ABSTRACT

A PARTICIPANT OBSERVER INVESTIGATION OF THE STUDENTS AND THEIR SOCIAL WORLD IN AN URBAN, INTEGRATED AND INNOVATIVE HIGH SCHOOL

By

Stuart B. Palonsky

This dissertation details a field research study which was conducted in a public high school during the period of November 1973 to March 1974. The name of the school and the names of the students used in the reporting are fictitious in order that their anonymity be preserved. The school was selected for the study because it was urban, racially segregated and educationally innovative and special attention was given to these factors.

Participant observer field work is more of a qualitative than a quantitative research design. Instead of studying some social phenomenon as an outsider replete with statistical models and testing instruments, the participant observer attempts to approach knowledge by becoming an "insider" and by being a part of the social reality of the individuals and groups he is studying. He attempts to discover and explain group perspectives and individual relationships in complex social settings by assuming the role of a group member and taking part in the daily lives of his subjects.

Guided by a series of research questions, I "attended" high school in order to investigate the informal social world of students

and the relationship of that world to the formal structure of the school and the process of education. The exploratory questions which guided this research were:

1. What is the nature of student groups? What unites the members of a group? What is the extent of social interaction between various groups?
2. What is it like to attend high school from the perspective of the students? What are students' concerns? What are their fears, hopes, and aspirations? What do they want out of school?
3. What is the effect of educational innovation on the students' social reality in the school? How do students and student groups perceive these innovations?
4. What is it like to attend an integrated school? What is the extent of black-white interaction in the school?
5. Why do students use drugs? What are the social effects of drug use on the student, the school and the process of education?

Two black and two white groups were studied and an analysis of the data generated the following responses to the exploratory questions:

1. The students were divided into distinct and voluntary peer group associations. These groups were isolated from one another and they all viewed the school differently. They responded to the school on the basis of the perceptions of the individual members and the perspective created by their social interaction. The various groups

experienced little interaction with one another in their informal world and the formal organization of the school did not encourage the groups to interact.

2. The high school was a different place and it served a different function for each of the groups studied. Although they all maintained different social realities, three common concerns of students emerged throughout the study. The students wanted the school to provide them with an opportunity to: (1) engage in a serious exploration of self, (2) develop their academic skills or at least require the students to perform "academic work," and (3) help them with a career choice.

3. Educational innovations which emphasized student-initiated learning often exposed the students to conflicting role expectations of the school and their peer group. The peer group was found to exert a greater influence on student behavior than the expectations of the school. The students were also found to have some difficulty making the transition from the teacher-initiated instruction of the junior high schools they had attended to the student-initiated learning of the high school. Because the students did not plan the innovations or have any part in the decision making process of the school, they viewed innovations as instructional changes which merely required their compliance.

4. Although blacks and whites attended the same school and went to many of the same classes, they really existed in two separate worlds. There was a white world and a black world and there was very little formal or informal contact between them.

5. Students claimed that they smoke marijuana--the principal drug used--for two reasons: because they were bored and because it was fun. There appears to be a high correlation between smoking marijuana and boredom. In addition to the cut rate, student absenteeism. failure rate, and drop out rate, excessive drug use indicated that something was not going on in the school. Excessive drug use may be considered an epiphenomenon; it may be symptomatic of a school which is not addressing the problems, concerns and aspirations of many of its students.

In general, it was found that although conflict was evident in the lives of all the students, the school followed a policy of conflict avoidance. The school encouraged the students to remain in their groups and avoid social situations or dialogue which could potentially be abrasive. There were no mechanisms for the resolution of conflict and no school-provided focus for student activity

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This volume is dedicated to the students of South High School who made the research a warm, personal experience and to Whitney who constantly encouraged me to do it.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Need

Until very recently, it was assumed that the purpose of school was to prepare students for later life. The student was regarded as a formless creature who was to be shaped, poked, molded and socialized for productive life in the society. He was to be graded, sorted and shined up in much the same way that we commercially prepare apples for the market. What was long ignored, in this future-oriented training, was that students were already living in a social world--the social world of school. They live in a unique sociocultural environment, populated almost entirely by adolescents, with its own mores, sanctions, reference groups, needs, concerns and aspirations.

Today, curriculum planners and educators generally recognize the existence of this social world; but, while they call for programs of instruction that are directly related to the "concerns of students," they in no way resolve the problem of how to identify these student concerns. It is necessary to do more than engage in speculation; research must be designed to explore the needs and concerns of high school students. This research should seek a first-hand look at the student world from the students' perspective. While carefully designed surveys of students' interests have long been a part of the educational literature, comparatively few studies have been conducted which explore

the school from the perspective of the students and view the educational process as the student views it.

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to employ the research methodology of participant observation in order to gain a first-hand look at the student world and to explain that particular sociocultural phenomenon as it relates to the process of formal education. The research is an attempt to understand the social reality of students by directly participating in the social world of the public high school and assuming the role of a participant within that sociocultural setting.

This is not designed to be a case study of individuals, but rather the unit of analysis is the group and the social reality generated by the interaction of the group. Reality, as used here, refers to the social reality which is constructed by the interaction of individuals. It is defined by Berger and Luckman, as that "quality appertaining to phenomena that we recognize as being independent of our own volition (we cannot 'wish them way')."[1]

For the purpose of this study, the reality of high school students will be defined as those events and factors which are present in the everyday life of school. According to Mead and Dewey, this reality results from the interaction of the individuals within their

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[1]Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckman, The Social Construction of Reality, A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge (New York: Doubleday and Company, 1966), p. 1.

social groups.[2] It is the dynamic social process by which individuals interpret and define the actions of others. This concept of reality is referred to as the "interactionist approach" in sociology and social psychology and it is characterized by three central propositions.

1. The individual's personality--the distinctive patterns of behavior that characterize him as an individual--results from and is reinforced by his day-to-day association with those about him.

2. The individual's behavior or conduct follows a direction that is the result of reciprocal give-and-take of interdependent men who are adjusting to one another.

3. The culture of the groups is a reflection of those agreements about proper conduct that emerge and are reinforced by man's continual communication as people collectively come to terms with life's conditions.[3]

This view considers man's social interaction with his fellow man to be the creating and sustaining force of any group or societal concept of what is real. This concept of reality requires the validation of other people and their continued interaction to define and interpret their world. By implication, if an individual wants to explore the social reality of individuals or groups, he should subject himself to the dynamics of the social environment and actually become a part of the group as it engages in the processes of creating and sustaining that reality. The participant observer methodology allows the researcher to assume the role of a participant in the social setting and engage in the interactions of individuals and groups. He is

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[2]George H. Mead, Mind, Self, and Society: From the Standpoint of a Social Behaviorist (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1934). John Dewey, Human Nature and Conduct (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1922).

[3]John W. Kinch, Social Psychology (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1973), p. 11.

able to take part in the group interactions which create the social reality for that group.

Exploratory Questions

Researchers who use the participant observer methodology maintain that the formulation of hypotheses is an ongoing process. Only tentative hypotheses can be formulated before being exposed to the group dynamics and the data provided by the group interaction. Once in the field, the researcher develops working hypotheses which he continually tests and refines, accepts or rejects, depending on subsequent field data or outside information such as library research. According to Geer,

> working hypotheses are a product of the field data itself and whatever ideas the field worker can summon. The initial stimulus may come from repetition or anomolies in the data which catch the observer's attention so that he searches his mind for explanations. Or he may start from the opposite end--what is in his head--and search the data for evidence or stereotypes from the general culture or notions derived from discussions with colleagues, previous research, and reading.[4]

The participant observer methodology is less structured than ordinary quantified research. Its flexibility increases the likelihood that the researcher will find facts he had not previously considered and develop hypotheses he had not formulated when he began his study.[5]

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[4]Blanche Geer, "First Days in the Field," in Sociologists at Work, edited by Philip E. Hammond (New York: Doubleday and Company, 1964), p. 384.

[5]Howard S. Becker and Blanche Geer, "Participant Observation: The Analysis of Qualitative Field Data," in Human Organization Research, Field Relations and Techniques, edited by Richard N. Adams and Jack J. Preiss, (Homewood, Illinois: Dorsey Press, 1960), p. 268.

Rather than entering the school with hypotheses to test, this research design allowed the data to present hypotheses for examination, but the research was not totally unstructured. The literature indicates that student social life is centered around age-grade peer groups and that these groups occupy most of the student's energies and time. Previous studies also indicate the centrality of the status afforded by group membership. It was also known prior to the field research, that the school used for the study was educationally innovative and racially integrated. This study, therefore, was guided by exploratory questions which focused the research toward an exploration of student groups and the group perspective in an integrated and innovative high school.

The research was conducted with the following exploratory questions in mind.

1. What is the nature of student groups? What unites the members of a group? What is the extent of social interaction between various groups?

2. What is it like to attend high school from the perspective of the student?

3. What are students' concerns? What are their fears, hopes, aspirations? What do they want out of school?

4. What is the effect of educational innovation on the students' social reality in the school? How do students and student groups perceive these innovations?

5. What is it like to attend an integrated school? What is the extent of black-white interaction in the school?

Soon after the research project began, it become evident from the field data that drugs and drug use were significant factors in the

students' social world. The exploratory questions were expanded to include:

6. Why do students use drugs?

7. What are the social effects of drugs on the students, the school and the process of education?

Definition of Terms

The terms used in this chapter, and elsewhere in this study, are subject to a variety of definitions. For the purpose of this reporting, the following definitions will be maintained:

Adolescence--As Friedenberg points out, this is a value laden term for the period of an individual's life from age fourteen to age twenty-one. He wrote: "Adolescence is conceived as a distinct stage of life in societies so complicated and differentiated that each individual's social role and function takes years to define and learn. When years of special preparation for adult life are required, those years become a distinguishable period with its own rules, customs and relationships."[6]

Elsewhere, Friedenberg writes that the central developmental task of adolescence is "self-definition." "Adolescence is the period during which a young person learns who he is, and what he really feels. It is the time during which he differentiates himself from his culture, though on the culture's terms. It is the age at which, by becoming a person in his own right, he is capable of deeply felt relationships to other individuals perceived clearly as such."[7]

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[6]Edgar Z. Friedenberg, The Vanishing Adolescent (12th edition; New York: Dell Publishing Company, 1969), pp. 21-22.

[7]Ibid., p. 29.

Differentiated Staffing--an educational innovation which is designed to provide more effective utilization of school personnel. As used in this reporting, it refers to the employment of non-teaching paraprofessionals (aides) who supervise resource centers, libraries, and who also assist teachers with their classroom teaching assignments.

Educational Innovations--planned changes in content and/or process of education conducted within the structural framework of the school. It is designed to provide new ways to meet the goals of the educational system and the society. Innovation differs from school reform in that the latter usually implies changes in the society as well as the school.

Flexible Modular Scheduling--an educational innovation which provides a system of scheduling instructional classes. It departs from the usual division of the school day into courses of equal segments of time. Classes are scheduled in modules (mods) of twenty minutes each and the school day is nineteen modules long. Students are expected to attend class only during those mods when they have a class scheduled. The remainder of the day is called "unscheduled time" during which the student can work on independent studies, receive remedial help or leave the school to engage in on-the-job work experience.

Group--According to George Homans, a "'group' is defined as a number of persons, or members, each of whom, while the group is meeting,

interacts with every other, or is able to do so, or can at least take personal cognizance of every other."[8]

Group Perspective--as defined by Becker, it refers to "modes of thought and action developed by a group in a particular situation. They are the customary ways members of the group think about situations and act in them."[9]

Learning Resource Centers--an integral part of flexible modular scheduling, these refer to areas within the school where students can go during their "unscheduled time" to pursue special interests or complete specific class assignments.

Participant Observation--a scientific field-research technique which affords the researcher opportunities to explore social situations from the perspective of the people in that situation.

Reference Groups--the group whose norms and values an individual may use to evaluate or judge himself. It is possible to have more than one reference group. In the case of a student in high school, his friends constitute a peer group which may serve as one reference group and his family may constitute another reference group.[10] Various

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[8]International Encyclopedia of the Social Studies, edited by David L. Sills, Vol. 6, p. 259. Copyright 1968 by Crowell Collier and Macmillan, Incorporated.

[9]Howard Becker, et al., Boys in White (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), p. 36.

[10]Wilbur B. Brookover and Edsel L. Erickson, Society, School and Learning (East Lansing, Michigan: Michigan State University Press, 1969), pp. 65-66.

reference groups expect the individual to assume differing patterns of exhibited behavior. When two or more reference groups place similar role expectations on the individual, he is said to experience role congruence. When each of the various reference groups expects the individual to exhibit different role characteristics, he is said to experience role conflict.

Role--a social position which is characterized by a set of personal qualities, activities, and expectations. The set is normatively evaluated to some degree by both those who occupy the role and those in other social positions.

Social Reality--the ordered view of one's world that is created and sustained by the interaction of individuals and groups.

Subculture--according to Brookover, all members of a society share a common culture but these members are also part of sub-societies with subcultural patterns that differ from the culture of the society and other subcultures. These subcultures may vary in respect to language, values, norms, aspirations and/or patterns of behavior.[11]

Symbolic Interaction--the dynamic social process of individuals and/or groups by which they interpret and define the actions of others.

Overview

This study details a field research project that was conducted in a public high school. The name of the school and the names of its

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[11]Brookover and Erickson, Society, School and Learning, p. 40.

students used in this reporting are fictitious in order that their anonymity be preserved. The methodology employed is participant observation. Unlike standard quantitative studies, participant observation is a qualitative methodology which is largely exploratory in nature and it is often reported in the first person singular. Guided by a series of research questions and working hypotheses, the researcher is able to investigate public education from the perspective of the student.

During the period from November 1973 to March 1974, I was a "student" at South High School. With the knowledge and permission of the administrators, teachers, and students, I attended classes, ate lunch in the cafeteria and associated with students regularly. I also attended dances, ball games and an occasional party. Insofar as it was possible, I entered into the everyday routine of attending high school and I became a familiar and accepted student of the school.

Although I am reporting this in the first person, as individual research, I have had the benefit of sharing data and perceptions with John Butler. Mr. Butler, a fellow graduate student and former school administrator, began his field study at South High School on the day my field research was concluded. Our collaboration has added to the longitudinal dimension of the study as well as giving us some confidence when we ask ourselves if we really saw what we think we saw. We believe if two researchers, working independently with the same data, arrive at similar conclusions, a certain degree of validity can be claimed.

This study focuses on the student as the client of public education. It attempts to explain the student perspective and the influence that perspective has on the student, the school, the teachers and the educational enterprise.

Chapter Two contains a review of the literature on adolescents in school, participant observer studies, and those participant observer studies that deal directly with education.

In Chapter Three, there is an amplification of the participant observer methodology and the social theories which have guided the research and reporting. This chapter also contains a statement of limitation that applies to this study.

A description of the school, the community and the students is found in Chapter Four. This chapter also contains descriptions of the activities of various student groups in their day-to-day lives as public school students. During the period of field research, the school abandoned the flexible modular system and adopted a more traditional scheduling model based on five classes a day, five days a week. This study will focus on the effect this change had on student perceptions and interactions.

Chapter Five contains an analysis of the field data and responses to the questions posed in Chapter One. The conclusions and implications of the study are discussed in Chapter Six.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The literature reviewed in this chapter has been divided into two sections: the literature of adolescents in school, and a summary of participant observer studies in both school and non-school settings.

Adolescents in School

The literature selected for review includes studies by psychologists and educators but the emphasis has been placed on sociological investigations. The sociologist, unlike the individualistically oriented psychologist, considers man's relations to society within the context of his human group. My study is not a case study of individuals but an exploration of group interaction and the social perspective generated by that interaction. Sociological explanations also help to explain how social and cultural forces influence the behavior of the individual and the group.

Sociological investigations of adolescence are often traced to Margaret Mead (1928).[1] Her study directs attention to the cultural forces which define status within society instead of viewing only

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[1]Margaret Mead, Coming of Age in Samoa (New York: Morrow, 1928).

physiological factors as the determinants of adolescence. Not long after the appearance of Mead's book, Willard Waller introduced the concept of a "youth culture" in the Sociology of Teaching (1931)[2]. He identified a subculture based on mutually acknowledged group norms and values which set adolescents apart from adult society.

Waller portrayed the gap between the adolescent culture and adult culture in schools as a polarization into "warring camps." He claimed that,

> the teacher represents the adult group, ever the enemy of the spontaneous life of groups of children. The teacher represents the formal curriculum, and his interest is in imposing that curriculum upon the children in forms of tasks; pupils are much more interested in life in their own world than the desiccated bits of adult life which teachers have to offer. The teacher represents the established social order in the school, and his interest is in maintaining that order, whereas pupils have only a negative interest in that feudel superstructure. Teacher and pupil confront each other with attitudes from which the underlying hostility can never be altogether removed.[3]

Waller's conception of a youth culture was reinforced by Talcott Parsons (1942)[4]. Parsons characterized youth as the creators of humanistic social patterns which emphasize fair play, athletic prowess, social graces, irresponsibility and rebelliousness toward

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[2]Willard Waller, The Sociology of Teaching (Russel and Russel, (1931) 1961).

[3]Ibid., pp. 185-186.

[4]Talcott Parsons, "The Social Class as a Social System: Some of its Implications in American Society," in Education, Economy and Society, A Reader in the Sociology of Education, edited by A. H. Halsey, Jean Floud, C. Arnold Anderson (New York: Free Press of Glencoe, Inc., 1961), pp. 434-54.

adults. He also considered it to be one of the "hallmarks of the American education system" because, he believed, student subcultures were far less prevalent in most European education systems than in the United States.

The notion of an adolescent subculture, although not universally accepted, has been distinguished by a great many researchers including the very influential James Coleman (1961)[5]. Coleman portrays adolescent subcultures as collections of groups which are in opposition to adult authority.

He recognized that teacher and parent approval or disapproval no longer constituted effective "levers of control" regulating adolescent behavior. Students are now more concerned with the approval or disapproval of the peer group within their own subcultural society. It was perhaps remotely possible to break down that society and reinstitute adult controls but Coleman did not think this would be desirable. "The major thesis of this book," he wrote, "is that it is possible to take another tack, to learn how to control the adolescent community, as a community, and use it to further the ends of education."[6]

Coleman linked the emergence of an adolescent subculture to the emergence of formalized educational institutions. Adolescents were set apart from the rest of the society and as an unintended consequence

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[5]James S. Coleman, The Adolescent Society, The Social Life of the Teenager and its Impact on Education (New York: The Free Press of Glencoe, Incorporated, 1961).

[6]Ibid., p. 12.

of this separation, society was presented with new socialization problems. "The society," he wrote, "was confronted no longer with a set of individuals to be trained toward adulthood, but with distinct social systems which offer a united front to the overtures made by adult society."[7]

The most enduring finding of Coleman's study is his recognition of the position of athletics in adolescent groups. Athletics were found to enjoy a centrality and a position of status in adolescent life which was unchallenged by any school ascribed status and certainly not by a status attained through academic achievement.

Coleman re-evaluated some of his ideas in a later work and he emphasized the freedom that should be afforded students rather than the attempts to control them.[8] However, much of the literature on adolescent groups and subcultures still regard them as a threat to teacher autonomy and school authority.[9]

Waller, Parsons and Coleman regard the youth culture as assaults on adult society and a repudiation of adult values but this is not an unchallenged position. Eisenstadt, for example, views the youth cultures found in industrial societies as a transitional life stage. He believes that it is a halfway house between childhood and

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[7]Ibid., p. 4.

[8]James S. Coleman, Adolescents and the Schools (New York: Basic Books Incorporated, 1965).

[9]see for example, Mary A. Bany and Lois V. Johnson, Classroom Group Behavior, Group Dynamics in Education (New York: The Mac Millan Company, 1964), and Albert K. Cohen, "Social Control and Subcultural Change," Youth and Society, Vol. 3, (March, 1972), 259-276.

adulthood; it serves as a bridge between the time a youth is appreciated for who he is and the time he will be appreciated for what he is.[10]

The Adolescent Society has become a standard reference in the field but it has its share of critics. Canacian is representative of a good number of researchers who have attacked Coleman's methodology. She claims that his "survey methods [did] not produce a systematic and adequate description of adolescent values."[11] Epperson, among others, believes Coleman was wrong to conclude that formalized institutional schools set adolescents apart from the rest of society.[12] He agrees with Coleman that today's adolescent is less involved with family life than adolescents in the past, but Epperson believes the adolescent is still too closely attached to his family to be considered a member of a distinct subcultural society. The adolescent still retains many ties, loyalties and aspirations that link him to his family. According to Epperson, we still do not have a perception of the adolescent that accounts for his multiple loyalties and the relation of these loyalties to specific situations. He believes that we need to develop a conceptual scheme that accounts for adolescent behavior without explaining it away as a subcultural phenomenon.

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[10]S. N. Eisenstadt, From Generation to Generation (Glencoe, Illinois: The Free Press, 1956).

[11]Francesca M. Canacian, "New Methods for Describing What People Think," Sociological Inquiry, 41 (Winter, 1971) 85-93.

[12]David C. Epperson, "A Re-Assessment of Indices of Parental Influences in the Adolescent Society," American Sociological Review, Vol. 29 (February, 1964), 93-96.

The data presented in a study by Elkin and Westley indicate that the sociological characterization of adolescents living in a separate subcultural society "has a somewhat mythical character."[13] Their analysis of student values and attitudes indicate that there was more "continuity than discontinuity in socialization." They found few sharp conflicts between parents and their children which would represent cultural differences. They claim,

> the empirical data do not deny that there are psychological tensions and distinctive interests among adolescents; however the data do suggest--at least among those middle class groups studied--that the current model of adolescent culture represents an erroneous conception.[14]

Jahoda and Warren argue that the existence of an adolescent subculture is a "pseudo problem" rather than a real issue. They contend that much of the problem is semantic and the existence of an adolescent subculture depends largely on the researcher's needs and subsequent definition of the term "subculture."[15]

> Now what does one mean by a subculture? Whichever of the many definitions of culture serves as a model, the fact that youth is assigned a special status in society is not good enough reason to speak of a separate culture. All known societies include some status differentiations among their constituent groups, not only according to age but also sex, occupation and other factors.[16]

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[13]Frederick Elkin and William Westley, "The Myth of Adolescent Culture," American Sociological Review, Vol. 20 (December, 1955), 680-684.

[14]Ibid., p. 683.

[15]Marie Jahoda and Neil Warren, "Myths of Youth," Sociology of Education, Vol. 38 (Winter, 1965), 138-149.

[16]Ibid., p. 143.

If these writers haven't sufficiently muddied the waters of adolescent life, the views of Elisabeth B. Hurlock should be considered. She claims that today's adolescents are a "new species." She believes that they are different than preceding generations of adolescents being characterized by: peer conformity, preoccupations with status symbols, irresponsibility, anti-work attitudes, anti-intellectualism, criticism for older generations, a disregard for rules and law and an unrealistic level of aspiration.[17]

Schwartz and Merton (1967) approach the study of adolescents from still another direction. They argue that the existence of a subculture does not rest upon its power to repudiate basic adult values. They claim that much of the significance of adolescent life is obscured from adults by linguistic masks; adults simply do not know what adolescents are talking about because of the ways in which adolescents use language. They further argue that adolescents are set off from the rest of the adult community because the expectations which guide their behavior are not always community expectations.[18]

Hollingshead (1949) found that the behavior and expectations of adolescents were not dissimilar to members of the adult community.

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[17]Elisabeth B. Hurlock, "American Adolescents Today--A New Species," in Human Dynamics in Psychology and Education, edited by Don E. Hamachek (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1968), pp. 357-70.

[18]Gary Schwartz and Don Merton, "The Language of Adolescence: An Anthropological Approach to the Youth Culture," American Journal of Anthropology, Vol. 72 (March, 1967), 453-468.

He hypothesized that "the social behavior of adolescents appears to be related functionally to the positions their families occupy in the social structure of the community."[19]

Hollingshead's research involved extensive field work and he was able to investigate the associational patterns of 259 groups in both school and non-school settings. He concluded that these associations are the most obvious factors of adolescent behavior and these voluntary and informal groups consumed most of their interest and time. He referred to these groups as "cliques" and claimed that, "a clique comes into existence when two or more persons are related to one another in an intimate fellowship that involves 'going places and doing things' together, a mutual exchange of ideas, and the acceptance of each personality by the others."[20]

The cliques he studied were small, involving no more than three to five members, and they were limited by neighborhood associations and subject to dissolution by dating patterns but while they existed, the groups colored much of adolescent life. He noted that, "once an adolescent is identified as a member of a particular clique, the reputation of the cliques tends to be attached to him by adolescents outside the clique, by teachers, and by other adults . . . ."[21]

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[19]August B. Hollingshead, Elmtown's Youth, The Impact of Social Class on Adolescents (New York: John Wiley and Sons Incorporated, 1949).

[20]Ibid., p. 205.

[21]Ibid., p. 217.

Many of the studies of the adolescent in school explore the problem of pupil control and discipline largely in terms of school related problems. Stinchcombe addresses the problem of discipline not as a school problem but as a problem created by the larger society and inherited by the schools as the major socializing institution of that society. He began his study by asking why the student-teacher relation in high school is one of the very few "authority relations in modern society whose maintenance is constantly problematic."[22] Basing much of his work in sociology, Stinchcombe weaves his argument out of the social theories of Robert K. Merton (anomie) and Max Weber (doctrine of legitimacy and expressive alienation.) His study was largely qualitative; instead of doing extensive surveys of a cross section of schools in the style of Coleman, he focused on only one high school in California.

Stinchcombe concluded that the problem of school discipline is based on the inability of the school "to offer any desirable status beyond high school to some of its students." He referred specifically to the lesser talented student who is forced to accept the school's definition of success and failure.

> The school puts all those 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 in algebra as success, talent at automobile mechanics as failure.[23]

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[22]Arthur L. Stinchcombe, Rebellion in High School (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1964), p. 1.

[23]Ibid., p. 8. A similar view is expressed by Paul Goodman, Compulsory Mis-Education (New York: Horizon Press, 1964), and Growing Up Absurd (New York: Random House, 1960).

He did not indict the schools. He felt the inability of the schools to define success and failure in other terms was not a failing of the school but of the society.

> For the reason that the school cannot promise much is that the society cannot promise much. Tinkering a bit with the curriculum 'to make it more meaningful' for duller children will have little effect.[24]

Stinchcombe is also critical of the "Puritanism" the society forces on the school. These attitudes do not permit discussion of the "adult pleasures" of sex, alcohol and tobacco and makes it difficult to develop a rational introduction or discussion of important issues.

> Although most adults treat these things as the good life, they do not allow the official representatives of the culture to say that these are the good things. It is the official hypocrisy that is behind the famous definition of a teacher as a man hired to tell lies to little boys . . . . Somehow children must avoid becoming like they are told to become in school, in order to become like adults. Rebellion . . . is a nearly inevitable result of the two-faced character of the ideals of adulthood.[25]

Claude Buxton's recently published book reports the findings of research that surveyed 6,500 high school students. His study indicates that students on the whole, are indifferent to school although most of the students are reluctant to admit that they dislike it.

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[24] Ibid., p. 179. Also see, Edgar Z. Friedenberg, Coming of Age in America (New York: Random House, 1963) and The Vanishing Adolescent (Boston: Beacon Press, 1959). Friedenberg claims that education cannot be improved except in a society that respects the young; and American society respects no social groups which are powerless.

[25] Ibid., p. 182.

Students also claimed that they like their teachers but that they feel guilt and have feelings of anxiety about their work in school and the relation of schooling to their future. The responses students gave to questionnaires also implied students considered interaction among their peers to be a distraction from studies.

Buxton, like many other critics of the public schools, does not see curriculum innovation or the proliferation of federal funds as an answer to the schools' problems. He is not prescriptive but notes that a "massive change in attitudes" of all persons concerned with the schools is necessary for a remediation of school problems.[26]

The literature includes several works which provide an effective introduction to the study of adolescents in school. The three most helpful volumes are Harry Silverstein's book, The Sociology of Youth;[27] Richard F. Purnell, Adolescents and the American High School;[28] and the Review of Educational Research, 1966.[29]

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[26]Claude Buxton, Adolescent in School (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1973).

[27]Harry Silverstein, editor, The Sociology of Youth, Evolution and Revolution (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1973).

[28]Richard F. Purnell, editor, Adolescents and the American High School (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1971).

[29]Educational Programs: Adolescence, Review of Educational Research, 1966, Vol. 36.

"The Sociology of Adolescence: A Review of Major Studies"[30] by Howard W. Polsky and the "Concept of an Adolescent Subculture"[31] by Kandel, Lesser and Roberts are selections found in the Purnell volume and are of particular interest. "The Adolescent and His Society"[32] by Smith and Kleine is from the Review of Educational Research and it also provided direction in a complex and extensive field.

The studies of adolescents in school have been conducted with somewhat of an eclectic spirit but five points of general agreement can be distilled from the literature.

1. There is general agreement that adolescents in school form voluntary associations with their fellow students which are referred to as cliques or gruops.

2. These groups form the dominant pattern of student associations and they occupy most of the students' time both in school and out of school.

3. Depending on the researchers' definitions, these groups may or may not constitute a subculture which rejects adult standards and authority. They do, however, exert a powerful influence on students and serve as one reference group for adolescent behavior.

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[30]Howard W. Polsky, "The Sociology of Adolescence," in Adolescents and the American High School, edited by Richard F. Purnell.

[31]D. B. Kandel, G. S. Lesser, G. C. Roberts, "The Concept of Adolescent Subculture," in Adolescents and the American High School, edited by Richard F. Purnell.

[32]Louis M. Smith and Paul F. Kleine, "The Adolescent and His Society," in Review of Educational Research, 1966.

4. A predominant characteristic of the research on adolescents has been its desire to find ways to control the students and the student subculture.

5. There is little support for the notion that "tinkering with the curriculum" will bring about desired change within the school. School problems are the result of the problems of the larger society and they cannot be remedied only by altering the in-school environment.

Participant Observer Studies

My study was designed to explore the student perspective and to provide a first-hand look at student life. It was therefore decided to employ the field research methodology of participant observation. The methodology allows the researcher to get closer to the realities of social interaction than traditional quantified research.

The participant observer methodology was developed by nineteenth century anthropologists who wanted to leave their arm-chair speculations and do research in the field. In this vein, Bronislaw Malinowski has been referred to as the first anthropologist to "pitch his tent" in a native village observing and recording what went on in the manner of a participant in the social setting and a scientific observer.[33] Twentieth century sociologists have adapted

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[33]Rosalie Wax, Doing Fieldwork, Warnings and Advice (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971), p. 35.

and revised the methodology and have pitched their tents in Italian slums,[34] "Negro Street Corner Societies,"[35] and among mental patients.[36]

Streetcorner Society, originally published in 1943, reports Whyte's study of an Italian neighborhood in Boston. The book focuses on the people in general, and on their political and social structures in particular. Whyte posed several questions which guided his research and reporting.

> What makes a man a big shot and by what means is he able to dominate the little guys? To answer that question, let us watch Tony Cataldo. He is a prominent racketeer, and he is concerned, among other things, with controlling the corner boys. How does he go about it? And let us watch George Ravello, Cornerville's state senator, as he organizes his political campaign. He needs the support of the corner boys. How does he get it? We know in general that the heads of political and racket organizations in Cornerville cooperate with one another. But what is the nature of that cooperation, upon what is it based, and how is it established?[37]

To answer these questions, Whyte used the participant observer methodology to investigate the social interactions of individuals and he then developed a mosaic of the social organizations of the community. He lived in the community and took part in the social activities of the individuals and groups that he studied but he was careful to divorce

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[34]William Foote Whyte, Streetcorner Society (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, (1943) 1970), and Herbert J. Gans, The Urban Villagers, Groups and Class in the Life of Italian-Americans (New York: The Free Press of Glencoe, 1962).

[35]Elliot Liewbow, Tally's Corner (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1967).

[36]Erving Goffman, Asylums (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, 1961).

[37]Whyte, Streetcorner Society, pp. xix-xx.

any moral judgments from his reporting of their behavior. The participant observer, he noted, is interested in observing people acting out their lives, not in determining the morality of that existence.

Herbert Gans also studied an Italian section of Boston but the research questions that he posed were different than the questions asked by Whyte. According to Gans,

> My main research interests were two: to study a slum and to study the way of life of a low income population. I wanted to know what a slum was like and how it felt to live in one.[38]

Gans research spanned the period from October 1957 to May 1958 during which time he lived in the neighborhood he was studying. He concluded that the residents were not frustrated seekers of middle class status but rather they constituted a subculture with aspirations which bore little resemblance to middle class values or goals. It was a slum only by definition of the outsiders (e.g. social workers, educators, public health officials) and its existence as a subculture was only understood by the insiders. The participant observer method, according to Gans, enabled him to become an insider and allowed him to get close to the "realities" of the people and the community by reducing the distance between the researcher and his subject of study.

Tally's Corner was originally written as a dissertation for a doctorate in anthropology. The book details a seven month field research study of "Negro streetcorner men," and their world of "daily face-to-face

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[38]Gans, The Urban Villagers, pp. ix-x.

relationships with wives, children, friends, lovers and neighbors." The study is an attempt to record and interpret the life of ordinary "lower-class" people "on their own grounds and on their own terms." Liewbow describes the exploratory nature of some participant observer studies. He explains that the data were collected with the aim of gaining a clear, first-hand picture of lower-class Negro men rather than of testing specific hypotheses.

> The focus was on the man as father, husband or other family member, but there were, by design, no firm presumptions of what was or was not relevant. In this sense, there was no detailed research design; the intention was frankly exploratory.[39]

Liewbow considered human cultural behavior as a predictable response to societal conditions and he believed that an examination of those conditions was necessary to understand the behavior. Referring to this aspect of his study, he wrote,

> An attempt was made to see the man as he sees himself, to compare what he says with what he does, and to explain his behavior as a direct response to the conditions of lower-class Negro life rather than a mute compliance with historical or cultural imperatives.[40]

Although a white researcher investigating a black subculture, Liewbow mentions no special problems in being accepted. He notes that the "degree to which one becomes a participant is as much a matter of perceiving oneself as a participant as it is being accepted as a participant by others."[41]

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[39]Liewbow, Tally's Corner, p. 10.

[40]Ibid., p. 208.

[41]Ibid., p. 256.

Asylums is a study of the "social situation of mental patients and other inmates." The thesis of the book is that the most significant factor in the codifying of behavior for inmates of a mental institution is the nature of that institution, not the illness of the patient. Goffman tested this hypothesis by assuming a participant observer role in order to learn about the social world of the hospital inmate. His study differs from the previously cited investigations because he had a specific hypothesis to test rather than exploratory questions to answer. Goffman, unlike Whyte and Liewbow, did not assume the role of his subject--the hospital inmate. He took on a series of "safer roles"; he worked, for example, as an assistant to the athletic director.

Goffman was still able to explain the reality of inmate life from the perspective of the inmate. Referring to his study and the underlying rationale of the participant observer methodology, Goffman writes,

> It was then and still is my belief that any group of persons--prisoners, primatives, pilots, or patients--develop a life of their own that becomes meaningful, reasonable and normal once you get close to it, and that a good way to learn about any of these worlds is to submit oneself in the company of the members to the daily round of petty contingencies to which they are subjected.[42]

There have been very few studies that have employed the participant observer format to investigate public education. Two of the best and most recent studies are: Small Town Teacher written by

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[42]Goffman, Asylums, pp. ix-x.

Gertrude McPherson and Inside High School[44] by Philip Cusick. These studies explore the school from the perspective of the actors in the social setting; McPherson conducted an investigation of the teachers in an elementary school and Cusick investigated the social world of students in a high school.

McPherson, a Ph. D. sociologist, conducted a concealed participant observer study in a New England school where she was teaching. The research was designed to investigate the role of the teacher, their in-school social interactions and their problems of status and role identification. Describing the purpose of her study, McPherson wrote,

> I am looking at the teacher from her own point of view. I am concerned with the teacher's expectations for herself, for pupils, for parents, for the administration, and with her responses to the ways in which she defines the expectations of others toward her.[45]

Elsewhere she explained how the nature of the research question guided her selection of methodological approach and required that a participant observer study be conducted so that she could be an insider. "This kind of research," she wrote, "requires an inside observer, one who experiences the same demands, expectations and pressures as the respondents and can make sense out of behavior and comment from within."[46]

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[44]Philip A. Cusick, Inside High School (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1973).

[45]Gertrude McPherson, Small Town Teacher (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1972), p. 7.

[46]Ibid., p. 12.

McPherson's perspective as an "insider" led her to several conclusions concerning the teachers and their roles and expectations. She found only limited degree of job satisfaction in the school; morale was low and cynicism was prevalent. The enthusiasm of new teachers was greeted with a teasing indifference or open sarcasm. New teachers were told that their "innovative ideas" would not work and that they would be better off sticking to the "old methods." Teachers were not expected to boast about their success in the classroom because this implied that other teachers were not successful. Teachers were not expected to complain of classroom problems because this was considered a sign of vulnerability and insecurity. The teachers created and maintained a group reality which encouraged cynicism toward their profession and insured that cynicism would be shared by the new teachers who entered the building.

The methodology for my study draws heavily from Inside High School. Cusick spent six months in a rural high school during which time he attended classes and took part in the informal out of class activities of various students and student groups. His book describes student behavior and the ways in which that behavior effects the students, the teachers, the administrators and the school organization. The purpose of his study was to gain a better understanding of the student perspective and to understand why students behave in the ways they do.

He decided on the participant observer methodology because it afforded him the ability to investigate student behavior and the

impact of the school on the student from the perspective of the student. He wrote,

> The information gathering procedure was based on the assumption that any group of individuals will develop a reasonable way of behaving in their environment and if one wishes to understand that behavior, he can do so by joining, submitting himself to the routine, rules and regulations that structure their world, and recording everything that goes on.[47]

Cusick claims that the sociocultural characteristics of the school's organizational structure provide the students with a great deal of time in which they "literally had nothing to do but stay in some state of spectatorship--waiting, watching or listening." The school's organization was characterized by teacher and subject specialization, downward communication flow, batch processing of students and emphasis on maintenance procedures. Since students were constantly in each others company, they used their time to engage in small group activities and these group activities became an important social referent.

Cusick claims that the school did not begin to touch the students needs or tap into their energies or creativity but it did prepare individuals to "live out their lives in the American mainstream."

> Those students who adjusted so well and with so much sophistication to [the high school] will have little difficulty adjusting equally well and with an equal degree of compliance to their jobs with . . . any large, impersonal, bureaucratic, future-reward-oriented organization that make up the bulk of American economic and social life.[48]

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[47]Cusick, Inside High School, p. v.

[48]Ibid., p. 220.

The school may not have direct impact on the lives of students but, through its role as a socializing agency, it indirectly effects their lives by inducting them into the society and teaching and enforcing society's reward structure.

The school Cusick studied was a rural-suburban school which had a traditional curriculum and neither drug use nor racial disturbance was a significant factor in his reporting. The school I investigated is an urban school which offers an innovative curriculum and a scheduling system that allows for considerable student freedom. The school I investigated also has a history of racial problems and drug use. My investigation considers the urban high school students given those conditions: innovation, integration, and drugs.

Summary

Participant observer studies have been conducted in a wide variety of social setting but several aspects of the methodology and its underlying rationale permeates the literature. A review of the literature of participant observer studies in both school and non-school settings indicates agreement on the following points:

1. People develop reasonable ways of behaving in their environment and this behavior is a direct response to both the exigencies and mundane routines of day-to-day living.

2. The participant observer can examine and explain individual and group behavior by subjecting himself to the same routines and rituals experienced by those he is studying.

3. The methodology of participant observation allows the researcher to become part of the social interactions of individuals

and groups by defining the researcher's role as closely resembling the roles of the actors in the social environment.

4. Acceptance of the researcher by the groups and individuals he studies depends more on the personal relationships which are developed rather than upon any formal explanations given by the researcher.

5. It is possible to carry out this type of research even when the groups studied differ significantly from the researcher in age, social class, race or cultural orientation.

6. The participant observer is able to become an actor in the social environment and an insider who can develop a first-hand perspective of group behavior and the social forces which help create that behavior.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Conceptual Framework

The participant observer (P.O.) methodology is more qualitative than quantitative research. Instead of studying some social phenomenon as an outsider replete with statistical models and testing instruments, the P.O. attempts to approach knowledge by becoming an "insider" and by being a part of the social reality of the individuals and groups he is studying. He attempts to discover and explain some particular group perspective by assuming the role of a group member and by taking part in the construction of that perspective.

The purpose of the P.O. study, then, is to develop understandings of group perspectives and individual relationships in complex social settings. The P.O. methodology reduces the gap between researcher and subject; the researcher's role is defined as less unlike his subject than in ordinary quantified research. He is not limited to looking only at the covariance of isolated factors. He becomes part of the ongoing group dynamics and he studies the process as well as the product of the group interaction. According to Bogdan, this methodological approach directs itself at human settings and the individuals in them "holistically." He claims that the subject of the study, "be it an organization or individuals, is not reduced

to isolated variables or hypotheses, but rather an attempt is made to look at it in context, from a comprehensive perspective."[1]

The initial task of the P.O. is to establish himself as an "insider" so he may participate in the activity of his subjects and understand the reality they create through their shared activities. According to Cusick, the researcher assumes that his fellow participants in the social setting actually form their own social reality, and that in order to understand it, he should take part in the creation.

> The information gathering procedure [is] based on the assumption that any group of individuals will develop a reasonable way of behaving in their environment, and if one wishes to understand that behavior, he can do so by joining them, submitting himself to the routine, rules, and regulations that structure their world, and recording everything that goes on.[2]

Implicit in the P.O. methodology is the concept that individuals interact and create a social concensus which they define as reality--something which they believe to actually exist. Man is considered to be a social creature who, as he interacts with others, acquires beliefs and patterns of behavior that allow him to derive a measure of satisfaction from his environment. These beliefs and behaviors are not static but are redefined in a continual process of interaction among individuals in an ever-changing social environment.

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[1]Robert Bogdan, Participant Observation in Organizational Settings (Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 1972), p. 1.

[2]Philip A. Cusick, Inside High School (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Incorporated, 1973), p. v.

These redefinitions of reality take place within the context of the organizational setting. The organization establishes guidelines for group interaction and the norms and behaviors developed by the informal group reflect the formal structure of the organization in which they exist. According to Perrow, the explanation for organizational behavior is not primarily in the formal structure of the organization but lies in the "myriad of subterranean processes of informal groups."[3] A study of student groups and group interactions, therefore, not only produces information about the informal network of the student subculture, but also indicates how these groups influence the formal structure of the school, the curriculum, and the staff.

By their actions and interactions, men create a subsociety with its own goals, norms, and standards of behavior. In order to understand the reality generated by the group, it is necessary to understand the interactions of its members. This may be more complex than it first appears. Some sociologists contend that human beings do not directly respond to each other's actions. But first interpret the actions and then respond on the basis of that interpretation.[4] This ongoing process of definition and interpretation is referred to as "symbolic interaction."

> The term 'symbolic interaction' refers . . . to the particular and distinctive character of interaction

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[3]Charles Perrow, Complex Organizations (Glenview, Illinois: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1972), p. 180.

[4]Herbert Blumer, "Sociological Implications of the Thought of George Herbert Mead," American Journal of Sociology, Vol. LXXI (March, 1966), 537.

> as it takes place between human beings. The peculiarity consists in the fact that human beings interpret or 'define' each other's actions. Their response is not made directly to the actions of one another, but instead is based on the meaning which they attach to such actions. Thus human interaction is mediated by the use of symbols, by interpretation or by ascertaining the meaning of one another's actions.[5]

Symbolic interactionists consider the human group to be a developing social element. As the members interpret and respond to the actions of others, they establish patterns of joint actions and norms. They also allow for the transformation of the actions and norms by their continued interaction. In order to understand this dynamic group process, it must be perceived through the eyes of an insider. According to Blumer,

> The study of action would have to be made from the position of the actor. Such action is forged by the actor out of what he perceives, interprets and judges; one would have to see the operating situation as the actor interprets them.[6]

The participant observer methodology enables the researcher to perceive the social situation as the actors perceive it but he is not only a participant in the group; in his role as scientific observer, he must also account for and explain the actions of his fellow participants. According to Geer,

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[5]Herbert Blumer, "Society as Symbolic Interaction," in Human Behavior and Social Process, edited by Arnold Rose (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin Company, 1962), p. 180.

[6]Blumer, "Sociological Implications of the Thought of George Herbert Mead," p. 542.

> A participant observer in the field is at once reporter, interviewer, and scientist. On the scene he gets the story of an event by questioning participants about what is happening and why. He fills out the story by asking people about their relation to the event, their reactions, opinions, and evaluation of its significance. As an interviewer, he encourages an informant to tell his story, or supply an expert account of an organization or group. As a scientist he seeks answers to questions, seeking hypotheses and collecting data with which to test them.[7]

Participant observation is a research procedure which (1) describes the group process from the vantage point of a participant who takes part in the group activities and the ongoing process of constructing a social reality and, (2) explains that reality as a scientific observer in the social situation.

There is an ontological dimension to social research. The social science researcher attempts to gather organized knowledge about the social reality of individuals and societies. Alfred Schutz claims that this is the "primary goal" of the social sciences. Explaining his concept of social reality, he wrote,

> By the term 'social reality' I wish to be understood the sum total of objects and occurrences within the social cultural world as experienced by the common-sense thinking of men living their daily lives among their fellowmen, connected with them in manifold relations of interaction. It is the world of cultural objects and social institutions into which we are born, within which we have to find our bearings, and with which we have to come to terms. From the outset, we, the actors in the social scene, experience the world we live in as both of nature and of culture,

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[7]Blanche Geer, "First Days in the Field," Philip E. Hammond, editor, Sociologists at Work (New York: Doubleday and Company, 1964), p. 383.

> not as a private but as an intersubjective one, that is, as potentially accessible to everyone; and this involves intercommunication and language.[8]

The participant observer engages in a form of social science research which seeks to understand the social reality of the human world of intersubjective meanings. Maurice Nathanson gives the following example of what is meant by social reality in his examination of the "handshake" as a symbolic act.

> The handshake that consumates the business deal is in purely physical terms no more than an exercise in the mechanics of muscles, tendons, bone, cartilage, etc. From the standpoint of the social order, and the business world in particular, the handshake is significant: it means that something has been agreed upon by the partners to the transaction and that the agreement has been concluded, fixed or redeemed in some form. . . . Throughout our life with others in a shared world the what of social reality is the meaning grasped by each of what is signified by external events.
>
> . . . In purely anatomical terms, the handshake of the business deal may be indistinguishable from that of the acknowledgment of an introduction, the ritual of receiving a diploma or the rules of courtesy governing wrestlers about to meet in a ring. What is meant by each of these cases is quite different.[9]

Participant Observer in the Field

In order to describe the group processes, the researcher must become an actor in the social setting. He must experience the same mundane pressures and the periodic exigencies as the individuals

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[8]Severyn Bruhn, The Human Perspective in Sociology, The Methodology of Participant Observation (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1966), p. 164. See also: Alfred Schutz, The Phenomenology of the Social World. Translated by George Walsh and Frederick Lehnhart. (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1967).

[9]Maurice Nathanson, editor, Philosophy of the Social Sciences (New York: Random House, 1963), pp. 8-9.

and groups he is studying. According to Whyte, Cusick and Burnett,[10] the explanation for the researchers presence depends more on the role he assumes in the field than any formal explanation he gives for his presence. The individuals and groups the researcher is studying will develop an explanation for his presence and his actions as he is trying to develop explanations for their actions. The researcher must assume a role that will explain his presence in the field but this role must also suit his personality well enough so that he can be comfortable. According to Gold, there are four basic roles that the P. O. may assume while doing field research:

> Complete Participation--The true identity of the complete participant in field research is not known to those whom he observes. [The complete participant engages in role pretense.]
>
> Observer as Participant--[This role] is used in studies involving one-visit interviews. It calls for relatively more formal observation than either informal observation or participant of any kind. It also entails less risk of 'going native.'
>
> Participant as Observer--Both field worker and informant are aware that there is a field relationship. [The field worker's presence is known but he attempts to be a 'normal' and 'acceptable' member of the group and their activities.]
>
> Complete Observer--The complete observer role entirely removes the field worker from social interaction with informants. Here a field worker attempts to observe people in ways which make it unnecessary for them to take him into account.[11]

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[10]William Foote Whyte, Street Corner Society (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, (1943) 1970), p. 300. Cusick, Inside High School, p. 7. Jacquetta Hill Burnett, "Ceremony, Rites and Economy in the Student System in an American High School," Human Organization, Vol. XXVIII (Spring, 1969).

[11]Raymond Gold, "Roles in Field Observation," in Sociological Methods, A Sourcebook, edited by Norman K. Denzin (Chicago: Aldine Publishing Company, 1969), pp. 373-378.

In a study of high school students, it was decided that a modification of the "participant as observer" role would best serve my research and personal needs. Identifying myself as a researcher, granted me and my thirty-year-old body entree to essentially age-grade peer groups as well as the ability to move from group to group--something the students themselves may not always do. It was also a role in which I could be comfortable. There were, of course, certain limitations imposed on my participation: as an adult with a background and a future in public education, it would certainly not have been prudent to personally engage in the drug and sexual experience of my subjects.

The P.O. methodology is in actuality a multi-methods research design.[12] Although most of the data was generated by the group interaction and recorded in the form of written notes at the end of each day in the school, library research and formal interviews were also conducted. Information for this study was collected from the following sources:

1. Library research. The literature on adolescents in school, participant observation studies, and participant observation studies in education were reviewed. This review was helpful in the formation of exploratory questions and also served as an aid in the validation of the research findings.

2. Formal interviews. Toward the end of the study, formal taped interviews were conducted with the three building principals and several other members of the administrative staff. These interviews

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[12]Severyn Bruyn, The Human Perspective in Sociology, The Methodology of Participant Observation (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Incorporated, 1966), p. 161.

provided information about official school policy and the perceptions held by these individuals.

3. School supplied data. The school was very cooperative and placed all of their quantitative data at my disposal. The statistics quoted in this research (e.g. cut rate, failure rate, truancy rate, etc.) were supplied by the school and were compiled by either the school or the district's research office unless other citations are used.

4. Background information. Dr. Fred Ignatovich of the Department of Higher Education and Administration of Michigan State University, served as a consultant to the school during its first year of operation. The collected results of his efforts provided important background material for this study.

5. Participation. The main source of data was the notes that were compiled after every day of classes, every ball game, and every dance. In typewritten form, my notes totaled more than 300 pages. Periodically, Mr. Butler and I would exchange notes and discuss the discrepancies and similarities in our findings as well as the direction our research should go.

Methodological Problems

Participant observation research is often criticized because it lacks the standard tests of reliability and validity. It is also impossible to reduce the data to neat statistical models with means, modes, standard deviations and confidence intervals.

But although the researcher is dealing to a large extent with subjective data, he is able to make an adequate analysis. Homan describes "six indexes of subjective adequacy" which help to validate

the study. These indexes are actually conditions to determine if the researcher has adequately experienced the culture he is studying. The conditions to be met are as follows:

1. Time--The more time an individual spends with a group, the more likely it is that he will obtain an accurate interpretation of the social meaning its members live by.

2. Place--The closer the observer works geographically to the people he studies, the more accurate should be his interpretations.

3. Social Circumstance--The more varied the status opportunities within which the observer can relate to his subjects, and the more varied the activities he witnesses, the more likely the observer's interpretation will be true.

4. Language--The more familiar the observer is with the language of his subjects, the more accurate should be his interpretations.

5. Intimacy--The greater the degree of intimacy the observer achieves with his subjects, the more accurate his interpretations.

6. Concensus--The more the observer confirms the expressive meanings of the community, either directly or indirectly, the more accurate will be his interpretations of them.[13]

Homan's "indexes" guided the research during the four months of the field study. I was involved in a wide range of student activities both inside and outside of the classroom. I became familiar with the language of adolescents and "confirmed" the "expressive meaning of the community" through extensive personal contact with members of the various groups under study as well as with Mr. Butler, my fellow researcher.

As was stated in Chapter I, John Butler and I conducted this field research project independently and at different times but we

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[13]Bruyn, The Human Perspective in Sociology, pp. 181-183.

shared data and perceptions. This added to the longitudinal dimension of the study--providing us with a combined eight months in the school--as well as adding to the validity of the study.

One of the exploratory questions which guided this research deals with the problem of bi-racial interaction among the students in an integrated high school. We wanted to know when, how and where blacks and whites interacted in the school and what the school was doing to encourage or discourage this interaction. The nature of this question required that both white and black groups be investigated. There are limits to the acceptance of a white researcher's probes into black groups--especially when he is attempting to move back and forth between white and black groups many times in the course of a study. Mr. Butler is black, a former school administrator and a former professional athlete. His acceptance by the black groups was more complete than any acceptance that would likely be afforded a white researcher. He investigated three groups which I studied and one group of blacks which I did not study. I investigated two additional white groups which Mr. Butler did not study but the focus of our study was on the white and black groups which we both examined. We were able to compare statements white and black groups said to each of us individually. We were surprised by the candor exhibited by most of the students. Honest questions asked with sincere curiosity produced answers that rarely saw race as a hindrance to dialogue.

Mr. Butler's perceptions did not always coincide with my perceptions, but in the main, we were able to re-investigate the disparities in our views and we have been able to arrive at a

concensus. We believe if two researchers, one white and one black, arrive at similar conclusions, a degree of validity can be produced that no single researcher could approximate.

In participant observation research, the researcher must depend to a great extent on his perceptions. Hopefully, he does not selectively expose himself to the data or selectively perceive it. His observations and perceptions guide his inquiry and force him to seek explanations for the human activity he studies. He must explain the interactions and perspectives of the group from the vantage point of a group member. According to McPherson, the usefulness of P.O. studies "must rest (as ultimately all sociological research must) on the perceptiveness, sensitivity, and honesty of the investigator. All of the tools for increasing accuracy, for extending observation, for reducing investigator bias cannot make up for blunted perception or ensure that the observations are accurate, reported fairly, assessed and weighed scientifically."[14]

One device we employed to see if our perceptions were "blunted" was to check with members of the faculty and the administration of South High School at the conclusion of the field research. Shortly after the completion of the field research, I presented them with several copies of a short paper which described the research and discussed some of its

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[14]Gertrude H. McPherson, Small Town Teacher (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1972), p. 11.

conclusions.[15] "You were there" and "you really understood" were comments which the faculty offered as indications that my perceptions were accurate. In addition to these comments, the building principal informed me that he plans to use P. O. investigations as an ongoing part of his internal assessment of the school's impact on the students. While this is not the main purpose of P. O. studies, it seems to indicate a level of satisfaction with our findings.

Entering the Building

A common feature of P. O. studies is a section which includes the methods employed to gain access to the field situation. These sections not only couch the methodology in terms of its investigative limits but they are also helpful for future researchers who care to replicate the study or use the methodology in other social settings.

Our research and our plan to gain access to the field were guided by two ethical considerations: (1) all of the significant actors subject to the investigation, must consent to participate in the study, and (2) the information generated by those individuals would be considered confidential and efforts would be made to preserve their anonymity.[16]

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[15]Stuart B. Palonsky, "Hempies and Squeaks, Truckers and Cruisers--A Participant Observer Study in a City High School," paper presented at The Faculty-Graduate Student Colloquium on Social Science and Education at Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan, April 19, 1974.

[16]Executive Office of the President, Office of Science and Technology, Privacy and Behavioral Research (Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1967), p. 18.

Confidentiality and consent were the mechanisms we decided would best protect the rights of privacy of our subjects. There were three categories of subjects which needed to grant consent: administrators, teachers and of course, the students.

In October 1973, we approached the building principal with our proposal to do the research. We knew that he had recently received his doctorate and would possibly be sympathetic to doctoral research. We had also heard reports that he would be receptive to a study in the high school. The school was in the process of being accredited and our research could provide additional data for the evaluators. This was a key aspect for his approval. South High School lies in close proximity to a major university and the school is inundated with requests for studies of various designs. The principal informed us that the policy of the school is to refuse all research requests unless the research itself could directly benefit the school. He told us that he had refused a request from the Department of Sociology to study the use of the lavatories in the school; he didn't believe this study would benefit the school. We were able to convince him that a P.O. study of South High School would provide him with data which they would not be able to collect by other means.

Because P.O. studies are rarely used in educational settings, we left a copy of Philip Cusick's book Inside High School with the principal for his consideration of the methodology. This too proved to be an important factor as it provided the principal with an example of this type of published research and rendered the methodology more understandable and less threatening.

A few weeks after our first meeting with the principal, he contacted me and asked if Mr. Butler and I would meet with the heads of the various academic departments in the school. He also suggested that it would be advantageous if Dr. Cusick accompanied us so that he might respond to questions concerning any methodological or procedural problems that he had encountered while doing his study.

Dr. Cusick agreed to the request and his presence was a definite advantage for us because of the assurance he could give that P.O. field work creates no interruption of the process of education. The school always reserves the right to terminate the research if the researcher becomes a distraction to students and teachers or a threat to the orderly process of education. Mr. Butler and I explained that we had been public school teachers and knew the limits and the problems of the teaching profession and we were not polemicists looking for sensationalism or an exposé.

Approximately one week after our second meeting, we were notified that the administrators and the heads of departments had approved our request and if the teachers accepted our proposal we could begin. It is perhaps significant to note that no one in the school suggested that we secure permission from the students. We addressed the faculty at a Monday faculty meeting. We made three separate presentations to each of the three curricular divisions of the staff: Exact Sciences, Careers, Humanities. We explained the nature of our study and assured them that we were not there to evaluate the faculty or their teaching methodology. This may have been important as I later learned that more than 50 percent of the faculty is non-tenured, and job security and classroom evaluation are often tender issues to non-tenured staff.

Many of the faculty members welcomed our presence and asked if we would participate in class discussions and some made specific invitations to visit their classes. We assured them that we would always secure their permission before entering a class and that we would try to become normal and acceptable students in every class. If this entailed taking tests of answering questions, we would be more than willing to comply.

More than a month passed from the time of our first meeting with the principal until the day we began our research. Although Mr. Butler would not begin his field work for several months, we decided that it would be better if we met the students together. On the first day of our regular attendance in the school, we were issued a locker, identification cards, and we were introduced to the hall guards. The principal toured the building with us looking for "some good students" for us to meet. Although he greeted many students by name, he didn't introduce us to anyone. He told us that it might be better if we went out on our own to meet students rather than use him as an "inside man."

Mr. Butler and I walked around the halls, sat in on a few classes and talked to as many students as we could. We told them that we wanted to see what the school looked like from the students' perspective and if they would not mind, we would like to go to classes with them at some later date. The students were very curious about us. They wanted to know if we had graduated from high school and after we explained that we had, they could not understand why we wanted to come back. They told us, however, that if we wanted to, they would be glad to take us around and explain the school to us.

Some of the divisions in the student body were apparent on that first day. When we explained to one girl that we wanted to see what was going on in the school, she told us that "there ain't shit goin' on here"! but several males nearby enumerated a considerable list of "good teachers" and "good courses" that we might be interested in attending.

There was some suspicion that we were narcs (narcotics agents). As one of the black students told me: "You'll be o.k. as long as nobody gets cracked (arrested) but if they do you better not even come back . . ." The students' suspicions that there had been undercover narcotics agents in the school was later confirmed by one of the staff. He told me that "two years ago, when the school first opened, we played cops and robbers. We had plain clothesmen come in here and there were busts and that sort of thing. The kids really enjoyed that. They made a game out of it. The guys who got busted in the halls became instant folk heroes and the other kids would go out and beat on the cop cars and try to turn them over."

Mr. Butler and I became a new game for the students to explore. They approached us on the first day and told us that they heard that "there were two new people in the school--a black dude and a white dude--and that they may be narcs." They spent the first days in exploration and testing and during the first several weeks the students arrived at explanations for our presence. It took perhaps three to four weeks before we were accepted into the various group structures. It took that long to determine that we were not narcs and our regular attendance required the groups to come up with another explanation for our being there.

During the times we were in the school, we did not take notes or use recording devices except for several interviews toward the end of the study. In the evenings, we recorded our notes and compiled them in loose-leaf note books. My notes filled more than 300 typed pages and on periodic intervals Mr. Butler and I exchanged notes and discussed similarities and discrepancies in our findings.

Limitations

South High School has an enrollment of 1200 students. It was impossible to interact with all or even most of them. In a sense, we were forced to sample from the population of students and student groups, but we did not attempt to make any sort of random sample. It became apparent that some groups were better served than others by the design and implementation of the curriculum, the course offerings and the methods and personalities of the teachers. We investigated some groups who were college bound and successful in high school but most of our time was spent with groups who cut classes, failed courses and were largely disaffected from the school and the school's goals. We explain this aspect of the study by indicating that those students who have internalized the systems' goals and reward structure and those students who are willing at least to play the game, are less of a problem for educators than those who reject the goals of the school in favor of the subcultural goals generated by their peer groups. The emphasis of our study is on the disaffected and the dissatisfied groups within the school. We wanted to discover their problems, concerns and aspirations and determine if the causes of their disaffection are school treatable.

During the time of the field research, the school changed its system of scheduling from flexible modular to a more traditional system of five classes a day, five days a week. This proved to be a pervasive change that affected nearly every student and every student group. The descriptions of the students and the student groups found in Chapter IV is set against the backdrop of the schedule change. The way in which the various student groups reacted to the above change reflect their attitudes toward the school and is a product of the changed group reality.

Summary

Participant observation is a scientific research methodology which is designed to (1) describe the perspective of various groups from the vantage point of one who interacts with the members of the group in a variety of social circumstances, and (2) explains that perspective in terms of current social science knowledge. The methodology is qualitative by design and exploratory in nature. It is not designed to test hypotheses but rather to generate theory and the possibility of future research in areas that have not been extensively explored and in areas that knowledge cannot be approximated except by becoming an insider to the social situation.

CHAPTER IV

PRESENTATION OF THE DATA

Introduction

The unit of analysis in this study is the adolescent group in the school setting. The study identifies several groups and reports their interactions and daily routines in a public high school which is innovative, integrated and where the students have ready access to drugs.[1] Because the interactions of any human group do not take place in a vacuum, a description of the social and physical environment of the school is included to provide an understanding of the setting in which high school groups create their social reality.

This reporting begins with brief descriptions of the city, the school, the administrators and the faculty and then procedes to describe the various groups and their daily routines. The focal point of the study is the students' reaction to a change in the schedule from a modified system of flexible modular scheduling to a system of five classes a day, five days a week.

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[1]The term "drug" is used rather loosely in this reporting to refer to all of the illegal substances consumed in the school. Marijuana was the most widespread of these substances in the school followed closely by alcohol. There was no evidence of hard drugs such as heroin or cocaine but there was considerable use of barbituates, amphetamines and hallucinogens.

The City

South High School is located in a small industrial city in the Midwest (SMSA 130,000). The city's employment picture is dominated by the automobile industry and by state and government agencies. This combination of a strong, unionized industry and Civil Service jobs produces a median income of $11,000[2] per family. It is not a particularly exciting city; there are no threatrical companies or art museums and many of those who work in the city reside in the wealthy suburbs. The residents of the city were characterized by one of South's staff as being "hard working and church-going people who are often forced to hold down two or more jobs just to make ends meet."

The overwhelming majority of the residents of the city--close to 90 percent--are native born Americans of native born parents. Only about 10 percent of the city's population is black or Chicano and although the schools are officially classified as "integrated," few of the neighborhoods in the city are. Small enclaves of blacks live among the predominantly white population with only the West side--which bears the reputation for being the tough side of town--housing a large black population.

The city is dominated by small one-family homes with tiny buffers of neatly kept lawn between them. The lawns are dotted with

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[2]U. S. Bureau of the Census, Census of the Population and Housing: 1970. . . (Washington, D. C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1972).

All of the statistics quoted in this section are taken from the 1970 Census. The citation above purposely excludes the information which would identify the city.

snowmobiles, motor boats and other gadgets designed to free their owners of the factories and offices and provide weekends of pleasure.

South is located in the most recently developed section of the city. Many of the homes, apartments and public housing projects are less than five years old and the students often indicate that subdivisions are located where they say, only a year or two ago were trees and fields. The newness of the area tends to minimize the sense of neighborhood which characterizes many of the older sections of the city. There are few long-standing neighborhood stores. The local grocery is likely to be a small convenience franchise with the same design, architecture and high prices as thousands of others across the country. One of these stores, located close to the school, has a sign in the window which reads: "No More Than Three Students Permitted in The Store at a Time--This Means You!!"

The 1970 Census indicated the lack of holding power of the city's schools. Of those city residents twenty-five years old and older, less than 60 percent are high school graduates. The figure is considerably lower for the black and "Spanish language" populations. Less than 40 percent of the blacks over the age of twenty-five are high school graduates and just slightly over 30 percent of the "Spanish language" population graduate from high school. Of those members of the general population who are between the ages of sixteen and twenty-one, 16 percent are not high school graduates and are not enrolled in school. Again, the figures are higher for the minorities. Almost 24 percent of the blacks and over 26 percent of the "Spanish language" populations between the ages of sixteen and twenty-one do not have high school diplomas and are not enrolled in school.

The School

South is the newest of the city's high schools and has been open only three years. When changing housing patterns and population shifts within the city mandated the construction of a new high school, the central administration decided to develop a program of instruction built around the innovations then recommended by professional educators. They adopted a flexible modular schedule, team teaching, a differentiated staffing model and three-hour vocational blocks. From the standpoint of the student, the flexible modular schedule had the most pervasive impact on their lives.

The school day--as in the city's three other high schools--extends from 8 a.m. to 2:10 p.m. but the modular system made the school day at South unique in the city. Instead of a series of classes punctuated by bells and study halls, South used a system of nineteen, twenty minute modules (mods) which interspersed periods of class time with unstructured or free time. Typically the students at South had no more than 8 to 10 mods of classes a day. The rest of the time could be spent in the various resource centers or in the library doing homework or getting help from their teachers. Leisure time was considered a significant part of the students' day and they were allowed to set aside up to two mods a day for relaxing and "socializing" in the commons area (the cafeteria).

The mods were quite an innovation for an otherwise cautious and conservative school district. All of South's students had attended highly structured and control-oriented junior high schools and the adjustment to the freedom afforded by the modular system did not come easily to many of them.

During the 1971-1972 school year, the district retained a consulting firm to help them with the problems of the new scheduling system. These consultants advised the district that there were very few models to follow and the school should just "jump in and see what happens" with the flexible modular scheduling and the other innovations. Originally, 80 percent of the students' day was unstructured and 20 percent was given to structured class time. The faculty and the administration report that this was a disaster. They claim that the students weren't "ready" to handle that much non-structure and South's rates of class absenteeism and failure were the highest in the city. Consulting teams from a nearby university later recommended that the ratio should have been reversed; a school should begin with 80 percent structured class time and 20 percent unstructured time and eventually move toward a division of the school day of 50 percent unstructured time and 50 percent structured time.

Every year brought new changes to the scheduling system and each change saw the imposition of more structure. The school was caught in a classical education dilemma: they had granted freedom and found poor pupil response and they had to go through the agonizing procedures for "tightening up."

By the 1973-1974 school year, the school had instituted a system of alternating days of traditional classes with days of modular scheduling. During the days of traditional class scheduling, South looked like many other high schools; students went to five classes during the day, they had fifty minutes to eat lunch and they had no free time. During the alternate days, South was a school on a modular schedule with mods of instruction and mods of unstructured time.

The system was changing every year. The school was becoming unpredictable and many students claimed that they felt like "guinea pigs." Faced with an inconsistent environment, the students came to interpret the school's schedule for themselves. The sophomores in particular had trouble with the system. They did not understand why the juniors and the seniors could not explain the schedule to them. The sophomores had not been involved with the schedule's evolution and had a particularly difficult time dealing with the alternating days of structure and non-structure. One of the black sophomore boys explained it this way:

> As I see it, the structured days are the school's time and the modular days are my time. I'm hip to that. I go to class on structured days but on my time I do as I please. I never get high on the school's time but today's my time and I'm ripped.

Even though South was experiencing a gradual tightening of the schedule, it retained its humanistic orientation and did not adopt rigid policies for student control. There were no hall passes, bells or those little slips of paper bearing the teacher's signature which sanction various excretory functions--students would go to the lavs on their own. Students at South were afforded a certain degree of freedom. There was even an area in the back of school where, during lunch and before classes began, the students were allowed to smoke. Despite the presence of two hall guards, South remains an open school; it is easy to leave and easy to enter and the general atmosphere of informality encourages interaction between students and teachers.

The building itself is different than the other schools in the city. It is a modern structure built on a manageable scale; there

are none of the seemingly "mile-long" corridors which often characterize newer schools or the imposing stairways which herald the entrances to many city schools. The lockers are painted blue, yellow, green or red. Many of the classrooms are carpeted and several areas of the school have modular classrooms with sliding partitions which invite team teaching in a variety of classroom shapes and sizes.

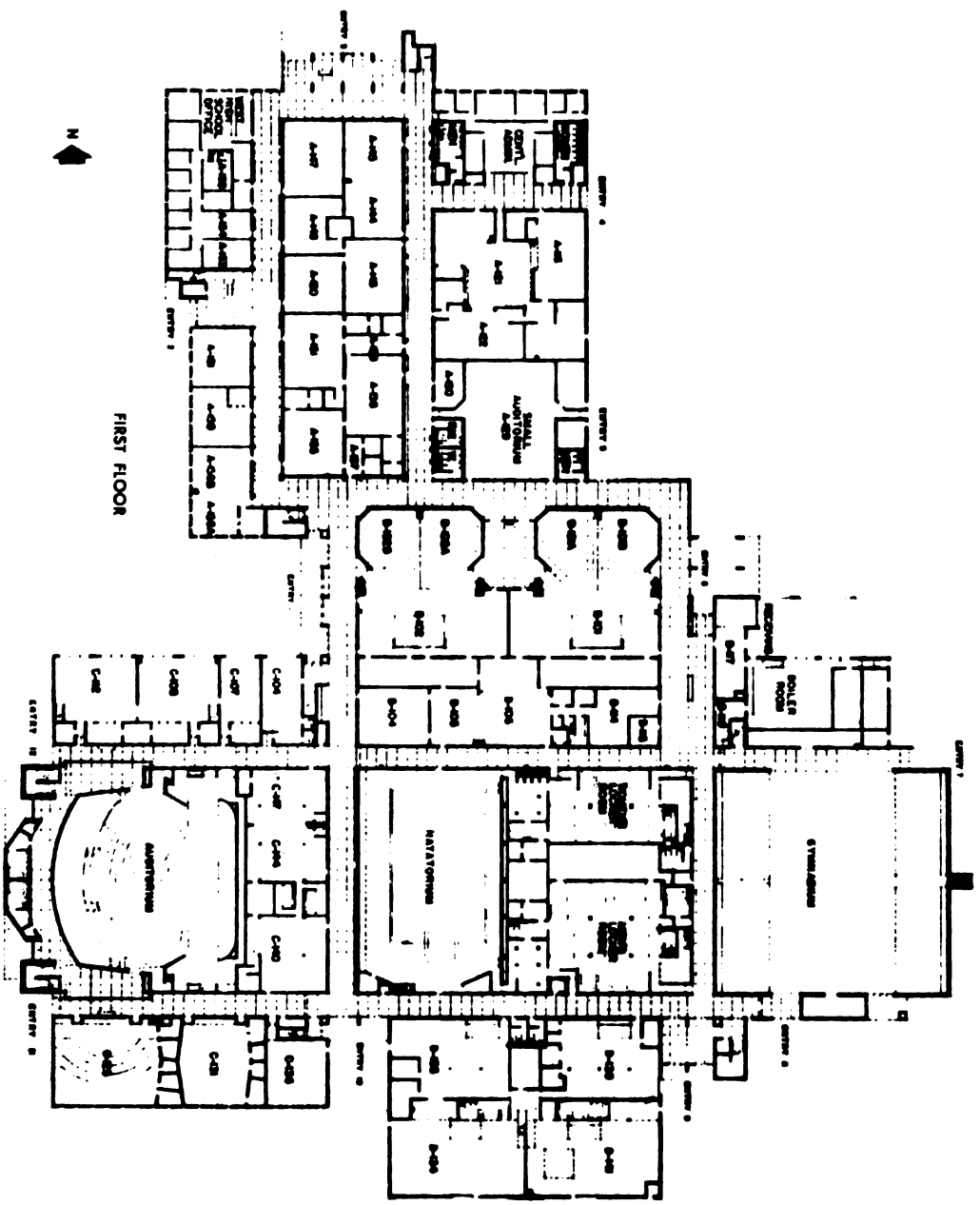
The floor plans shown on pages 60 and 61 indicate that over two-thirds of the instructional classrooms in the building have no windows. These classes are generally comfortable and the students rarely complained about the lack of windows.

In general, they are proud of the school and many of the students consider it the "best looking" in the city. They point with considerable pride to the large student parking lot and an elaborate and very attractive auditorium.

Administrators

There are three building administrators at South who supervise the operation of the school: Paul Gordon is the building principal, Peter Wade is the Assistant Principal for Student Services, and Mary Phillips is the Assistant Principal for Staff Services. Please note that the Organizational Chart for South High School on page 63 also indicates that there is an Assistant Principal for Community Services. This principalship is held by Lyle Benson who is the school's only black administrator and his primary responsibility is the supervision of the night school.

Paul Gordon is the only administrator who was recruited from outside the district. He holds a doctorate from a major university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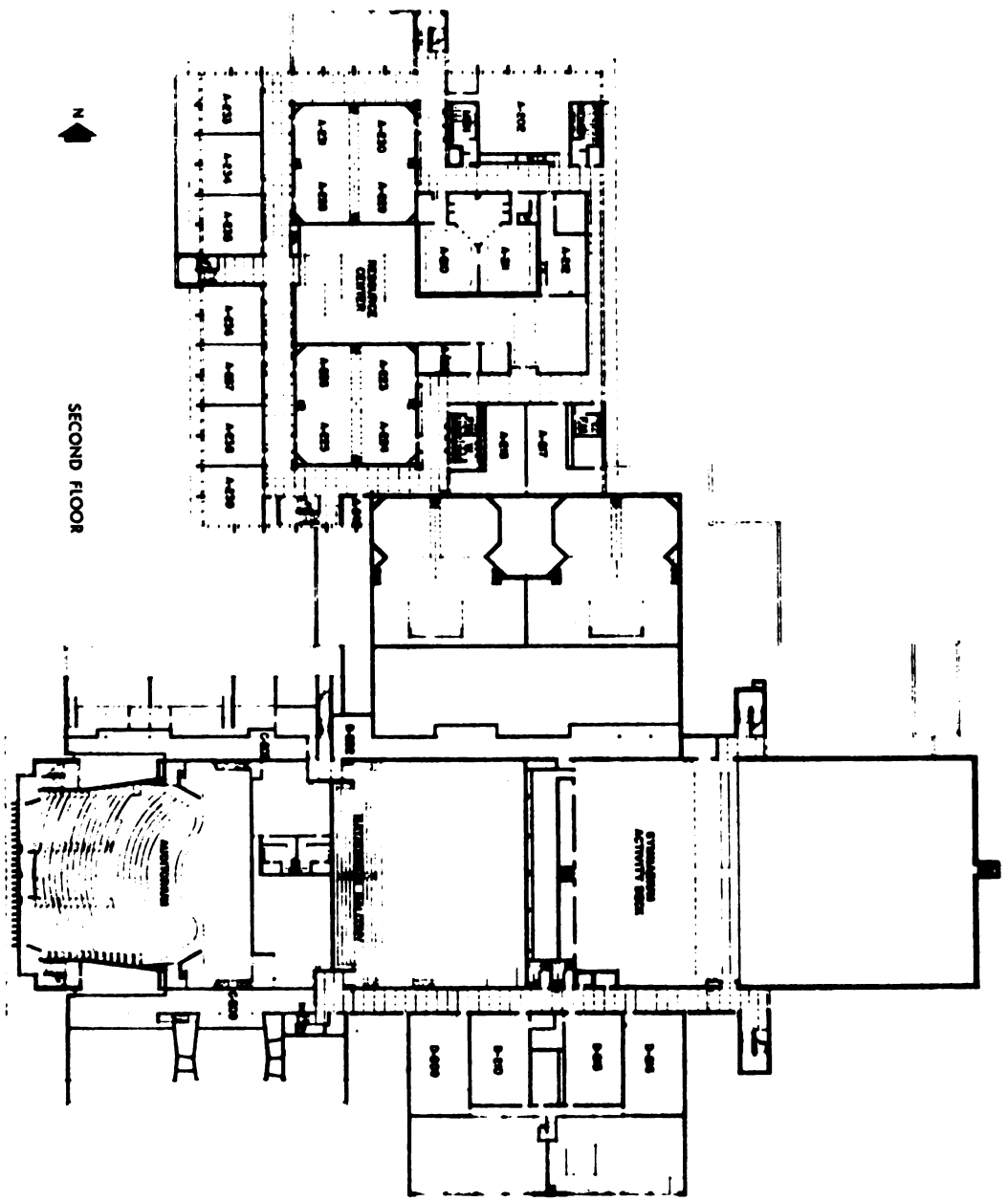
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SECOND FLOOR

and the superintendent of the city's school system served on his doctoral committee. Dr. Gordon was not the building principal when the school opened in 1971; he was a replacement for the principal who had designed and inaugurated most of the school's innovations. Dr. Gordon was brought to the school at the beginning of its second year of operation when the original principal had to resign because of illness. Dr. Gordon had no previous experience with modular scheduling and his primary responsibility was not with scheduling but with what he referred to as the "people problem." His role was to encourage understanding between the races. On a wall in his office there are three attractively framed prints of John F. Kennedy, Cesar Chavez, and Martin Luther King, Jr.

Dr. Gordon enjoys a good reputation among the students. He is young--in his mid-thirties--soft-spoken, intelligent and he knows most of the students by name. Students feel free to walk into his office at any time and they refer to him as "Dr. G." or the "good doctor." A Ph. D. degree is an unusual phenomenon in a working class school. Many of the students come into contact with an individual they call "doctor" only when they visit their family physician and a non-medical doctorate often confuses them. I overheard two sophomore girls discussing it one day in the lunch line.

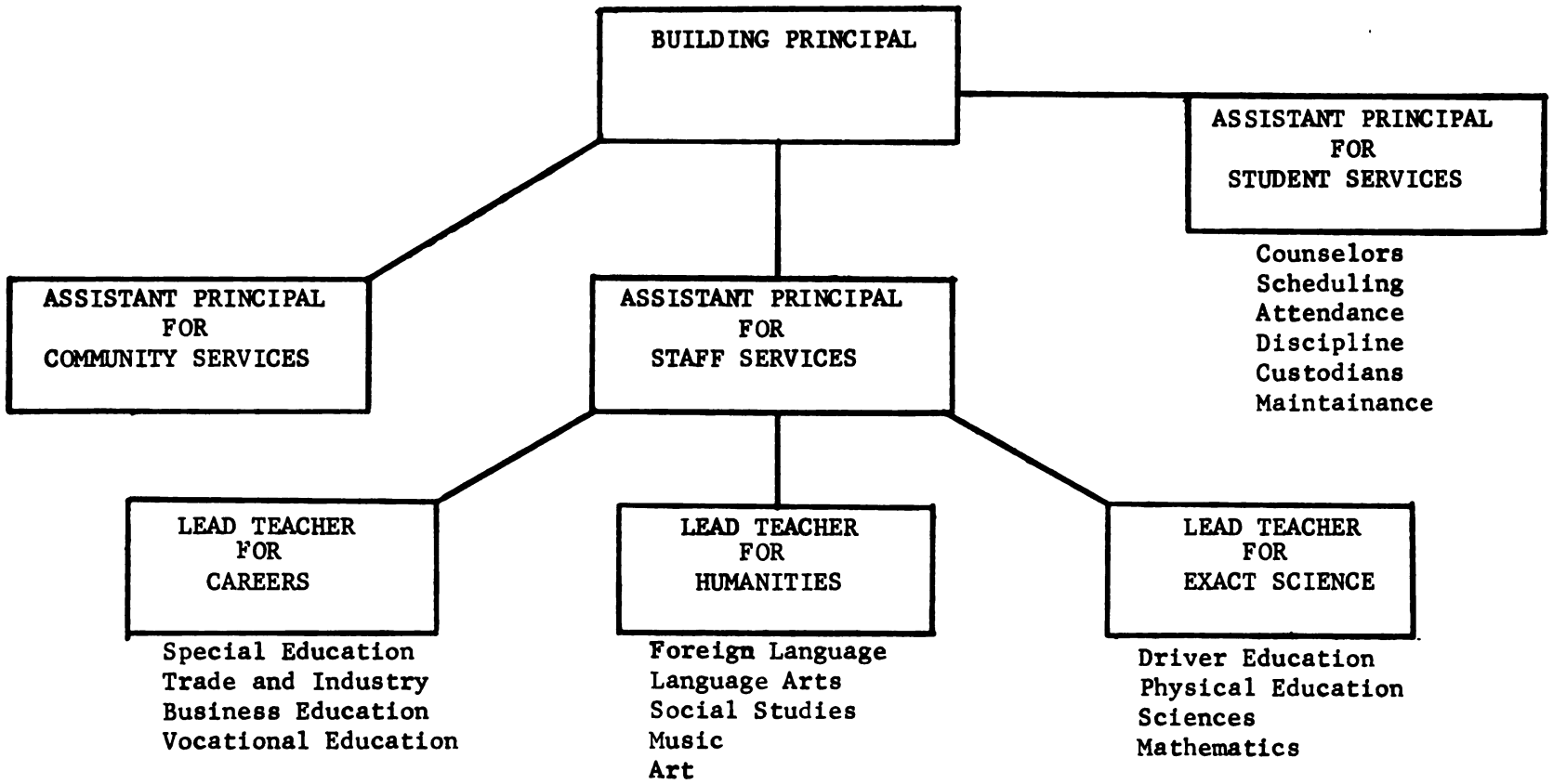
"Is Dr. Gordon really a 'doctor'"?

"Yeah, I saw it in the school paper. There's his picture and right underneath it it says, 'Dr. Paul Gordon.'"

"Well I don't care what it says," came the reply only half in jest, "I wouldn't let him examine me--he's only a principal"!

SOUTH HIGH SCHOOL

ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



Ms. Phillips is in charge of scheduling and staff services. She does not have as much contact with the students as the other principals and many of the students had trouble telling me who she was and what she did when I would ask them. Ms. Phillips holds a masters degree in curriculum and she had taught English for ten years in another school in district. She volunteered to work in South because of its innovations but she had little voice in the planning of the original system. In fact none of the three building administrators had a significant role in determining the direction of South's innovations until after the first year of the school's operation.

Of the three building principals, Mr. Wade has the most contact with students. Among his other duties, he is the administrator who is primarily in charge of discipline. He is a former junior high school science teacher who has a commanding presence, a loud voice and as the students point out, a penchant for wearing his pants two inches too short.

The nature of his job renders him the least admired figure in the school. He is charged with the responsibility for enforcing the schools' rules and he must confront students who cut classes, smoke in the school and break other regulations. Mr. Wade doesn't believe that South presents a severe discipline problem for the administrators. He claims that apathy and drug use are the two most serious problems he has to deal with and he views the drug problem in terms of its effect on learning.

> I've been around education lots of years and I'm going to use a phrase that I use to say when I was a coach and when I used to go to meetings and conventions. . . . If I go to a convention and it costs me $200

> and I've gone two days and most of the stuff is dry but I find one thing--one thing that is new education to me--it's worth it. I believe education is the same for kids. I don't believe that you go into a 50 minute class and you learn, learn, learn, learn. I think that's ridiculous. If you can learn one thing in there--just one--I think [its a good day]. . . . Let me put it positively: under the influence of drugs you have a chance of missing that one thing that you might have learned today.

Staff

South's staff numbers about 60 teachers--not including the paraprofessionals who assist the teachers and supervise some of the resource centers. Almost 50 percent of the teaching faculty is not tenured.

The instructional staff is not divided into departments such as science, physical education, social studies and English as is done in the universities and emulated by many high schools. In an attempt to avoid the fragmentation which often accompanies this type of departmentalization and also in an attempt to encourage interdisciplinary approaches to learning and teaching, the faculty is grouped in three general areas: careers, exact sciences, and humanities. All of the courses are offered under these three areas and it sometimes creates strange groupings; physics and driver education, for example, are both part of the exact sciences area while reading improvement and philosophy are both in the humanities area. Each of these instructional areas is supervised by a "lead teacher." These individuals have their own offices and teach only one course a day. They are charged with the responsibility of supervising all of the teachers in their area and coordinating the curriculum. There is also one individual who is

unofficially designated the "lead teacher" of the guidance staff. He is involved in the school's decision making but he does not enjoy the same hierarchical status as the other lead teachers and his position is not indicated on the school's organization chart. As he puts it, "They call me the head of guidance, but all I am is the guy who opens the mail."

Almost 50 percent of the staff was recruited on the basis of their desire to work in a less structured, less control-oriented setting. Many of the younger and creative teachers throughout the district came to South specifically to try some innovations and attempt to implement some ideas that the traditional schools in the district could not accommodate. But not all of the staff volunteered to come. With the opening of South, enrollment at the other three high schools dropped and there had to be a proportional drop in the faculty. The other 50 percent of South's staff was composed of teachers who had been given intra-district transfers that they may not have wanted. Generally, the staff was young, energetic and creative but it must be pointed out that I did not interact with staff. I am largely ignorant of the divisions of the staff and I have no way of knowing which members enjoy positions of status and influence and which do not, or which staff members are loners and which are part of groups. My perceptions of the staff are largely student perceptions tempered by my eight years of teaching experience.

The faculty had several lounges where the students were not allowed to go and they ate in a dining room that the students did not frequent. There was no designated faculty dining area but the faculty generally ate in one room where the food was prepared and

served by members of the Quantity Cooking Class. The average cost of a meal was slightly over a dollar which made it beyond the budget of most students. The students with whom I associated never ate in this dining room. When they did eat in school, they would use one of the main cafeterias where the cost of a meal was fifty cents. The food here was generally well served but typically starchy and bland and it was served on paper plates and consumed with plastic utensils that always seemed to snap in two in the middle of my mashed potatoes.

The Student Population

South High School is an integrated school with a population of 1200 students in three grades. The student body is 77 percent white, 20 percent black, 2 percent Chicano and 1 percent officially classified as "other."

Some of the students spend considerable time and money in their selection of clothing and give a good deal of attention to their appearance. Others dressed in a studied casualness with high styled jeans and fifteen dollar "work shirts." The school dress code is considered reasonable by the students. While the principals would caution a male student, for example, if he wore bib overalls and no shirt, conflict over dress or hair length was rare. The students took these relaxed grooming codes for granted although the issues of dress and hair length are far from settled in other areas of the country and have only been relaxed in this city during the last five years. A large number of students dress in what they refer to as "basic blue"--blue denim jeans, a blue shirt and a blue denim jacket, Watching the students flow toward the school at the beginning of the

day gives the impression that there is a good deal of uniformity in the unconventional dress of adolescents.

South is a neighborhood school with only a small group of students--mainly black--bused in from the west side of town. Most of the students either drive or walk to school but car pools of parents driving students to school are not uncommon. The student parking lot was crowded by eight o'clock with cars that paid little attention to the white parking lines. Most of the vehicles appeared to be family cars rather than student owned. Bumper stickers which urge their readers to join the "United Auto Workers," "Visit Parrot Jungle" or "Re-Elect the Mayor" indicate the concerns of an older generation and are not generally found on a student owned "set of wheels." Despite the presence of large refuse containers bearing signs which read "Bash Trash," the parking lot is often littered with empty bottles and beer cans. Periodic clean-ups by the school or some club or ecology organization kept the lot reasonably clean. Most of the students kept their cars locked but despite South's "reputation" for vandalism my unlocked car remained untouched for four months.

In our study of student groups, I make no claim to have identified "average" or "typical" students; if they exist at all, it is solely by definition. The groups selected for study were chosen because of their diversity and also because I felt comfortable with them and they seemed comfortable with me.

"The Grand and Glorious Hempy Underground"

As I walked the halls during my first day at South, I was greeted by a lanky, dark-complected student who introduced himself as "J."

"My real name is Javiar," he said, "but people can't pronounce it so just call me "J"--everyone does."

I explained the nature of my research and "J" volunteered to serve as my "guide."

"I'll show you around this school, man. Nobody knows this school better than I do. . . . This is a very complex place," he said. "It's not as easy as those who smoke dope and those who don't. It's a lot more complicated than that--the cliques and stuff."

"J" is one of the central members of a small group who call themselves the Hempies--a name taken from the rope-like substance they smoke to get "high." The Hempies are one of the many and diverse groups in the school's drug subculture. They are soft-drug people who limit their chemical adventures to marijuana, amphetamines, hallucinogens and alcohol. With the exception of "J," all of the Hempies are "Anglos"--white, North Americans.

Javiar. "J" was born in this city but his parents are of Spanish descent. He told me that his father had divorced his mother and was remarried to a "white woman." His stepmother refers to "J" as a "spic" when she gets angry at him.

"I get on her ass and then [my father], gets on mine. My father and I don't get along but you can't expect us to--he's a prick and I'm a bullshitter."

"J" dresses very informally. He usually wears jeans and a t-shirt and during the colder days of winter, he wore a floppy

engineer's hat and a black leather jacket that was several sizes too large. He has a brother and a stepsister in the school and an older brother who is serving time in a state prison down south. "J" is intelligent and well-spoken and he is able to make it through school with a minimum of effort. The work and study involved in going through school exact very little of his time and energies.

He is into the "people aspect" of school, as he puts it. Most of his time in school is spent "rapping" with his friends, getting high, and flirting with the "foxy ladies." He is gregarious and would often walk up to girls in the hall and greet them with a hug and a kiss. One day he wrote "Black is" on his right arm and "Beautiful" on his left arm. He stopped a number of attractive black girls in the hall to put his arms around them and give them a "Black is Beautiful hug." Almost all of the girls he stopped giggled and screamed but returned his hug.

The school doesn't interfere very much with "J's" social life. Its academic demands require only minimal compliance and attention. He rarely gets in trouble with the administration but rarely is he involved with what's going on in his courses. Everyone knows who he is. He is active in the school plays, he goes out for one sport a year and he is a vocal supporter of the school's athletic teams but he can be intimidating to teachers and students who don't know him.

Because "J" is often outspoken, some of his teachers accuse him of disrupting the class atmosphere and making the students afraid to speak in class. One of the student teachers asked me to talk with "J" to get him to be less insulting and aggressive in class. Although I could agree that he should be confronted, it was not a function of

the group to promote an educational climate in the class. The group function was to support the individual member, not the school. If there was a conflict between individual behavior and school norms, the school norm would not be supported.

In his group structure, surrounded by his fellow Hempies, "J" is not insulting or aggressive. He listens to his friends' problems and is very willing to help them in any way he can. He talks freely about his own problems and concerns and he expresses attitudes that he rarely exposes in class.

We walked to class one day when "J" was "off on a little chemical excursion" and he talked about his home life. "J" lives in one of the newer subdivisions near the school and his father works in the local auto plant. Although his father makes a decent income, "J" held down a series of part time jobs to support his car and to assert his independence. As we walked, "J" cursed his father and indicating the height of his father's head, took karate kicks at the spot. He also wheeled around and from a slight crouch, slashed at invisible attackers with the large can opener he was carrying.

"J" hangs around with the white Hempies and some of the Chicanos gave him a hard time because of it. One attractive Chicano girl who speaks unaccented English referred to him as a "tio Tomas" (Uncle Tom) while he was standing with his friends. It hurt him. "J" doesn't speak fluent Spanish and he feels because he has a Spanish surname, everyone expects him to.

> "Hell . . . all those guys with Polish names, they can't speak a word of Pollack but they want every spic to talk Spanish.

"J" does speak enough Spanish to help him out when he needs it. One day we sat in the cafeteria waiting for a student to present a slide-tape show on Jimi Hendrix and his music. The presentation was part of a class and although "J" and I were in there illegally, the teacher did not notice and ran around kicking out other students who did not belong there. One of these students was "J's" brother. As the teacher asked him to leave, "J" yelled in Spanish, el otro lado, chico" indicating that his brother should come in through "the other side." His brother understood and walked around the cafeteria and re-entered unnoticed.

Tony. Tony is the most academically successful member of the Hempie group. He is a bright, sensitive, nice looking sixteen-year-old, who maintains a B plus average. The Hempies do not take classes together as a rule and it would be difficult to infer from Tony's classroom behavior that he is a member of a subculture that regularly engages in a felonious activity--smoking dope. One of his teachers, who noticed that I spent a good deal of time with Tony, cautioned me about devoting too much of my study to the "good kids." "You should hang around with the pot smokers," she advised, "they're the ones causing all of the trouble around here." She didn't realize, and in fact there was no way for her to know, that Tony was stoned and at least one other student was "blown away" by some purple mescaline that was for sale in the school that day.

Tony often complained of boredom but he appreciated the social aspects of school and he was anxious to return after the Christmas

vacation. His class assignments were often dull and routine but he did them and complied with the school's rules in order to "preserve peace at home" and because he did not like to "hurt his teachers' feelings."

Tony is a serious student and like the other Hempies, he does not plan to go to college and is very concerned about his future. He hopes to take the school's Television Production block next year so that he can get a job in the television industry. The lead teacher in the Careers area told me that the students who do take this three hour vocational block have an excellent chance of working in the field. Television production is a rigorous course and the students must take basic electricity as a pre-requisite. Tony knows several of the students who are taking the television block now--they are members of other groups in the drug subculture. He asked them if it was a "tough course." They told him that it is a lot of work but "it isn't tough if you like it and the teacher," a former employee of a major television network, "knows his shit." Tony is looking forward to getting into this course and he has promised himself to "work his ass off to stay in it."

Tony, like all of the Hempies, feels free to speak about his personal problems within the group structure. Tony dresses in "basic blues" but his father keeps a fairly rigid hold on his appearance and behavior. Tony rarely can go out on weekends and when he does, he has a curfew. He is required to have his hair cut once a month and although he has saved several hundred dollars from a part-time job, his father will not let him spend it on a stereo that he wants to buy.

Several times, when I was speaking to him on the phone, Tony would indicate that he was having trouble at home in a not very cryptic way by saying: "Remember that problem I spoke to you about? Well it's surfaced again, I'll call you back."

Tony complains that his father beats him up now and then and Tony looks forward to the day that he will turn eighteen and can move out of the house. He participated in an empathy training program conducted in the school by the local Drug Education Center and he feels that this has helped him to understand his father but he says that because his father is in his forties, "he is too old to change."

> My father was almost thirty when he graduated from college. He had to work part time and he couldn't go straight through. My grandfather gave him twenty dollars to go to school and I think my father gave it back to him when he graduated. Most of the problem between my father and me is because of my grandfather--if you know what I mean.

The school did not have the funds to continue the Drug Education Program this year although they acknowledge the success it had. It was designed to provide straight talk about drugs and instruct students how to administer overdose aid. Tony only mentions the empathy training aspects of the program but he proudly displays a patch on his jacket that indicates he has gone through the entire program. Although he regularly smokes marijuana, he is certain that his parents do not suspect it. Tony is not allowed to smoke cigarettes in the house but his parents are suspicious of that habit.

Jeff, Kim and other Hempies. Jeff is the Hempies' leading "party person." He is always ready to play, party and as he says, "get down and boogey." Along with Ray, he is a regular visitor to

many bars in and around the city. He has a ready smile, a charming wit and a host of identification cards that indicate he is two years older than he really is. Jeff's family income is the highest in the group but the six children in his family reduce it to the extent that Jeff is not considered one of the rich kids in the school. He dresses well and he is the only Hempie to refer to the clothes he wears to school as his "school clothes." Jeff has his own car--a two-seat, well tuned foreign sports model--that affords him a good deal of status and freedom.

Kim is Jeff's girlfriend. She is a delightful pixie of a girl who dresses well and always looks neat. Both Kim and Jeff work in the afternoons as part of their school program. Jeff works in a local gas station and Kim works in a State office building as a secretary. Approximately 40 percent of the students at South are released in the afternoons for work. This is one of the designs of flexible modular scheduling but it divides the student body into half-day students and full-day students. It also is one of the reasons that the Hempies are somewhat invisible to the school: they do not go to class as a group.

Kim has only three hours of class in school per day. She takes a two hour secretarial block and one academic class. The school has twelve of these vocational blocks. Some of them are general courses, such as the secretarial block and are offered in every high school. Others such as Television Production and Residential Construction are taught only at South and students from the city's other three high schools are bused to south specifically for these blocks. The secretarial block is two hours long but most of the other vocational

blocks last for three hours. The blocks of time were instituted in order to comply with guidelines to receive the maximum federal aid.

Jeff is not enrolled in one of the vocational blocks but he is in a specific released-time-for-work program. This program reflects the seminal stages of career education at South. Jeff takes one course called I.W.E. (Individual Work Experience) and two academic courses. I.W.E. is designed to prepare him for "the world of work." He is taught how to write resumés and he listens as the teacher stresses the importance of punctuality, cleanliness, and respect in securing and maintaining a job. This class meets the first hour of the day and very often Jeff is high on drugs when he arrives at class.

Jeff is the only Hempie who openly discusses drugs with his family. Jeff attempts a line of reasoning which equates his own dope smoking with his father's consumption of alcohol but this has not won his father over. His father still can argue the legality of his own habits and the illegality of his son's but this has not won Jeff over. Jeff and the other Hempies have been smoking since the eighth grade but they claim that their use of marijuana leveled off about a year ago and is now on the decline.

Kim's membership in the group is determined by her relationship with Jeff. I found most of the groups at South to be voluntary peer associations that were dominated by males. The presence of females was almost certainly linked to a male in the group and the females occupied satellite roles in the group structures.

Kim is well liked and respected by the Hempies. Her home was considered one of the better "party houses" in the school and she has a good relationship with her parents although they do not know

that she smokes dope. During one of my first days with the Hempies, several of us drove out to Kim's home for lunch. Although she had not met me at the time, she did not hesitate to pass a pipe full of dope my way. "If you're with these guys," she said indicating the van load of Hempies, "then you must be o.k."

Kim is not the only female member of the Hempies. Cathy dates a graduate of South who hangs around with several of the Hempies after school hours. Cathy's time is divided between the Hempies and a group of female dope smokers in the "grand and glorious Hempie underground," to use the rubric "J" attaches to the drug subculture. The Hempies would often flirt and get high with Cathy and the female dopers but the male dominance of the group could rarely accommodate women as co-equals. There were several all female groups in both the drug subculture and the non-drug world and although I interacted with several of them over extended periods of time, I could not help but remain an outsider who was not privy to their secrets and organization.

Ray. Ray is a tall, slim, nineteen year old Hempie. He doesn't live at home because he claims that it is "easier not to." "Our house is small and we get on each others' nerves." Ray has lived in a variety of places and has held down an assortment of part-time jobs during the course of this study.

Unlike the other members of his group, Ray has trouble passing his courses. His transcript contains mostly D's and E's with a few C's and an occasional B. It was not probable that Ray would graduate this year; although this caused him some anxiety, he continued a low level of productivity and was collecting still more low grades. Instead

of staying in school, Ray decided to take the GED Exam (General Educational Development) and earn a high school equivalency diploma. The exam is administered in several segments. An individual is not permitted to take the next exam in the series unless he has passed all of the preceding exams. Ray exhibited no small about of pride as he successfully progressed through the series toward his equivalency diploma.

Ray has been in the school for three years and has mastered its bureaucratic intricacies. He knows every secret area to smoke where hall guards never check and he is expert at cutting into the lunch line. He also collected three lockers at South. He told me that "every year the school assigns you a new locker and I remembered the combination of the old ones. I found out that they gave my old lockers to squeaks [sophomores] so I just kicked their asses out."

Ray claims that he is not competitive and will not participate in the physical education program. "They're always pitting one student against another and I don't like that." The other Hempies did not find the physical education classes to be overly competitive--very few of the activities involved winning as a criterion--and despite Ray's claim that he did not like to compete, he tried constantly to win at ping pong and grew very angry when he lost. The group never mentioned these inconsistencies in his behavior. If he did not want to go to physical education, that was his business.

Ties within the Hempies varied through the course of study. When I first met the group, Ray and "J" were very close and formed the strongest friendship bond in the group. By the end of the study Ray and Jeff were the strongest bond with Ray spending many nights at

Jeff's home when he had no place to live. Ray eventually quit school and the group was forced to regroup around the triad of Jeff, Tony and "J." The relationship within the group always retained this degree of fluidity which allowed for the formation and dissolution of various dyads and triads without threatening the group cohesiveness.

Hempies in School

All of the groups had their own area of the school which they claimed as their own by the right of regular occupancy. The Hempies claimed the North entrance. They would meet there every morning before school, shake hands, exchange a few pleasantries, smoke a cigarette and make some of the important decisions of the day.

The first decision was based on a determination of what day it was. If it was A, C, or E day that meant five hours of structured class time that was not unlike the other high school in the city. If it was B, D, or F day, the students had days of classes interspersed with "unstructured time." D day meant large group instruction and the mornings were generally filled with large lecture sessions. The Hempies disliked D days and they rarely attended D day classes. This proved unfortunate for the Hempies because many classes used the large group format to present new information. B and F days were filled with small discussion sessions and the Hempies would decide to go to these classes on the merits of the various teachers or the individual class. Because the school used a six day cycle of classes, the students had to determine the day in order to know what classes they had. If Monday was an A day one week, it would be F the following week and E day the week after.

Armed with the data concerning the day and a knowledge of their own schedules, the Hempies would make their first major decision of the day: whether or not to get high before going to class. The Hempies do not use coercion or group sanctions to encourage each other or their friends to get high. Each individual decided on the basis of his classes and personal predilections whether or not to "turn on." Non-smokers were not encouraged to get high but if one wished to associate with the Hempies, there was little recourse but to smoke. So much of their day was spent in planning to get high, actually getting high and, of course, enjoying the high, that students who did not care to smoke dope would be excluded from one of the most significant aspects of the Hempies' day. For a while, I would accompany the group when they would smoke dope but when they realized that my role precluded any drug use, they began to excuse themselves and slip off without me.

Every group that smoked dope had their own special area in and around the school where they got high. Some sophomore groups enjoyed smoking in the building. For some male students, it was an achievement to smoke dope in the girls lav. There were two girls who enjoyed smoking outside the principal's window while for another group it was considered a good day if they could "cop a buzz" near the gymnasium without getting caught by the ever-vigilant physical education staff. The Hempies were more discreet. They never smoked in the building and they would usually go out to the parking lot and smoke in someone's car.

The second major decision of the day was whether or not to show up for "T.C.G." The decision had to be made quickly because at eight

o'clock the hall guards would be "sweeping the area" and chasing the kids out of the halls.

"T.C.G." stands for Teacher-Counselor-Group and as Tony said when I asked him what it was, "It's really just 'homeroom' but don't let them hear you say that, they get pissed." It was designed to make the homeroom into a unit that had some purpose beyond being an administrative convenience. It was created by South's guidance department and it was intended to cast the teacher into the role of a counselor. The "lead teacher" of the Guidance Department explained it this way:

> What we planned to do was have the teachers work with the students as students. What happened was that not all of the people were comfortable with this role. Some of the students didn't show up for T.C. Some of the teachers were anxious to have a good relationship with the students but when the kids didn't show up there were some hurt feelings.
>
> There was another thing. With the teacher's flexible modular schedule, forty minutes of each day was set aside to be spent with the kids. He could see all of his students. He could arrange to see individual students. . . well what happened is that the kids didn't come to homeroom and the teachers were very frustrated.
>
> Some of the kids felt that some of the teachers were [playing the role of counselor] because they were assigned to [T.C.'s]. If that was the case . . . the kids would cut him off. They would say that they had an assignment to work on and they would go out to the parking lot.

During the time I was at South, the T.C.G. no longer had a counseling function; its purpose was no different than the traditional homeroom: it provided an arena where attendance was taken and the morning announcements were read. After T.C.G., the Hempies went their separate ways.

Under the flexible modular schedule not one of the Hempies took classes together. Although they were all juniors and took many of the same courses, they attended class and interacted with their teachers apart from the reality they generated while in their group. The group did not prescribe specific behavior to be followed when the individual members went to class by themselves. Tony could be quiet, deferential and serious; "J" could be loud, flirtatious, and a "discipline problem"; and Kim could be the demure secretarial student.

Each of the Hempies had a favorite teacher in the school and each of them had a course they enjoyed. They were quick to point out their "good teachers" and they would advise me beforehand whether or not to expect a good class. All of the Hempies would go out of their way to invite me to a class that was doing something "special." If there was to be a skit, a guest speaker, or an interesting topic to be discussed, the Hempies would search the school for me and invite me to come along.

Tony was particularly impressed by his Humanities teacher Ms. W. Her class is in one of the windowless rooms on the second floor but a carpet and many wall decorations help to create a pleasant environment. Tony likes the class because he claims that "you can talk about anything you want to and nobody will laugh."

During one of the small group meetings on a B day, Ms. W. told the students that they were going to write a poem. She played some background music, lit candles, turned off the lights and asked the students to sit on the floor. They were to find a picture in a magazine and write a poem to express the way they felt about the picture. There were a variety of magazines and some students took

pictures from "Sports Illustrated" while others used "Seventeen" or "Life." Tony found a picture of a peaceful outdoors setting and we shared a candle on the floor. Although one student protested that "you can't write no poem about 'Mean Joe Green'"--the huge defensive lineman of the Pittsburg Steelers football team--all of the other students seemed to enjoy the writing exercise.

After about twenty minutes, Ms. W., who had also written a poem, asked the class "to share their poems with everyone." The class was a very diverse group. Although there were no blacks, there was one Chicano girl, four cheerleaders, two wrestlers, several dopers and a dozen other students I did not know. Tony regularly flirts with two of the cheerleaders but he does not interact with any of the other students outside of this class and as he says, he "hardly knows them." This did not stop him or anyone else in the class from freely reading their poem.

The students--with the exception of the one male who wrote an ode to a lineman--seemed genuinely pleased with the opportunity to share their ideas. Most of the poems were excellent. They showed a sensitivity and a style that could not have been anticipated after only twenty minutes of writing. The students gave each other a great deal of support and verbal reinforcement.

"Hey, I really like that poem."

"Yeah, I see what you saw in the picture; that's neat."

The class even said nice things about my poem which, by any objectives standard, was mediocre but their support did make me feel good.

It was not uncommon for Ms. W.'s classes to deal with the affective domain of education. She enjoyed open discussions of feelings and problems and Tony considered himself "lucky" to have a time during his day when he could relax and talk freely.

There were many teachers who encouraged student participation and discussion of feelings and values but it was possible for a student to have a schedule which did not include even one class that invited him to speak or to take an active part. It was possible to follow a student around who never had a chance to say a word in his classes.

Kim only attended school in the mornings and her classes did not require her active involvement. She envied Tony and the other Hempies--all of whom had classes where they could take an active role--because of this opportunity to express themselves. She told me:

> I never get a chance to say anything and if I'm called on I don't know what to say. I think my teachers want me to say things they like to hear. Mr. V. yells at me when I give him an answer he doesn't like but Tony and those guys can say anything in class. I like to sit in on their classes but I'm still afraid to say anything.

Kim had a running battle with her Government teacher Mr. V. Government is the one State-required course for graduation. Every student has to take one semester of Government and it was the rare student who expressed any interest in it. Kim was asked to leave class one day for "not being prepared" and she had to make up the work she missed in the Humanities Resource Center. There were two other girls in the Resource Center who also had work to make up for the class. They were to read an article on the problems of cities and fill out a work sheet. They were supposed to work separately but after a few minutes they all got together at one table.

The first question on the work sheet asked whether or not the student thought the cities could be "saved." The rest of the sheet asked for specific examples of remediation for urban problems. None of the girls thought the cities could be redeemed but as Kim said, "that's not what [the teacher] wants to hear." So they all wrote it was possible to save the cities and they searched the textbook for passages about urban renewal, anti-poverty programs and the like.

I asked Kim what would happen if she wrote that the cities could not be saved if this was the way she really felt.

"Oh he'd yell at me and I'd rather make up some shit than have him yell. I don't know why, but I feel like crying every time he yells."

During lunch the Hempies would get together as a group. They would talk about what had gone on during the morning or discuss something that they were planning to do after school. If a rock band was scheduled to make an appearance in the city, plans for attending the concert, buying tickets, and finding the money to pay for them would occupy many weeks of conversation. The lunch period during structured days was fifty minutes long and all of the students would eat at the same time. The cafeteria system was efficient enough to serve everyone in that period of time and still allow them about twenty minutes of free time. A typical meal included pizza, french fries, a roll and perhaps some cake for dessert. The Hempies, who usually ate lunch in school, inhaled all this starch in less time than it takes to

describe and they would be free to cruise the halls or truck out to the parking lot to get high.[3]

In the same way that the Hempies had their own area of the cafeteria for eating and their own part of the building for meeting before school, so too did they have their own area for cruising. The Hempies would make endless circles around the main hallways, cruising by the entrance, the administrative offices, the science labs and the secretarial rooms many times, saying hello to the same people over and over again as they circled. It was like grabbing brass rings on a merry-go-round. The group seldom went up to the second floor and rarely did they go down to the gym. If they stopped at all, it was near the North entrance and they would sit and talk to other groups and whatever girls were willing to listen.

Dope could be bought and sold during the lunch hour. While we were sitting by the North entrance, a black girl came up to "J" and asked who I was. He explained that I was an "honorary Hempie" and that I was "O.K." She nodded and asked if anyone wanted to buy "some pot or some pills." No one wanted any and she moved on. Association with the Hempies granted me a badge of legitimacy. It was commonly known among the students that the Hempies were dopers and if they accepted my presence then most of the other dope smokers seemed to feel that I could be trusted.

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[3]Trucking and cruising, as used by South's students, have a similar meaning. Cruising refers to aimless perambulation while trucking usually implies walking with a predetermined destination. A student would "cruise" the hall but "truck on out" to the parking lot.

It was fairly common for blacks and whites to buy dope from one another but rarely did they get high together and drugs were often a source of racial conflict. Cathy bought a "hit of window-pane acid" from one of the local dealers. Everyone crowded around her to take a look at the hallucinogen and speculate about its potency and offer recommendations concerning how much should be taken at one time. This of course is a great problem with illegal drugs: the potency and purity are unknowns. Students often would buy a "hit" of acid and consider that to be an absolute quantity and quality when in fact there is no standard qualitative or quantitative value implied by the term. A hit refers only to the size which is marketed and it is a term of convenience rather than a precise referent for a powerful drug.

As the group stood around and discussed the drug, a black male walked up to Cathy and asked to see it. She opened her hand and he grabbed it and popped it into his mouth. This was incredible to all assembled not only that he had stolen it from her hand but that on the spur of the moment, he would be willing to ingest an unknown chemical of unknown strength. The group rapidly became less concerned about his personal welfare and irate that they had been "ripped off." It nearly triggered a serious incident. The Hempies and some of the other white students were angry. Throughout the remainder of the day, the Hempies talked about the "nigger who ripped them off" and they recounted stories of the race fights in the school's history and wondered aloud when the next one would be.

During the unstructured days, the Hempies were a more cohesive group than they were during the structured days. They were in each other's company for a greater portion of the day. There were fewer scheduled classes which caused them to go their separate ways and they were able to interact with each other over greater periods of time. With less than half of the day occupied by classes, the Hempies could generate any number of activities which held the group together. Their most frequent activities during the unstructured days were hanging around and getting high on marijuana and complaining that "there was nothing to do."

Different groups engaged in a variety of activities. Many groups studied and interacted with their teachers in formal or informal activities. Other groups used the school facilities such as the resource centers and the library to pursue individual interests and the gymnasium was always filled with students playing basketball. There was also a lot of card playing, gambling and chess playing going on during the day. The administrators know about the gambling but the games dissolve and set up again so quickly that it is impossible to control. John Butler investigated a group of black males who referred to themselves as "Pimps and Gamblers" and five dollar gambling pots were not uncommon in that group. But they were an exception, most of the gambling was for low stakes. Penny pitching was the most common game and it was unusual for anyone to lose more than twenty-five or thirty cents. There were black gamblers and white gamblers and although they played similar games of chance, there were no integrated gambling groups.

The administrators liked to believe that the chess players were engaged in a valuable leisure time activity. Oddly enough the better chess players, and those who played on the school's chess team rarely played during school hours. They generally waited until the quiet of after school before they would play. Those who played during the school day were either neophyte players who made unsophisticated moves or those players who were high and played for amusement. I sat at a board with one student who didn't make a move for ten minutes. I had begun the game with a very basic opening move and I waited for his first move. I began to worry that I was about to be checkmated by some stroke of brilliance which I could not even imagine when he finally looked up at me and apologized.

"Hey man I'm sorry. I'm tripping [on some hallucinogen] and I just can't make any sense out of this game--maybe tomorrow. . . ."

The Hempies would usually get together after T.C.G. on unstructured days and make their plans for the day. "J" and Ray were in the same T.C.G. and they would walk over to meet Jeff after his T.C.G. Kim usually had a lot of work to do and she did not hang around with the group. As was the case for all of the secretarial students, Kim had a lot of shorthand to transcribe and typing to do. The secretarial students could be easily recognized by the ever present shorthand books they carried around. They seemed to be constantly working. They worked in the halls, in other classes and during lunch. The work occupied a great deal of their time but apparently not their concentration. Secretarial students seemed to be able to drop in and out of class discussions and still do their homework and a few of

the girls were able to sit out in the parking lot and work as they got high.

The unstructured days at South afforded the students a great deal of time to engage in a variety of activities. The Hempies, like most of the students carried out these activities within the social context of the group and during the unstructured days, the group spent a great deal of time together. The Hempies were not "joiners" or regular participants in planned school activities. None of the Hempies held political office in the school. With the exception of "J," none of the group participated in athletics or the intramural sports program which scheduled its activities during the school day. They were not active in clubs and few of the Hempies were involved in school plays, yearbook committees or any other school sponsored activity.

The Hempies spent their unstructured time in group activities which supported the individual member. Several days were spent searching for used parts for Ray's car or Jeff's car. One full day was consumed pulling "J's" car out of the ditch he had driven into the night before while returning from a party. Many days were spent just riding around or visiting other schools in the city.

During the unstructured days, personal problems could be given more attention. It was an ideal time to look for part-time jobs or deal with problems at home. It was also a good time to appear in court. Tony had to go to court once to answer charges that he had been driving a friend's car without a license. Jeff made two or three appearances in court because of a serious accident that he was involved in last year. For the members of the "grand and glorious Hempie underground"

court appearances were not unusual. Several members of various groups in the drug subculture had been arrested for possession of alcoholic beverages, marijuana or violation of the city's curfew laws during the course of the study. John Butler reports an armed robbery which took place in the parking lot of the school and within certain groups, it was not uncommon to periodically run into probation officers and welfare workers.

The Hempies and the other groups in the drug subculture would offer support for the students who had to appear in court. They would provide sympathy and recommend the courtroom demeanor and clothing styles that they felt would play on the judge's sympathy. If any member of the group was having problems, he could count on the group to support him in any way it could.

Most of the problems were not legal but personal. The Hempies felt free to talk about their home lives and personal fears and concerns within the group structure. Each of the Hempies also had at least one teacher or counselor who they felt they could go to with a personal problem. "J" expressed the feelings of the group. He said that if he had a problem he could not go to a "teacher" but he could go to see certain teachers in the school because he considered them "friends." The Hempies felt that there were teachers in the school who cared about them as individuals and would spend the time to help them with problems.

During most of the unstructured days, the Hempies just hung around. They "cruised" the halls, "trucked" out to the parking lot to get high, they went to the few classes that interested them, and they complained of being "bored." As Ray would say, "We don't do much around here, we just go to school and rap with our friends."

Black Students

There are approximately 240 black students enrolled at South and most of them live in the neighborhoods around the school. When South opened, many black students were bused in from the West side of town in accordance with a plan to achieve racial balance in the city's schools. The members of the Board of Education who proposed this plan were recalled in a special election and their successors endorsed the neighborhood schools concept which eliminated busing to achieve racial integration. The black students who had been bused to South were given the option of attending a school in their neighborhood or continuing their high school education at South. Many of them chose to remain and though there is now no city-wide busing plan, some students are still bused from the West side of town to South High School.

Most of the black groups, regardless of their attitudes toward school or their attitudes toward other black groups, tended to congregate in the hallways adjacent to the West Cafeteria. Two years ago, in these hallways, the black students linked arms and refused to allow whites to pass and the area has become the central hub of the school's black student population. The blacks sit on the benches in the hallway and on the nearby stairway which leads to the second floor. Although whites walk freely through the hallway and have untroubled use of the stairway, it is clear that this is the blacks' area. No white groups loiter in this hallway or on the stairway.

There is also one section in the West Cafeteria that is regularly occupied by the black students. This is the section

closest to the black hallway and it is really just a string of tables where perhaps 50 or 60 students can sit at one time. Even when the West Cafeteria is relatively empty, blacks would tend to crowd around these tables. Very few whites ever sit here and more blacks eat lunch in this area than anywhere else in the school.

The various black groups get together only for lunch and after they eat, the groups go off in separate directions. Some would study, some would go down to the gymnasium to play ping pong or basketball, some would go and get high, but wherever they went, it would be in all black groups to engage in all black activities. There were tables of black students in the library, groups of blacks playing basketball and a special area for those who used drugs. The white marijuana smokers used the parking lot and very few black groups went there to get high. The black marijuana smokers would either go out to the athletic field and smoke in the baseball dugouts or they would go off to some remote area of the building to get high.

When I spent time with black groups, the school looked different and sounded different. The faces of the students changed from all white to all black. The world was louder and more animated. The music and clothing styles were different. I heard fewer complaints of boredom and I became aware of activities that I did not know were going on when I was with the white groups. There were days when black performers entertained in the cafeteria and days when several black student groups played music and danced in the enclosed area between the two cafeterias. At these times, I was one of the few whites attending the activities and some white students would approach me to ask if it was "all right" if they hung around.

Black Jocks (BJ)

The groups identified as the Black Jocks are all football players. Of the several black athletic groups, the football players were the most academic. The BJ claim that they have consciously tried to overcome the "dumb football jock" image but it is probably happenstance as much as anything else. The black football players just are more academically talented than, for example, the black basketball players. Bob, Dwight and William are the central members of this group. They have known each other since junior high school and they all live on the West side of town and although they are very different in dress, habits, and attitudes, football, neighborhood and blackness unite them into a group.

Bob. Bob is the most outgoing member of the BJ. He dresses very casually and often wears a t-shirt and jeans covered by a long cotton coat that looks like it should be worn by a factory foreman or a gas station attendant on a television commercial. He wears steel-rim glasses and tops off his outfit with a blue, inverted sailor's cap. Bob is the loudest member of the group. He has a booming voice and few inhibitions when it comes to yelling in the halls or speaking out in class. He is often outrageously funny and with little encouragement he would go into his imitations of Step 'n' Fetchit or Humphrey Bogart. As we stood in the halls one day, two army recruiters walked by us and Bob shouted "Heil Hitler" at the top of his voice. The recruiters, in an outstanding display of military discipline, didn't blink an eye but Bob's outburst snapped the

head of Mr. Wade, the assistant principal, who happened to be walking by. Mr. Wade did not get a chance to speak as Bob spotted him and yelled,

"And this school would be a lot better off without you here too"!

Mr. Wade smiled self-consciously and retreated. I later asked Bob if he had been serious.

"No," he said, "but it will give him something to think about."

Bob could be very intimidating. He had a powerful build and would often practice what he called his "menacing stare." He cut into the lunch line one day and a white paraprofessional, assigned to supervise the lunchroom, asked Bob to return to the end of the line. Bob gave him his "stare" and protested that he had been there all along and refused to move.

"Look you four-eyed freak," Bob bellowed at the aide, "they call me 'Bad Bob' and I eat guys your size for breakfast"!

The aide left to get help.

Bob's outburst and anger had been pure show. He handed a girl in line fifty cents, asked her to buy him lunch, and quietly sat down by himself. The aide returned with two hall guards and Dr. Gordon, the principal, but there was nothing to be done. Bob was peacefully reading a book and as Dr. Gordon was asking him to relate the story of his encounter with the aide, Bob's lunch tray was quietly put in front of him. Bob then invited Dr. Gordon to join him for lunch but the principal seemed to know he had been had and he left.

Among the members of BJ, Bob has the most contact with white students. Although he rarely dates, he flirts constantly and is well known and very popular with many white student groups. His conversations with whites were either serious discussions of class work or they were filled with a humor of an attacking nature that precluded any real exchange or dialogue. He rarely discussed personal issues with whites. He could be suggestive if not outrightly obscene. Standing in the black corridor, he spoke to a white girl who was dating a black student.

Bob: "How's M"?

Girl: "Oh, I don't know."

Bob: "What do you mean you 'don't know'? You're with him all the time"!

Girl: (giggling) "I just don't think about it."

Bob: "Yeah, just like a bed bug; you sort of forget about them and get used to living with them."

Girl: "A bed bug"? (laughter)

Bob: "Yeah M. told me all about you and him."

Girl: "What did he tell you"?

Bob: "He gives me a sweat-by-sweat description"!! He told me you're a moaner. Is that true"?

The girl left flustered, angry and embarrased and Bob told me that he had made up the whole thing on the spot and could not explain why he had done it. He is extremely quick witted and at times he could be nasty and verbally assaultive to others. One morning, after a week with no sunshine and constant rain and snow, a white girl

came up to Bob on the black stairway and asked rhetorically where the sun had gone.

"Y'all know the answer to that one," Bob snapped at her. "The niggers stole it. They steals everything else don't they"?!

Dwight. Dwight is the most steady individual in the BJ. He is big, strong, good looking and the captain of the football team. Dwight works hard in school, usually complies with his teachers', expectations and rarely fools around in class unless Bob is there. He takes mainly academic courses but because of a reading problem, he spends one hour a day in the Reading Center. He is proud of the fact that his reading has improved since he began working in the Center and he now reads at 450 words per minute. Dwight rarely dresses in jeans and he usually wears well tailored slacks and expensive looking shirts. Most of Dwight's time is spent with his girlfriend Tanya. He walks her to class, they regularly eat lunch together, and they spend most of their unstructured time together. When Tanya and Dwight are in the same class, Dwight sits with Bob or other members of the BJ and Tanya sits alone or with several black girls. Other than occasional glances at each other, they rarely interact in class.

Dwight works as a teachers' aide in a local elementary school during the afternoons as part of his own school program. He considers this the highlight of his school day and he likes working with "little kids" and helping them solve their problems. Tanya takes the Dental Hygiene Vocational Block which she claims she enjoys. Although she is the only black in the course, she interacts with the white girls

when she is there. Outside of class, she interacts almost exclusively with black students.

Dwight and the other BJ feel that the school is not interested in the black students. The BJ claim that they are "getting a lot" out of their programs, but they point to many blacks who are not. In particular, Dwight thinks that the black athletes are being slighted. He claims that,

> During the season, the school sends around an academic eligibility slip that the teachers have to sign. The teachers help you with your work during the season so you can play ball for the school but after the season's over, they just don't seem to care.

Because of his participation in athletics, Dwight is well known in the school. He is well respected by many white groups but he rarely interacts with whites and has very little optimism for the future of race relations. He told me a story about his younger sister, who is in elementary school, and the man who drives her school bus. The man is white and as Dwight relates it, "he likes black kids." He takes groups of black elementary school students to the zoo or to activities in and around the city on his own time and at his own expense. Dwight said that the bus driver plans to be a teacher and wants to teach in a black school in Detroit.

> The guy is really a nice guy but I tell him that there are just certain things that you can't do. It's not possible to be a white teacher and live in an all black neighborhood and teach in an all black school. I know it's sad but it's true.

William. William is the sharpest dresser of the BJ. He always wears expensive, well-fitting clothes. He has an extensive wardrobe and he rarely wears the same thing twice in a week. He has

a wide variety of slacks, shirts, sweaters and platform shoes. He is rarely without a hat and he has an ample supply of knit caps in a wide assortment of colors.

William is an all-city half-back in football and he has a fine build and a good looking face. His girlfriend, Carla, is also very attractive and well dressed and together they make a striking couple. Most of their time in school is spent together. They do not take the same courses and William is often late for his own classes because he always escorts Carla to and from her classes. Carla rarely interacts with whites when she is with William but by herself, in an all white class, she seems comfortable and she talks openly and freely with the teachers and with her classmates.

Despite William's athletic prowess and striking physical appearance, he is quiet and often very shy. One day I stood in a line with William waiting for him to be measured for his graduation cap and gown. He was wearing a hat as usual and he was worried that he would have to take it off for the measurement.

"My hair is up in braids," he whispered to me, "and I'll feel like a fool if I have to take it off."

He was measured for the graduation cap without his hat. The man from the company renting the caps and gowns did not question his braids and none of the white students in the line made any reference to them.

One of the most widely admired classes in the school is the Psychology class taught by a white teacher. Mr. R., the psychology teacher, is a strong male figure who works hard to create an

atmosphere of informality and openness. He encourages group discussions and he tries to build a "climate of trust" that allows students to speak freely about their concerns and problems. "J" claims that "there is a lot of love in that class."'

During a unit on values, Mr. R. asked the class to divide into groups of four or five students in order to play a values clarification game known as the Fall-Out Shelter Problem.[4] Mr. R. then explained the situation to the groups.

> Your group are members of a department in Washington, D. C. that is in charge of experimental stations in the far outposts of civilization. Suddenly the Third World War breaks out and bombs begin dropping. Places all across the globe are being destroyed. People are heading for whatever fallout shelters are available. You receive a desperate call from one of your experimental stations, asking for help.
>
> It seems that there are ten people but there is only enough space, air, food, and water in their fallout shelter for six people for a period of three months--which is how long they estimate. . . [they must stay down there]. They realize that if they have to decide amongst themselves which six should go into the shelter, they are likely to become irrational and begin fighting. So they have decided to call your department, their superiors, and leave the decision to you. They will abide by your decision.
>
> But each of you has to quickly get ready to head down to your own fallout shelter. So all you have time for is to get superficial descriptions of the ten people. You have half-an-hour to make your decision. Then you have to go to your own shelter.[5]

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[4]For a complete description of the game, see, Simon, Sidney B.; Howe, Leland W.; and Kirschenbaum, Howard. Values Clarification, A Handbook of Practical Strategies (New York: Hart Publishing Co., 1972), pp. 281-286. Mr. R. changed the game somewhat for his class and there are many varieties of this game available.

[5]These were not Mr. R.'s exact words but are from the directions given in Simon et al., Values Clarification, pp. 281-282.

Mr. R. had written the following list of the ten people and a brief description of them on the chalkboard:

1. Bookkeeper; 31 years old
2. Teenage girl; six months pregnant
3. Black militant (male); second year medical student
4. Famous architect--author; 42 years old
5. Hollywood starlette; singer, dancer
6. Bio-chemist; homosexual
7. Rabbi; 54 years old
8. White female M.D.; a racist
9. Prostitute
10. Policeman with gun (they cannot be separated).

I joined a group which included Carla, one Chicano girl, one white girl, and "J" of the Hempie group. This happened to be the same day that mesacaline was for sale in the school and "J" was completely stoned and he was of very little help to the group. Everyone knew he was stoned and they left him alone.

The group was unanimous in their selection of the pregnant teenage girl for the shelter and their rejection of the bio-chemist ("We don't want no 'fag' in the shelter"). But they could agree on little else. The white girl in our group, much to Carla's suprise, asked someone to tell her what "black militant" means.

"You don't know what a black militant is"? Carla asked making a face which showed her dismay. "He's a--well you know--like the Black Panthers--radicals, and groups like that. I can't believe you don't know. . . ."

The white girl did not listen as Carla was explaining and continued to try to get Mr. R's attention so she could ask him the question. He was busy with another group of students and the question was never answered. The majority of whites and Chicanos in the class agreed that the black radical and the white racists would work out their differences in the shelter but the blacks in the class were unanimous in their disagreement. Carla said that they could never settle "those problems." Every once in a while "J" would lift his head off the desk and yell, barely coherently, "Ya gotta have someone from the black race in the shelter." But no one wanted to take up his point and he would put his head back down on the desk and rest.

William takes a similar psychology course from another teacher who also enjoys an excellent reputation among the students. William rarely gets involved in class discussions; he sits on the outside perimeter of the class and his participation is usually limited to perfunctory answers or an occasional joke. One day the teacher asked the class if they would like to have some background music as they worked on an assignment, William called out that he would like to hear the "theme from 'Deep Throat'"--a hard core pornographic movie that was playing in the city.

BJ in School

Bob, Dwight and William plan to go to college next year. They take academic courses and although they constantly complain to their teachers about their work load being too heavy, they regularly complete all of their assignments and they still have plenty of time

to enjoy the social aspect of school. They do not belong to the school's social or political organizations but like the Hempies, they depend on the group to generate social activities to occupy their time. Unlike the Hempies, the BJ do not use drugs in school and drugs constitute a very small part of their conversation or leisure time activities. The group generally creates an atmosphere that encourages light humorous conversation but at the same time allows the individual members opportunity for doing the necessary school work.

Bob, Dwight, and William all plan to attend the same state supported college next year. Despite the fact that less than 2 percent of that college's students are black, none of the three think they will have any trouble "fitting in." Dwight claims that he is used to being outnumbered by whites and he claims that he can create his own social life if the whites leave him alone. He indicates that this is what he and the group have done in high school. "The administration just kicks out all the 'radical blacks' and they just leave the rest of us alone." Bob plans to major in engineering and he loudly proclaims that "I'm going to go to school to get an ed-u-cation"! "Those niggers," he says, "indicating Dwight and William, "are going to school to play football."

Dwight and William generally accepted Bob's verbal outbursts and occasional attacks with a friendly good humor. It may appear to an outsider that Bob is the controlling influence on the group because he is the loudest and the most verbal member; but he is not. The group assigns high status only to those individuals who are successfully seductive and date. Bob does not have a girlfriend and does not date

regularly. William and Dwight consider him socially naïve and in their quiet way they exert a very strong influence on him. They claim he should "party more" and stop wasting his time flirting with girls he never asks out. When Bob does go to parties, he usually checks with Dwight and William on how to act and how to dress. He is the most verbal and the most gregarious member of the group but these are not the criteria the group established as high priorities. In order to be the leader of the BJ, he would have to be more successful in his social relations.

The BJ claim that the high school has not been much help for them in selecting a college or counseling them on the best ways to get financial aid. Dwight also claims that the school has not been pushing them into the harder "college prep" courses. There was a feeling in the group that the high school was mainly interested in the white students. They did not think that the school's black teachers offered them the kind of help they needed. They claim that the white teachers did not expect very much from them because they were black and the black teachers made them work harder than the white students so they could "prove blacks can do well in school."

The BJ do not take all of their classes together. When they did have classes together, they would take over one rear corner of the room and fool around and talk up to, and occasionally beyond the teacher's tolerance. If there were no other members of the group in their class, they would sit with any other black students in the room and if there were no other blacks, they would sit alone. One of the courses the BJ did take together was Advanced Composition,

a "college prep" course taught by a white teacher. The class was large and the seats were arranged in rows. Mr. R., the teacher, generally requested that I enter into all of the class activities including the taking of examinations. The BJ appreciated this and their grades on vocabulary tests mysteriously went up during the time I was there. Bob would whisper to William: "Hey man, you're wrong about number five, jack; the college kid's got another answer." If Mr. R. heard these exchanges, he ignored them.

Mr. R. was a hard working and well organized teacher. His course stressed reading as well as grammar and vocabulary but some of the work he required of his students seemed of doubtful future value. He required that the class memorize the Dewey Decimal System "so that when they got to college, they will be able to use the library." He also plans to put his classes through a "mock college registration" because his own registration consumed ten hours of his first day in school and he wants the students to be ready for college.

The blacks had earned a reputation for physical toughness in the racial violence of previous years. Most of the white groups paid them grudging tributes of respect because of the way they fought despite being outnumbered. There was also the feeling among the black and white students that the teachers were more willing to discipline a white student in class than a black student. The whites felt that the blacks were getting away with something and the blacks felt that the white teachers were afraid of them.

The BJ were often loud in class and every once in a while they could be rowdy. In one class, Bob and two other black males

tried to leave a few minutes before the class was scheduled to end. The teacher told the group to sit down and wait. He then asked them if they were on "C.P.T."

Bob: "C.P.T." What's that man"?

Teacher: "Colored People's Time. You guys always seem to be on your own time and not the schools. You come late and you leave early."

With that the group walked around the class asking the students--white and black alike--if they were "colored. " Bob announced the findings to the teacher:

"There ain't no 'colored people' in here so you can forget that C.P.T. shit."

The teacher said, "O.K. I'll call it B.P.T. then." The group did not respond but left class a little early anyway and with some hand slapping and a lot of laughter they reaffirmed the fact that they had won this minor battle with the white teacher. This seemed to be one of the purposes of the BJ as a group and one of the things that united them as a group. They are willing to play the game and get good grades so that they can go to college but they are ever conscious of being a black minority in a white school.

Black Academics (BA)

I would always ask the various groups I studied for permission to accompany them to class. The Hempies and the BJ usually welcomed me along and they did not indicate that my presence would be a harmful distraction. In fact, the Hempies claimed to welcome my presence as a "relief from the boredom" and the BJ liked to have me along during

an exam so they could, as Bob put it, "sit near the college kid and see if he's having any trouble with the test." The BA would give some thought to my requests to accompany them. They were very serious students who worked hard in their courses and they believed that school was difficult enough without the additional burden of showing a visitor around.

The BA were actively involved in the school and they were organizers and joiners of a great many activities. There were very few clubs, plays, or organizations in the school that did not have at least one BA as a member. They were on the class governing councils, the Black Culture Week Committee, and the school radio station. Their day was one of constant activity: running from class to class, meeting to meeting, with little time to eat and no time to hang around. They were exclusively a school based, school oriented group who, although they spent a lot of time together, knew very little about one another. Some of the members of the BA, belonged to several groups. As members of the BA, individuals could receive support for their academic interests and achievements but for the social, athletic or play aspects of adolescent life, they would have to seek gratification from other black groups.

Allan is the key figure in the BA group. Without his presence, the group would be nothing more than a collection of black individuals who believe academic achievement is a significant aspect of school life. When they are in a class without Allan, the BA are loners who interact with few other students. When he is there, he forms the nucleus around which a group can form and the group reinforces the

individual members. Some of the members of the BA are seniors and they plan to attend a variety of colleges across the United States next year, many in pre-professional programs. One of the males plans to attend University of California at Los Angeles and one of the females plans to attend a black womens' college in Georgia.

Allan is a short, thin, sixteen year old. He wears his hair in a modest "fro" and he is always neat and well groomed. Like the other members of the BA, Allan neither smokes cigarettes nor uses drugs. He rarely cruises the halls and he never cuts classes. He always goes directly from one class to another, never stopping in the black hallway or on the black stairway. He eats lunch at the black table but he interacts with very few of the other groups at the table and he is not the most popular student in the black world at South. Bob, the loudest BJ, refers to him as "the punk sissy" because Allan allegedly hid during the race fight of last spring. Allan claims to have only one friend in the school but he is not part of the BA's and he does not attend classes with Allan. Their friendship begins when school ends and they rarely see each other during the school day.

Allan lives in a neighborhood not far from the school which he describes as "integrated." He claims that living in an integrated neighborhood and attending an integrated school have caused him some problems. He told me that,

> It used to be in junior high school that if you were talking to some white kids in the hall and the black guys would see you, they would give you a hard time about it. So I started hanging around with only black kids and then we moved to an integrated neighborhood and I didn't have many friends there. It seems that at South, you can talk to whites and the blacks won't say anything to you about it but I'm still confused.

Allan made a conscious effort to sit at the black table and associate with blacks. He claimed that he had "nothing against whites" but he thought that it was "better" if the blacks in the school at least hung around together. If there were no blacks in his classes, Allan would sit by himself. Like most of the blacks in the school, Allan felt that the black students at South were badly divided and rarely cooperated with other blacks except during the periods of conflict with the white students.

Allan considered physics to be his most interesting course and he was not alone in his appreciation of the class and the teacher. Although most of the students in the class were college-bound, several Hempies and many students who had no plans to attend college cited Physics as their favorite course. It was the rare student who had not at least heard about the "good physics course" and many students who were not enrolled in the course would sit in the back of the room just "to watch the stuff going on." Kim and Cathy--the girls who hang around with the Hempies--regularly sat in on the Physics class, in part because Jeff takes the course but they claim to enjoy "just hanging around there."

Mr. H., the Physics teacher, was a doctoral candidate in physics at a nearby university when he became interested in public school education. Although he is only a dissertation away from his degree, he claims that he is not interested in teaching the academic aspects of physics to kids and he says that he is not a "physics teacher" but rather he "teaches kids some physics." Students are greeted as they enter his class by a number of bumper stickers pasted on the door which read:

"Physics is X Rated,

This is Physics County, and

Joe Cool Takes Physics."

The bumper stickers are a part of the enthusiasm Mr. H. generated for his course that captured the imaginations of the diverse student population in his class. Mr. H. is a very active teacher who is always in motion and always talking to students. He dresses informally and on alternate days he could wear jeans and an open neck shirt and then a jacket and tie. When he lectured on Aristotle's concept of the physical universe, he wore a mock toga and laurel wreath. The majority of his classes are not lecture-recitation sessions but a series of individual experiments that the students must perform to learn the physical principles involved. In order to get credit for understanding the principle, the students would individually "confirm" their knowledge with Mr. H. He would ask them several questions to see if they had understood the principles and the student's grade was in part determined by the number of experiments he had done and the principles he had confirmed with Mr. H. At first it confused me when I heard students speaking of going to Physics so they could be "confirmed" but after a few sessions I understood his system and realized that there were no religious rites being conducted in class.

Mr. H. worked hard and the students appreciated it. They were relieved when he had a student teacher because they felt that "it would make it easier for him." Mr. H. let the students listen to an FM stereo rock station as they worked and he encouraged rather than demanded work from the class.

"Listen," he would say, "it's hot in here today so you can work on the experiments and I'll be here to answer any questions. You can confirm some of last week's work or if you want, it's o.k. to cop some z's." (take a nap)

His class was generally an incredible example of purposeful activity for the entire period with students going from experiment to experiment and Mr. H. running around confirming students and students constantly asking and receiving help and advice from each other and the teacher. It was perhaps this flurry of activity and the music that attracted so many visitors. There were always a half dozen students who were not enrolled in the course who would sit and observe the physics class. Mr. H. had a great deal of equipment lying around the room. There were balance scales, magnets, weights, pulleys, springs, and a host of expensive electronic devices. I asked him if he had any problems with vandalism especially since the students had a "reputation" for stealing. He told me with a good deal of pride that it was rare if anything was taken.

> My kids don't take anything. I trust them and they know it. Every once in a while, the kids who don't take Physics come in here and they rip off some equipment. I saw one of my kids stop an outsider who was stealing some magnets. He told the kid that 'we don't steal here.' I really felt good about that.

Physics was a demanding course and although Allan worked hard, he did not seem to like the course as much as many of the other students. Many of the students who regularly came to Mr. H.'s class and worked hard in Physics, cut their other classes or did little work in them and they had time and energy to devote to a class that interested them. Allan worked hard in all of his classes whether he was interested

in them or not and Physics was just one more class to master in his busy schedule. During Physics, Allan worked with three other black students--one male and two females. Their discussions and interactions were limited to the problems at hand. For the BA, the school provided the basic organization for their activities and they believed in the importance of academic work. Allan would enter a classroom, look for the black students and pursue the objectives of the day with little time devoted to anything else. The students he associated with rarely discussed their social lives or personal problems.

Allan and I sat in the library during one of the unstructured days with two girls from Haiti. Allan had known them for over a year and he claims that he spent a good deal of time with them but he did not see them after school and he did not know that they were from a foreign country until I asked them. "I thought they spoke funny," he said referring to the Haitian accents, "but I was always too embarrassed to ask." He was surprised to learn that I knew anything at all about Haitian politics or history--especially since he did not. He was impressed and somewhat astounded that there is a black nation with black leadership in the Western Hemisphere. Allan is very interested in black history and black culture and he reads a good deal about the subjects. He also subscribes to "Encore," a magazine which is geared to a black college-bound audience. Allan's sister is active in the NAACP youth council in the city but although he is a member, he does not think much of the organization. "If you ask me," he confided, "they are more interested in social things than political things."

Allan is a junior but he will be graduating this year because he has taken several courses in South's night school. According to school administrators, the night school not only serves the adult population of the community, but over 400 high school-age students are also "clients" of South's night school program. Some of the "clients" are like Allan and take a few courses at night in addition to day time courses but most of them are high school age students who are not currently in school or students who left school previously but need only a few courses for their diplomas.

Allan took a psychology class this year and he was disappointed that the course was not challenging enough. "I thought it was going to be a tough course," he told me, "because there were a lot of older people in there and I thought older people would be smarter." Allan does not understand why everyone does not take school as seriously as he does and on occasion, he shows signs of being an academic elitist.

He is a member of the junior class steering committee--a quasi-legislative body--and he proposed that "no student should be a member of the committee unless he has a "4 point" average (all "A" work). His fellow committee members tried to lower the grade point average to a "3 point" (a "B" average) but Allan protested.

> I believe that a student with only a 3.0 average should be spending his time in class. You must realize that the primary function of the school is to encourage learning.

Dr. Gordon, the building principal, was present at the meeting and he objected to any minimum grade point average because it would provide the non-academic students in the school with a "cause." Despite Allan's previous hard-line stand on the grade point average he readily capitulated to the principal's reasoning.

The Steering Committee represents the total extent of student political organization in the school. Each class has a Steering Committee which is composed of twelve elected members: four blacks, four whites, and four Chicanos. Dr. Gordon is fond of pointing out that this type of representation is similar to the U.S. Senate but the absence of a body similar to the House of Representatives leaves the school with a unicameral body which has few functions. The Steering Committees are elected by the students and their function is limited to planning some social events. When the issue of a student strike to protest the change in schedule arose, few students believed that the Committees were viable organizations which could address the issues. The Committees lacked any real power or authority and many students referred to them as a "sham."

Allan was frustrated by his role on the Junior Class Steering Committee. It was rare that more than one-third of the members were present for any given meeting and Allan felt it was primarily the Chicanos who were letting the Committee down. At one Committee meeting he said, "they can't be counted on. They never show up for meetings and they never tell you why."

Allan doesn't have time to waste at meetings which accomplish nothing. He rarely wastes time during his day. He runs from class to class, takes an active role in every class and he is willing to help a teacher out with a lesson that is not going well. He will force himself to volunteer an answer when other students have nothing to say. He will ask questions long after other students have stopped paying attention and in one class he was the only one who was not talking or taking a nap. Allan believes in school and the BA needs

Allan to make them believe that school is as important as he thinks it is.

Allan has a part-time job on weekends and he rarely goes to parties. Several of the BA are socially oriented as well as academically oriented and belong to other groups which serve their social needs. Some members of the BA could not imagine running into Allan at a party. After school, Allan becomes something of a loner. He would either get together with his one male friend or spend long hours alone in front of the television.

College Bound Boys (CBB)

The college bound boys are a closely knit group of juniors who take most of their classes together and spend a good deal of time with each other after school and on weekends. They are polite, good-natured and conscientious students who are well-liked by their teachers and admired by a considerable number of sophomore girls. The CBB come from the wealthier homes in the city. They wear their hair short, sport well-fitting perma-press clothes and their cursing is limited to mild obscenities in the locker room. There are four central members of this all white group but Ken and Carl are the closest friends and they comprise the dyad around which the group forms. Ken and Carl are approximately the same height and build and they look enough alike that some of their teachers would, on occasion, confuse their names.

The Hempies were glad that I spent some time with the CBB. They claimed that Ken and Carl would be able to provide "another look at the school." They were right. Ken and Carl never loitered in the halls, cut classes, smoked cigarettes or used drugs. During the

time I spent with the CBB, I never ran into the Hempies except in class. The CBB spent most of their unstructured time working in the resource centers or in the library. They were usually surrounded by girls and they interspersed their working with flirting and casual conversation. Carl had a steady girlfriend during the time I was there and one of the Hempies described her as "pretty cute for a 'squeak.'" Carl's girlfriend is a sophomore so they do not take any classes together and he is able to spend most of his time with the group. Like most of the girls the CBB date, Carl's girl friend is very attractive and well-dressed. She often wore skirts and stockings and in a school without a rigid dress code, this was enough to set her apart from most of the other girls.

The school looked pleasant when I hung around with the CBB. They enjoyed their classes; there was a good deal of light banter and talk about sports and there was a constant series of gentle flirtations with whatever girls (white) happened to be around. If they had any annoying habits it was that they constantly were looking in the mirror to comb their hair and comparing their present chest size with their measurements of a year ago. They knew a lot of girls and they flirted a good deal and they treated girls with what they called "respect." They did not use obscenities in the presence of female students and they were willing to carry their books.

Ken and Carl began their day with a Co-ed gym class. The class engaged in a wide variety of activities from horse back riding to roller skating. Many of the activities involved leaving the school and spending money out of their own pockets. These activities were selected by the students in the class but the expense involved made

them prohibitive for many of the students in the school. Although Ken and Carl were among the few students I knew at South who did not work, they never complained of the expense. Bob, Dwight and William of the BJ group were in the class during the first semester but they did not enroll for the second semester because they said the class was too expensive for them. The Co-ed gym class sponsored a 1950's style sock hop to raise money for the class and although Bob did not plan to take the course and would not benefit from the fund raising, he did agree to serve as disc jockey for the evening and he did a very good job. Although the CBB and the BJ were in the same class, they do not interact.

All of the CBB were on the swimming team. The team, like most of South's athletic teams, had only a mediocre season but this did not dampen the CBB's enthusiasm for the sport. On the day of a meet, they would be nervous in anticipation that only a high school athlete can understand. On the day of one meet, Carl spent the entire period of Co-ed gym in the locker room alone, trying to "get himself together." An upcoming meet would dominate all of their conversation and activity. The CBB complained about the lack of attendance at the meets and Ken claimed that the "only people who show up are our parents, a few friends, and two all-night janitors." At the one home meet I attended, there were more spectators from the visiting school than there were from South.

Most of the athletic events I attended drew a poor student turnout although the faculty were faithful supporters of the teams. At one basketball game there were over thirty faculty members in attendance but the students filled less than one fourth of the

gymnasium. Students did not support the teams and it was not uncommon to hear the students who did not participate in sports ridicule the athletes.

"You can't get athlete's foot at South because there are no athletes here," and, "Anyone who goes out for the team gets a Varsity letter," were typical of these comments but on the morning after the basketball team upset a local rival, the halls were electric with praise for the team. On that morning, the students were saying that South is too small to be a Class A team and if they were in Class B, where they belong, they could be state champions.

During the second hour on structured days, Ken and Carl and one of the other CBB had Chemistry class together. This was another of the very popular classes in the school and the CBB would often look over to me to see if I was enjoying the class and they would want to know if I found the course "challenging." Like most of the classes at South, Chemistry was not a rigorous academic course and there was a wide variety of students and of abilities in the class. Chemistry was a strange course for me to attend because there was one Hempie and one BJ in the class as well as the CBB. I attended this class quite often and depending on the individuals I was with, I would sit in different areas in the room and interact only with the group or individuals I accompanied to the class. The CBB claim that they learn a lot in the class and they tell the story of the mock nuclear reactor which the teacher set up. It covered the whole room and Ken said, "you could sit in the middle of the thing and watch the neutron whipping around. It was neat."

Mr. T., the Chemistry teacher, was involved with many aspects of student life and in the words of one of his students, "he really cares about the kids." He is the advisor to the Outing Club and he takes the club on ski weekends and camp weekends that attract students from a variety of groups. The field trips that the Chemistry class took were the talk of the school for weeks. His band plays at school dances and he helps the gymnastic club and the cheerleaders. In addition to Chemistry, Mr. T. teaches Consumers Math and those students are also lavish in their praise for him. A black sophomore boy referred to Mr. T. as the "hippest dude in the school."

Ken and Carl enjoyed Chemistry and they would often come in during their lunch period to work on experiments. They are diligent students and they did nearly as much work in drivers education as they did in Chemistry. They were as concerned with their grades in Co-ed physical education as they were in any of their academic courses.

I trusted Ken well enough to ride around with him in the Driver Education car. The school has an elaborate driver training course laid out in a parking lot on school grounds. It has curves, grades, stop signs, traffic lights and an area to practice parallel parking. The cars are equipped with radio receivers and the instructor, who was located in a tower overlooking the course, could talk to the student on the radio and tell them what they were doing wrong but the students did not have a transmitter and they could not answer back. The instructor announced that he was going to call the roll.

"Blow your horn once if you are here. Blow it twice if you want me to tell you your grade on your last test."

Ken blew his horn twice and his "A" was announced over the radio. He smiled and looked around to see if his friends would acknowledge his achievement and he then went on to talk about something else.

"I have to hold my hands on the wheel like this," he said indicating the two-hands-on-the-wheel driver's manual style, but I know when I get my license, I'll have one arm out the window and one hand on the bottom of the wheel. School's like that; they teach you a lot of worthless things, but I'm having fun."

The CBB enjoyed the modular system. The unstructured days gave them the time to get all of their work done in school and they appreciated being free of homework after school. Ken told me that, "the mod program let's you get your work done in school so you can do other stuff." When I asked what other "stuff" was he said, "girls and swimming--there's nothing wrong with that, is there?"

The CBB enjoyed school. They rarely had any trouble with academic courses and if they did not like a teacher or a course, they would evaluate the course by the grade they received. "That's a pretty boring class, Ken told me, "but I get B's." If I would stop them in the halls with a casual greeting and ask them how they were doing, they would respond with a report of the swimming team's record, their individual times, and their girlfriends.

The CBB often got together on weekends. No one in the group had a car of his own but they seemed to have ready access to one of their parent's vehicles. Ken, Carl and one of the other CBB played guitar, folk mostly but they also played some rock, and they would get together on weekends and play or they would go out on dates. A

date usually consisted of attending a school play, ball game or dance or going to a movie in town.

As a group the CBB generated a reality that reaffirmed the value of school as a road to college and success. They rarely interacted with students who did not agree about the purpose of education.

Isolates[6]

Most of the students at South belonged to at least one peer group association and it was possible to be a member of two or more groups. When "J" of the Hempie group runs track he spends at least three hours a day with the track team and he considers himself a "part-time Hempie and a part-time jock." He spends less time with the Hempies during track season and he gets high less frequently. The group can accept his dual allegiance although every once in a while they drag him off to a car, with more drama than actual force, and demand that he get high with them. "J" would scream that they were "ruining a great athlete" but he did not resist for very long. Seasonal involvement with athletic teams provides "J" with access to his informal group of friends and the formal structured group of the team.

Female students in particular could associate with a variety of groups. There were all-female groups in the school such as the several groups of cheerleaders, secretarial students, and groups of females in other vocational blocks. Female students and female groups could also associate with two or more male groups.

Joan is a junior who has close friends in both the CBB and the Hempies and she represents the only informal contact these diverse groups had with each other. Joan seems to be aware of the group structure in the school and she does not discuss the members of one group while she is with the other. The CBB and the Hempies see each other many times during their school days but they never so much as exchange greetings or nod their heads at one another. Joan seemed equally comfortable with both groups but she did not spend a great deal of time with either of them. Joan takes school work seriously enough to share common outlooks and problems with the CBB. Although she does not use drugs, she is honest, open, and friendly and the Hempies consider her to be a friend. Joan alternates her wardrobe between "basic blues" and a skirt and blouse. The Hempies would compliment her when she dressed up and the CBB sometimes teased her if she wore her "grubby jeans" too often.

Joan enjoys having a great many friends and knowing "a lot of different people" as she puts it and she was genuinely popular with both groups. When I asked Joan who her friends were in school, she named members of several groups but Joan seems to have no one group of her own.

There were many students like Joan who did not belong to any one group but who were able to spend short periods of their day with

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[6]The term "isolate" refers to the students who have no group of friends with which they regularly associated. See, Philip A. Cusick, Inside High School (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1973), pp. 163-174.

several different groups. Donald is a white male who knows many of the Hempies but he does not use drugs and he was not uncomfortable when the Hempies would leave him to get high. Donald would often go to class alone and interact with the students there. He was comfortable in classes with the BJ and the CBB as well as in classes in which he interacted with few students. His social life was built around Church league basketball, the teams he played on in school and neighborhood activities. All of his activities in and out of school involved different groups and he interacted with many different students. He found school "boring" but he claimed that he liked to go to South because "it's easy to make friends and to know a lot of people."

Not all of the isolates were as happy as Joan and Donald. Many of them had no group of their own and interacted with very few people during the day. Ray was one of those students. He is a black junior who takes a three hour vocational block but he spends most of the time in that class by himself and after that class he rarely ever speaks to anyone else. His clothes reflect an all too apparent poverty. He wears sneakers during the coldest and snowiest days of winter and his ill fitting jacket barely covers his back. He stopped me several times in the halls to invite me to come to class with him or just to talk. During one of the unstructured days, we talked for almost an hour in the main lobby. He told me the story about the "six white guys he was looking for." According to Ray, they were trying to kill him because he had moved into an all white neighborhood and all of the white girls were in love with him and he was going to get them one by one."

As we talked five or six groups of black student groups circled the main hallways and walked by us several times. Everytime they would pass, Ray would look up at them looking anxious to exchange some greeting with them but they did not look in his direction. For the better part of an hour the groups passed by and not one of the students gave him even the slightest recognition. Finally, one sophomore boy walked by and nodded at Ray. Ray became very animated and he excitedly recounted several stories that involved himself and the sophomore boy. He told me that he could get that guy to help him fight off the whites that were after him. Ray was happy: someone had said hello to him that day.

Linda is a very pretty white senior. She is talented and intelligent. She is involved in the school plays and she is one of the few students who reads books outside of class but Linda is an isolate. Linda knows a lot of people in the school but she rarely spends much time with any one student. She claims that she has one friend in the school but they do not take classes together and they do not see each other very often. Linda says that things were lonelier for her last year and school was more boring. She said that she "used to smoke a lid [about one ounce] of marijuana a week" with one other girl because there was nothing else to do. Linda does not smoke as much marijuana this year but she still claims to be bored. Linda spends a good deal of her time alone but she did not like to eat alone or smoke cigarettes alone and it was not unusual for Linda to ask someone to have lunch or a cigarette with her.

Linda is well known in the school and her teachers do seem to take an interest in her and although she appreciates their caring,

she does not respond. She cuts class very often and her teachers often would stop her in the hall to invite her to class or to come in and talk with them. Linda would promise to see them but she often broke her engagements. Several times she promised to meet me at one class or another and then she would decide not to come without telling me. She would invariably apologize and tell me why she had not been there. "I just couldn't get it together for that class"; or, "I was too stoned"; or, "I fell asleep in the car" explained away her absences.

Linda is involved with school's dramatics and she is interested in literature and theater. Her guidance counselor would like her to go to college next year but she avoids making an appointment to see him. She waxes romantic about living in "Wyoming or Montana or someplace like that" with a communal family. She describes her own family as "just a bunch of people who live in the same house."

Linda's natural attractiveness is highlighted by a careful application of make-up--slightly in excess of the average amount worn by South's female students. She always has the attention of male students but she has no regular boyfriend though she dates often. She told me that "guys always want their egos boosted" and she claims to enjoy "deflating a few egos around here." Linda spent most of her day complaining of being bored, getting high, and castigating the people she referred to as "the snobs in this school."

Schedule Change

On December 11, Dr. Gordon sent a memorandum to the staff of South High School concerning the change in schedule from flexible modular scheduling to a more traditional system of five classes a day five days a week (five by five). The following excerpts from that document summarize his position.

To define the problem:

A. Problem in general: The implementation of the flexible modular schedule at [South] High School has been an on-going effort over the past two years. On the one hand, the program has been most successful for those students and staff equipped to handle it, while on the other hand, significant numbers of students have not been served. In an effort to minimize the problem of providing a basic education to all students, [South] began an every other day schedule of structured and unstructured time this fall. We are now at a position to implement another step in the [South] program. This involves retaining those that have succeeded . . . differentiated staffing, the evening school which serves 400 students, large group/small group instruction while discarding those that have not been judged appropriate--[flexible modular scheduling].

   Among the lessons learned at [South] is the hard fact that not all students can successfully negotiate blocks of unstructured time. Those that can, have accomplished a great deal during the two years. Those that can't have failed to show significant growth. Because the number of students not exhibiting desired growth is over 30%, the task became one of developing a plan with which to keep the advantages as listed above while providing a structure for those who need it. Unstructured time should be available for those who can utilize and have earned it while those who cannot handle it will be placed into structured situations and be encouraged to develop a capacity to earn such flexibility.

B. Specifics of problem:

   1. Data on student achievement: The number and percentage of high school students receiving "E's" (failing grades) across the [city] School District have been compared over the last two years. The

> data indicate a higher percentage of failure at [South] than in the other three schools. In contrast the number of [South] students receiving "A" grades has remained consistent with the other high schools. Drop-out rates between secondary schools also remain consistent across the district.
> 2. Data on student class attendance: The number of students missing classes over the second semester has been documented. Comparisons between structured and unstructured days this semester have been made. Differences in 90% of the courses affected by unstructured days indicate more absenteeism on the unstructured days.
> 3. Personnel available to maintain open labs and student centers: Over the past year, three differentiated staffing positions have been cut at [South] due to decreasing enrollment. The positions have had an effect on supplying support staff to keep learning stations beyond the regular classrooms open.
> 4. Availability of extended day program for students to attain additional credits: This fall [South] has offered courses for credit to students through the extended day program. As the program develops and course offerings are extended, students desiring additional credits can be served.

The administration was faced with a problem. According to their most recent survey, 85 percent of the students answered "yes" to a question which asked if they thought "the modular schedule has more advantages than disadvantages." (see appendix C, page 185). On the other hand, 30 percent of South's students received one or more failing grades during the second semester of the 1972-73 school year. This was nearly double the failure rate of the city's other three high schools. (see appendix C, page 188).

Dr. Gordon told me that the flexible modular schedule was "just not working." He claimed that the school had to be "accountable" for all of the students and with 30 percent to 40 percent of the students receiving one or more failing grades during each grading period, he did not believe that the school was serving the student

population well enough. Dr. Gordon and several of the staff members indicated that the school was under fire from "downtown." The Central Administration did not like South's failure rate and they wanted South to "tighten up" and produce statistics that would be comparable to the other high schools in the city. Staff members cite the reduction in the paraprofessionals as an indication that South was losing administrative favor downtown.

There was another troublesome statistic: the cut rate. South collected data and reported the Comparative Absence Records of South students. (see appendix C page 186). This data was gathered during the first marking period of the 1973-74 school year. During this period the number of students receiving one or more failing grades had risen 8.3 percent from the previous year and stood at 38.3 percent of the student body. The school found that the students were absent from individual classes at the rate of 15 percent on "regular days" (structured) and 25.66 percent on "flexible days" (unstructured). The school concluded that the alternating days of structure and unstructure were not the solution to the scheduling problem and they also concluded that a move toward all structured days would lower the absentee rate and make them more accountable.[7] At first glance this appears to be reasonable but the statistics need further explanation.

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[7]Dr. Gordon's memorandum of December 11, refers to those students who have "exhibited desired growth" and who have "earned unstructured time" and those who have not earned unstructured time. The new schedule would impose structure on all of the students and the decision of who has earned unstructured time in the future would be left to individual teachers working with their students.

The cut rate for some classes differed considerably from the mean cut rate of their sample. (see appendix C page 186). Students were absent from Physics, for example, at a rate of 6.8 percent on structured days and only 1 percent on the unstructured days when mean cut rate of their sample was almost 26 percent. Students cut American government at the rate of 24.1 percent on structured days and 51.5 percent on unstructured days. They cut Life Science at the rate of 30.6 percent on structured days and 64.7 percent on unstructured days. The school's data suggest that several courses were significantly above the mean for student absence and several were significantly below. Why were students attending Physics, Economics, Geometry and the Secretarial and Residential-Construction vocational blocks with great regularity but cutting almost 50 percent of their Life Science classes and over 34 percent of Advanced Metals class and almost 38 percent of their Government classes? Was it the schedule? the teachers? the curriculum? or the students who were enrolled in those classes? The administration did not have the answers for these questions and they did not want to make inferences from the data beyond concluding that the alternation of unstructured days and structured days was not working. Dr. Gordon did explain the low cut rate in Physics by saying that this course "attracts better students." By and large this is true but it does not account for the Hempies, dopers and non-academic students who regularly attended Physics but cut their other courses at or above the mean rate.

The school had data at their disposal which they consciously chose to ignore--or perhaps more appropriately stated, they had access to information stored in the computer which they did not wish to

retrieve. At an informal meeting of the lead teachers and the representative of the district's Office of Research and Evaluation, the researcher asked if they wanted to know who was doing the cutting.

It was possible to develop a profile of the students who were absent from class an excessive number of times. Were they the blacks? the Chicanos? the poor? the students from broken homes? The lead teachers did not want this information. Whatever suspicions they harbored concerning the students who cut classes, they did not want a quantification of the data.

The faculty was badly divided by the proposed change. Rumors of debate and heated faculty meetings filtered into the students' world. There were rumors that some of the teachers would resign if the change was implemented and some members of the faculty did check with their union representatives to see if the change would be contrary to provisions in their contracts. According to one member of the faculty, the teachers were promised five years in which to make the system work and now after only two and one half years the system was being abandoned. He claimed that he did not know how to handle flexible modular scheduling when he first came to the school and only now after a great deal of work, and effort was it beginning to work in his classes. He was angry that he would not be given the opportunity to try it over a longer period of time. This feeling was shared by many of the teachers. At one point, a vote of the faculty indicated nearly a 50-50 split on whether they preferred to retain the old system or adopt the new proposal. Although the administrators did not address the students, many teachers discussed the issue in class

and the students made up mental lists of those teachers and administrators who were "for" and those who were "against" the mods.

The proposed schedule change would not alter the schedules of approximately 40 percent of the student body. During the fall semester, there were 322 students enrolled in three hour vocational blocks, 147 students in the Co-op program (released-time-for-work) and 31 students who attended the Academic Interest Center[8] for extended periods during the day. The students in these programs would not be greatly effected by the schedule change because the modular schedule had had the least impact on these programs. A student enrolled in a three hour vocational block had that block every day from 8 a.m. to 11 a.m. The alternating days of structure and non-structure effected only the one or two classes he took in the afternoons. Jeff, of the Hempie group, for example was on the Co-op program and he was released every afternoon to work. The alternating days of structure and non-structure effected only the two academic courses he took in the mornings, and similarly for others.

The student groups that would be effected by the change had an issue that could potentially unite them. Despite the differences in their social realities, the modular system was someting that 60 percent of the students shared in common. Tony claimed that this was the first time that the students at South had been "excited about anything." Several groups were meeting simultaneously to discuss the schedule change and possible student reactions to it. The groups

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[8]The academic interest center is designed to serve all of the schools in the district. It provides special courses that could not be staffed or draw enough students in any one school. Mr. H., the Physics teacher, teaches an astronomy course at the AIC, and John takes a class in modern dance there.

had rarely communicated with each other previously and even now they did not know what other groups were doing about the schedule. I was perhaps the only individual in the school who knew that there were several diverse groups meeting about the same issue. It certainly would have helped them if they had joined in a common effort but my role precluded any action on my part that would have brought them together.

The various groups met in different places and at different times to discuss possible actions and protests they could engage in to prevent the school from abandoning the modular system. There was something ironic about most of the meetings. The school encouraged all sorts of ad hoc groups and afforded the students the use of conference rooms in which to meet. The students were meeting in the school's conference rooms during class time and drinking the school's coffee while planning protests against the school's rigidity.

The Hempies met only briefly with a group called the Students Rights Committee. This group was originally assembled to deal with alleged infringements of the students' legal rights by the school but they had not met prior to the issue of the schedule change and they had only three brief meetings in all. A friend of the Hempies named Barry was the leader of this movement. He is a member of the drug subculture but because he takes most of his courses in the Careers area, he did not associate with the Hempies during the day and he rarely saw them after school. Barry, even by the Hempies relaxed standards, is a "freak." He wears his hair long, spends a great deal of his time hanging around the halls, and he always sports a roach

clip[9] from his belt. During the time I was there, Barry had been arrested for possession of drugs and violation of the city's curfew ordinance, and he was in constant danger of being expelled from school. He had been suspended once for possession of marijuana and both Barry and the school administrators feel he cannot function well in a traditional school setting. Next year he plans to attend the city's alternative high school which is designed expressly for students who have difficulty adjusting to the structure of high schools in the city. The school will open next year for its first class and Barry hopes to be one of its students.

Barry had led an unsuccessful student walk-out in the junior high school and he wanted to try and organize some sort of walk out or strike to protest the schedule change. He asked "J", Tony, Jeff and myself to be part of his committee. We were joined by Ruben, a Chicano who usually wore a wide-brimmed purple hat, and Harry a slender black male who was a good friend of Ruben. He too wore a hat--a black wide-brim--and sometimes he also wore a gold earring.

Ruben was quite outspoken and he had gone to see Dr. Gordon on his own to protest the schedule change and ask for a student assembly to discuss the issue. The principal refused to allow the assembly and he explained to Ruben the problems caused by the failures and the cutting. As he told all of the students who came to see him, the school was just not "doing the job" it was supposed to under the mod system. Ruben ran into me in the halls after his meeting with Dr. Gordon and he was very angry.

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[9]A device which is designed to hold small marijuana cigarettes

"Sadistics, sadistics (statistics), all he gives me is sadistics"! Thirty-five percent of this, sixty percent of that. I'm not a sadistic, man! I'm a person! I don't understand sadistics. All I know is I don't like the change"!

It is somewhat difficult to understand all of Ruben's anger because he rarely comes to school and he often cuts classes when he was there. He was in the Co-op program that required students to come to school in the morning and work in the afternoon. Many of those students habitually cut their classes and often they cut the whole morning but according to the teacher who supervised their work, they rarely missed a day on the job and they were rarely late for work. Although Ruben and the others on Co-op would not be affected by the change in schedule, he felt it was his "responsibility to speak out against something [he did] not like."

Barry, Ruben and Harry came to school so irregularly that any sustained action to protest the schedule change became impossible. The Student Rights Committee wanted to take radical action and stage a protest or a strike or a walkout but they had no idea how to get the mass of students involved in their programs. After talking about it in two additional meetings, they decided that it was impossible to organize and the group broke up. Tony's optimism for getting the students united was short lived and he and the rest of the Hempies attempted no other serious protests or activities to forestall the change or protest it once it came.

The BJ and the other groups in the black community did not organize into formal organizations to deal with the schedule change. Dwight told me that he had been in the school for three years and he

was tired of them changing the system but that there was little that anyone could do. He also claimed that if the new system was offensive enough to the students, they would walk out on their own and no one would need to organize a strike or a protest. Bob and William believed that it was impossible to get South's students together on any issue and they thought it was best to accept the change.

Allan of the BA wanted the students to unite behind the Class Steering Committees and turn them into viable political organizations which could present a list of grievances to the principals. He was clearly hurt when the students bypassed the Committees because they were, in "J's" terms," tools of the administration." Allan later claimed that the modular system was too difficult a system because it "put all the burden on the students." He said he would be happier with the five by five system anyway because the work would be easier and "you would know where you stand in every class."

The CBB had been the most vocal supporters of the modular system but although they were disappointed to hear that they were being cancelled, they claimed that they would go along with anything that the school adopted. Carl asked me in confidence if I knew who the students were who were causing all the "problems."

"You spend a lot of time in the halls," he said, "who is ruining the system for the rest of us? Is it the freaks"?

Everyone was looking for someone to blame for the schedule change. When they blamed the administration, they would point to Mr. Wade who they considered to have been an enemy of the mods all along and by his own admission, he was not a supporter of the system. Some of the students blamed "those people downtown" but they were never

able to identify them for me. Most of the students blamed other students in the school. Many students came up to me and in frustration, accused a variety of groups for their problem. One white male told me,

"It's not my fault that the students are failing; it's the hippies. I know a lot of them and they're screwing it up for the rest of us. I do my work. I plan to go to college."

I asked him if he cut classes and when he responded that he had, I told him that the school was probably upset with him too.

"Yeah," he said, "but I'm passing. The hippies fail everything."

Another student standing near us believed the fault lies with the blacks.

"It's the damn niggers. They are always so loud in the halls and stuff that the school gets uptight."

Most of the students blamed someone else for the change. The conversation I had with the two students was conducted in the legal smoking area but at an illegal time when we were supposed to be in class.

Linda summed up the majority sentiment of the students. She said: "This school is always changing and there ain't shit you can do about it"!

Not all of the students were so resigned. A group of college bound white students organized a committee and called themselves The Concerned Students for Better Education (CSBE). Daniel, one of the leaders of this group of students, understood publicity better than the leaders of the other groups. He circulated petitions which nearly

everyone in the school signed, and he and another student hung posters which read:

"Five by Five is Bold Jive,"

"Preserve the System," and,

"The Mods are the Best, Our Teachers do the Rest."

The CSBE also had access to a mimeograph machine and they put out several bulletins. One of them read:

IT'S NOT TOO LATE

> The administration would have you believe that the scheduling system for second semester has already been decided. IT HASN'T! We can still save our system. This can be done with the strength of present student, faculty, and parent opposition to the changes which have been proposed. We must stand up for our educational rights. With a united effort we can prevent any undesirable change. Don't be discouraged! We still can save our system by joining together. Show your support by wearing S.O.S. buttons and signing petitions asking to be heard. Ask your teachers to stand firm against the proposed change and have your parents let the administration know of their opposition. Join together now for the betterment of education.
>
> Concerned Students for
> Better Education

The CSBE urged students to wear "S.O.S. Buttons" (Save our System). Many teachers also joined the students and wore buttons and signed petitions asking that the mods be retained. The CSBE also contacted a lawyer from Legal Aide to determine if they had any rights to demand a certain form of education and also to find out if it was possible for them to stage a walkout or a strike. The CSBE drew up elaborate plans to contact parents, the press and the local television stations if and when they staged their protests.

The lawyer gave the students nearly fifty hours of his time and he listened with great interest and respect to the questions and

problems the students presented to him. His patience and willingness to hear the students out won him a great deal of respect in the school. He spent two hours in a meeting with Dr. Gordon and Daniel trying to find out if there was any hope for a compromise. He later told me that despite the students dissatisfaction with the new system, there was almost nothing they could do to fight it.

The CSBE tried to enlist parent support for the retention of the modular system. They organized a phone-calling campaign and asked parents to speak out on the schedule issue and they arranged several tables at South's Open House for Parents to answer questions about the system. Their efforts were disappointing. Less than 100 parents came to the open house and very few of them were willing to wear S.O.S. buttons or sign petitions. The phone calls taught the students something the administration had already known: most of the parents were either uninterested or uninformed about the modular system. Some students were offended by the rudeness and abusive language the parents used on the phone and the opposition they expressed toward the mods.

The administrators believe that the parents were the single greatest force which caused the demise of the modular system. The head of the guidance department claims that the parents never did understand the system despite a bi-lingual newsletter that the school sent out every month which explained the system and reported what was going on in the school. He said,

> The parents call up and say; 'Hey what's a six day cycle'? . . . I can't explain this system to many people. . . . It hurts me when I realize that they don't understand me. I say we have three mods to the hour and nineteen mods in a day and a six day cycle and

> some people thought the kids were going to school on Saturday! Then some of them would call and say, 'Where's my kid'? I'd say, 'Well, he's on unstructured time right now.' Then they would say, 'Well would you get him for me'? I'd have to say that we didn't exactly know where he was. 'He may be in one of the resource centers on F Day.' The they'd say, 'F day what's that? You mean he goes to different places on different days? What the hell do you mean 'unstructured time'?

Mr. Wade, the assistant principal for Student Services, also claims that it is very difficult to get parents involved with the school unless the child was threatened with suspension.[10] I asked him if there was any other way to get the parents to come in to talk about the problems of their children.

> The answer is absolutely no; I've tried it. I can't help it but that's the way they [the parents] are. But the minute I send a letter out to the parents and say your son is suspended and cannot come to school, they'll be in the next day. It's human nature. I called a woman a couple of weeks ago and said 'could you come in and see me? Your son is here . . . I'm not going to suspend him right now but I want you to come in because I want to nip this in the bud. . . . She said, 'Gee I can't make it for two or three weeks. I'm so busy I really can't make it . . .'. I said, 'Well in that case, I really don't want him to miss any school but I'm going to have to suspend him.' She said, 'Just a minute Mr. [Wade] , I'll be up in ten minutes.' She was there in ten minutes.

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[10]"Suspension" refers to the school punishment that denies a student his right to attend school for a three day period. The most common causes of suspension at South were Truancy, Drinking, and Insubordination. Often a student could prevent his suspension by bringing his parents to school. There were 162 suspensions during the first semester of the 1973-1974 school year.

"Expulsions" refers to the school punishment that permanently denies students the right to attend school. Very few students in the city are ever expelled because an expelled student is denied use of night school facilities including the program where he could earn a high school diploma. Students with serious discipline problems are asked to voluntarily "drop out" of school so that some future time, they can attend night school. Fourteen students dropped out of school during the first semester.

> Three weeks when there was no suspension, ten minutes with suspension.

Dr. Gordon claims that the community is the single most important element in determining the success or failure of an innovative program. I asked him what advice he would give to another principal who wanted to try a flexible modular schedule or any other innovation in education. He said,

> The first thing I'd tell him is not to listen primarily to educators. Telephone calls should probably be made to key people in the community. This is crucial . . . I'm saying that educators can't just listen to themselves on this topic.

Student support for a strike or a walk out never materialized. Attendance at CSBE meetings dwindled to less than ten students. The momentary unity the students evidenced concerning the schedule dissipated. The majority of the faculty voted to support the new schedule, the administrators had always supported it, and the students could not organize the divergent groups into a solid front to oppose it.

On January 14, Dr. Gordon issued another Memorandum concerning "Information Related to the Schedule Change." According to that memorandum, the new schedule would begin on February 11 and every day would have the same time schedule:

7:45-8:00	Teacher planning
8:00-9:00	First period and announcements. Students are to remain in their first period class for announcements which begin at 8:50
9:05-9:55	Second Period
10:00-10:50	Third Period
10:50-12:20	Fourth Period (student activities)
12:25-1:15	Fifth Period
1:20-2:10	Sixth Period (school dismissal at 2:10)
2:10-2:40	Seventh Period (student activities)
2:40-3:40	Teacher planning

Dr. Gordon emphasized the "internal flexibility" of the new schedule. The resource centers, the library, and the Instructional Media Center would still be available for student use. Individual teachers were now responsible for providing the diversity of instruction and flexibility of the curriculum that had previously been built into the modular system. Internal flexibility was described in Dr. Gordon's memorandum:

> Flexible time for students:
>
> 1 Students may be sent to a resource center, the Instructional Media Center, or the Career Center, by following the procedures outlined for these centers.
>
> 2 Any two or more teachers by mutual agreement may let a student work extra time in a given class (example: the English teacher and Art teacher may allow a student to miss an English class so that the student can spend two hours in Art class).
>
> 3 A student activity period is designed for students to participate in the following activities:
>
> a. Resource Center use (homework, etc.)
> b. Lunch
> c. Enrichment activities
> d. Tutoring
> e. Student Meetings (e.g., assemblies, steering committees, clubs, etc.)
> f. Individual and group counseling
> g. Extension to regular class activities (e.g., band marching, co-ed physical education trip, etc.)
> h. Athletic activities

The ninety minute lunch hour (student activity period) was designed to provide students with time to "socialize" and meet with their teachers in informal activities and clubs. There were also school planned activities that Dr. Gordon outlined:

> Lunch Hour:
>
> 1. Lunches will be served in B-101 and B-102 from 10:50-12:20.
> 2. There will be Co-ed swim daily in the swimming pool from 11:10-12:10

3. The gym will be open daily from 11:10-12:10 for physical activities (e.g. basketball, badminton, intramurals etc.)
4. The student operated radio station may provide music in the halls during student activity periods.
5. Student dances may be planned from 11:20 to 12:10 on one day per week.
6. The media and resource centers will be open during the student activity period and after school daily.

Dr. Gordon encouraged the teachers to discuss the new system and the reasons for the change with their classes. He did not allow the Steering Committees to call a general meeting of the classes and he did not address the students in a body.[11] On January 15, during T.C.G., Dr. Gordon officially announced the new schedule change. Perhaps due to poor timing, the announcement was made shortly after students were leaving their T.C.G. and going to their classes and activities. Although the announcement could be heard in the halls, very few students stopped to listen. Thursday, January 31 was the last "unstructured day" in the history of South High School and the CSBE carried around a mock coffin on which they had written, "The Mods--R.I.P."

The effect of the new scheduling system on the various students and student groups will be discussed in Chapter Five.

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[11]Dr. Gordon told me that the city schools rarely permitted assemblies because they were potentially volatile situations and fights often broke out.

CHAPTER V

ANALYSIS OF DATA

This research was guided by several exploratory questions which were enumerated in Chapter One. This chapter contains an analysis of the data presented in Chapter Four and responses to the exploratory questions.

1. What is the nature of student groups? What unites the members of a group? What is the extent of social interaction between various groups?

The fact that students spend most of their school day in voluntary peer group associations has been described by many researchers.[1] The relatively minor role played by academics in these groups has also been documented.[2] It was found during this study that the attitudes of students toward school varied from group to group and that the academic aspects of school were a minor component of student reality in all but the Black Academic group. What accounts for these differences between groups? What unites the various members of a group and how do they develop and maintain an "attitude" toward school?

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[1]See for example: James S. Coleman, The Adolescent Society (New York: The Free Press of Glencoe, 1961); Philip A. Cusick, Inside High School (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1973); C. Wayne Gordon, The Social System of the High School (Glencoe, Illinois: The Free Press, 1957); August B. Hollingshead, Elmtown's Youth (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1949).

[2]See for example: Claude E. Buxton, Adolescents in School (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973); Coleman, The Adolescent Society; Cusick, Inside High School; Gordon, The Social System of the High School.

At first glance, all of the students at South High School appear to have a great deal in common. They are all teenagers who spend the major part of their day in the same building, subject to the same rules and regulations. Most of the students live within walking distance of one another. Almost all of them were born in the city in which they now live and they have attended the same public school system for between ten and twelve years. Yet their habits in school and the attitudes toward education vary considerably. Drug use is an example. For some twenty to forty percent of the students, drugs--principally marijuana and alcohol--constitute a fundamental element in their social reality while perhaps an equal percentage of the students have not even experimented with these drugs. In order to understand this and the other variations between students it is necessary to consider the "perspective" generated by the individuals in their groups.

In Chapter Two, "group perspective" was defined as "modes of thought and behavior and action developed by a group in a particular situation. They are customary ways members of a group think about situations and act in them."[3] The concept that a group of individuals develops responses in order to act in certain situations needs some further elaboration here. According to Shibutani,

> A perspective is an ordered view of one's world--what is taken for granted about the attitudes of various objects, events and human nature. It is an order of things remembered and expected as well as things actually perceived, an organizational conception of what is plausible and what is possible;

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[3]Howard S. Becker, et al, Boys in White (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), p. 36.

> it constitutes a matrix through which one perceives his environment. The fact that men have such ordered perspectives enables them to conceive of their ever changing world as relatively stable, orderly, and predictable.[4]

Based on their individual perceptions of any given situation, the members of a group interact and create a group perspective and develop reasonable ways of constructing their behavior based on these perceptions. The explanation for the different behavior and attitudes exhibited by various student groups is directly related to the manner in which the group defines the social situation of the school and their role in the school. The behavior of each of the groups is then considered "reasonable" based on the group perspective. However, though the behavior may be reasonable for the group, the perspective that generated it may have been based on inaccurate interpretations of the situation or "selective perceptions" of the environment. According to Shibutani,

> There is abundant experimental evidence to show that perception is selective; that the organization of perceptual experience depends in part upon what is anticipated and what is taken for granted. Judgments rest upon perceptions, and people with different outlooks define identical situations differently, responding selectively to the environment.[5]

Thus, "J" of the Hempie group could claim that the schedule change from flexible modular to "five by five" was just another example of "our treatment at the hands of the running dogs of capitalist-imperialism" and Ken of the College Bound Boys could maintain that the

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[4]Tomatsu Shibutani, "Reference Groups as Perspectives." Symbolic Interaction, edited by Jerome G. Manis and Bernard N. Meltzer (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1967), p. 161.

[5]Ibid., p. 162.

schedule change was "probably best for the majority of the school." While the explanation provided by Shibutani accounts for the different perceptions of the same occurance, it does not explain why the perceptions are different.

One of the inherent weaknesses of the participant observer methodology is that the researcher enters an ongoing social situation. I was not present when the individuals began their regular group associations and the factors which drew them together are unknown.[6] The group in school is accepted as a given and an attempt is made to understand the group as it is without the knowledge of how it was formed. Another weakness of the participant observation methodology in the public school setting is that the researcher is largely unaware of the variations in home environment between the individual members of the group or between groups. It is simply not possible to enter the homes of the students for extended periods of time. There is, however, considerable philosophic reasoning and empirical evidence to indicate that early experiences with education and the economic and social background of the family strongly influence the attitudes of students toward public schools.[7]

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[6]When the students were asked why they associated with certain groups, they usually responded that they did not know and that when they arrived at South they "just started hanging around together."

[7]See for example: John Dewey, Experience and Education (New York: Collier Books, 1973), and Christopher Jencks et al, Inequality (New York: Basic Books, 1972).

It seems reasonable to say that the individuals begin school with varying habits and dispositions toward education. Some of South's students live in homes where one or both parents are college graduates and there are heavy doses of middle class aspirations while other students come from homes in which the values of education are not stressed. The home environment coupled with the students' early experiences in school produced certain habits and dispositions toward education by the time they reached high school.

When the students arrived at South, they entered into voluntary school associations with other students who shared similar perceptions about education and the purpose of school. Regardless of their attitudes toward school, the individual can usually associate with a group of students which shares similar attitudes. They will be influenced by the group as well as have an influence on the other members in the group. According to Blumer,

> . . . group action takes the form of fitting together individual lines of action. Each individual aligns his action to the actions of others by ascertaining what they are doing or what they intend to do--that is, by getting the meaning of their acts. For [George Herbert] Mead, this is done by the individual 'taking the role of others--either the role of a specific person or the role of the group (Mead's 'generalized other'). In taking such roles the individual seeks to ascertain the intention or direction of the acts of others. He forms and aligns his own action on the basis of such interpretation of the acts of others. This is the fundamental way in which group actions take place in human society.[8]

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[8]Herbert Blumer, "Society as Symbolic Interaction." Symbolic Interaction, edited by Jerome G. Manis and Bernard N. Meltzer (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1967), p. 142.

Several of the researchers cited in Chapter Two maintain that the group life of adolescents in school not only is the dominant source of influence on their lives but that it also constitutes a "subculture." James Coleman, for example, wrote,

> The student is 'cut off' from the rest of society, forced inward toward his own age group, made to carry out his whole social life with others his own age. With his fellows, he comes to constitute a small society, one that has most of its important interactions within itself, and maintains only a few threads of connection with the outside adult society. . . .It is hard to realize that separate subcultures can exist right under the very noses of adults--subcultures with languages all their own, with special symbols, and, most importantly, with value systems that may differ from adults.[9]

Many researchers believe that Coleman overstated the case.[10] Adolescents carry on extensive interactions with adults outside the school and they exhibit many of the same concerns as other members of their social class.[11] Their daily contact with their parents also tends to minimize the concept of a unique age-grade subculture. It is perhaps more helpful to consider the adolescent as an individual with several reference groups--his school group being just one of these reference groups. The adolescent is influenced by the expectations placed on him in his role as son or daughter, brother or sister as well as age-grade associations. According to Brookover,

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[9]James Coleman, The Adolescent Society, p. 3.

[10]See for example: David C. Epperson, "A Re-Assessment of Indices of Parental Influences in the Adolescent Society," American Sociological Review, Vol. 29 (February, 1964), 93-96; Frederick Elkin and William Westley, "The Myth of Adolescent Culture," American Sociological Review, Vol. 20 (December, 1955), 68-684; Marie Jahoda and Neil Warren, "Myths of Youth," Sociology of Education, Vol. 38 (Winter, 1965), 138-149.

[11]See for example: August Hollingshead, Elmtown's Youth.

> In societies with an extensive range of interaction such as we have in the United States, the significant reference groups or persons may vary greatly from one situation to another. For example, the adolescent may employ peer group values in his evaluation of himself as a dancer. The same students may also use the standards of his parents or other adults to appraise his performance in algebra or history.[12]

Viewed in this context, adolescence is not a period of sub-cultural rejection of adults norms and values but a period in an individual's life when he has multiple reference groups and there are multiple expectations placed on his behavior. He is not unlike the adult who holds down a job which requires different standards of behavior than those required by his family, church, and bowling team.

The group in school becomes one significant referent for the student and the groups norms and values guide his evaluations of his own actions. The expectations of some school groups differed considerably from the expectations of the home and the school. Those students for example, who smoked marijuana experienced more "role conflict"--conflicting role expectations--than those who did not. Those students on the other hand, who planned to attend college in compliance with group, parental, and school expectations experienced "role congruence"--closely aligned expectations from two or more reference groups.

The school group provided a significant referent for the individuals in that group but there was very little interaction between groups and except for the expectations of the school, they had no

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[12]Wilbur B. Brookover and Edsel L. Erickson, Society, School and Learning (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1969), p. 70.

common school referent. The groups were isolated and there was no group that was considered the leader in social affairs, clothing styles or school leadership. The students existed in separate social worlds under the organizational umbrella of South High School. Blacks seldom interacted with whites. Dope smokers seldom interacted with non-dope smokers. The college-bound seldom interacted with the non-college bound. When there were serious differences in the orientation of the students' reality, interaction that could cause conflict was avoided. The issue of race was never discussed between white and black groups and drug users were never heard to argue the virtues of drugs with non-drug users. As a testament to the research which indicates the lack of importance of academics in the student world, successful students could interact with unsuccessful students--this was not a sufficiently significant issue which could cause conflict between groups or individuals.

The informal structure of the students' social world tends to divide the students into groups which respond to the school based on the perspective of its members. The various groups do not interact and the school does not openly encourage interaction. The lack of a viable student political organization and the lack of school wide activities and assemblies allows the students to perpetuate their own perspectives. The lack of focus and centrality provided by the school leaves the student body fragmented into peer associations with few inter-group contacts.

When the change in schedule was announced, each of the student groups interpreted it differently. There was little communication between groups and each of the groups, based on the perceptions of

the individuals and the perspective generated by their interaction, accomodated the schedule change to their social world. The new schedule really did not have a drastic impact on any of the groups. It allowed the students to carry on most of their former activities and at the same time it pleased the administration.

During the ninety minute "activity period" the students were able to associate with their groups. The activity period permitted the Hempies to get together, cruise the halls, and if they chose, they could go out to the parking lot to get high. The CBB and the BA could work in the resource centers and the library and complete all of their school work during the day. The black students were able to congregate in the black hallway and engage in the activities of their various groups. The BJ were graduating seniors who accepted the change as a predictable aspect of a school that had changed every year since they had been there. The yearly changes in the schedule and the curriculum were accepted by all of the groups as part of their social reality around which they had to build their group activities.

The administrators seemed to like the change. The halls were no longer crowded with students who were supposed to be in class. The school looked more orderly and because the students were now forced to attend class, complete assignments, and exhibit minimal compliance, the failure rate decreased and the overall grades went up. The school looked better to outsiders. The statistics indicating the failure rate and the cut rate were now comparable to the other schools in the city and there were no students loitering in the building. But there was no basic change in the student realities. School was no more or no less meaningful to the various groups. The teachers who had been

successful under the mods, were still successful under the five by five scheduling.[13] Good teaching seems to have transcended the scheduling system. Mr. H., the Physics teacher who had been a strong supporter of the mods, claimed that "Physics will be cool no matter what kind of scheduling we have." The immediate effect of the schedule change was cosmetic: the school had not really changed at all, but it looked better to outsiders.

2. What is it like to attend high school from the perspective of the students? What are students' concerns? What are their fears, hopes, and aspirations? What do they want out of school?

South High School was a different place and it served a different function for each of the groups studied. The Hempies viewed the school as a place to meet their friends, to hang around and talk about the personal issues and problems of their lives. The BJ viewed the school as both a present social reality which provided fun and athletic teams and also as a vehicle which could get them into college. The group perspective generated by the BA established academic success as the highest priority in their social world and the CBB would play the "school game" as long as it allowed them to swim and flirt and did not require that they work too hard. The peer group is the basic unit of organization with the social structure of the high school.

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[13]The impact of the schedule change was felt most severely by the teachers. The schedule that they had labored with and in which they had invested considerable time and energy was eliminated. Several teachers spoke of resigning and many were resentful that the change was forced on them. It was not immediately apparent how the teachers' attitudes effected the students perception of the school and the new schedule.

South High School contained many diverse groups which created and maintained realities based on their interactions and interpretations of their social world.[14]

Although the school was a different place for every group, the environment of South High School provided elements of commonality for all of the groups and individuals. Unlike the students of "Horatio Gates High School" that Cusick studied,[15] the students at South did discuss their teachers and the school administrators outside of class. The teachers at South were real people in the students' eyes. The students often discussed what they considered to be good teaching and good classes and they had definite ideas concerning what constituted poor teaching. (Poor teachers were those teachers who, according to the students, lectured too often and did not have a real interest in the students or the subject matter.) Many of the teachers shared a good deal of their personal lives with their classes and the students appreciated the trust and respect these teachers showed for them. There was a feeling among the students that many of the teachers "cared" about them as individuals. Cusick studied a school with a traditional scheduling system but the difference in student attitudes cannot be explained only by indicating that South used a flexible modular schedule.

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[14]I encountered many groups which are not represented in this reporting. There were groups of "New Christians" who met every day before school and tried to live what they called a "Christian life." They did not use drugs and they claim that they have found new peace since learning to "love Jesus." There were groups of "hall freaks" who lived from rock concert to rock concert. They would rarely miss a concert within 90 miles of the school. There were many other diverse--perhaps deviant--groups but their irregular school attendance made it difficult to study them.

[15]Cusick, Inside High School.

The flexible modular schedule had provided the students and teachers with a great deal of contact in small, informal classes. All of the students had at least one teacher in the school who they felt they could "relate to." Was this a product of the scheduling or the personalities of the teachers? The flexible modular schedule afforded the opportunity for increased teacher-student dialogue but not all of the teachers took advantage of it. Some small classes with only ten or fifteen students were characterized by the teacher talking and the students listening or sleeping. It was clear that the schedule did not increase dialogue between teachers and students in all of the classes. On the other hand, many very creative teachers were attracted to the school because it had a flexible modular schedule that would allow them to work in a less structured setting. It seems that the flexible modular schedule did not increase informality and teacher-student interaction by itself but it attracted teachers who wanted this type of educational setting and it encouraged their efforts and innovative ideas.

One of the most common complaints offered by the students was that they could not talk to their parents about many of the substantive issues in their lives. The students claimed that it was difficult if not impossible, to discuss issues of sex, morality, politics, drugs, and hair length with their parents. The school atmosphere of informality and candor allowed most of the students to discuss personal problems with their teachers in class or in private conversations. In many ways the teachers at South acted as "interpreters" between the students and their parents, explaining the parents problems to the students and helping to promote a dialogue between them.

Mr. R., the Psychology teacher, seemed to be aware of the communication breakdown between parent and student. The students in his class often complained of their inability to discuss issues with their parents and Mr. R. structured several activities which were designed to facilitate dialogue. While working on a unit entitled "Child Growth and Development," Mr. R. asked the students to interview their mothers regarding the circumstances of their birth. The students were to find out from their mothers where they--the students--had been born, if they were born in a hospital or at home, if it had been a full-term pregnancy and if there were any unusual circumstances or events surrounding their birth.

Mr. R. shared the information he knew concerning his own birth with the students. In the two Psychology classes I observed, I estimate that more than 70 percent of the students complied with the assignment and those who did claimed that they found it very enlightening. One of the students told the class that this had been "the first time" he had "talked to his 'old lady' and she ain't too bad after all."

Mr. R. had seized on an issue of maternal expertise and by structuring an interview he provided a vehicle for dialogue. Most of the students reported that their mothers were glad to talk about their pregnancies and deliveries and the students were able to see their mothers in a new light: a unique expert in the area of their own births. However, as was stated in Chapter Four, not every student had a class in which he could discuss personal issues or even take an active role. It was possible to follow a student for an entire week

and observe that not one of his classes required any more from him than he occupy one of the seats and "pay attention" to what the teacher was doing.

Although group perspectives varied and group attitudes and orientations toward school differed, three common concerns of students seemed to emerge throughout the study. The students wanted the school to provide them with an opportunity to: (1) engage in a serious exploration of self, (2) develop their academic skills, and (3) help them with a career choice.

The most frequently expressed concern of the students was a desire to understand themselves, their friends, and their parents. This concern varied in intensity from group to group and while it was almost a preoccupation with the Hempies, it was discussed less by the CBB and the other groups. Overall, the exploration of themselves and their values was the most pervasive concern of the students at South. They were interested in exploring their values, the values of society and the values of their parents in both an affective and a cognitive manner. The students in the Psychology class liked to explore their "feelings" and the "feelings" of the class but the students in Philosophy class enjoyed their first assignment for the term which required that they "prove that they exist." Who am I? What am I doing here? What is my relationship to other people and How do I know? were questions the students were interested in exploring.

One of the reasons for the success of the schedule change was that there was not a great deal of academic work required by the school

and the students did not have to do homework after school. The CBB and the BA had lauded the virtues of the modular system because they claimed that they could get all of their work done in school. They worried that the imposition of the "five by five" system would force them to bring school work home but this fear did not materilize. There was very little school work required for most courses under the modular system and even less under the "five by five" system. The students were self-conscious about the lack of serious effort that was expected from them. Jeff, of the Hempies, claimed that all that was necessary to maintain a "B" average in the school was to "draw a map, make a collage and copy a few pages out of a book."

The students felt that they <u>should</u> be doing more work and they expressed feelings of guilt that they were not. The flexible modular schedule afforded the students adequate periods of unstructured time to pursue any independent study of individual interest but most of the students did not use the time for that purpose. It is somewhat ironic that the Hempies in particular felt that they should be <u>required</u> to do more work when they spent more time than the other groups in non-academic activities. The students' education had, until they entered South, followed a pattern of teacher-guided learning and many of the students had a great deal of difficulty making the transition to student-initiated learning. They felt that high school should involve more academic work then they were doing but for many of the students it was impossible to break old habits of education. These students expressed genuine relief when the system went back to a more traditional scheduling pattern and they would again be told exactly what to do and when to do it.

The students also expressed concerns regarding their careers after high school. For the students who were planning to attend college--approximately 28 percent of the graduating class--the decision could be deferred but the majority of the students did not plan to attend college and they were aware that they soon would be faced with the problem of selecting a career.

The "energy crisis" had an impact on the school and it added to the students career anxieties. The school day began in total darkness after the adoption of Daylight Savings Time and the school's thermostats were turned down to 68 degrees but the fuel shortage caused factory lay-offs and that had an even greater impact on the students. For the most part, the parents of South's students had enough seniority to retain their jobs but the students who had graduated last year and the year before were laid off in large numbers. Reports circulated around the school of individuals the students knew who had an expensive apartment, a wife, and a child and were now laid-off. The large number of factory lay-offs made it difficult for South's students to secure part-time work. Everywhere they went for a job, they would find several people ahead of them who were out of school and out of work. The "energy crisis" made it even more unlikely that the students would find a meaningful job after school which made school all the more meaningless.

All of the students who did not plan to attend college were concerned about their future employment. Those students in the "Careers area" who took vocational blocks were perhaps the most concerned. They were often unsure of the career choices they had made and were less certain that they could secure employment in those

areas. Discussions about future work were exceded only by talk about girls in the male dominated careers classes which I visited.

One group of Chicano students[15] found out that I had been in the military and they asked me several times if they "could learn a trade of something useful in the service." It was difficult to answer their questions because my own military experience is clouded by the Vietnam War. I was a draftee with five years of college and no desire for a "military trade" but the sincerity of the students' questions forced me to seriously reflect on the vocational aspects of military service. These Chicanos and most of the other students at South were very concerned about a job after high school and many of them looked to the military for training that they felt they had not received in school.

3. What is the effect of educational innovation on the students' social reality on the school? How do students and student groups perceive these innovations?

Educational innovation as defined in Chapter One refers to the planned changes in the content and/or process of education which takes place within the structural framework of the school. The innovations at South were designed to provide students with a flexible program of instruction that was tailored to meet their individual needs. The innovations included differentiated staffing, team teaching, resource centers, performance based teaching and flexible modular scheduling.

Rarely did the students mention or take notice of any of the innovations except the modular schedule. The flexible modular system

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[15]The Chicano students comprise about 2 percent of the student population. I knew several Chicano students quite well but I was never accepted by any of the Chicano groups and so they are largely ignored in this reporting.

with its mods of class time and mods of unstructured time was an innovation that, at least in theory, charged the students with the responsibility for their own education. The students were given large periods of unstructured time during which they were to complete their class assignments or pursue their own interests. Most of the students seemed to thrive in this setting. They could get their work done in school, socialize with their friends, eat lunch when they wanted and by 2:10 p.m., when the school day ended, they would have no work to bring home. They had a lot of personal contact with their teachers and the school took on a very relaxed and informal atmosphere. But the system was not working for everyone.

Over 35 percent of the students failed one or more classes every grading period. The cut rate averaged between 20 percent and 50 percent for all classes and it became painfully obvious that cutting, failing, and hanging around the halls had become an integral part of the student reality for many of South's clients. It was not exciting to hang around in the halls day after day and the students who did, constantly complained of being bored but the feeling they communicated was that attending classes would offer them no relief. This frustrated the teachers who worked hard to make the system function and it grated abrasively on the administrators who had to listen to complaints from faculty, community and the Superintendent of Schools.

South was characterized in the local papers as a "multi-million dollar playground" and parents called the school calling for an end to "permisiveness." Many of the students who were failing courses and cutting classes loved the notoriety. It gave them a sense of uniqueness and distinguished them from the students in the city's other high

schools. In a quest for superlatives, South's students felt they had won; they may not have been the best in anything but now they had a reputation for being the worst in the city for cutting, failing and wasting time. Their athletic teams had won no honors, South won no academic contests but no other school had received South's publicity and no school was more controversial to outsiders.

When the schedule was changed to a more traditional "five by five," the students who were passing their courses could not understand why the modular system was abandoned considering that 65 percent of the students were doing satisfactory work. There was a mixed reaction among the students who were failing or cutting. To many of these students education is a boring, agonizing and a painful process. They endure it for several reasons. Some realize that they cannot get a decent job unless they finish high school. Others come to school simply because there is nothing else that they want to do or they do not want to antagonize their parents who want them to graduate from high school. Many of the students come to school solely for the purpose of being with their friends and engaging in the social life provided by group activity. The modular system afforded these students a great deal of free time to associate with their friends. If the students did not want to attend class, there were few sanctions forcing him to attend. If they cut class often enough, they risked a call to their parents and the possibility of failing the course but this did not seem to coerce students into regular attendance. When they did not attend class, the students would hang around the halls or sit out in the parking lot or some other area of the school. Many of them

would get high during the day and occasionally there would be a party at someone's home but most of the time they just sat around waiting for something to happen.

Many of the students experienced conflicting role expectations. As members of age-grade peer groups, they could admit that their classes were boring and lacked meaning. Failing and cutting were approved by their groups as legitimate responses to boredom and irrelevance but the students were also subject to the expectations of the school and their parents who demanded that they attend class, keep out of trouble and graduate. The two reference groups created role conflicts; the students often did not meet their parents expectations and they often felt guilty. It was no uncommon for them to express this guilt as one of the Hempies did. "I know I'm going to regret not studying," he said. "My mother says I'll never amount to anything. Everyone had told me that I have the ability and that I'll be sorry later on. . . ."

The role conflicts and the guilt that the students experienced under the modular system were largely eliminated by the new schedule. Under the "five by five" system, the students had to attend class and by doing so they were meeting the expectations of home and school. The students also had 90 minutes in the middle of the day to engage in the activities expected by their other reference group. They could hang around or get high and complain about school. For those students who had been experiencing role conflicts, the schedule change that had reduced their freedom also made it easier to live with two sets of conflicting expectations.

This is not meant to imply that innovation is bad or that schools should seek to avoid change. The students did not view the innovations as anything that they had a voice in--and in fact they did not. All of the changes and all of the decisions which were designed to make the students better and happier learners were planned without consulting the students. The students were not brought into the decision making process when the modular system was begun and they had no voice when the decision was made to abolish the mods. The students viewed the innovations as something that concerned the faculty and the administration and only demanded their compliance. They saw themselves, as one student put it, as "guinea pigs for every new idea that comes to the teachers and the principals." The faculty was unionized and they had to be consulted when instructional changes were made. The students have no organization or unity and were excluded from decisions effecting their education. If education is to be based on "the needs of students," they must be brought into the process which designs and evaluates educational programs.

4. What is it like to attend an integrated school? What is the extent of black-white interaction in the school?

Although blacks and whites attend the same school and go to many of the same classes, they really exist in two separate worlds. There is a white world at South and a black world and there is very little formal or informal contact between them.

The informal social world of the school with its student dyads, triads, cliques and groups is divided along racial lines. Each group of students had their own area of the school where they gathered but almost all of the black groups tended to congregate in and around the

black hallway, the black stairway and the black section of the cafeteria. White groups did not loiter in these areas and they had only very limited contact with black students outside of class. Blacks and whites passed each other numerous times during the school day but rarely did they acknowledge each others presence with as much as a head nod. When I followed white groups, I generally would be the only one in the group to exchange greetings with blacks. When I followed black groups, I would be the only one in the group who regularly exchanged greetings with whites.

Social contact between blacks and whites in the informal world of student groups was limited to the peripheral social contacts of various individuals in the group. Bob, of the BJ group, knew many white students but his contact with them was of a perfunctory nature and often mildly antagonistic. He did not eat lunch with whites and most of his conversations with whites took place near his locker which was located in the hallway perpendicular to the black corridor. Members of the CBB interacted with several black males but they were superficial acquaintanceships and their communication changed when blacks interacted with the group. The CBB would engage in a light banter with the few blacks they spoke to and they avoided the topics which dominated their normal group conversations--girls and swimming. Carl of the CBB told me that he had "nothing against blacks" but he showed me a small scar on his arm, the result of a racial fight of a year ago, and he shook his head and wondered why the incident occurred and if another incident will take place at some future time.

The Hempies, with the exception of "J," had almost no contact with blacks. Blacks and whites did not smoke dope together and they

did not "hang around" the halls together and during the time of the flexible modular schedule, these were the Hempies principal activities. The Hempies accepted me to a greater extent than any of the other groups. They would look for me before school began in the morning and they would ask around if they could not find me. I spent more time with the Hempies than any of the other groups I studied and after the field work was completed Jeff told me that he "knew I would like to hang around" with what he referred to as "my own ethnic group." I asked him what he meant and he said,

> Well John [Butler] hung around mostly with the blacks and you hung around mostly with the whites. That's the way most people are comfortable--with their own kind.

If I was standing in the hall and talking to a black student and the Hempies passed by, they would come over and say hello to me and often we would shake hands but it was rare if they would say hello to the outsider--the black student. This happened several times and each time the same pattern was repeated. The group would surround me, ignore the black student and the black student would slip away without a word. It was obviously such a common occurence for most of the groups at South that when I would later apologize to the black students for the rudeness, they would indicate that "this is the way it is here."

There were few examples of interracial dating and those couples were always composed of a black male and a white female. There were no couples, that I was aware of, composed of a black female and a white male. One of the black students told John Butler that he would "kick the ass of any white guy who dated a black girl." When Mr. Butler

pointed out that there were several black males who dated white females, the student acknowledged that this was "all right" but he would not agree that it would be acceptable for a black girl to date whites.

The formal structure of the school with its organization, classes, and regulations did not encourage black-white interaction. Blacks sit together in class whether or not they are members of the same group. The BJ and the BA would both seek out members of their own groups to sit with or work with during a class. If there were no other members of their group in class, they would try to sit with other black students. Some teachers consciously attempted to group students to increase interaction but most did not.

On the first day of the school semester and the beginning of the "five by five" schedule, Bob of the BJ was scheduled for the Advanced Composition class. His schedule had been arranged in September and it did not reflect a choice he had made because of the change in schedule. The first thing that Bob did was to look for other blacks in the class. Not finding any he told the teacher,

> "Hey man, I ain't gonna be the only nigger in this class? You better find me some 'brothers' or I'm gonna sit out here in the hall."

The teacher, who was standing at the door, chose to ignore the remarks and tried to coax Bob into taking a seat. Bob remained adament and refused to enter the class until Dwight and two other black males arrived at the class. Bob told them that he was glad they were there and they looked over the room in search of a place to sit. Bob pointed to the right rear corner of the room and led the group there.

They decided to occupy that area of the class for the remainder of the year. There were no whites in this section of the room and the group interracted with few of the whites in the class.

There is only very limited black-white contact in the school and this has resulted in an appalling ignorance. I had lunch with Mel--a member of the "grand and glorious Hempie underground"-- and he pointed in amazement to a group of blacks. Several of the girls were putting the guys hair up into braids. Mel asked me what they were doing.

"I don't know," I answered. "Why don't you ask them"?

"Yeah, I will. There are a lot of black dudes in my three hour block. I'll ask one of them when the time's right."

"Are they friends of yours"? I asked.

"Yeah, you could say that."

Mel takes a three hour vocational block in Television Production. As noted previously, this is a very popular course at South and it is also a course where there are many black students and the blacks and whites must work together in an informal setting for fifteen hours every week. Many of the important leadership positions in the class--directors, head technicians, etc.--were held by blacks.

Three months passed and just before I was about to end my research, I asked Mel if he had found out why the blacks braid their hair. He told me that he had not. He said, "the time has just never been right to ask one of them." He spent three hours a day, five days a week in a small informal, integrated class yet the "time had never been right" to ask a "friend" why he puts his hair in braids.

The lack of information about the "other race" was not limited to the whites. When I first arrived at the school, two black girls asked what my name was. After I told them and spelled my last name for them, one of the girls asked me if my name was "German or something like that." Her friend answered before I had a chance to. "Don't be ignorant, girl," she said. "He can't be German, he's got curly hair. He's Italian." Even Allan of the BA was confused by the ethnic composition of whites. He asked me if I was Jewish. When I told him that I was, he said that he could not understand how I could be "Jewish with a Polish last name." He believed that the two must be mutually exclusive.

Many of the whites and blacks did not even know each others names although the school is small enough that they see almost all of the students every day. At one basketball game I was impressed by the ability and skill demonstrated by one of South's black players. He had a smooth style and a shooting ability not matched by anyone on the floor that evening. I had met him previously in the Co-ed Physical Education class but I had forgotten his name and I asked several of the white students who he was. Not one of them could tell me his name until they looked it up in the program.

Despite South's history of racial violence, there were no serious fights in the school while I was there. There were several serious incidents in two of the city's other high schools during this period but the whites at South were largely unaware of them and most of the blacks I spoke to considered them to be problems which did not effect South. During the time I was there, the closest thing to a racial incident took place in the cafeteria.

I had been walking around the halls when I entered the cafeteria and sat down with a few of the Hempies and several white female students. The girls were visably shaken; they were trembling, drained of color and the backs of their hands bore large and fairly deep scratches. They told me that they had been standing in the lunch line and "two nigger girls tried to cut in." The white girls had protested and there were a few seconds of scratching and punching before the incident ended.

The cafeteria had become electric in the few seconds between the time of the minor fight and the time I arrived there. The physical gulf between the black section of the cafeteria and the white section never appeared larger. Small groups of blacks crowded around the black combatants and white students grouped around the white girls. Everyone in the cafeteria seemed aware that something was going on.

As the tension mounted, the two hall guards walked into the cafeteria apparently aware that there was some trouble. There is one female guard and one huge male guard and they are both black. They walked over to the black section of the cafeteria and the white students took this as a sign of black solidarity.

"Those niggers always stick together."

"Yeah, I'm sick of the niggers in this school. They think they can get away with anything."

While the hall guards were talking to the black students, several of the whites reached into their pockets and withdrew small folding knives which they opened and closed several times. After a few moments the female hall guard approached the white students and asked the girls involved to relate the incident. The girls still trembling, fought back tears and told their story.

"I thought that's what happened," replied the guard. "You have to stick up for your rights no matter who cuts in front of you. White, black, I don't care who it is. . . ."

The hall guards had successfully relieved the tension. I do not know what they told the black girls but the white group felt that there had been justice. The black hall guards had told them that they were in the right. The hall guards had a good reputation among white and black students. Everyone considered them to be "fair" which is high praise coming from students. The guards told Mr. Butler that they try to be fair: "We walk around and bust honkies one day and niggers the next."

The formal structure of the school is attempting to address itself to the issue of race in only the most limited way. I asked Mr. Wade, the assistant principal, what the school was doing to increase bi-racial understanding or at least dialogue. He told me that this was an "official goal of the school" and the administrators had given the message to the teachers so "whatever they are supposed to be teaching should be tied into the idea of racial understanding and the brotherhood of man." Dr. Gordon points to Black Culture Week and the establishment of the multi-racial class councils as positive steps toward racial understanding. The efforts of the students who planned the activities for Black Culture Week were enjoyed primarily by blacks. A panel discussion that included several white teachers and Dr. Gordon was videotaped and broadcast by the Television Production class. There were only three whites in the audience and none of the white students I associated with watched the television broadcast.

The class councils, as noted previously, were largely powerless political organizations which did not have the support of the student body but in some ways they did help to mediate black and white problems. The dances they organized usually had two bands--one black and the other white--which alternated and played to two separate audiences. The schools radio station which broadcasts music during the lunch period, alternates "disc jockeys" and it features "black music" one week and "white music" the next.

5. Why do students use drugs? What are the social effects of drug use on the student, the school and the process of education?

The participant observer gains access to the social world of the students and he learns not only the tricks and devices by which it responds to the school organization but also the secrets which it keeps from the school. Drugs are one of these secrets. The teachers and the administrators realize that there is considerable drug use in the school but few, if any, realize the extent or the number of participants.

Association with the Hempies granted me a badge of legitimacy among the drug users. It was commonly known among these students, that the Hempies were regular drug users and if the Hempies trusted me then most of the students could trust me. Drugs soon became something we could talk about and joke about outside of class. Rarely were drugs discussed in class because very few classes provided a forum for open discussion of personal issues. In the classes that did invite discussion, the students were generally open and trusting and many of them spoke freely about drugs. Based on their prior experiences with

the teachers, the students would determine who could be trusted and who could not be trusted. They knew that some teachers would accept them the way they were and other teachers had to be lied to in order to preserve the myth of a relationship. As one student told me: "You can't talk about dope in some classes. You gotta tell some teachers what they want to hear or they will hold it against you forever."

Drugs were widespread and drug use was not limited by age, sex, or race. It was impossible to determine a drug user by the way they looked or dressed. Some of the regular marijuana smokers openly wore "roach clips"; several male students would hang them from their belt loops and some of the female students wore "roach clip" earrings or necklaces. Most of the students--especially those who had been arrested previously for possession of drugs--were more secretive and more cautious and their costumes could be disarming. Powdered and polished secretarial students with perfect make-up and neatly pressed outfits were as likely to smoke as any long-haired and unconventionally dressed student.

Students claim they smoke marijuana for two reasons: because they are bored and because it is fun. More dope was consumed under the modular schedule than under the "five by five." The students have less "free time" under the "five by five"; they hang around less and if their classes are no more interesting, at least they have to exhibit minimal compliance by attending class and taking part in the class activities. There appears to be a high correlation between smoking dope and student boredom. In addition to the cut rate, failure rate and student absenteeism, drug use at South indicated that something

was not happening in the school. Excessive drug use may be considered an epiphenomenon; it may be symptomatic of a school which is not addressing the problems, concerns and aspirations of many of its students.[16]

It is difficult to determine how many students have tried marijuana at least once but I would guess the total represents a clear majority. How many smoke regularly? This is another statistic that is very difficult to determine. My guess would be that at least 20 percent but no more than 40 percent get high a minimum of once a week. The statistic is unimportant in itself; whatever the exact percentage of regular smokers, it represents a large number of high school students who are willing to risk school sanctions and legal penalties to engage in activities that their parents and teachers have told them were harmful. Smoking dope may be characterized as the rejection of adult values and a willingness to break the law to engage in peer group activity.

Drug use had a divisive effect on the student body and it also tended to further separate many of the teachers from those students who used drugs. Students who did not use drugs rarely associated with those students who did. The interaction and communication between groups who used drugs and those who did not was limited. Drug use--or perhaps the absence of drug use--like race, and attitudes toward academics, divided the school into various student factions which

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[16]For a further discussion of drug use as an epiphenomenon see: Victor Gioscia, "Grovin' On Time: Fragments of a Sociology of Psychedelic Experience." The Sociology of Youth, edited by Harry Silverstein (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1973), pp. 454-63.

knew very little about one another. For the students who used them, drugs were a very significant part of their lives and conversations. Drugs were part of the reality for many students but they were not a reality for all students they thus divided the student body.

Drugs also represented a division between the students and the teachers. Those classes that did not discuss drugs were excluding an aspect of student reality from class investigation and dialogue. There were, of course, certain classes that did encourage discussion about drugs and these classes afforded drug users and non-drug users a vehicle for the exchange of ideas that was not available in the informal world of student groups. Classes that even occasionally encouraged these discussions were doing more than the students home environment. According to my informal survey and school supplied data, the students did not think that drugs were a problem in the school but they also claimed that they could not discuss the drug issue with their parents.

While I associated with the Hempies, I worried about how to disguise them in my reporting to preserve their anonymity. I was concerned that through me, their parents would find out about their marijuana smoking but the Hempies assured me that their parents would not believe it even if they were told. As one of them put it: "If you described me perfectly, used my real name and put my picture on the page, my mother would still swear it was someone else."

I asked Mr. Wade, the assistant principal, if the parents were aware that their sons and daughters used drugs. He told me that,

> I had one in this morning. I'll tell you what I did. The mother was there and the boy was there. He bought a ten dollar bag of marijuana -- we call it a "dime bag." . . . I told her it was marijuana. She said, 'marijuana, what's that'? I said, 'it's dope. They put it in cigarettes and smoke it.' She turned to [her son] and said, 'you don't use that.' He said, 'no I don't. I was with the guys who were buying it. I just loaned them the money.' I just leaned back and didn't say a word. I could have said 'come on now tell your mother the truth you bought the bag. It's for you. But it would have served no good purpose. I was really caught and I thought, Oh Christ, what am I going to do now. I did what I felt I had to do. I said, 'his story is that he was with two other guys; they bought the bag and he loaned them the money. He got in trouble for it.' His mother says, 'okay, now don't you ever loan money again.' Now we settled the whole thing and I let her go on believing. . . .

Mr. Wade confirmed the inability of the parents to believe the truth about the students' drug use. When drugs are not discussed at home or in school, they become exclusively the topic of group discussions which often lack a sophistication and an understanding of the power of the drugs and their potentially addictive nature. Those students who choose to use illegal substances are entitled to have access to current medical and scientific thinking concerning the addictive or other deleterious effects of drugs as well as the techniques of overdose aid and drug counseling. The school cannot afford to ignore this student reality.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Conclusions

This study has investigated the informal social world of students in an urban, integrated and innovative public high school. An attempt was made to see the school, the teachers, and the process of education as the students see them. The students were viewed as actors in a dynamic social situation. Their actions were considered rational and based on their own needs, their group interactions and reflective of the formal organization in which they existed. The research design of participant observation allowed me to become an "insider" to the social world of high school students and my conclusions are based on an analysis of the field data as viewed from the perspective of the students.

1. The social world of South High School was found to be composed of a great variety of student groups which experienced very little formal or informal interaction with one another. Although the individual groups were fairly homogeneous entities and there was little variation in wealth, dress, or attitudes among group members, there were marked differences between groups. When there were differences in race, drug use, and social orientation between groups, the extent of their interactions was very limited. Blacks seldom interacted with whites. Drug users seldom interacted with those who did not use drugs and athletes seldom interacted with those who did not use drugs

and athletes seldom interacted with the non-athletes. The school was a different place and served a different function for every group studied. Each group interpreted the school and the purposes of education for themselves and there was little agreement among the various groups.

2. The school provided no threads which united the groups and it offered no central focus for their activities. The students were afforded large segments of "unstructured" time during which they were free to participate in a variety of activities. Most of the students used this time to engage in the activities generated by their groups. Students studied, played, flirted, and used drugs in small voluntary peer associations which were guided by the social reality generated by their interaction rather than any directions provided by the school.

South High School is a new school which has yet to establish traditions, rites, and ceremonies which identify it as a continuing organization to either the students or the community.[1] South's athletic teams have won no honors and the school has earned no positive recognition with which the students can identify. The students were influenced more by the norms and values of their peer group by the expectations of the school.

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[1]The importance of rites and ceremonies in a public high school can be illustrated by the example of South's Homecoming Dance during the 1971-1972 academic year. Although this was the school's first year of operation and there had not been a class to graduate from the school, the students insisted that there be a homecoming dance because they claimed that every other school in the city had one and they did not want to be different.

3. Music and heterosexual interest came the closest to being common themes in all of the groups. Although music was a significant aspect in the lives of nearly all of the students, there was a great variety of musical tastes in the school. The music enjoyed by the black groups was not the same music enjoyed by the whites. It was necessary to have both a black and a white band at school dances and the school radio station broadcast black music one week and white music the next. There was also a considerable variety of music within the black and white populations. Each of the groups exhibited musical taste and sophistication as varied as the groups themselves. Some white and black groups listened exclusively to "pop forty" radio stations while members of other groups invested in expensive stereos and mountains of records and their knowledge of music and musical groups was impressive.

Student interest in sex, like their interest in music, was nearly universal but here too there were connoisseurs and neophtyes and differences between groups. Contrary to popular images of secondary schools, there were very little overt sexual activities or public displays of sex. There was certainly no copulating in the halls, wild sex orgies, or venereal disease in epidemic proportions.[2] Many couples who had been dating for long periods of time experienced

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[2]Most of the students could identify two or three cases of venereal disease in the school but they did not think it was a serious problem and they expressed "pride" in the fact that the students at South were "clean."

mature human relationships which included sex but promiscuity was atypical behavior for the vast majority of the students at South. While flirting and seductive behavior dominated much of the students' time, sexual relationships were private, discreet and far less casual and less frequent than the popular press would have us believe.

3. The school made few attempts to promote dialogue among the various student groups. Several teachers at South structured experiences for students which were designed to foster communication and the exchange of ideas but these were isolated examples in a school which encouraged student groups to remain separate from one another. The school provided no general focus for student activity; there were no school assemblies, no viable student political organizations or activity and nothing which encouraged students with differing social realities to confront one another.

The school placed a great deal of emphasis on its maintenance subsystem and it consciously attempted to eliminate potentially abrasive situations. The school was fearful that racial violence or student protests could erupt at any time if the students were allowed to confront each other with their disagreements or organize to deal with their problems. The students were encouraged to pursue activities in their homogeneous groups and avoid contact and potential conflict with other groups. The school followed a policy of student control which was described to me as "spread 'em out and keep 'em moving." It was a policy of conflict avoidance which assumed that if there were no overt incidents of conflict or violence, there were no covert hositilities, tensions or problems. This policy can only be regarded

as naive myopia because it ignores the fact that conflict is a fundamental reality common to the lives of all adolescents.

The students at South were constantly confronted by conflict producing situations when they dealt with the substantive issues of their lives such as: this discovery of their own identity; the relationships they had with their parents, teachers, and friends; the purposes of school; their future; and their drug and sexual experiences. The school could not pretend to address the concerns of students and avoid conflict because the concerns of students dentered on the conflicts in their lives. By not providing the students with a mechanism to resolve conflict, the school exacerbated the students' problems.

4. The lack of common purpose among the groups, their lack of interaction and the absence of dialogue between them made it difficult to consider the school as one organization with common purposes and goals. Such concepts as "school spirit," "the student body," and "school climate" became obfuscated and elusive. The informal structure of South High School was reflective not of one school but of many schools within the same building. South was really a loose organization of student groups which maintained separate social realities and which were encouraged to remain isolated from one another in an effort to avoid conflict and maintain the appearance of stability and order.

Implications for Further Research

This study was designed to create a general picture of the informal social world of students in one public high school. The investigation provides a way of "knowing" for the individuals involved in the educational process at South High School. The information

generated provides the school administrators and curriculum planners additional data with which to evaluate their educational programs. It allows the teachers to assess the extent to which their classroom activities carry over to the informal world of student groups. It could also be the basis of a course designed to encourage the students to investigate their social world, their school and their social realities.

An investigation of the social world of one high school does not provide information which can be generalized to reflect the social worlds of all high schools. If a more generalizable set of conclusions concerning the student world is desired, the study must be replicated in a variety of schools with special attention given to the sociocultural variables found between schools. A more reliable set of conclusions would be drawn if the study was replicated in several schools with special attention given to the factors of social class, racial composition, the attitudes of the community toward the school, the degree of student involvement in the decision making processes of the school, and the extent to which the school designs measures to deal with the conflicts in the student world.

Participant observer studies need not necessarily be long and intensive to be beneficial to the researcher conducting them. Because of the extent to which this researcher was accepted by the various student groups and the candid responses which were received, I believe that this research design would be of benefit to individuals in teacher education, graduate students in curriculum or administration and any student of education seeking a first hand knowledge of students.

Of a more specific nature, this research indicated that conflict was a common theme running through the student groups. While conflict resolution mechanisms are beginning to be introduced in secondary school curriculums, they generally focus on the individual nature of conflict. It was found during this study that conflict took place not only between individuals and the individual and society but that conflict often resulted from group identification, conflict between groups and the policies of the school which kept the groups isolated from one another. The differences between drug users and those who did not use drugs, conflict between blacks and whites, athletes and non-athletes have a group component as well as an individual component. Conflict resolution, as well as nearly every other aspect of secondary schools, needs to account for the informal social structure of the student world and its domination by student groups.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

STUDENT SCHEDULE--MODIFIED FLEXIBLE MODULAR

SCHEDULE

Cycle No.

Time	Mod	A	B	C	D	E	F
8:00- 8:20	0						
8:20- 8:40	1						
8:40- 9:00	2						
9:00-99:20	3						
9:20- 9:40	4						
9:40-10:00	5						
10:00-10:20	6						
10:20-10:40	7						
10:40-11:00	8						
11:00-11:20	9						
11:20-11:40	10						
11:40-12:00	11						
12:00-12:20	12						
12:20-12:40	13						
12:40- 1:00	14						
11:00- 1:20	15						
1:20- 1:40	16						
1:40- 2:00	17						
2:00- 2:20	18						
2:20- 2:40	19						
Meetings							

APPENDIX B

SOUTH HIGH SCHOOL
COURSE OFFERINGS

CAREERS	EXACT SCIENCE	HUMANITIES
Typing	Concepts in Mathematics	English 10
Shorthand	Consumer Math	Girl Talk
Secretarial Block	Algebra I	Language of Personality
Recordkeeping	Algebra III	Reading Improvement
Accounting Block	Trigonometry	English Literature
Survey of Business	Geometry	Science Fiction
Clerical Block	Analysis	Publications
Advanced Clerical	Computer Programming	Journalism
Distributive Education	Biology	Creative Writing
Drafting	Chemistry	Advanced Composition
Metals	Physics	Communications
Cycle Mechanics	Life Science	Spanish
Woods	Advanced Science	German
Electricity	Boys' Physical Education	U.S. History
Graphics	Girls' Physical Education	Government
Photography	Co-ed. Physical Education	Economics
Clothing	Driver Education	Sociology
Foods		Philosophy
Family Living		Psychology
Home Management		Geography
Childcare		Humanities
Television Block		Anthropology
Residential Development		Art
Food Management/ Quantity Cooking		Music
Hospital Services		
Dental Services		
Commercial Art		
Heating/Air Conditioning		
Construction		
Special Education		

APPENDIX C

South High School
Evaluative Information

I South High Student Attitude Survey

The following information was coordinated through the efforts of South's Instructional Council and the School District Evaluator.

	Percent Agreeing				
	1971-72		1972-73		1973-74
	Nov.	June	Oct.	May	Nov.
1. This school seems to be getting better	55%	73%		62%	50%
2. If I had my choice of high schools in the city, I would choose South High		65%	80%	76%	80%
3. I look forward to coming to school	38%	46%	42%	52%	47%
4. The staff at South is concerned with me, the student, as an individual	41%	43%	29%	48%	40%
5. The staff is actively involved in trying to make our school a better place.	55%	63%	67%	64%	47%
6. School is exciting and interesting	32%	44%			
7. I need more help with my classwork	46%	34%	48%	32%	30%
8. Students should be responsible for keeping the school and grounds clean.	69%	67%		68%	60%
9. I have too much unstructured time			07%	10%	04%
10. I get more work done on structured days (A,C,E) than unstructured days (B,D,F)					15%
11. I enjoy school more on structured days (A,C,E) than unstructured days (B,D,F)					09%

		Percent Agreeing				
		1971-72		1972-73		1973-74
		Nov.	June	Oct.	May	Nov.
12.	I feel I'm learning as much in the modular schedule as I did in the traditional schedule.	49%	66%	68%	67%	
13.	I enjoy going to the commons.					54%
14.	What our school needs is a strongly enforced discipline code.		23%		24%	10%
15.	The modular schedule has more advantages than disadvantages	64%	73%	78%	85%	
16.	If there were more classes scheduled during 3 p.m. to 10 p.m., I would probably sign up for at least one of them.					25%
	Highest number of students responding to a single item.	700	379	333	749	541

II. Comparative Absence Records of South Students

A sample of students was used in acquiring the following information:

A. 1972-73-1st marking--Second semester (flexible-modular)

10th	26.4 ABS/Student	Average
11th	26.1 ABS/Student	Average
12th	18.2 ABS/Student	Average

B. 1973-74-1st marking--First Semester (modified-flexible-modular)

10th	19.1 ABS/Student	Average
11th	18.7 ABS/Student	Average
12th	16.6 ABS/Student	Average

C. Humanities

			Absences	
		#of Students	Regular	Flexible
Am. Govt.	Juniors	45	24.1%	51.5%
Econ.	Jr. & Sr.	27	8.4%	21.8%
10 Hum.	Soph.	50	17.8%	31.6%
Psych	Jr. & Sr.	57	17.0%	30.1%
Cer/Scul.	Soph., Jr., & Sr.	31	14.8%	27.4%

		#of Students	Absences Regular	Flexible
D. Vocational & Industrial				
Cons. Occ.	Jr. & Sr.	47	6.7%	6.5%
Jr. Sec. Blk	Jr.	27	7.9%	13.1%
Adv. Metals	Jr. & Sr.	26	25.8%	42.3%
Hosp. Serv.	Jr. & Sr.	31	20.6%	24.3%
E. Exact Sciences				
Biology	Soph.	85	8.3%	15.2%
Concepts	Soph.	67	18.4%	26.7%
Algebra	Soph.	36	10.7%	20.0%
Geometry	Soph.	31	7.1%	8.7%
Life Sci.	Soph. & Jr.	51	30.6%	64.7%
Physics	Sr.	84	6.8%	1.0%

Evaluative Information

III. Percent of students receiving one or more "E's" Fall-Spring semesters 1972-73

# of E's Received	East		North		South		West	
	Fall '72	Spr. '73	Fall '72	Spr. '73	Fall '72	Spr. '73	Fall '72	Spr. '73
1-E%	10%	11%	10%	8%	12%	12%	10%	8%
#	188	189	176	131	147	144	172	125
2-E's %	3%	3%	3%	3%	6%	7%	5%	4%
#	68	55	62	42	83	77	89	58
3-E's %	2%	1%	1%	2%	4%	5%	3%	2%
#	34	20	27	36	54	56	50	28
4-E's %	1%	1%	1%	2%	5%	5%	1%	1%
#	11	20	23	25	67	54	19	19
5-E's %	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	2%	1%	2%
#	10	15	23	17	8	25	14	23
1-6 E's %	16%	17%	17%	15%	28%	31%	20%	17%
#	311	299	311	251	359	356	344	253
Enrollment:	1976	1754	1800	1640	1275	1149	1686	1484

IV. Percent of students receiving one or more E's Spring Semester 1972-73 by grade level.

	East	North	South	West
10th	26%	22%	39%	27%
11th	15%	17%	33%	16%
12th	8%	6%	18%	6%

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