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LOCAL STUDENTS AT A LOCAL COLLEGE:
AN INVESTIGATION OF THE EFFECTS OF
CAMPUS-COMMUNITY CONFLICT UPON THE
EXPERIENCE OF LOCAL STUDENTS

by

STEPHEN A. GREEN

A dissertation submitted to the
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ABSTRACT

LOCAL STUDENTS AT A LOCAL COLLEGE:

AN INVESTIGATION OF THE EFFECTS OF
CAMPUS-COMMUNITY CONFLICT UPON THE
EXPERIENCE OF LOCAL STUDENTS

by

Stephen A. Green

Adviser: Professor Patricia Kendall

While there have been comparative studies of commuting and residential college students few have sought to examine the experience of being a commuter. Further, no such studies seem to have distinguished between commuters who come to the college from the community in which the college is located and those who commute from other locales in the surrounding area. A major reason for examining different kinds of commuters would be the probability that the experience of those coming from the local community are tempered by the relationship between the college and the community. That is, to the extent that typical "town-gown" tensions exist, we may expect that these affect the local students in a special way since such students will be forced to relate closely to two entities at odds with each other. Further, we would presume that the experience of being caught between two sets of attitudes, each disparaging the other, would be negative.

The present study is an exploration of aspects of the experience of these local students and makes use of labeling theory in an attempt to understand how the community and college view the local student and how the local student's experience may be affected by these views.

Local and non-local students attending a four year public college were interviewed in order to examine data on the following:

- a. the local students' perceptions of the views people in the community held about the local college,
- b. the local students' own attitudes about the local college,
- c. the local students' prior expectations about their experiences and their actual experiences at the local college, and
- d. the non-local students' attitudes about the community, its townspeople, and the students attending the college who come from the local community.

In addition, a small number of faculty members and administrators were interviewed in order to assess their views of the local students and of the relationship between the campus and the community.

The data revealed that the local students are labeled as "townies" mainly by non-local students at the institution, and that this negative label has the breadth of what Hughes called a "master status". In this case the label carries with it negative "auxiliary status traits" applied to the community and its inhabitants by some persons at the college.

While we find a negative definition of the local students by people at the college, the data do not strongly support the notion that the community looks down on its own members who attend the local institution. The views of the local college by the community are, for the most part, rather mixed.

Finally, while we have a clear picture of the negative labeling of the local students we do not have a similarly solid basis on which to claim that these students are in any way affected by the views others have of them. Labeling theory, however, would suggest the likelihood that those who are labeled will respond in some way to the attachment of the label. We are led to expect this even in the case of as marginally deviant a status as "townie". We argue that there is no such response in this case because the status is transitory. It is transitory in the sense that the local students are confronted with such labeling for only a few years and can more easily ignore it given the knowledge that it will no longer be applied to them once they have left the college.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many persons assisted in varying ways with this task and I am pleased to have an opportunity to publicly acknowledge their help.

To my wife, Susanne Green goes my eternal gratitude for the loving support which made every aspect of this study easier to accomplish.

No graduate student's doctoral committee could be more ably and flexibly led than was mine by Patricia Kendall. Her advice, support, and comments on the manuscript were always helpful. So were the comments of the other committee members, Lindsay Churchill and Murray Hausknecht and those made by Caroline Persell who also read the manuscript. For their comments on various drafts I am also indebted to Thomas Green and Christopher Green.

Various colleagues at North Adams State College provided assistance during the study. In particular I would like to mention Albert Bartovics, Marc Goldstein, James May, F. Leonard Paolillo, and William West. To these five as well as the many others at the College who supported and encouraged me go my thanks.

I am also grateful to Karen DeOrdio who typed the manuscript under less than ideal conditions.

To all of the people at Mill City State College who participated in the study, I am most grateful. Their willingness to be interviewed made the research possible and whatever utility this study might have stems ultimately from the data they so graciously provided to me.

Finally, for the many things she gave to me, to my family, and to so many others, I would like to express by love for, and gratitude to, the late Bonnie Paolillo.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	vi
CHAPTER ONE	INTRODUCTION	1
	THE PROBLEM	1
	THE LITERATURE	5
	METHODS	13
CHAPTER TWO	THE COMMUNITY AND THE COLLEGE	18
CHAPTER THREE	THE LOCAL STUDENTS	25
	REASONS FOR CHOOSING MILL CITY STATE COLLEGE	26
	ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF COMING TO MILL CITY STATE COLLEGE	33
	DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THOSE COMING TO MILL CITY STATE COLLEGE AND THOSE GOING AWAY TO COLLEGE	38
	ATTITUDES ABOUT MILL CITY STATE COLLEGE	42
	THE 1972 STUDENTS: EXPERIENCES AND ATTITUDES SINCE BEING AT THE COLLEGE	54
	THE 1976 STUDENTS: EXPECTATIONS ABOUT BEING AT THE LOCAL COLLEGE	58
CHAPTER FOUR	THE NON-LOCAL STUDENTS	63
	NON-LOCAL STUDENTS: VIEWS OF MILL CITY AND ITS INHABITANTS	64
	NON-LOCAL STUDENTS: ATTITUDES TOWARD THE LOCAL STUDENTS	69
	NON-LOCAL STUDENTS: PERCEPTIONS OF LOCAL ATTITUDES TOWARD THEMSELVES	73
	SUMMARY	74
CHAPTER FIVE	FACULTY AND ADMINISTRATION	75
CHAPTER SIX	THE CONSEQUENCES OF BEING A LOCAL STUDENT	81
CHAPTER SEVEN	CONCLUSION	98
	REFERENCES	104

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

THE PROBLEM

Many colleges and universities in America today serve both residential and commuting students. This is not, of course, true of all institutions of higher education: many colleges are still almost entirely residential, while many others, particularly those public institutions located in large cities as well as the large numbers of community colleges, are attended only by students who commute from home each day. In the relatively small amount of literature on commuting students there has been reasonably good documentation of the fact that there are problems in the relationship between commuters and residential students (e.g. Chickering, 1974). Since the commuters live locally, their ties to the community in which the institution is situated are very real and very close. Unlike the residential students, the commuters live with their families in most cases, often work on local jobs and, importantly, maintain friendship ties with their high school friends and others in the community. Since the commuting students do maintain these local involvements they are only infrequently involved in campus activities outside of their classrooms, and will, inevitably, draw upon members of their own group for purposes of socializing. The relationship between the commuters and the residential students, then, is minimal, owing to what may accurately be classified as de facto segregation.

Another force which may have a pronounced effect upon the experience of the local students at the college is the relationship

between the campus and community. Although much has been written on the "town-gown" relationship (e.g. Fink and Cooke, 1971 and 1972) which appears to be one characterized by tension and conflict in most cases, the question of how such tensions may affect the commuters who come from the community to the local college has been ignored. The tensions in the campus-community relationship revolve around numerous issues¹ which are tangential to the student body with one exception: the concerns of people in the community with certain behaviors of the students. Student involvements with drinking, drugs, and sex often go beyond what the community deems acceptable. If, as the literature suggests, the campus and the community are often at odds, what meaning, in the case of a residential college which also draws substantial numbers of local students, does this have for the local commuting student? In the eyes of the college he represents the community which implicates him in whatever the institution finds distasteful about the locality; to the community he is part of the college, that somewhat less than fully accepted institution and its students. There seems to be a real likelihood that the local commuting student is caught in the middle between two sets of somewhat negative definitions, each applicable to him because each definer thinks of him, at least in part, in terms of his affiliation with the other.

¹An analysis of the two hundred and eleven works cited by Fink and Cooke indicates that problems such as housing, transportation, parking, and student demonstrations as well as the question of how the institution may help to solve community problems are among the most frequently discussed issues.

How does the local student view this? What are his perceptions of the community's view of the campus? Of the campus' view of the community? Of the views each hold of him and other commuters like him? What effect does this have on his college experience? This study sets out to discover some answers to these questions.

The study looks at the experience of local students at Mill City State College,² a public four-year college in the Northeast.³

The College was established in the late 19th century as a normal college for the training of teachers. Essentially a teacher's college for most of its existence, the institution more recently has evolved into a small liberal arts college. Mill City, the community in which the College is located is a small industrial city in which the College plays an increasingly important economic role as the local industrial structure continues in the decline which has been happening for the past half century.

²In this report the names of all nearby geographic localities and local institutions have been changed in the following manner:

the local college -- Mill City State College
the community -- Mill City
the local high school -- Carter High School
the county -- Hill County
a nearby private college -- Thompson College
a nearby college town -- Thompsonville
a regional vocational high school -- Hill County Technical
High School
the local newspaper -- The Reporter
a local crafts organization -- Local History and Craft Corporation
a local restaurant -- Mill Valley Inn

In all cases in which a substitution for the actual name has been made in a quotation the new name will appear in brackets.

³The College is one of ten which comprise the State College System. All but two are four year liberal arts colleges. The

The student body of about 2100 comes mainly from outside the local area; in fact, a large portion of the student body comes from some of the more distant localities in the State.⁴ Approximately 900 "non-local" students live in the dormitories and about 600 more live in off-campus apartments. Approximately thirty percent of the students are commuters, something over one-third of these coming from the immediate community.⁵

Data for this investigation came from interviews with students at the college who are residents of the local community, from a sample of students who come from outside the area, and from a small group of faculty and administrators. The interviews were semi-structured with mainly open-ended questions about attitudes, feelings, and experiences. Probing, often at length and in depth, was employed in order to achieve an understanding of the "quality" of the feelings and experiences.

The framework within which the data are analyzed is the labeling process, a theoretical orientation common today in sociological studies of deviants. If, in fact, the local students are

public universities and community colleges each have their own separate systems.

⁴Approximately sixty percent of the student body come from localities at least fifty miles from the College and particularly from the larger cities and their suburbs located at the other end of the State.

⁵These figures are estimates given by the Director of Admissions at the College.

caught in a bind between the college's attitudes toward the community and the community's attitudes toward the college and if those views are somewhat negative, then the students are likely to feel the effects in some fashion. This statement suggests the relevance of using labeling theory in that we will need to explore the question of whether the local students are labeled, whether, if they are, they are aware of it, and whether such labeling has any effects upon their experience.

The study is one which attempts to explore three problems:

1. what the experience of college is like for a student coming from the community in which the college is situated,
2. the ways in which the experience of the local student may be affected by the relationship between the college and the community, and
3. the utility of labeling theory in analyzing the experience of the local students.

THE LITERATURE

The literature relevant to this study falls into three categories: discussions of, and studies using labeling theory, studies of campus-community ("town-gown") relationships, and those works concerned with commuting students. In terms of quantity the amounts vary from quite a lot to relatively little on these subjects as ordered above.

The literature on labeling theory consists primarily of those works examining the labeling process and those which use the theory to explain deviance (e.g. Schur, 1971; Rubington and Weinberg, 1973; Hawkins and Tiedeman, 1975). We are concerned here with both types. The former to show that the problem being studied here should be amenable to the application of labeling theory, and the latter to

show that labeling theory has not been used, as it is being used here, in the study of those who can be described as deviant only in that they occupy a marginally deviant status.

While we can find some important statements on the labeling process in the work of Tannenbaum (1938) and Lemert (1951) it was not until the publication of Howard Becker's Outsiders: Studies in the Sociology of Deviance (1963) that a truly systematic presentation of labeling theory was available. Becker brought together some of the previously presented notions (Tannenbaum's "dramatization of evil" and Lemert's "primary deviation" and "secondary deviation") and these combined with his own views give us an excellent description of the labeling process and its potential consequences for the person who is labeled.

A key point for all labeling theorists is that deviance is socially produced. Becker stated that,

"Social groups create deviance by making the rules whose infractions constitute deviance, and by applying those rules to particular people and labeling them as outsiders. From this point of view, deviance is not a quality of the act the person commits, but rather a consequence of the application by others of rules and sanctions to an 'offender'. The deviant is one to whom that label has successfully been applied: deviant behavior is behavior that people so label." (Becker, 1963: 9)

Becker goes on to argue that once a label has been applied the potential exists for the creation of further deviance on the part of the individual who has been labeled. That is, we may expect that the power of social definition is such that the labeled person finds little possibility of escape from fulfilling the expectations of his

definers. The act of labeling someone, then, may give rise to the occurrence of a process, the result of which would be to further immerse him in the deviance which the label "accuses" him of in the first place (see Becker, 1963: 19-39). Thus, while one cannot deny the existence of other causes, the further deviance is seen as being at least in part, the result of the attachment of the label. The prophecy has been fulfilled. (see Becker, 1963: 34-39)

While we can find numerous studies which have applied labeling theory in the attempt to explain deviance most of these, unlike the present study, have examined behavior.⁶ Relatively few attempts have been made to examine those whose status is deviant, and even fewer studies have examined the status which is at most marginally deviant. The present study concerns the last mentioned. Our interest is not in criminals, homosexuals, or drug addicts; nor are we studying those who are physically or mentally different as would be true of dwarfs, the blind, or schizophrenics. Rather, the present case deals with a particular group of college students (those who reside in the community in which the college is located) who may be negatively labeled by others at the college who do not share the characteristic in question. The label is "townie", and the present study attempts to look at the experience of those sharing that label in order to understand something about their experience, particularly whether that experience is in any way conditioned by the label.

⁶There is nothing surprising in this since we tend to be far more concerned with deviant behaviors than with deviant statuses. It is the former which we are much more likely to define as harmful.

To state that we are concerned here with those who are marginally deviant means only that an assumption has been made as to the degree and quality of the deviance perceived by the relevant defining audience. Certainly the local students are not labeled to the degree that rapists, alcoholics, or thieves are. They are not criminals and neither are they the same as non-criminal groups often dealt with in studies of deviance; political extremists, mentally ill or retarded persons, adherents of "odd" religious groups, or the physically afflicted. At the same time, however, the local students find themselves aligned with two groups which are to some extent at odds with each other, and to the degree that each group labels and treats differentially members of the other, labeling theory becomes a sensible framework within which to study their experience. That the local students are labeled by the community is suggested, subtly rather than overtly, in the data which will be presented further on in this report. That they are labeled by the campus community will be seen much more clearly.

It is worth noting at this point that this study was conducted because the author recognized that there are, and have been in the past, some misconceptions about the local students which inevitably have created a negative image of them. Questions asked of some administrators and faculty members prior to the planning of this research revealed that the students who come from Carter High School in Mill City are seen as poorer students who are less well prepared and less motivated academically than those who come to the College from other parts of the State. However, when the S.A.T. verbal and math scores along with the CLEP scores on examinations in English,

Math, Social Science, Natural Science, and Humanities were compared between the local and non-local students who entered the College in 1972, no major differences appeared.⁷ The local students scored higher on three, lower on three, and equalled the mean score of the non-local students on the other. When the same scores were looked at later for the entering class of 1976 the Carter graduates were found to have scored higher on all seven tests.⁸ There were no indications, however, that the views of the local students as poorer students had changed. Given this situation we can make the claim that a negative stereotype of these students exists unchanged.

The inherent problem is basically a definitional one. If any group is labeled, then, theoretically, the process as described in labeling theory should occur even if the group so defined is not

⁷The test scores were as follows in 1972:

	<u>Carter Students</u>	<u>All Other Students</u>
SAT Verbal	459	448
SAT Math	470	479
CLEP English	447	447
CLEP Math	443	461
CLEP Natural Science	445	440
CLEP Humanities	420	417
CLEP Social Sciences	396	412

⁸The test scores were as follows in 1976:

	<u>Carter Students</u>	<u>All Other Students</u>
SAT Verbal	454	444
SAT Math	499	476
CLEP English	418	406
CLEP Math	487	468
CLEP Natural Science	424	408
CLEP Humanities	412	408
CLEP Social Sciences	420	399

commonly thought of as deviant. Labeling theory does not deal with deviance in terms of any objective reality which clearly differentiates between what is and what is not deviant. Rather, it is applicable only when the behavior or status is conceived of as deviant in terms of social definition. Our concern, then, is inevitably with the question of whether or not that behavior or status is so defined by some audience. Measuring this, however, remains very difficult. It is hard to disagree with Simmons' contention that "almost every conceivable dimension of human behavior is considered deviant from the normative perspective of some existing persons and groups." (Simmons, 1965: 225) Nor can we disagree with the commonly asserted belief that no behavior is universally seen as deviant. We can, however, do better than this "all or nothing" situation might suggest. We can, and we do, ask questions of samples of people through which we attempt to ascertain the proportion of persons in a population who consider a particular behavior or a particular status to be deviant. We are not, however, assured of either of two important factors through most of this research. First, it is not easy to ascertain whether respondents are defining the behavior or status in question in a similar manner. A more important, and certainly more difficult problem, is that we rarely have a good clear measure of the intensity of their feelings, and thus cannot easily predict the possible effects their definitions may have on those to whom they apply the label. The degree to which we can with accuracy declare an individual's subsequent behavior to be the result of how he is defined by some audience is problematic. The problem, of course, is just "how much" labeling need occur: how

strong must the reaction be? No exact answers can be given.⁹ We may still find it useful, however, to search for some limitations of the degrees to which social definitions, and the behavior which is likely to accompany such definitions, may affect an individual's actions. In this study of how local students may be affected by conflicts between the college they attend and the community in which they reside (and in which the college is located) we hope also to learn something more about the labeling process.

The literature dealing with campus-community relationships fails to come to grips with the subject matter of this research. The "town-gown" studies have examined many facets of the relationship between campus and community but have not dealt with how such relationships might affect the experience of the local student. The many studies, most of which are "in-house" documents looking at the specifics of the relationship between a given college and the community in which the college is located, have dealt instead with the more typical sources of strain which concern both parties. Problems related to student housing, transportation and parking, economic impact of the institution upon the community, student behaviors such as drinking, drugs, and "demonstrating" are a few of the more common topics. The two volume bibliography compiled by Ira Fink and Joan Cooke (1971 and 1972) gives a good idea of what is in the literature. Their work is annotated, the average annotation running more than half a page,

⁹For a good overview of some of the criticisms which touch on these and other problems in labeling theory see Schur (1971: 7-36).

and covers two hundred and eleven different studies, not one of which deals with the meaning of the campus-community relationship to the students who come from the community in which the college is located.¹⁰ Rather, the selections cited deal mainly with the "town-gown" problems mentioned above as well as problems of campus involvement in solutions of community problems.

The literature on commuting students is small, undoubtedly owing in large part to the only recent growth in the numbers of commuting students. Perhaps the best work is Arthur Chickering's Commuting Versus Resident Students (1974). The book provides numerous valuable insights into the world of the commuting student. It is not as useful for the present study, however, as it might have been had it gone more deeply into self and other's perceptions of the commuter status. Instead, it is mainly an objective comparison of commuters and residential students. One does not come away from this study really understanding how the commuter feels about his experience but that, after all, was not Chickering's main concern. The same point can be made about most other works dealing with commuting students. The tendency is to compare commuters with resident students on values, attitudes, aspirations, involvement in campus activities, spare time activities, and so forth.¹¹ No study could be found which attempts, as does the present one, to

¹⁰Fink and Cooke (1974: 4) state, "As anyone using this bibliography will soon note, the materials described are not easy to locate. The annotations, as a result, are considerably longer than they would be if the publications were more accessible."

¹¹Says Chickering (1974:137) in his Bibliographic Commentary, "No systematically organized body of research and theory directly addresses the commuting student, his experiences, and the educational outcomes which flow from them."

understand from the commuter's point of view the quality of his college experience, particularly with respect to ways in which that experience may be affected by the campus-community relationship. In sum, it can be stated with some assurance that neither the literature dealing with commuting students nor that covering campus-community relationships shows any concern with the convergence of the two, which is the subject matter of the present study.

METHODS

The data for this study were collected through interviews made up almost entirely of broad, open-ended questions. Four different groups were interviewed. The number of interviews completed for each group are as follows:

1. 24 of the 37 Carter High School graduates of June 1972 who started at Mill City State College in September 1972,
2. 32 of the 40 Carter High School graduates of June 1976 who started at Mill City State College in September 1976,
3. 34 of a sample of 50 students from outside the "local" area, and
4. the twelve faculty members and administrators who were asked to participate in this study at Mill City State College.

The two groups from the local High School are populations. The 37 in 1972 and 40 in 1976 represent all of the students from Carter High School who graduated in June and began at the local college in September of those respective years. The non-local students are a systematic random sample while the very small number of faculty

members and administrators were chosen mainly from those who have been working at Mill City State College for at least five years.

The response rate of nearly seventy-five percent was satisfactory. All respondents were notified by letter and follow-up letters were used when necessary. The group hardest to reach was that of the Carter High School graduates of 1972. A number of them had dropped out of the College and five of these had left Mill City as well and were unreachable. There were some refusals in each group but not enough in any case to prevent about two-thirds of the group from being interviewed.

The choice of these particular groups of students for interviewing may not be obvious. The 1972 Carter High School students who came to the College were chosen because they were close to the end of their college careers at the time the interviews were done. Thus, they were able to provide insight into the actual experience of being a local student at the College. The students who came to Mill City State College from Carter High School in 1976 were interviewed either during the summer or early in the fall of 1976. These students were chosen in order to get at their expectations and attitudes, as well as their perceptions of the attitudes of others about the local College, without any of this information being tempered by the experience of actually having been at the College for any substantial period of time.

The sample of non-local students was interviewed in order that some comprehension of attitudes about the community and the local students could be attained from persons who did not come from Mill City. This sampling splits up evenly between non-local students living in dormitories on campus and non-local students who live in apartments near the College.

The group of faculty members and administrators at the College was interviewed in order to add to the data on the College community's image of the community, the relationship between the two, and the perceptions about the local students.

Two difficulties arose in the interviewing process. The first of these was relevant only to the 1972 students from Carter High School. Many of the questions required them to talk about attitudes and expectations they had had three or four years earlier. Even with intensive probing there were some questions they could not deal with in much depth, though overall the answers from this group on the retrospective questions provide data that is not superficial. A related problem is not knowing how the experience of the intervening years may have "conditioned" the respondent's perceptions of how he and others felt some years earlier.

The second difficulty encountered in the collection of the data was that the students, both local and non-local, tended to be less responsive than might have been hoped. The questions, almost all open-ended, could have been dealt with more extensively than was the case in many of the interviews. It is true that many were difficult questions in that the respondent was in the position of having to speak about his perceptions of how others felt. There was, however, even more timidity about doing this than had been expected. Even with intensive probing there was a tendency for some of the respondents to be unable to get very deeply involved. Although the data are substantial enough for the purposes of the study, it had been hoped that they would have been more extensive. Two causes for this problem seem likely: as

noted above, the questions were often difficult to deal with in the first place, and, secondly, the students interviewed were perfectly aware that they were being interviewed by someone who was affiliated with the institution they were being questioned about. This latter may have been the more telling factor. A situation in which one has to make statements to a representative of an institution about its quality will be approached with trepidation, particularly if there are negative statements to be made. In all cases the interviews took place in an office on campus. Although this was very convenient for those involved it could not help but further promote the identification of the interviewer with the institution.

In general, however, the interviewing was successful since it yielded enough data from sizeable proportions of the groups studied. The average interview was about one hour in length for the 1972 Carter High School students and about forty minutes for the 1976 Carter students, the non-local students and the faculty and administrators.

It had been hoped, originally, that some of the teachers and administrators at Carter High School would be interviewed. However, since there were some indications of resistance to this by the administration of the High School, the decision was made to forego this group rather than create unnecessary strains, since its members did not constitute an essential data source for the study. In addition, interviews were expected with some of the Carter High School students who went away to other colleges. The administration at the school preferred, however, not to allow access to the data on who went where or which students were planning to go elsewhere. Although data from

this group would have been of interest, it was again not crucial since the far greater interest lay in the perceptions of the Carter students who came to Mill City State College about the views of these others.

This study is exploratory. It does not have among its purposes the comparison of data with other studies or the retesting of hypotheses formerly examined by others under similar circumstances. Rather, new ground is being broken here in this attempt to look at people from a new perspective and to study a problem which has been virtually ignored. The theoretical model, though popular in recent years, has not been used in studies of persons similar to those in the present study. Some of the findings here should be generalizeable to other groups which are labeled and which may be considered marginally deviant. Generalizations about "town-gown" relationships and about the experiences of commuting students will be made. However, these won't be applicable to all college-community involvements given the likelihood that there are real variations in such relationships and experiences. The problems colleges and communities have with each other are enhanced or mitigated by many variables which all but make direct comparison impossible. It is hoped, however, that some light will be shed on all the issues studied: the experiences of local commuting students, the relevance to that experience of campus-community relationships, and the utility of labeling theory in the study of those with a marginally deviant status.

CHAPTER TWO

THE COMMUNITY AND THE COLLEGE

Mill City is situated in a mountainous section of a Northeastern State. Settled in the 18th century, the community became the area's center for the manufacturing of textiles by the late 19th century. The constant flow of water in the area's major river provided power for the mills and good railroad facilities provided much needed transportation for both people and goods to the otherwise isolated region.¹ By the turn of the century the city reached its economic peak and had a population of over 24,000. Practically every census since 1900, however, has shown a decline in population as Mill City has suffered the fate of almost all Northeastern cities whose economy was based on manufacture; the movement out of the area of the factories, most often to take advantage of cheaper labor, cheaper power, and cheaper transportation primarily in the South. Today the city's economy remains dependent on manufacturing for the most part, but the jobs are fewer and are concentrated in a very few plants. The second largest employer in the community today is the local four-year State College. As the economy of the area peaked and began to stagnate, the population decreased until today Mill City has only about 17,500 inhabitants,

¹Mill City lies in a valley between a mountain range immediately to the east and a somewhat more distant range to the west. Mill City became the northern terminus of a railroad in the mid-nineteenth century. Some years later a long sought east-west rail line was completed giving the community good transportation connections with many of the larger cities of the Northeast. Today there are no longer any passenger trains on these lines and only a few of the freight trains passing through Mill City each day stop there any more.

about three fourths of its population seventy-five years ago. Unemployment within the local labor force is high and little significant relief seems likely in the near future. The community has been involved in a constant search for new industries to settle in the area so as to provide new jobs. Although a few small manufacturers have moved into Mill City in the last few years they have not employed enough persons so as to effectively alter the unemployment rate.

The economy is a constant topic for discussion locally. A reader of the City's one newspaper, The Reporter (daily except for Sunday) is constantly confronted with news articles, feature stories, editorials and letters to the editor touching upon some aspect of the economic problems of the area. The Reporter only recently ran a ten-day series on the local economy; its strengths, its weaknesses, its problems, and some possible solutions. All of the discussion, however, has led to little apparent change in the situation.

Given these problems one might expect concerted efforts to reach solutions about which there was some degree of consensus. The community, however, seems somewhat at a loss in making decisions about its future. Mill City appears to be attempting to cling to a past of which it is justifiably proud, but whether this is compatible with a viable economic future is questionable. It seems likely that only a real crisis would lead the people of the community to believe that change is necessary.

One type of change which some in the community feel could benefit the area would be a significant movement in the direction of the exploitation of tourism. The region, with its surrounding mountains, attracts many vacationers from the relatively nearby Eastern seaboard

metropolitan areas. The money they spend, however, does not come into Mill City but rather to other localities which seem better prepared to offer the tourist the types of activities he is looking for. The Local History and Craft Corporation, a non-profit operation whose aim is to create a center for the production, display, and sale of fine handicrafts and to rehabilitate local buildings of historical interest, has not been well received by the community even though it is doing precisely the kinds of things which American tourists appear to find particularly attractive today.

It would be simplistic to suggest that the community is antagonistic to change. Rather, the impression one gets is of a population so beaten down by high unemployment, high taxes, high energy costs, and no real control over the problems facing it that the human energy can't be found to confront the situation, set some goals, and make a real attempt to attain them.

While Mill City has been suffering, Mill City State College has prospered. Until two years ago when the State imposed budgetary cutbacks the College had experienced a decade of extraordinary growth. Begun in the late nineteenth century as a normal school for the training of residents of Hill County to become teachers, the institution was very small and underwent comparatively little growth until recently. There were never more than two hundred and fifty students until the late nineteen fifties, and the College reached a population of about five hundred in the mid-nineteen sixties. During these seventy years other changes occurred as well. Although still a teachers college, the Bachelor of Science degree began to be awarded when the College

became a four-year school in the nineteen thirties. Although the Bachelor of Arts degree was awarded by the mid-nineteen sixties, the College was still mainly oriented to teacher training and was a liberal arts school in name only. Since then two major changes have occurred. Mill City State College has grown to over two thousand students, more than quadrupling the numbers of the mid-nineteen sixties, and it has become in reality a college offering a general education with many fields of study. The College today offers Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Science degrees in a total of thirteen fields and an Interdisciplinary Studies degree as well.

Another indicator of growth during this period is the sizeable increase in numbers of faculty and particularly of faculty members who have earned advanced degrees and are interested in research activities while continuing to meet the most important requirement of a teaching institution, classroom effectiveness.

At the same time library holdings have increased in both quantity and quality and other academic services such as a well equipped media center and a solid computer operation have come into being.

The physical plant has grown enormously in the past decade with a new library, classroom building, administration building, Campus Center, and, importantly, new dormitories. The latter, especially, have had a great impact on the quality of life at the College as nearly half of the students attending the institution are now able to reside on campus.

The growth of Mill City State College has significantly added to the role it plays in the local community. Its impact has consequences

both social and economic. One might argue that there are psychological effects as well. Taking the latter first we might expect that there would be a great deal of pride and satisfaction in the community due to having the College located there. Such feelings would likely be manifested in support for the institution. There seems, however, to be a good deal less support than might be expected. The social interactions between the College and the community are also less in quantity and less favorable in quality than what one might assume. Although the College today has significant economic impact on the community and the surrounding areas this also has not led to the closer relationship between the two which would otherwise have appeared likely.

Aside from some of what we shall see of the "town-gown" problems when we examine the data, there are some other indications of the tensions which may be pointed out at this juncture. While The Reporter tends to be supportive of the College editorially, its reporting appears often to give more coverage to what may be deemed the negative rather than positive aspects of the institution. Thus, the reader of the paper is more likely to receive information regarding student drinking behavior, parking problems, and disputes about the State's acquisition of property to be used for the construction of new dormitories, than about the growth in academic programs and academic quality. Whatever the reason for this kind of coverage, the effect is likely to be one of reinforcing if not creating, negative views of the College. That the paper's approach is in part a reflection of already existing attitudes is also a probability. In any case, a reality for the College is to find itself portrayed in a light less favorable than that which it desires.

In the spring and summer of 1976 a series of meetings was held by the Planning Policy Committee of Mill City.² This Committee looked at the community's past growth patterns as well as present growth trends and future growth potential in order to make recommendations about what the City should and should not be doing to promote its future. Members of the Committee were representatives of about a dozen groups in the community; the planning, school, and health boards, the College, industry, labor, the poor, etc. Without fail, during the meetings attended by the author of this study, each time Mill City State College became a topic for discussion someone would point out that "The College is a resource but. . ." Certain themes would appear over and over. "The College took a city playground when it expanded and never replaced it as promised." "The College has never followed the Master Plan it had produced some years earlier." "The College takes over City property in a fashion such that no one in town has anything to say about it." "The College's growth has led to problems such as student rowdiness, congested parking, and deterioration of neighborhoods near the campus." Although there might be an occasional reference to the boost to the local economy created by having the College here, most of the discussion centered on problems attributed to the institution. It would have been difficult to come away from those meetings feeling that the community viewed Mill City State College with any warmth.

²Planning Policy Committees were established in each city and town in the State in accordance with the Planning Policy Development Act of the State Legislature in order to provide "your community with a unique opportunity to describe the major growth-related problems and opportunities confronting your community and to make specific recommendations to address those issues" as well as to "tell us how we can make state laws, programs, and policies more effective in helping

The impression one gets is that there is some feeling in the community that the College goes its own way without much regard for what the community may or may not want from it. We shall see later on that others see the relationship similarly. A further impression one gets is that the College doesn't quite know what to make of this, particularly since it can point to tangible positive effects it has upon the community. Although there is every reason to expect some tensions between "town and gown" we might profitably examine the quality of the present relationship particularly given the recent history of both the community and the College. This will be done through the examination of student, faculty and administrative perceptions as shown in the data collected in the interviews. We may reiterate, however, prior to the presentation of that data that the relationship is not altogether a happy one and there are sound reasons to expect some effect upon the students at the College who come from the community.

you to achieve your community's goals for the future." (Personal Communication: Governor to Planning Policy Committee, February 2, 1976.)

CHAPTER THREE

THE LOCAL STUDENTS

It is necessary, given the nature of this study, that we now take a look at the local students, some aspects of whose experience form the focus of this inquiry. Although this study is not being done for purposes of comparison of the local students with the non-local students, some comparisons are inevitable and these will appear in the pages which follow. The major thrust, however, is the determination of how, if at all, the experience of the local student is affected by the relationship between the College and the community.

The term local is obviously relative and is used in different ways in different studies. While some others have chosen to equate "local" with "commuting", for the purposes of the present research we do not.¹ Since the intent in this study is to examine community-college relationships and their connections with the experiences of local students it seems clear that our concern is with those who come from the community in which the College is located. Therefore commuting students who come from communities other than the immediate one are not the concern here. The most reasonable method of determining which students

¹The point here is simply that "local" as used in this study refers only to those students who came to Mill City State College after graduating from Carter High School. These are not, however, the only students who commute to the College.

come from the local community is to take those who graduated from the High School in town.² With the exception of a handful of students who come to Carter High School from a few neighboring towns and villages which do not themselves have high schools, all of Carter's students come from Mill City.

Carter High School has been sending more than sixty percent of its graduates to college each year. Of those who go to college close to one third choose to begin their college careers at Mill City State College.³

Let us now turn to these students who upon graduating from Carter High School entered the College in the following September. Why did they choose to come to Mill City State College?

REASONS FOR CHOOSING MILL CITY STATE COLLEGE

Students from Carter High School decided to come to Mill City State College for reasons somewhat different from those of other high school seniors in the early 1970's. Data from a nationwide study of high school seniors (Fetters, 1972) shows that "Availability of specific courses or curriculums", "Reputation of the college in academic areas",

²Until 1974 a very small number of students came to Mill City State College from Sacred Heart a Catholic High School in Mill City which closed that year. The decision was made to deal only with Carter students in this research since so few came from Sacred Heart to the State College.

³Perceptions that the local students who come to Mill City State College have of differences between themselves and those who go away to other colleges will be looked at shortly. Unfortunately since Carter High School graduates who went to other schools were not interviewed we have no answer to the question of whether they perceived any difference.

and "College expenses" were reasons most often cited by the college bound seniors as being "very important."⁴ While the National Survey showed 62 percent mentioning specific courses or curriculums and 43 percent mentioning the college's reputation only 34 percent of the 1972 and 1976 Carter students who opted for the local school give similar reasons (i.e. positive statements about the College or its programs) for their choice. In fact, only 17 percent of the 1972 population gave such reasons. The combined figure is increased because 47 percent of their counterparts in 1976 cited positive aspects of the College and its programs. The major reason for this striking difference in just four years would appear to be that the College's reputation has improved as it moved further from its heritage as a teachers college in the direction of a good liberal arts college with a number of strong programs. Although this change was well under way by 1972 it had become more perceptible by 1976, and information regarding it was more readily available to those interested in looking at the State College as one among other choices.

A female from the 1972 group states:

"My parents were either going to buy me a car or send me away to a private college. I took the car and came here. I figured I could get just as good an education here as anywhere else for teaching.

⁴In the Spring of 1972 data were gathered from nearly 18,000 High School Seniors attending over 1,000 High Schools in the United States. The questionnaires focused on two major areas; various aspects of, including their attitudes about, the student's High School experience and the student's plans for the future. In Section I of the questionnaire those students planning to go on to college were asked about the relative importance of various factors which might affect their choice of college. Data from the national survey can be compared only with caution since in the present study the questions have

And a male from that year:

"I was interested in business and the school was getting a good reputation in Business Administration so I came here."

While statements suggesting that the education at Mill City State College is sound were only sporadic among the 1972 students from Carter High School their 1976 counterparts were much more likely to note this point. The following two interviews were typical:

"I started taking accounting at [Carter]. I like working with figures and really loved it and did well in it. I decided that's what I'd like to do eventually. . .my accounting teacher at [Carter] said the program was real good here. I heard the Business Administration program was particularly excellent at [M.C.S.C.] ."

"I never thought it was a bum college. It's growing and I'm proud to be here. I found that the differences between colleges I wanted to go to and here aren't that great."

Many more Carter students (63 percent) mention financial reasons (class of 1972 - 54 percent; class of 1976 - 69 percent) than the 41 percent in the National Survey who cited "college expenses" as a "very important" reason for their choice of college. As noted earlier the economy in the northern Hill County region has been stagnant for some time and money for college is not readily available to many local families. This would be true, however, of many other regions of the country. The big difference in cost arises when the student has the opportunity to live at home while attending college. This is, of course,

been asked only of those students attending one particular college rather than all students in the Carter class of 1972 who were planning to attend college.

the case for the Carter High School students but does not accurately describe all students in the National Survey, since not all of them live within commuting distance of a college. This is further borne out when we note the fact that 38 percent of the "non-local" students who come to Mill City State College cite financial reasons for their choice, a figure very close to the national 41 percent but substantially lower than the 63 percent figure amongst the Carter High School students attending the local college.

Another important reason for coming to the local college cited by many of the Carter students (33 percent in 1972 and 56 percent in 1976) is that they wanted to remain in the area, to live at or be close to home.⁵ For high school seniors the choice to stay at home and go to college can mean not having to cope with all of the insecurities such a new experience may engender. Indeed the college experience may be frightening to the student even when remaining in familiar surroundings close to supportive relatives and friends. At the same time it should be noted that the new experience of college is more meaningful to many students precisely because it allows, often for the first time in their lives, the opportunity to leave home and "cut the apron strings."⁶

⁵In the National Survey 22 percent cited being "able to live at home and attend college" as being "very important." The figures do not tell us what percentage this is of those for whom this was a possibility.

⁶One of the key themes in Chickering (1974) is that residential students gain a great deal in terms of personal development precisely because they are away from home.

For instance, the non-local students at Mill City State College who were interviewed mentioned "wanting to get away from home" in 47 percent of the cases. That some of the Carter students would have liked to go away to college but remained mainly for financial reasons is indicated occasionally in the data. The point here is that citing "remaining in the area and living at home" as reasons for coming to the College may rationalize a decision which is not necessarily one's first choice. However, we should not lose sight of the apparent comforts of commuting from home as noted by many of the local students.⁷

A female student from Carter High School who entered the college in 1972 states that:

"a lot of my friends were coming here. I'm local so it was easy to come here."

Two students from the 1976 class indicate varying self-perceptions of their readiness to go away to college.

"It [M.C.S.C.] has what I want, a Business Department. My brothers went away to school, one to Saint Michaels and the other to [Thompson], (a nearby private college). The one at Saint Mike's took up Business Administration and told me they use the same books here. I figured the Department would be just as good. Also its a lot cheaper here. I could have gone away if I wanted to. There's not that much to being away though. I'd rather live at

⁷The degree to which the choice by a Carter High School student to come to the State College or to go away to school reflects a "local" or a "cosmopolitan" orientation in Merton's sense is not readily apparent. While students made statements about wanting to stay at home or wanting to get away from home there is not enough data of suitable strength to state that those Carter students who came to Mill City State College are "locally oriented" while those who went away can be characterized as having a "cosmopolitan orientation" (see Merton, 1957: 387-420).

home and go out on weekends. Also I worried about my studying. If I went away I might not study so much. . .A lot of my friends are here. I'll always have someone to talk to. I'll know most of the local kids here." (Emphasis supplied)

"I was lazy about choosing colleges. It was hard to decide. A girl friend was coming here, and then transfer out which I may do too. Also, it's near home and I didn't feel ready to go away. I can mature more here. I don't feel ready yet to take the step of going away. (Emphasis supplied)

The only other reasons for choosing Mill City State College which showed up with some frequency were "family pressure to stay in the area" and "didn't have anything else to do" or "didn't know what I wanted to do." Interestingly both occurred with some frequency only among the 1972 students (29 percent in both instances) and rarely or never among the 1976 students (6 percent in the first case and not at all in the second). The data indicate that the family pressure relates to both financial problems and to parental protectiveness, the latter more strongly than the former.

A female from the 1972 class stated:

"My parents wanted me to go here. They were against my going away to school. My only choices were here and [Thompson] but I felt I didn't have a good chance to get in there. . . My parents are old-fashioned and overprotective."

We may speculate that with the increased costs of going to college in 1976 parents were less likely to need to assert reasons other than financial ones if they wanted their son or daughter to stay at home. Recall that seven out of ten of the 1976 Carter High School students who came to the local college cited financial reasons as playing a part in their choice to do so. This may explain why so little mention of parental protectiveness occurred in that group.

The choice of Mill City State College because of a failure to know what else to do is interesting. Nearly one out of three 1972 students gives this as one of his reasons, while none of the 1976 students mentions it. Nothing in the data directly explains this. Educated guesswork might lead us to the following, however:

A. students in 1976 were more concerned about expenses and simply would choose not to go to college at all rather than to go without a good reason,

B. students by 1976 were more certain about where they were going in terms of a career and would be less likely to give a reason indicating that they did not know what they wanted to do, or

C. it was much easier to give such an answer in 1972 before the College really began to enjoy its better academic reputation.

A female graduate from Carter High School in 1972 exemplifies fairly typically the kinds of influences others had on the decision to come to the State College:

"My father said I was going to college here. Maybe because he never went himself. If it was up to me I'd have taken a year off and worked in my father's store and then travelled. I never really liked school that much. My mother was on my father's side. She'd have been disappointed if I didn't go here. The guidance counselor (at Carter High School) wanted me to go too. I went to see him a number of times. He always called me by different names. He never seemed to know me. He was always trying to get a high percent into college. He seemed not to care where you went as long as you went. There was no real pressure from my friends. My decision was already made by my senior year. . . none of them ever tried to talk me out of it."⁸

⁸Numerous comments about this guidance counselor were made by the Carter students from both groups. All such comments were negative. In conversations about the High School with College administrators his name came up as "one of the real drawbacks at [Carter]." Although he seems to be held in little regard it is important to note that his apparent disdain for the College may have some effect on how Carter students view the institution.

The Carter students were influenced in their decision to come to Mill City State College mainly by family members. Sixty-one percent mentioned such influence as coming predominantly from their parents. Siblings or cousins were cited occasionally as having supported the decision and in almost all such cases had based their support upon their own experiences at the College. About one third (32 percent) had been influenced in their decision to come to the College by guidance counselors or teachers at the High School and 25 percent had been influenced in their choice by friends. Comparatively few (13 percent) stated that the decision had been their own and that they had not been influenced in it by anyone else. There were no substantial differences between the 1972 and 1976 groups in the amount of influence by others.

ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF COMING TO MILL CITY STATE COLLEGE

When asked what specific advantages they saw in coming to the College, the Carter students pretty much repeated the reasons they had stated in answer to the question as to why they had chosen to come to Mill City State College. The cost and being able to stay at home were cited most often. About one in seven mentioned having a job in the area which they would be able to keep and a similar number mentioned aspects of the school's reputation ("a good school", "has a good Education program", etc.). It is, of course, no surprise to find the students mentioning as advantages the very same qualities they mentioned as reasons for coming to Mill City State College in the first place. To what extent some of these responses may be rationalizations cannot be very clearly explained here. Some indications may

come from our examination of "disadvantages." At the moment, however, it seems fair, though possibly redundant, to state that it is the advantages seen in going to a college that become the reasons for choosing that college.

The students who came from Carter High School to Mill City State College were also asked to recall what they had perceived as disadvantages in attending the local college. Three answers were given to this question with some degree of regularity. Twenty-nine percent (33 percent in 1972 and 25 percent in 1976) said none. Since so few negative comments had been made in answer to the question of why they had chosen this college in the first place it is not surprising to find nearly one out of three unable to cite any disadvantages. In fact, one might have expected even more to answer in this fashion.

Some interesting points do come out, however, when we look at the disadvantages which were mentioned. Thirty percent (29 percent in 1972 and 31 percent in 1976) mentioned being at home, with their families, and not out on their own as a disadvantage. We should recall that forty-six percent (33 percent in 1972 and 56 percent in 1976) had cited the same points in explaining why they had chosen to come to the local college. Relatively few seem to be neutral on the issue if we measure neutrality in terms of no mention, either positive or negative of remaining at home. We should note, however, that about one third of those citing "being at home with the family" as disadvantageous also cited this as an advantage. There is no reason to be particularly surprised by this. The student who stays at home and sees the advantages in so doing can certainly be cognizant of the

advantages inherent in the college experience for those who go away to college.⁹ Clearly there is a split on this amongst the local students with more of them willing to see "staying at home" as relatively advantageous.

The other disadvantage cited with some frequency is a corollary of the previous point. Twenty percent of the local students (17 percent in 1972 and 22 percent in 1976) mentioned as a negative aspect of coming to Mill City State College the inability to see new places and meet new people that would be an obvious part of the experience of going away to school. About half of those mentioning this as a disadvantage are among those who mentioned remaining at home as a disadvantage. The others presumably do not see staying at home with their families as being disadvantageous while they do at the same time view negatively the inability to expand their horizons through going away to college. Two females, the first from the 1972 group and the second a Carter High School graduate in 1976 illustrate their conflicting feelings in the relevant portions of their answers to the questions on advantages and disadvantages:

Advantage "I knew a lot of people coming here. I'd feel funny going somewhere where I didn't know people. I felt I could meet new people here. I'd be closer to a community I know. I wouldn't have to go to an unfamiliar place."

Disadvantage "I wouldn't get the chance to meet new people in a new place. I wasn't really ready to go out on my own. If I were to go to college now I would go somewhere else. I've learned a

⁹The reader gets some feeling for this in Chickerino's (1974: 41) assertion that Charlie (a typical commuting student) is "caught between two cultures (college and home) where identification with one often requires denial, or at least neglect, of the other."

little more. I've grown up more. I understand what others are like. I'd be ready to take responsibility for doing something on my own."

Advantage: "It will give me a chance to grow up more and mature before I decide to go away or not. . . I want to meet a lot of people at [M.C.S.C.] from different places."

Disadvantage: "I won't meet as many people from far away. I'll see a lot of people I already know. Going to a hometown college is like still being in high school and seeing the same people. That's the part I don't like."

It is likely that the local students know through what they've heard, or know, perhaps intuitively, what Chickerino sees as the reality occurring in his data.

"They (commuters) are constrained by internal conflicts and by pressures from parents, peers and prior community. These constraints operate with least force for intellectual development, where the college experiences of commuters and residents are most similar. Thus the commuters more quickly approximate the scores of residents in the intellectual area. But because differences exist, and persist, in the range of non-course experiences and interpersonal relationships, nonintellectual changes occur more slowly. Beginning college with fewer advantages than resident students, commuters as a group slip further and further behind residents despite these chances. And, as a consequence, college has the effect of widening the gap between the have-not students and the haves." (Chickerino, 1974: 44)

Other points mentioned as being disadvantages support some of the earlier findings. Thirteen percent of the Carter students (25 percent in 1972 and 3 percent in 1976) mention negative aspects of the College in terms of its reputation or programs. That this was pointed out far more often in 1972 than in 1976 supports the earlier contention that Mill City State College had in the past been easier to criticize and did, in fact, have problems which its recent progress has begun to solve. These figures spell out as clearly as any data could the

change in attitude among the young in Mill City. We shall see shortly that these changes are occurring in other segments of the population, too, though not as strongly.

Two comments of some importance were made by a few of the Carter students. When asked about disadvantages of coming to the local college four students of the total fifty-six (7 percent) mentioned that they would not be as involved in campus life because they would be commuting from home and spending less time on campus than other students.

"Staying at home separates you from other campus kids. You only see them in class and never get involved with them."

"I thought it would be hard to meet people and make friends. I have to come all the way back here from home if I want to use the library. That wouldn't be true if I lived on campus. If I lived on campus I'd be here all the time."

Two of the fifty-six Carter High School students (4 percent) predicted that they would be looked down on by other students because they were "townies."

"It seemed like the same kids from High School would stay together. We wouldn't be accepted. We'd be seen as townies. The other students would look down on us."

"I didn't think I'd get along with many of the students here. I guess they reject us as townies."

Even though only a few students raise these issues it is worth noting them as significant in that they were mentioned as disadvantages in answer to a very general open-ended question. They were already conceived of as problems by local students even if only by a few of them.

As we shall see further on these issues were discussed more fully and by many more students when raised more directly in the interview.

A somewhat higher percentage of the 1976 Carter students who came to the local campus applied to other colleges (50 percent) compared to the 1972 students (42 percent). Their rates of acceptance are similar, too (90 percent in 1972 and 81 percent in 1976). The only real variation is in the number of different colleges applied to. In 1972 the Carter students who eventually entered the local college tried to get into only seven other colleges, while in 1976 their counterparts made application to twenty-four colleges in addition to Mill City State College. The 1976 Carter High School graduates who came to State were apparently far more prepared to consider other possible locations for a college education even though they are much more likely to praise the local school than were those who graduated from the High School four years earlier. There are no differences between the two groups in terms of applications and acceptances on the variables of public vs. private or in-state vs. out-of-state institutions.

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THOSE COMING TO M.C.S.C. AND THOSE GOING AWAY TO COLLEGE

Both groups of students from Carter High School were asked whether they felt there were any differences between themselves as a group and their classmates who went away to other colleges. Forty-three percent (50 percent in 1972 and 38 percent in 1976) stated that there were no differences. About one in four felt that those who went away to college were more likely to have been the better students who achieved higher grades in high school. Once again we find that

many more from the class of 1972 felt this way (38 percent) than was the case with the class of 1976 (19 percent). This again lends support to the growing perception of Mill City State College as a better college academically by 1976, since the graduates who came to the local college that year were more likely to feel that the good students at Carter High School no longer had to go elsewhere for their college education. This, coupled with higher costs of going to school elsewhere, is likely to explain the fact that the "better" students from Carter now see the local college as a good alternative.

More students from the 1976 class (31 percent) than the class of 1972 (17 percent) feel that the students who go away to college are different in terms of their desire for new experiences, their independence, and their readiness to leave home. Perhaps by 1976 this was more likely to be an important reason for the local students in choosing a college than was "academic reputation". Such speculation may be supported once again by an earlier point. If the perception among the students at Carter High School is that there has been real improvement in the quality of education at the local college, then "greater academic quality" is less likely to be given as a reason to go to another school. It is interesting to note that there was a greater likelihood in 1976 for a student answering this question (regarding differences between those who come to the local college and those who went away to college) to mention negative things about going to Mill City State as being a reason to go elsewhere. Such views, however, when they do occur are usually attributed to other persons rather than the student himself. A female in the 1976 group

illustrated this point in her answer:

"I think the biggest difference is money. Also parent pressures. Many (students) come from families that wouldn't be proud if their son or daughter came to [M.C.S.C.]. The student might want to stay here but they know their parents might be hurt. It's like keeping up with the Joneses. The competition for status at [Carter] was terrible. Very cliquish. You always were under pressure of worrying what others would think. It was always the kind of atmosphere where you made decisions on the basis of what others would think."

Interestingly, only one student from the 1972 group saw those going away as being different by virtue of having more money, while nearly one out of four students from the 1976 class felt this was the case. It seems likely that a two-pronged economic explanation clarifies this point. First, costs of higher education continued to be on the increase during the early 1970's and secondly, Mill City, already suffering economically, continued to do so but with greater severity. Thus the students planning to go on to college when they completed high school faced rising costs while they had less to pay with given rapid increases in the cost of living. These economic factors seem to contribute in a major way to the perceptions that the better students from Carter High School now consider Mill City State College to be a realistic choice and that the students who go away to other schools have to have money in order to do so.¹⁰

¹⁰A calculation of social class based on father's occupation showed relatively little difference between those students from Carter High School who went to other colleges and those who came to Mill City State. The difference which did appear showed a somewhat greater likelihood for the children of professionals and executives to go away to college with the sons and daughters of lower level and

One final point already made in the context of the questions on advantages and disadvantages is that there were a few students who felt that they were different from those going away in that they wanted to remain home with their families. This reflects, once again, the growing number of students who by 1976 cited this reason as being one of their own in making the decision to enroll at Mill City State College. The probability that one's relationship with the household, and perhaps the community, plays a part in one's choice is evidenced by a young man in the 1976 group. Commenting on differences between his peers who came to the local college and those who had come away to school, he stated:

"I'd say a lot who stayed here are happy with their love lives, their families, and [Mill City] and had no reason to go away. Some who went away said that they couldn't wait to get out of the house and get away."

The degree to which the students attending or planning to attend Mill City State College rationalized their decision to do so is not known. That their answers to the questions regarding college choice as well as the question of differences between themselves and those who did not make that choice could have been subject to rationalizing is a point that needs to be made.

skilled workers being a bit more likely to remain at home while attending college. Perhaps surprisingly, a greater percentage of those going to other colleges than of those coming to Mill City State College came from homes of semi-skilled and unskilled workers.

ATTITUDES ABOUT MILL CITY STATE COLLEGE

How did the Carter High School students who came to the local college feel about that institution? What perceptions do they have about the attitudes of their families, their friends, people at the High School, and the community about Mill City State College?

Overall, the Carter High School graduates in 1972 and 1976 who came to Mill City State College made very few clearcut negative comments about the College. There was a great deal of variation, however, between the groups on positive versus neutral comments. While one third of the 1972 students were able to express positive attitudes about the College, more than two thirds (69 percent) of the 1976 class were able to do so. And while fewer than one fourth of the 1976 students made comments which were essentially neutral fifty-eight percent of the 1972 students did so. Once again we find support for the notion that, in the eyes of students coming to the college from the local high school, Mill City State was a better school by the mid 1970's than it had been only four years earlier. Although it may seem strange that a change in the College's reputation could occur so quickly it is not so unusual considering that the suggestion of such change was coming from those who had the greatest likelihood of keeping track of what the College was doing: i.e. high school students who might come to the College and their relatives and friends.

The neutrality amongst the 1972 students is illustrated in the comments of two members of that group, first a female, then a male:

"I had nothing against the school. My only negative feelings were about staying home. It was hard to formulate a picture of the place. I had

no particular attitudes about it. I heard no opinions. I didn't know anything negative. I never knew any students here socially prior to coming."

"I thought it was a place to go to get the degree and get out. I didn't like it or dislike it. Sort of felt that all colleges would be the same."

Running counter to these feelings are the positive commentaries which are more typical of the 1976 group. A male stated that:

"I like the College. Its new. I liked orientation a lot. Met lots of nice people. I'm excited about coming here. The faculty seems friendly. It seems as though they'll be willing to help anyone who asks."

A female from that group said:

"The College offers what I want. The kids are friendly. Its easy to make friends at [M.C.S.C.] From what I've seen the upper classmen are friendly. They'll help you out if you need help. Its different from high school. More kids, more things to do, more freedom. You're on your own more. Nobody pushes you to do things. That's a good thing. You get to know yourself better and grow up. I feel the teachers will be helpful. That they really want to get to know you and help you out."

Interestingly, when asked what the attitudes toward Mill City State College had been on the part of their families, friends, Carter High School staff, and the community in general, the respondents were a good deal more specific.

According to the Carter students there were almost no negative feelings about the College on the part of members of their families. Positive comments by family members were noted twice as often by students from the 1976 group (66 percent) than from the class of 1972 (33 percent). Moreover, the more recent Carter graduates were able to

pinpoint more specifically parental and sibling attitudes while their 1972 counterparts were only very general. As noted earlier the latter group was put in the position of having to dig back to a point three or four years earlier and they were not able to easily articulate much more than the direction of the attitudes.¹¹ In the 1976 group we find, however, that in addition to the broad, general comments there were many references to the College's closeness to home, its relatively low cost, and the experiences there of the parents and siblings themselves. On the negative side we find a few comments about the students at the College being overinvolved with drinking and general rowdiness. Generally, the comments from both groups are much more positive than negative with some families split on the issue. Following are comments from the interviews which indicate the wide variation in aspects of the College about which family members apparently have feelings, positive or negative:

"They really haven't said anything. I think my parents are happy I'm staying near home. I don't think my mother thought I'd make it but she's proud of the way I worked to get in here."

"My father thinks it's a terrific place because it's so close. He doesn't know much about teachers and courses but since it's here it's good."

"My father thinks it's the greatest. Really good. One of his good buddies is a guidance counselor at [Carter] and he says good things about it. My brother at [Thompson] doesn't think much of it. I resent that. He thinks this is the same as St. Mike's. My brother

¹¹In fact three times as many 1972 students were unable to answer this question at all as compared with the 1976 students. (50 percent to 16 percent).

sees them as places where you don't really have to study but just party all the time. He's not a better student but he's very smart. He doesn't put in all that much time studying."

"They think there's a lot of hell-raisers around here (the College). They're a little bit prejudiced about that. That's probably true of all colleges though. I don't really know what they think of the place beyond that. I do have some aunts and uncles who went here awhile ago and they liked it. I don't think my parents dislike it though. They probably haven't really kept up on it."

"I think they feel it's a good school as far as learning goes. That it can offer me a lot. My sister graduated from here and had no complaints. She went through the Carleton College catalog with me and told me they didn't offer any more than [M.C.S.C] did. They wanted me to make up my own mind though."

A rather different situation exists with regard to the attitudes of their friends about the State College. These attitudes tended to be much less positive and more negative than those of the respondents' families. Overall, leaving out the comments best described as neutral, about one third (32 percent) of the respondents reported negative feelings about Mill City State College on the part of their friends. It is no surprise, given the perception of the College's improvement, that more negative attitudes were reported by the 1972 group (38 percent) than by the 1976 group (28 percent). Most of the friends in question seem to have been Carter High School classmates of the respondents and undoubtedly some of them were among those going away to other colleges who may have felt some need to rationalize the decision not to attend college locally. (We should not fail to note here, however, that some of these friends would have been coming to the

State College and might have been more inclined to justify their decision to do so.

The positive comments, once again, tend to be very general. The neutral comments are general also. The negative attitudes, however, tend to be somewhat more specific and indicate feelings that Mill City State College is too easy academically, only a teachers college, not comparable to any private school, too small, does not give the student a good education, or is the place one goes to if one cannot afford to go to, or does not get accepted at, another college. The most common negative attitude was that one could not get as good an education at the local college, compared to what one could achieve elsewhere, mainly because it was too easy.

"Most of them thought it was an easy school to graduate from. . .that it wouldn't be tough academically. Most of them changed their minds if they took courses here. They just didn't think too much of the school. They'd rather go to a big name school outside of the area."

"They usually say they don't think it's a bad college but most of them think it's good that they're going away. They think it's O.K. but not highly recommended like Harvard or something. They expect that the degree isn't worth as much as one from somewhere else."

"They're not in favor of State so much. They tend to look down on it and feel there are better schools to go to. They don't see it as an academic school. They seem to think that a lot of kids go here only because they can't get in anywhere else."

The students' perceptions of the attitudes of the Carter High School staff toward Mill City State College were more positive than negative. Again we find a higher rate of negative feelings in 1972

(25 percent) than in 1976 (19 percent). In the interviews, however, we find that positive comments about the College are often of the "it's a good place to go but you could do lots better" type. The positive comments tend to be very general and only occasionally mention specifics about the College. The negative comments refer to the College as being easy, a place for the student who is not smart, a school not as good academically as others, and the place to go if one cannot get accepted somewhere else. Between the negative comments and the "it's good, but" positive comments, one gets the picture of the Carter staff's perception of Mill City State College as being only weakly, or at best moderately, favorable. The comments of two males from the 1972 class and then a female and a male from the 1976 group exemplify some of these attitudes.

"It seemed like the guidance people would push for [M.C.S.C] if they were having trouble getting a student in somewhere else. They saw it as an easy school. They saw it as the place to go if you couldn't get in somewhere else."

"They thought it was a fairly decent school. They mentioned it as a place to apply for practically every student though they really didn't push it. They thought the quality was average or maybe a bit above."

"They probably would rather see us go away. They don't down it really. They'd like us all to go to [Thompson], (a nearby private college) but we're not all that smart and rich. I think they're just happy to see people go to college and not just end up hanging around."

"I think they think it's a good school. They always seem to expect you to go away to school though. They never push State. They'd give you forms for other colleges and then give you one for State saying that everyone fills one of

these out. They almost seem to put State in a backseat position. It's the position where in effect they're saying, 'if you can't get in anywhere else you go to State'."

The support for the local college seems to be at best lukewarm among the staff at Carter High School, although in all fairness it should be pointed out that the respondents were mainly referring to the attitudes (as they perceived them) of the guidance counselors. They rarely had much to say about the views of their teachers. Probes produced a picture of students who had little discussion of their college plans with guidance counselors and almost none with their teachers. The one guidance counselor they saw most often about college did not seem to "push" the local institution. The few respondents who said that he strongly advised Mill City State for them were the ones who also defined themselves as being among the poorer students at Carter.

Some interesting findings emerge when we look at the Carter High School graduates' perceptions of the community's attitudes about Mill City State College. Overall, about half of the students (there is virtually no difference between the two cohorts) reported favorable attitudes. This includes, however, those who saw the community response to the College being favorable only because of its positive effect upon the local community. Since in these cases the feelings related only to a latent function of the College's location in the community and not to the institution itself, we may for our purposes exclude them.¹² When we exclude these cases, we note that about half

¹²The point here is that although the College does have an important role in the area's economy the present question is looking at feelings about the institution as an institution. Where impact on the

of the respondents from the 1972 group indicate favorable community attitudes toward the College (42 percent) but only about one in five (22 percent) of the Carter students who graduated in 1976 were able to do so. Here for the first time we find that there is less support according to 1976 graduates of Carter than was the case in 1972 as reported by Carter High School graduates of that year. In the previous cases (the respondent's own attitudes, the attitudes of family members and of friends, and the attitudes of people at Carter High School) there had been more expressions of positive feelings by the 1976 students from Carter. This variation requires some explanation not only because of its deviation from the trend but because of its relevance to a critical aspect of the study, the relationship between the College and the community. The students coming to Mill City State College from Carter High School in 1972 were more frequently able to articulate positive community attitudes about the College. As was the case for the 1976 group, the comments were quite general, the type which suggest that the College is seen as a good one without touching on anything very specific. Typical of these comments are the statements of a young man from the 1972 group.

"The community is slowly changing its attitude on the College. They are starting to realize that it's a good college, that its one of the best in the State system. A lot still call it

economy was mentioned the respondent was, of course, asked about any other attitudes the community might have.

the "teachers college" but even so they are beginning to see it as a real college with lots of good students."

A male from the 1976 group noted that:

"Generally people are positive about it. I've gotten a lot of favorable attitudes about it. It's in the town and there's the feeling that it's here and it's ours. Having a college in the town the quality that [M.C.S.C.] is is a big thing to the people here."

Negative community attitudes were mentioned by 61 percent of the Carter students (58 percent of the 1972 group and 63 percent of the 1976 students). These negative feelings fall into three categories; academic quality, student behavior, and actions of the institution itself. The concern with student behavior was the most frequently volunteered negative answer to this question as to how the community as a whole felt about the College. Among both the 1972 and 1976 Carter graduates who came to the State College 38 percent stated that the townspeople were upset with the college students' "trouble-making". More specifically, this term translates into student involvements with drinking, drugs, sex, and loud parties. Two females from the 1972 and 1976 groups respectively state:

"People around here are apprehensive. They don't like having all the students around partying. Their social behavior isn't acceptable to the townspeople. People ask, 'what about all that sex, booze, and drugs.' They're very negative about these things."

"Some of the older people look upon State with a frown. They see the kids as drug users and vandals. That's a big majority in our community. They all say 'that's [M.C.S.C.], they bring in all these trouble-making kids.' Then they say 'look at how nice [Thompson] is.' They don't realize there's just as much of a problem over there."

More than one in four (27 percent) of the Carter students noted that the community had some negative feelings about the academic quality at Mill City State College. Surprisingly such comments about the townspeople's attitudes were more prevalent in the 1976 group than in the 1972 group (31 percent to 21 percent). The perception of improvement in academic quality has been shown to have occurred in the students' presentation of their own attitudes as well as those of their families, their friends, and the staff at Carter High School. Why does this not obtain in their views of community attitudes? The following brief statement from an interview suggests an explanation. If the community has some particular quarrel with the institution being in its midst it will lead to a more complete denigration of all aspects of the institution.

"I don't think they regard it very highly at all. I think they hate being referred to as a college town and that their businesses depend on the College being here. They feel that if you come here you must be a dummy because this is where the dummies go. They do the same thing with [Hill County Tech.], (a local regional vocational high school). They take the place for granted and they've never really looked at it. I don't know why."

The other area of complaint mentioned by the students as being a "sore point" with the community has to do with certain actions of the institution itself. One in five (21 percent) of the students (25 percent of the 1972 students and 19 percent of the 1976 students) mentioned community concerns with the College's expansion; its taking over of the residential areas, and the creation of parking problems. Three male students, the first two from the 1972 group, provide some insights on this.

"They felt the same way then as they do now. They resented it somehow. The growth. The city may have felt it was losing something as the school grew so rapidly. It was something they couldn't control. Most of the community felt this way."

"It wasn't too high an opinion of the place. Mainly because of the way the College goes about acquiring property. There was a big stink about the College taking over the land for the high-rise dormitories. They didn't want [Mill City] to become a college town."

"The past few years there's been hassles around the parking problem. Also the College taking over the houses. [The Reporter] articles talk about these things. I don't think they (the townspeople) really see it as a plus though. Not like they see [Thompson] in [Thomsonville]."

It is interesting to note that the students were substantially more forthcoming about community attitudes than was the case with any of the others they were asked about. While about 60 percent were able to present attitudes in the latter cases (their own attitudes, 63 percent; their family's attitudes, 55 percent; Carter staff attitudes, 61 percent; and the attitudes of their friends, 61 percent) 91 percent of the Carter students made statements about community attitudes toward Mill City State College. There was some difference between the groups with the 1976 students ready to articulate their own and their family attitudes, but the chief variation lay in the numbers of respondents able to discuss the feelings of the community as opposed to the others they were asked about. It seems likely that this is simply explained in terms of the greater ease we have in attributing attitudes to a

collectivity as opposed to specific individuals (self, parents, siblings, friends, teachers, etc.).¹³

Another point which is worthy of mention here is that there was very little in the way of negative commentary in the attitudes expressed as being their own or their family's while substantially more negative attitudes about the local college were attributed to their friends, the staff at Carter High School, and the community. This is best analyzed in terms of Leon Festinger's (1957) theory of cognitive dissonance. Since the Carter students interviewed for this study were already at the State College or were about to enter it, they would have been unlikely to put themselves in a state of dissonance by defining negatively the institution they were, or were about to be, part of. That is, any negative attitudes they or their families expressed would have had the effect of also putting themselves in a negative position because of that affiliation. We can expect, therefore, that their comments will be more positive about the institution (as they were) and that such positive attitudes ought to be considered in light of the dissonance which would have accompanied negative attitudes about the College.¹⁴

¹³We may speculate that our increased bombardment by the media telling us how we feel about almost any issue may underlie our own willingness to make such statements about our community or our society,

¹⁴A good summary of techniques and processes of dissonance reduction may be found in Liebert and Spiedler (1971: 203-209).

THE 1972 STUDENTS:
EXPERIENCES AND ATTITUDES SINCE BEING AT THE COLLEGE

The discussion which follows deals with answers to four questions which were asked only of the students who came from Carter High School in 1972. Since they deal with perceptions of attitudes and actual experiences since being at the local college, they could not be asked of the 1976 group from the local high school. The first of these questions asked what differences the local students perceived between themselves and the non-local students. Their answers show general differences between the two groups being acknowledged but little in the way of specific information. About half of the group (46 percent) felt that the non-local students think and act differently mainly because they are non-local. That is, they are seen as being freer, less inhibited by their "family's rules" and more worldly in that they have been exposed to more experiences in big cities.¹⁵ How the perceptions of local students are influenced by their conceptions of large cities and their residents is a point of some importance. That the local image of the non-local is based as much on the perception of the non-local's place of residence as is the non-local's image of the local student is a possibility that ought not be overlooked. That is, we have begun to see and will continue to see that "locals" and "non-locals" have somewhat negative images of each other. The evidence from their interviews suggests that this has a good deal less to do with highly specific actions or attitudes on the part of each toward the other than it does

¹⁵As noted earlier many of the students coming to Mill City State College live in or nearby the large cities in the State. Mill City is about as far away geographically from such a city as any community in the State.

with stereotypes of traditional rural and urban values and life styles.¹⁶

The one other point which was made frequently by the 1972 Carter students (33 percent) is that there is a tendency for each group (locals and non-locals) to stay together and not interact substantially with the other. Many of these comments fuse "non-local student" with "living on campus" or, at least, "not living at home". It is quite true that non-local students live either in on-campus dormitories or in apartments in the community. In either case they are far more likely to be involved with the campus and campus activities than the local students who, in living at home, remain tied to their families, the community and activities related to both. Locals and non-locals, then, are also distinguished in terms of students who have significant ties to campus life and those who do not.¹⁷ We shall see that the non-local students also perceive the lack of involvement of local students in campus life as being an important distinction between the two groups. We can find some evidence for these points in the statements of local students which follow.

"Sometimes I can tell who they are just by how they act. We local kids live with our families. We have to follow our family's rules. Other students don't have to worry about this. They live more freely. They have more freedom. They may be freer to dress differently for instance. Sometimes I wish I could be freer. There are advantages to going away like learning to be on your own, learning how to handle yourself."

¹⁶For an excellent historical presentation of such images in America, most particularly images of the city, see White and White (1964).

¹⁷Chickering, who as noted earlier, has written the most comprehensive study of comparisons of commuters and residents is clearly concerned about the effects upon those (the commuters) whose ties to the campus are minimal. This concern led him to make a series of recommendations aimed at solving the problem. (see Chickering, 1974: 105-136).

"I tend to think more about the non-locals. Maybe they're easier to meet. Seems people from about here are still in their own cliques. People who aren't local don't know who is and who isn't local while I do. I guess I feel that non-locals are better off than the locals are at [M.C.S.C.] because they're having a new experience. Not the same old thing,"

"Local students seem to me to be more inhibited. Less prone to change. Quieter, Non-locals have had more experience particularly if they're from a big city."

"On the whole we didn't get along. I don't know why. When we were here we stuck together. The non-local kids stuck together too. They knew who was from [Mill City]. Maybe they thought we were farmers. Who knows?"

As noted above, the local students seemed to perceive their relationships with the non-local students as being dependent upon the latter's feelings about Mill City. The statements which follow illustrate this.

"They (the non-local students) think the College is O.K. but the town is eighty years behind the times. Nothing to do here but drink. I have to agree. There isn't that much here. They'd say, 'Oh you're a townie.' They wanted to see if I was conservative like all the other townspeople."

"The students here don't respect the town. They think it's dead. Nothing to do. They love the scenery, the location, but not the town."

"They think the place is dumpy. In the 'boonies.' Dirty. People aren't too bright. They think it's lower class with nothing to offer."

A very important question for this study is whether there exists a negative labeling of the local students by others at the College. When the Carter students at the College were asked about their perceptions of non-local student attitudes toward locals two-thirds were able to provide information. For the most part the data deal with attitudes

although about one in four of those who responded to the question felt that they were treated differently (and negatively) by the non-local students. The differences in treatment mentioned here are those of not being invited to do things with the non-locals and being left out of the non-locals' activities. The major point, in terms of attitudes, is that the locals feel that they are looked down on because they are "townies." Practically nine tenths of those responding felt this way. If you are a "townie", they feel, you are seen as inferior; you are not respected, and, as one put it, you are "the scum of the earth." A few of the local students note the degree to which these attitudes are based on a stereotype when they comment that the non-locals "can be very friendly if they get to know us." The fact remains, however, that the "locals" and "non-locals" do not get to know each other very well.

"When I was a freshman I felt that I was considered a 'townie'. The other students don't have much respect for local kids. They think you're here only because you couldn't get in anywhere else."

"Non-local students who don't know local students see the local students as the scum of the earth. It's handed down from other non-locals. We probably have a [Mill City] accent."

"Townies. That's the label you're called. It depends on your sex. When I met guys they didn't care where you came from. The girls were cliquey if they weren't from [Mill City]. They never really got close to you."

"You had one strike against you because you were from here. That was about it though. Other students wouldn't associate with you if you were local. But if you really wanted to be accepted you could. Altogether there was a feeling on campus that if you were local it wasn't a very good thing about you."

The Carter students do not, however, experience differential treatment from faculty or administrators. Practically all felt that their teachers do not know which students are local and which are not and that they are treated as equals. Equal treatment would occur they feel even if the professors knew where they came from. Only two students stated that they felt local students were seen by at least some professors and administrators as being less bright than non-local students. One of these stated that:

"Most teachers here treat you as a person, not as a local or non-local. Some professors and administrators, not a lot of them, think that if you are a local you're not as bright as the other students. That sure made me mad. I was upset at the professor. I felt he was stupid for thinking in that way. He made references to locals as being slow and having to take things slow in the classroom because of them."

To the extent that the local students experienced negative attitudes or negative treatment the source was almost always the non-local student. As we shall see further on, the data in the interviews with the non-local students support this conclusion while faculty and administrators are less likely to note significant differences between local students and non-local students.

THE 1976 STUDENTS: EXPECTATIONS ABOUT BEING AT THE LOCAL COLLEGE

The data on local students which have yet to be described come from two final questions asked of the students who graduated from Carter High School in 1976. The first question asked about their expectations prior to beginning at the State College and the second asked whether they expected to be viewed any differently because they came

from the local community. For the most part these students expected that college would be a generally positive experience. More than half felt that it would be a real challenge requiring a lot of hard work and studying. At the same time many foresaw the experience as being very enjoyable, interesting, and exciting; they were not put off by their expectation of having to work very hard. About one quarter of the students also looked forward to meeting new people, finding new friends, and taking part in new activities. One fourth also anticipated being more free and independent in what they saw as being a less structured situation than high school had been. They did not appear to be frightened by this expectation of greater responsibility and decision making. A little less than one fourth of the 1976 Carter students made only negative statements while a few more who had negative expectations also had many positive feelings. The negative feelings revolve, in some cases, around feelings of loneliness and the inability to meet people or have many friends. A greater number defined the experience as worrisome, fearing that the adjustment would be difficult and that they would feel lost, confused and uncertain. Some comments typical of the expectations of the 1976 group follow:

"It's going to be mostly studying. I won't be goofing off a lot. I'll devote most of my time to my studies. It won't be a rowdy time but I'll probably go to some dances. It'll be kind of lonely. I won't have a lot of new friends. I don't make new friends all that easily. I still have my established friendships here in town."

"I think the learning will be a lot more independent than in high school. The work will be different. In high school you always have to do things in a certain way. Here it won't be as structured or as disciplined. It won't be

as personal either. Relationships with teachers and other students won't be as close. There's a lot more people here. You're always seeing new people. In high school it's the same people. Here it won't be. It'll be harder to form really close relationships because of that."

"I hope it's some place where I can learn differently. At [Carter] I didn't learn much because of the setup (open classroom). Here I hope I'll be able to really learn something. I think it'll be a whole better place to be and that I'll do better than I did in high school. It's going to be a new beginning in my life. I really have to start doing things for myself."

"I'm very, very scared. Very nervous. At first I was nervous about being looked down on because I'll be a freshman again. I was scared about that until I found out no one can really tell if you're a freshman or not. Also I'm skeptical about whether I can handle it or not. Everything's on my own shoulders. I have to make decisions everyday to go to class or not. In high school you had to go."

None of the students from the 1976 group volunteered that he expected to be viewed as different because he came from the local community. However, more than half (57 percent) did state this when directly asked. Again, this is a very important question in terms of the study. It is of great interest that the majority of the 1976 Carter students coming to the College were already aware of the negative attitudes they would find on the campus. The most common theme running through their answers was that they would be "looked down" on because they were "townies." They felt they would be made fun of, joked about, mistrusted, and avoided by the non-local students. In general, they expect what the 1972 students have experienced, and many of them mentioned that these expectations were based upon things they had heard from others who had been at the College. It seems clear then that many of the local

students expect to experience or, in a few cases, have experienced, being viewed negatively owing to their status of "townie." Some indication of the range of responses follows in these excerpts from interviews with six of the students.

"No. I didn't have expectations of that. They don't know where I'm from. If I said I was from town it wouldn't change their behavior or attitudes toward me."

"Yes. Before I came here I knew that we were seen as townies. They make fun of us, especially those from big cities. Faculty don't care where you're from. It's just the students. I don't know if it's serious or not but it's what they do."

"Yes, I thought the people from the cities would look down on us. I had always heard (from friends) that people assumed that if you went to a local college it would be expected that you were there because you couldn't get in anywhere else. General talk among friends led me to think everyone would call us townies. They wouldn't see us as being as good as they are."

"I didn't think so but when I got here and joined the intramurals and went to parties people would make a big deal out of it. They'd say 'we've got a townie here.' I never thought that would happen. I didn't know what to say. You can't really do anything about it. It's sort of a joking thing but it keeps on happening and it makes me feel awkward."

"Yes, as a townie. A guy at Orientation walked away from me when he found out I was local. That's not the majority though. Occasionally there will be comments in class about townies but it's usually just kidding around."

"Definitely, yes. It's happened. They feel you're different because you're a townie. I went to a party and mentioned that I was from [Mill City] and they immediately labeled me a townie. It seemed negative in one case. Another time it seemed like they were kidding. They won't really treat me differently though."

A point of some interest is the degree to which the local students are uncertain about the meaning of being labeled as "townies." Their frequent comments indicating that they "don't know if it's serious", "it's sort of joking", "it seemed like they were kidding", and others in this vein suggest some possibilities. One is that they do not, in fact, know whether the non-locals are serious. Another is that they feel that the non-locals really do mean it, and these comments reflect the locals' dislike of accepting such an image. In any case, we find some indications here that, although the locals are labeled, they treat the attitudes of the labelers in such a way as to make more problematic the question of whether those attitudes affect them.

What of the non-locals? Who are they? What are their perceptions of the local students? In the next chapter we shall look at some answers to these questions.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE NON-LCCAL STUDENTS

Our central question requires us to examine how the non-local students feel about the students who come to Mill City State College from the local community. In order to best comprehend their attitudes it would be useful to first look at a few background issues. We will begin with the question of why these non-local students came to this particular college.

The students who came to Mill City State College from other than the local area¹ did so for a variety of reasons. More than any other reason is their desire to get away from home. Nearly half (47 percent) stated this as a reason for choosing this particular college.²

Slightly fewer non-local students (44 percent) stated that they decided to come to this State College because an academic program they wanted was offered here. This coupled with the fact that about one out of four (26 percent) came here because of good things they had heard about Mill City State College is indicative of the degree to which the College has achieved a good reputation outside of the local area. We should not, however, ignore the likelihood that the area itself plays a part in the decision. More than half of those non-local

¹We might remind the reader at this point that the non-local students who were interviewed are a small random sample of all students who reside in the dormitories on campus or in off-campus apartments and whose hometown in all cases was located beyond the distance from which any student would be likely to commute.

²The National Survey referred to earlier did not have this reason among the choices in the question as to what the student considered important in the choice of a college. They did, however, have as one

students who were interviewed stated that they had liked what they had seen of the campus and its location when they visited or that they wished to be in Hill County, the one mountainous area of the State.

Thirty-eight percent state that a reason for their choosing this college was the comparatively low cost. This, we may recall, was a primary influence on the decision of the local students but the non-local students do not have the cost-benefit of living at home while they attend Mill City State College. Since, in almost all cases, they live within commuting distance of another State College they are prepared to pay the additional costs of living away from home either because they can afford to pay more than the local students or because other factors such as those mentioned above are more important to them than cost in their choice of a college.³

The one other reason mentioned with some degree of frequency (35 percent) is that Mill City State is a small college and therefore has greater potential for more personal relationships and special attention.

NON-LOCAL STUDENTS:
VIEWS OF MILL CITY AND ITS INHABITANTS

Three fourths of the non-local students had never spent any time in the Mill City area prior to coming there as a student. The others

of their statements "Able to return home frequently because of nearness of the college." Although the non-local students at the College did not, in fact, state this as a reason, some part of their choice may well have been based upon this since many do go home on weekends.

³There is no reason to assume social class differences between local and non-local students to be any more significant than those between the Carter High School students who went to other colleges and those who stayed home and came to Mill City State College. Thus, while we shall find some tendency for non-locals to disparage locals

had been in and around the area occasionally, mainly on family drives through the mountains or for hiking or skiing. None, however, had spent enough time in Mill City to really have a feel for what it would be like there. When asked what they thought about Mill City as a place the non-local students were overwhelmingly negative. The only positive commentary which showed up with some regularity (nearly one half of those interviewed mentioned it) was not really about Mill City but rather about the area in which Mill City is located. Many students mentioned the beauty of the natural environment, the scenery, and the area generally. Mill City itself, however, is viewed with no enthusiasm by the students who come here from other parts of the State. To many of these students it is a depressing city; old, shabby, run down, dying. They perceive economic stagnation and comment on poverty, poor housing, and the lack of good shopping and public transportation. These perceptions seem to be summarized in the more general comments about Mill City being behind the times, isolated and out of touch.

One other negative attitude mentioned frequently is one which may be common in college towns. Thirty-five percent of the non-local students when expressing their thoughts about Mill City complain that there is too little to do; that the community simply hasn't enough to offer them in terms of places to go to have fun and to socialize. The desire for more activities of this nature (discotheques, night spots, etc.) may be expected from students who come from large cities and their suburbs. Whether they should rationally expect this of a com-

it does not seem likely that this would be explained on the basis of "higher class" students looking down on "lower class" students.

munity in a rural location is somewhat questionable. Some perceptions of the feelings of these students may be had from the statements which follow:

"I wouldn't want to live here. It's a depressing city with little to offer. Seems like it's all old people. Lots of poverty and low income housing. It just seems kind of behind the times. It does have beautiful mountains though."

"I don't like it too much. I like the mountains but the town seems kind of old and shabby. There's not much to do around here, no places to go at night."

"It used to be pretty nice from what I understand. Now it's a 'shit hole'. An industrial town which doesn't have much going for it. It's a pretty area though."

"It's very bad in terms of social life. The town hasn't grown in any sense. It's dying. It'll never have a chance to rebuild. Socially it's very bad. There's nothing for a young person to do."

"It's lacking. I come from a real small town but it's got more to do than [Mill City]. All you do here is drink and go to school. There's nothing else to do. The town has really fallen down in terms of providing things for students. For all the complaining they do about us you'd think they could provide more for us."

"I think its a poor city economically. I don't think the people are too keen about the college kids. The people seem to want to stay here. The younger people tend to leave but the older ones stay. The older people just don't seem to know the outside world."

This comment leads nicely into the next question. When asked about their feelings toward the townspeople of Mill City the non-local students are as negative as they are about the town itself. Fewer than twenty percent have no negative comment to make about the people, although the single most prevalent answer is of a positive nature. More than

sixty percent of the non-local students state at some point that some of the people are nice and accomodating; all but one quarter of these students, however, temper their remarks with negative comments.

One half of the non-local students characterize the town as being heavily populated by old people, retarded, abnormal and handicapped people, as well as "losers". There is much mention of people seeming to be strange physically and mentally and just "wandering around talking to themselves." Mill City has housing for the elderly not far from the College and the "downtown" area. In addition, the community has been very involved in the State program to move the retarded and mentally ill out of the State Hospitals if they are defined as not requiring institutionalization. Many of these people live in rest homes near the "downtown" area. Therefore, anyone walking on Main Street is likely to encounter more elderly people as well as other persons who look or act somewhat "strange" than might be the case on the Main Street of other towns or cities. The degree to which this situation ends up somehow symbolizing the community and its townspeople may be high and reopresents an interesting latent function of what are seen today as useful programs, i.e. housing for the elderly and the movement toward deinstitutionalization.

One third of the non-local students view the townspeople as disliking the students at the College. According to these students they are viewed as being rowdy and "drunken fools" who are not to be trusted or befriended. The students feel that little favorable publicity is given them so that the views of townspeople are fed almost entirely by negative portrayals which focus on drinking and, occasion-

ally, drugs. The range of non-local student reactions is illustrated in the following:

"I feel sorry for a lot of them. It doesn't seem like they can really get ahead here. There's lots of nice people in town even though everybody says they don't like the college students. You hear a lot about child abuse here but no one seems to do anything about it. A lot needs correcting around here."

"The townspeople come off as crazy. They look like they'd mug you. They give you weird looks. There are nice people but a lot that you meet seem weird. People will sit next to you and just start rambling on. That's very different from [my home town]."

"Some of the people here are rather strange physically and mentally. There are a lot of abnormal looking and acting people in this town. A lot of handicapped people around here. It may have to do with the outpatient programs and the economic depression of the area. I've had very little interaction with them. I think they see the college kids as a bunch of drunken fools but their attitudes are probably changing. They know just who the college kids are and they act cold toward us. I don't know, we just project the image of college students I guess."

"There's two different types. My neighbors are exceptional people. They're nice. Others are old who just stand around. Lots of nursing home people just wandering around as well as retarded people. Lots of them seem lonely like they're lost."

"The people seem like real loners. A lot of crippled people. They don't seem that friendly. They seem like the loner type. Content to be by themselves. They don't do much. Just work and go home. I don't see any community involvement. If [Thompson] College wasn't down the road you'd never hear about this place."

"The people are different. They seem strange. A lot of strange people walk around town. It seems backwards. Like hicks and people that

seem uneducated. Young girls with babies. I feel bad for a lot of the ones I see who seem to lead a very sheltered type of life. You hear about their complaints about students. They look down upon the college kids which makes us resent it. I get the feeling that they can pick us out as college students who aren't from the area and they won't accept us because of that."

The evidence strongly suggests a very negative view of the community and its townspeople. Given such widespread negativism, we might expect that many of these non-local students will similarly disparage the students from Mill City who come to Mill City State College. The non-local students, however, do not admit to themselves having the negative image of the local students which we would expect that they do. We shall see shortly, though, that they feel such a negative picture of the locals is rather typical of the attitudes of other non-local students.

THE NON-LOCAL STUDENTS: ATTITUDES TOWARD THE LOCAL STUDENTS

The non-local students say they generally like the local students although half say that they don't know too many of them. Some point out that it's hard to get to know the commuting students since they tend not to spend a lot of time on campus other than to attend classes. Half of the non-local students state that the local students are nice, that they get along well together and some are their friends. There are occasional negative comments, but for most of the students who come from other parts of the State those who come from Mill City seem to be nice kids whom they don't get to know very well because there is very little socializing with them.

"The few I know are nice. They accept us, I accept them. Some don't like being called townies but I don't see any difference between them and other people."

"I don't know that many. I guess they kind of stay to themselves. I've never seen them get involved with the non-local students. I don't know if they want to be part of the school or part of the community. They've grown up here and I think that's hard for them."

"I only know a handful. They seem to be very real, down-home people. They seem trapped here. Most haven't been away from the area. They are nice people, though."

"The few I know are decent people. Some of them are pretty smart although you don't get the picture that coming from this town they would be. They don't want people to know they're from [Mill City]."

"They're cliquey. They feel like they're a minority so they hang around together. They don't hang around with the non-locals who are often the more popular kids. They are nice kids, though."

The non-local students who were interviewed do not, as a group, appear to be antagonistic toward the students at the College who come from the community. Their negativeness about the town itself and its people does not reach over to the local students although, to the extent that the non-locals do find anything negative about the local students, it seems to attach to their affiliation with the community.

The non-local students do not see the local students as being different from themselves. When asked specifically if they felt there were differences nearly sixty percent said no. Those who felt that differences do exist talked mainly in terms of the local students being quieter, more inhibited, and not having traveled or seen as much as they themselves have. They are characterized here as being content with a slower pace of life.

The non-local students are insistent that they do not behave any differently with local students than they do with each other. Nearly ninety percent see no differences in their interactions with locals and non-locals. More than half (56 percent), however, stated that they have either seen or heard about others treating the local students differently. Most of these make reference to the local students being called "townies" which is seen as a negative term by the non-local students. In addition, about one in four claim to be aware that other non-local students view the locals as somehow inferior; lower socially and mentally, "stupid" or "jerks". The following excerpts from the non-local interviews give us a feel for the perceptions non-locals have of how their peers view the local students.

"I heard one person a week ago say she felt that students from [Mill City] were not as intellectual as those from [the big cities]. It had to do with their dialect, with the way they spoke."

"Yes. Some students say the townies are jerks. They don't even know who they are but they generalize about them, stereotype them. I don't know why. I guess maybe if they've ever had a bad experience they don't forget it."

"I know a lot of my friends have the attitude that the local students are different. They think they are backward. They tend to not want to associate with them. You always hear girls say 'Oh, he's a local or a townie.' If my girlfriends met a local person they would tend to shy away. A lot of students think the local students are really weird people."

"Yes, my roommate went out with a local student. The other kids in my house teased her. They said she was degrading herself going out with him. They were probably jealous but they said going out with a townie just isn't done."

"Yes, they're just labeled townies. It makes you think of the unusual townspeople and that gets transplanted to the local students. It's really a problem when they're known as townies. I think a lot of non-local students feel they can pull things over on the townspeople because they see them as slower."

"Yes, they say, 'What do you expect from a townie.' They view them as a lot lower than everybody else socially and mentally. A lot of students feel that way. I don't think they expect as much out of them in a way. They generally view them as pretty stupid."

With nearly sixty percent indicating awareness of differential attitudes and treatment on the part of other non-locals, we might have expected more than twelve percent to have admitted this of themselves. It seems possible that they are simply unaware of their own biases, or are aware of them but do not wish to admit to them. In any case we find that while the non-local students who were interviewed claim to like the local students, to not see them as being particularly different from themselves, and to not treat them differentially, the majority of them do attribute negative attitudes and negative actions to other non-local students at Mill City State College. Since people tend not to admit to their own biases because of what they feel this will say about themselves⁴ it is not altogether surprising to note these findings. It seems to be less risky to suggest that what the non-local students say about the feelings and behaviors of other non-local students is more accurately the picture of reality at the College than what they say about their own.

⁴See Allport's (1954; 309-321) discussion of inner conflict and particularly the repression of prejudicial attitudes.

NON-LOCAL STUDENTS: PERCEPTIONS OF
LOCAL ATTITUDES TOWARD THEMSELVES

Finally, the non-local students were asked whether they felt that local people (students as well as townspeople) treated them differently because they were from outside the area. Forty-four percent said no, they are not treated any differently. Those who felt that they were treated differently answered in one of three ways. About twenty percent felt they were not trusted or liked by the townspeople who tended to be fearful of them.

"Yes, the townspeople look at us as brash young college kids. You'll walk down the street and they'll watch you closely. They're untrusting. They worry about our involvement with drinking and sex. They want to make sure nothing is going to happen to them."

Another twenty percent talked in terms of being looked down on as being troublemakers who are always involved with sex and alcohol.

"They look down on the non-local college kids. They see us as wild, going to school just to have fun. They see that as true of us outsiders but not of the local kids."

The other point made by the non-local students was also raised by about one fifth of them. Here the students claimed that the local people give them a hard time and discriminate against them simply because they are from outside the local area.

"I worked at the [Mill Valley Inn], (a local restaurant). I've noticed a lot of people ask where I'm from. It seems like they give me a hard time like smaller tips because I'm from outside the area. . .you get the feeling that they don't want you."

"Yes. When it comes to cashing checks they're not too happy with us. They put us in a lower class because we're from outside the area. They don't give us privileges they give to their own."

When I go out drinking with friends they automatically see us as irresponsible college students. They expect us to do things which will flip them out."

SUMMARY

There is a strong suggestion in the data that the community, its townspeople, and the students from the community who come to the College are viewed negatively, and strongly so, by the non-local students. The local students are accurate in their perceptions that non-local students view them as generally inferior. While the non-local students who were interviewed do not often admit that they themselves have negative attitudes about the local students, they frequently attribute such feelings to the other non-local students. The evidence, then, seems to be powerful enough to assert that the local students are, in fact, labeled and that as "townies" they are not well thought of. That they may manage not to allow this to affect them by defining the criticisms as "kidding around" may indicate a need on their part to rationalize the label. While there is no indication that the non-local students are "kidding around", defining the attitudes in that fashion does serve to avoid their impact while at the same time it suggests that the locals really understand that there is an impact to be avoided.

What about members of the faculty and the administration? What is their view of the local students? The following chapter provides some answers to this question.

CHAPTER FIVE

FACULTY AND ADMINISTRATION

A small group of faculty members and administrators were interviewed. The purpose was to get at their views on two issues; their perceptions of the local students, most particularly any differences between them and the non-local students, and their perception of the relationship between the College and the community. Further, it was expected that, given their positions, their views of the students and the college-community relationship would be distinctive, unlike that of the two student groups.

About one in four of those interviewed stated that they did not know which students were local and which were not. The probability is that this is true for many more than those who volunteered the information. There are only limited numbers of ways in which faculty members or administrators are likely to find out who is local and who is not unless they really go out of their way to do so. However, we do find general statements being made by Mill City State College staff about assumed, if not perceived, differences between local and non-local students.

The faculty and administrators were split on the question of whether the local and non-local students differed academically. Half felt there were no differences, while of the others two thirds said the locals were weaker and one third felt that the locals were better. Those who felt the locals were stronger students academically attributed this to two points; the College is a better college today and more local people are aware of it and the local economy has continued to be stag-

nating. Thus, more of the good students graduating from Carter High School will come to Mill City State College because it is now a more reasonable choice for their higher education and, during a period in which costs are very high, by staying at home they can cut expenses while getting a good education. Those who felt that the local students were weaker tended to tie this to a point mentioned by many of the faculty and administrators interviewed. A number of them stated that the local students are less sophisticated, less culturally aware, or generally unaware of the world around them because of what is seen as a comparatively high degree of insularity and isolation characterizing Mill City. Many faculty members and administrators feel that the local community is highly parochial and local students, therefore, are at a disadvantage.

The local students are said to be different because they get less involved with life on the campus as a result of their continuing attachments in the community. In addition, about one in four mentioned that the local students come here because it costs them less to do so. Some excerpts from two of the interviews give some idea of the responses. First a respondent who felt there were no academic differences; then one who felt such differences do exist.

"My perception is that local students seem to be somewhat cloistered in that I don't see them as having a background of various experiences, travel, or broad perspectives on life. I see these more on the part of those coming from urban areas to the College. It's manifested in their conversation. It becomes apparent that they've travelled less or are less aware of things of a national or international nature. This relates to the constant presence of culture in an urban setting while it's at most seasonal here."

"One thing is that a lot of students who come from the local area want to go away but can't afford to do so. This is not their first choice. They feel apart from the non-locals while they find that their friends are the same people they already knew from the local area. . . Many of the local students who come here are not acceptable at other places. We still lower our standards a bit for local students because they commute and don't need dorms. Also it's good for community relations."

The faculty and administrators, then, do tend to see some differences between local and non-local students. Primarily, they talk in terms of the greater advantages non-local students have in that they have achieved a degree of cosmopolitanism, of worldliness. This portrayal reflects the common urban-rural imagery noted earlier. But, it is also true that only one third of those interviewed noted that there were ties between the location of the student's home environment and his academic abilities. However, many other staff members who were interviewed note aspects of the campus view of the community that touch on the parochialism of the latter. Although not all of the staff volunteer this about the local students we may at least speculate, particularly given some of our earlier findings, that faculty members and administrators also see these students in terms of their community.

The staff generally views the relationship between the campus and the community negatively. The only positive comments which appear are made by the very few who mention that the community (in particular the merchants) gains economically from having the College located here. Otherwise the commentary suggests that the faculty

members and administrators who were questioned feel that there are some serious problems in the relationship. Perhaps surprisingly, no mention was made of the community being upset with the students and their behavior (drinking, drugs, etc.). The perceptions of the staff are that the community is occasionally distressed about such problems as housing, parking and noise generated by the students. Even though such problems are caused by students, the residents of the community tend to attribute them to the College as a whole, and especially to the administration. Many of those interviewed see the community as viewing the College's administration as inaccessible, as not to be trusted, and as the object of their resentment over being left out of decision-making which affects the community. The following excerpts from the interviews indicate some variation in perception as to how serious a problem exists.

"I think they get along o.k. There are differences but they are on small petty things rather than major problems or incompatibilities. Things like parking, housing, and noise. They are wary of the College though, probably because they don't know much about this place which influences their lives so much. A distrust. They feel the place is inaccessible. They may be scared because they are not so well educated. They're awed of higher education. The College could do more to extend itself to the community. Don't know what, maybe interactive events could be generated."

"I feel that the economic impact of the College on the community is substantial but that the community doesn't express any appreciation for it. Usually what they express is an anti-student position. The College is a kind of intellectual island in a sea of academically poor individuals. A blue-collar labor area. I'd hate to say that the College looks down on the community. The College simply recognizes that the people here haven't had as much opportunity for education."

There is also a real problem of public relations between the College and the community. The community resents the College's expansion and the decisions being made without the community's knowledge."

"The community differentiates between the College community (students, faculty, and staff) and the administration. They don't like the administration mainly because of the expansion taking place. I've had people approach me and talk about how awful the administration is. Their attitude toward the place is that its so-so, certainly better than before, but the administration? It's the expansion. The way it was done. Some of the people in the immediate vicinity don't like the noise or the parking problems but they don't necessarily blame the parkers for that."

"The relationship between the College and the community is lousy. It could be greatly improved. When I talked with . . . [a well-respected man of substantial position in the community] he said the College had never sat down and made a plan to work out relations with the community. He feels this is a serious problem. The perceptions of the College particularly through the newspaper is as a troublemaking place. Not just the students but the administration as well because of things like unilaterally made plans and decisions without prior consultation with the City."

We find strong indications of stress in the relationship between the College and Mill City particularly in terms of a perceived community distrust and resentment of the administration at the College and its methods of decision-making as well as the content of those decisions. Some support for this perception can be found, we may recall, in the local student assertions about the community's views of the College where approximately twenty percent of the local students interviewed raised similar points. If these perceptions on the part of local students, non-local students, and teaching and administrative

staff at Mill City State College are accurate, then we can claim that there are in fact some real tensions between "town and gown" and can look for possible "fallout" from these tensions on the local students who are tied to both the institution and the community in which it is located.

CHAPTER SIX

THE CONSEQUENCES OF BEING A LOCAL STUDENT

Now that we have looked at the data we shall examine the question of whether or not there are negative consequences to being a local student. In particular we shall discuss the question of whether the locals are labeled and, if they are, what meaning the label may have for them in terms of effects upon their attitudes and behavior. We are aware that Chickering and others have argued that local commuting students suffer certain disadvantages. For instance, they tell us that commuting students generally do not get as involved with campus life as do the residential students. A major theme in Chickering is that residential campus life offers much to the personal and social development of the college student. Since commuters are not, by definition, residential they presumably do not make the gains that the dormitory students do. The point is, as Chickering notes,

"The range of significant encounters with new conditions, experiences, and new persons is most restricted for high school graduates who continue to live at home after entering college. Many of their high school friendships continue as do many other activities and responsibilities they have been carrying. They go to class at the college and go home."
(Chickering, 1974: 42)

It is clear that the students from Mill City who attend Mill City State College tend not to get very deeply involved and, apparently, for the reasons others have suggested;¹ that is, unlike the residential

¹The students who came to the College from Carter High School in 1972 were asked what activities they had been involved in on campus. Less than one out of three mentioned any activity other than intra-

students they are able to maintain relationships with their families, friends, and the community in general. Whether or not they wish to do so is an interesting question, but one irrelevant to the present point. The fact remains that as long as these students stay in town their potential for breaking their ties with its people and its activities are minimized. Although it is likely that the locals do not get involved in campus activities because they value and feel comfortable with their community attachments, they may suffer the cost of being seen as uninvolved and miss the opportunities of getting to know the non-local students and having those students get to know them. As noted earlier fifty percent of the non-local students stated that they really don't get to know the local students. That the two groups have little contact is important to the question of labeling, since our contention would be that any such in-groups have a potential for disparaging out-groups whether on real or imaginary grounds.

Allport, on this subject, states that:

"The initial fact, therefore, is that human groups tend to stay apart. We need not ascribe this tendency to a gregarious instinct, to a "consciousness of kind", or to prejudice. The fact is adequately explained

mural sports, and the local students who participate in intramurals almost without exception play on a team made up only of local students. Forty-two percent had taken part in no campus activity outside of the classroom. Those who said none and those who mentioned only intramurals represent seventy-one percent of the group. Thus only the remaining twenty-nine percent mentioned at least one extra-curricular activity in which meaningful social contact with non-local students was likely.

by the principles of ease, least effort, congeniality, and pride in one's own culture.

"Once this separatism exists, however, the ground is laid for all sorts of psychological elaboration. People who stay separate have few channels of communication. They easily exaggerate the degree of difference between groups, and readily misunderstand the grounds for it. And, perhaps most important of all, the separateness may lead to genuine conflicts of interests, as well as to many imaginary conflicts." (Allport, 1954: 18-19)

It is undoubtedly easier to disparage those whom one knows the least than those with whom one maintains even only occasional contacts. The students whom the non-locals do not get to know very well because of a lack of such contact are, in many cases, commuting students who are often residents of the community in which the College is located. Thus, the potential for disparagement (labeling being a typical part of such denigration) is great simply by virtue of the high degree of separation of the two groups.

That a case can be made for a potential for labeling, however, is not the same as being able to say that the local students are, in fact, labeled by others at the institution. What evidence have we that labeling takes place? We have noted a number of points thus far which lend support to our claim that such labeling has in fact occurred. For instance, although some at the College see them as less well prepared academically, the local students do as well or better than the non-local students on S.A.T. and CLEP exams. Some faculty members, administrators and non-local students continue, however, to view the locals as poorer students. The non-local students report little animosity on their part toward the local students but they report many

such feelings on the part of other non-local students at the College. The local students who have been at the College (the 1972 group) say that they feel looked down on because they come from Mill City. The local students about to start at the College (the 1976 group) expect to be looked down on because they are "townies." Thus, strong indications do exist that members of the institution (non-local students, faculty members and administrators) expect the local students to be different in a negative way while at the same time the local students have experienced such negative attitudes (in some cases negative behaviors) or expect to experience them. An important point remains, however. It is not clear that the labeling of the local students is due to any of their personal characteristics. That is, we cannot say for certain that the students who come to Mill City State College from the local community are seen as being something less than the other students because of any attribute other than the simple fact of the location of their residence. It may be argued (and there is some evidence for this) that it is the community which is especially looked down on and disparaged, and that any of its representatives, no matter what their personal characteristics, would suffer simply because of their connection with it.

The evidence for this is strong. When asked how they thought the campus viewed the community the 1972 students indicated that the town was viewed with disfavor. The faculty and administrators interviewed about the local students and the campus-community relationship make comments which at least indirectly agree with this. This shows up most particularly in their views of Mill City as a parochial and

insular place. The non-local students very clearly state their disapproval of Mill City and its townspeople. Is it not probable that the local students are seen negatively simply because they are from a community which is itself, along with its townspeople, also viewed negatively? After all, the term "townie", in and of itself, says only that the individual resides in the community in which a college is located. But perhaps the term "townie" is a master status trait (signifying only a geographic characteristic) which carries with it numerous auxiliary status traits which serve to "round out" the total picture of the individual. Howard Becker making use of Everett Hughes' (1945) distinction between master and auxiliary status traits states that,

"Hughes notes that most statuses have one key trait which serves to distinguish those who belong from those who do not. Thus the doctor, whatever else he may be, is a person who has a certificate stating that he has fulfilled certain requirements and is licensed to practice medicine; this is the master trait. As Hughes points out, in our society a doctor is also informally expected to have a number of auxiliary traits: most people expect him to be upper middle class, white, male and Protestant. When he is not there is a sense that he has in some way failed to fill the bill." (Becker, 1963: 32)

Becker goes on, in applying Hughes to deviant behavior, to explain that,

"Possession of one deviant trait may have a generalized symbolic value, so that people automatically assume that its bearer possesses other undesirable traits allegedly associated with it.

"To be labeled a criminal one need only commit a single criminal offense, and this is all the

term formally refers to. Yet the word carries a number of connotations specifying auxiliary traits characteristic of anyone bearing the label. A man who has been convicted of house-breaking and thereby labeled a criminal is presumed to be a person likely to break into other houses; the police in rounding up known offenders for investigation after a crime has been committed, operate on this premise. Further, he is considered likely to commit other kinds of crimes as well, because he has shown himself to be a person without 'respect for the law.' Thus apprehension for one deviant act exposes a person to the likelihood that he will be regarded as deviant or undesirable in other respects." (Becker, 1963: 33)

If, in Hughes' sense, "townie" is a master status, the potential auxiliary status traits would be those characteristics which are seen as being relevant to any community member, including all positive and negative aspects of the community and its populace as generally viewed by some defining audience. Therefore, we may argue that if the campus views the community negatively, those views apply to any community member regardless of what kind of person he actually is. Thus there may be something to what we noted one 1972 student had stated:

"You had one strike against you because you were from here."

Determining what portion of these negative attitudes is attributable to the local students themselves, separate from their affiliation with the community, depends upon whether such a distinction is made by those having such negative attitudes. We have no evidence, however, that such a distinction is made by those non-local students, faculty members, or administrators who were interviewed. Nor should we necessarily expect them to. Though not entirely analogous, Allport's notion of "least effort" works against making such differentiations, because it is easier to operate on the basis of whole

categories, within which objects share inherent likeness. That is, we have no reason to expect that the local students are differentiated, one from the other, or are separated from their environment any more than Negroes or Catholics are distinguished amongst by the racially or religiously prejudiced. Overgeneralization is easy in a world which demands generalization. Allport explains:

"It is not necessary for all simplifications to be malign. I may think the Swedes are all clean, honest diligent. I can regulate my dealings with them by this favorable view (and some of the attributes may, of course, have some probability of being accurate). Our point is merely that life becomes easier when the category is not differentiated. To consider every member of a group as endowed with the same traits saves us the pains of dealing with them as individuals."
(Allport, 1954: 169)

The relevance of this to the present problem is clear. Those persons who come to the College from Mill City may be thought of in terms of their place of residence because it is easier to do so. The definers, in categorizing people and things, are doing nothing more than they do every day in order to get along in human society. The application of this argument makes implicit the answer to our question. If those persons at Mill City State College (faculty, administrators, and non-local students) look with disfavor upon Mill City (and they do), then their disfavor will embrace the students who come from the community. Therefore, on the strength of fairly powerful negative views of the community and its people, along with somewhat weaker negative views of the local students, we will argue that there is a negative stereotype of, and a negative label attached to, the local students by members of the campus community.

The question of the community's attitudes toward students from Mill City who attend the College is not so clearly answerable. Our only relevant data on this come from the interviews with the local students. While we posited the likelihood that the local students are caught in a crossfire of negative attitudes the data do not entirely support this. We have made the case that the campus community has a negative image of the local students. The data clearly show this to be the case. The community's view of the College is not always a friendly one, but the expectation that the community looks down on the local students who attend the College is not strongly supported. While the local students see some antagonism toward the College on the part of members of the community, there is little to suggest that it carries over to them. Rather, the data more clearly articulate strains in the "town-gown" relationship. There are the occasional references to the College as being poor academically or the students from the community going there only because they cannot get accepted anywhere else, but these are too infrequent to support with any strength the notion that the local students are looked down on by the community.

We might recall that the students reported almost no negative attitudes about the College on the part of their families. Their perceptions of the attitudes of their friends and of staff members at Carter High School showed some indications that they see these people as being less than satisfied with the academic quality of Mill City State College, but the comments suggesting this were less frequent, and less definitive, than what would be necessary to make any strong

claims about them. Finally, the local students see the community as having some strong negative attitudes about the College, but these are related less to the local students than to the community's dislike of student "rowdiness" and the perceived "institutional takeover" of the town by the College. Thus, while we can find a good deal of both positive and negative comment about the College not much of this picture shows the local students in a negative light. We cannot, therefore, maintain our original notion that the Carter High School students who come to the local college are subject to negative labeling by the community.

Our arguing that labeling is occurring, however, deals only with the initial stage of labeling as a process. That is, labeling theory presumes that the application of a label carries with it the potential for some effect upon the individual owing to his being labeled. The question for us now, then, is whether or not some effects do occur which have meaning for the experience of the labeled local students. Such effects, if they do occur, should be in the areas of attitude change or behavior change. Measuring such change is clearly a problem. Had the study been longitudinal, students could have been interviewed before, during, and after their college experience in order to get at any changes in attitudes or behavior. Observation could have been used to get at some aspects of behavior change as well. The study as planned, however, did not allow for these approaches. It was necessary, therefore, to ask questions of the students which would allow for the collection of data on their own perceptions of such changes. This in itself presents an additional problem in that such

a sensitive area could best be approached only indirectly. To have asked directly a question such as "Do you feel that the College view of you as a local student has had any effect upon your experience at Mill City State?" would have almost certainly put the students on the defensive and yielded only negative responses. The method used in attempting to get at the needed data was to inquire indirectly, an approach weakened only by the risk that the responses would not clearly allow for definitive interpretation. The questions asked were what the student's expected being at the College would be like, what differences there were between what they had expected and what they had, in fact, experienced, and in what ways, if any, their attitudes about the College had changed since coming there. Obviously questions such as these allow for a broad spectrum of topics to be raised by the respondent. It was presumed that if there was any significant problem with being at the College as a local student, there would be indications of this in the answers to such questions as well as in other parts of the interview.

What do the data tell us? While we can make a strong case for there being a negative stereotype of the local students accompanied by a somewhat derogatory label, "townie", we have no clearcut evidence that the students who come to the College from the community suffer any adverse effects because of this. Why should we expect that they would? In his insightful introduction to the sociological perspective, Invitation to Sociology, Peter Berger presents a picture of the relevant social process.

"Insofar as he is able the individual will try to manipulate his affiliations (and especially

his intimate ones) in such a way as to fortify the identities that have given him satisfaction in the past - marrying a girl who thinks he has something to say, choosing friends who regard him as entertaining, selecting an occupation that gives him recognition as up-and-coming. In many cases, of course, such manipulation is not possible. One must then do the best one can with the identities one is thrown.

"Such sociological perspective on the character of identity gives us a deeper understanding of the human meaning of prejudice. As a result, we obtain the chilling perception that the prejudging not only concerns the victim's external fate at the hands of his oppressors, but also his consciousness as it is shaped by their expectations. The most terrible thing that prejudice can do to a human being is to make him tend to become what the prejudiced image of him says that he is." (Berger 1963: 102)

In general, this is similar to the process as presented by Howard Becker in his discussion of deviant careers (Becker, 1963: 25-39). A few points from that discussion are mentioned here in order to see how our present case fits. Becker begins with the basic assumption that the first step is the commission of a non-conforming act followed by an audience's questioning of the motivation for that act. That is, Becker suggests that a frequent response is asking, "Why did he do it?" We are not dealing, however, with the commission of acts, but rather with being characterized by a status which may be seen as deviant. The question of motivation is not nearly so relevant. The status of "townie" will be ascribed to all students at the College who come from the community. The only ways to avoid it would be to somehow hide one's identity as a resident of the community (and this won't necessarily protect one from oneself since, after all, one knows that one is a "townie" even if others do not), or to simply not attend the College in the first place.

We have already noted that Becker makes use of Hughes' notion of master status traits and auxiliary status traits. In his discussion of deviant careers Becker is simply making the point that an individual committing a single act such as having used drugs, stolen, or committed a homosexual act is likely to be seen as being all that an addict (junkie), a thief (mugger), or a homosexual (fairy) is considered to be by a defining audience. This could occur, of course, even if the individual has been falsely accused. Our point here is that "townie" also is a master status which carries with it those auxiliary status traits applicable to anyone coming from the locality. Thus in our case not only may he be seen by some at the College as being there "because he couldn't get in anywhere else", but also as one of those somewhat "backward" people who are seen as being typical of the community.

Finally, as Becker notes, this picture of the individual as more completely deviant may have serious consequences.

"Treating a person as though he were generally rather than specifically deviant produces a self-fulfilling prophecy. It sets in motion several mechanisms which conspire to shape the person in the image people have of him. In the first place, one tends to be cut off, after being identified as deviant, from participation in more conventional groups, even though the specific consequences of the particular deviant activity might never of themselves have caused the isolation had there not also been the public knowledge and reaction to it. For example, being a homosexual may not affect one's ability to do office work but to be known as a homosexual in an office may make it impossible to continue working there. Similarly, though the effects of opiate drugs may not impair one's working ability, to be known as an addict will probably lead to losing one's job. In such cases, the individual finds it difficult to conform to other

rules which he had no intention or desire to break, and perforce finds himself deviant in these areas as well. The homosexual who is deprived may drift into unconventional, marginal occupations where it does not make so much difference. The drug addict finds himself forced into other illegitimate kinds of activity, such as robbery and theft, by the refusal of respectable employers to have him around. . .The behavior is a consequence of the public reaction to the deviance rather than a consequence of the inherent qualities of the deviant act.

"Put more generally, the point is that the treatment of deviants denies them the ordinary means of carrying on the routines of everyday life open to most people. Because of this denial, the deviant must of necessity develop illegitimate routines." (Becker, 1963: 34-35)

Given these observations we need to look for indications that, as a result of the label assigned them, the local students are more likely to think and/or behave in ways which "fulfill the prophecy." But no such indications have been found. Although, as we have noted, there are difficulties in getting at such data, it is assumed here that at least some hint would have appeared of any impact upon the local students of the image others at the College have of them.

Very few of the students from Carter High School who entered the College in 1972 mentioned expectations or experiences which suggest the likelihood of such impact. A small number did state that the non-local students stuck together, excluding the local students, or that they, the non-locals, could have been friendlier and less narrow-minded. However, there simply isn't enough of such commentary on which to base an assertion that this had any effect on the local students. Also, the students from the 1976 group, who earlier have been shown to have relied on information from other locals in formulating their attitudes and expectations, do not give any indication

that they expect to be affected by the anticipated stereotyping of themselves as "townies." In fact, those who stated that they don't expect to meet many new people or find new friends at the College are outnumbered by a ratio of three to one by those who do expect to meet lots of new people whom they will like!

Given the data on commuting students, along with the relevant findings mentioned earlier in this chapter, it is not surprising to find that very few of the local students from either group expect to get involved in campus activities.² While we can state that few students from the community expect to, or in fact do, get involved in extracurricular functions involving them with non-local students, we are not certain of the degree to which this is explained by their continued contact with activities and people locally. It is likely that much is explained because of an unwillingness (perhaps in some cases, an inability) to break off these already well-entrenched relationships. Some part of the reason may be their anticipated or experienced disapproval by the local students. This ought not be ignored even though support for this is not clear in the data. That is, we would speculate that their knowledge of how the campus community (particularly the non-local students) views them, works to solidify relationships in the community even though the local students may desire to establish new ones. On this point recall the sizeable numbers of local students,

²We should note once again that the question regarding expectations was open-ended and that the students' answers were probed for as much data as possible. They were not, however, directly asked whether they expected to get involved in campus activities.

who while noting the comfort of remaining at home with families and friends, also indicate the disadvantage in doing so of not getting away from these relationships. Certainly, going away to another college would have at least temporarily weakened the "home town" relationships while at the same time mandated new ones. The fact remains, however, that whatever their motivation regarding their involvements off campus, the local students do not indicate that such relationships are in part maintained through their lack of involvement in activities on campus. We may only speculate that this is likely.

We seem then, to have an interesting case of a group being labeled and being aware of the labeling while not indicating that they are affected in any way by it. This is not to suggest that those who are labeled are always aware of any effects on them but only that no such awareness is apparent in this case. While we may speculate that a process similar to that described by Becker is occurring (some response to being labeled) we cannot assert categorically that it is. What does this tell us about labeling theory?

Milton Mankoff (1971) has argued, sensibly, that labeling theorists might pay closer attention to the utility of labeling theory in accounting for the production of career deviance. He suggests that it is worth looking at the validity of labeling theory as applied to both ascribed rule-breaking and achieved rule-breaking. The reality, Mankoff argues, is that labeling theory makes more sense when applied to the former mainly because ascribed rule-breakers have no control over their rule-breaking while achieved rule-breakers can "commit themselves to deviant careers without being 'forced' by formal or

informal agents of social control. . ." (Mankoff, 1971: 211) While Mankoff gives us stronger arguments for expecting labeling theory to be applicable, we are still faced with the fact that labeled local students do not appear to show any response to their negative definition by the campus community. Why has the labeling apparently not produced any reaction?

While we make no claims that the ascribed status of "townie" is the same as that of blindness, ugliness, being Black or being Jewish, we find no rationale within labeling theory to suggest that it, like these others, should not evoke a community's reaction or, further, that those having such a status should not respond in some way to that reaction. Where labeling theory is weak then, is in showing us more clearly the circumstances under which those labeled are most likely to respond in some way. As mentioned, "townies" may be seen as less deviant than those stigmatized by some physical affliction or by racial or ethnic heritage. That in itself may explain to some extent the apparent lack of response on the part of "townies" to their label. But the theory does not tell us this should be the case; rather labeling theory would lead us to believe that in any case of labeling there exists the likelihood of some response.

Our contention here will be that the key to explaining why this potential is not actuated in the present case is that the status of "townie", unlike the examples given above, is transitory. That is, while these other statuses are relatively permanent one is a "townie" in the eyes of the definers at the College only so long as one is a student from the community attending the institution. Like any

college students, the local students attending Mill City State College can see generally, even if they cannot always pinpoint specifically, the date at which they will no longer be college students. Thus, it might be argued that they will be less likely to respond to the label because it is not going to remain for a very long period part of the image others have of them.

Additionally, as we have argued, the label "townie" is likely to include, from the point of view of the labelers, the characteristics generalizable to the whole community and to its townspeople. But the local students may not be planning to maintain their residence in Mill City after they have graduated. While they were not questioned as to their plans after graduation, it is quite apparent that the community does not offer a wide selection of career opportunities to college graduates. Therefore our argument is based upon the premise that the local students attending Mill City State College do not show much response to being labeled because they know that they will not remain in a position to be labeled for very long. If it had been found that students from the 1972 group who had left the College without graduating had done so in part because of their being looked down on by others at the institution we could say that even so impermanent a status as "townie" is not only labeled but that those so characterized react to that label. In fact, no such indications were found. We would argue, then, that a marginally deviant status which is not permanent is unlikely to evoke a response from those labeled due to that status, and further, that labeling theory would be "tightened up" by accounting for this limitation.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSION

In this study we have attempted to learn something about the experience of students who attend a college located within their community. More particularly, our interest lay in the question of whether such students were viewed negatively by the college and the community due to any effects of "town-gown" conflicts. We attempted to apply labeling theory as it is commonly used in studies of deviants on the basis of our assumptions that these students are labeled as "townies", and that this label is derogatory in much the same way, if not at the same depth, as are other labels attached to out groups.

The study emanates from some observations made by the author at the college where the study was conducted. These preliminary findings were strongly suggestive of the likelihood that these local students are, in fact, considered by various persons on the campus to be less well-prepared academically, less motivated, and somewhat hostile to the institution. However, when the criticism made most often by people on the campus (that the local students were not as well prepared for college as are the non-local students) was investigated, the data indicated that the students coming to the college from the immediate community were apparently no different in academic preparation from those whose place of residence was somewhere else. The apparent contradiction between belief and reality was the basis for conducting the present research.

In order to explain why the discrepancy existed a number of possibilities were considered. Since the comments about the local

students had almost always been aimed at those who come from Mill City, the community in which the State College is located, and rarely to students who commute from other nearby towns, the probability that these views result from campus views of the community was given priority. In other words, the study was predicated on the likelihood that the negative views of the local students result from negative views of the community itself. Since we can claim that such views would be indicative of "town-gown" tensions the research, as stated above, was aimed at discovering whether community-college conflicts affect the experience of students who come to Mill City State College from Mill City.

The findings were strongly supportive of the original observations that the local students are looked down on by members of the campus community, most particularly the non-local students. We found also, that many of the non-local students as well as some staff members at the College tended to be negative about Mill City and its townspeople. By suggesting that a "townie" represents more than simply an individual who comes from the community to the College (master status) but rather is characterized by a defining audience as everything which the community and its people represent to that audience (auxiliary status traits), we argued that "townie" is, in fact, a negative label which stereotypes all the local students. This we saw as being much the same process as that which Howard Becker and others have described as being common to the labeling of deviants.

Further, the evidence while being strongly supportive of the labeling of local students by many people at the College, did not very clearly uphold the original notion that the community also nega-

tively labeled its own residents who attend Mill City State College. Although we find evidence supporting the notion that the community has some negative feelings about the College there was not enough to show that such negative views are attached to the local students.

Labeling theory posits the probability that persons or groups which are labeled will come to show some effects of this by becoming more deeply involved in that which led to the application of the label in the first place. That is, in our definition and treatment of people as deviant we close off the avenues to a conventional life style creating a situation where some needs may be met only through continued deviation. Thus the application here of the notion of the self-fulfilling prophecy.

In the present study, however, we do not find much evidence suggesting that the labeling is having such effects. We argued that this can be explained by the impermanence of the status of "townie" and the knowledge of those having that status that it is temporary. Thus, while others with more permanent stigmata cannot easily escape a negative stereotype attributed to them, the "townie" can, and his awareness of this can operate to mitigate any reaction on his part to the label that has been attached to him.

The research has implications for studies of commuting students, studies of "town-gown" conflict, and for labeling theory. We shall now consider some of these.

As we noted earlier, studies of commuting students have tended to be comparisons with residential students. How the two groups compare on personality traits, social background, and aspirations are

among the more common themes; less attention is given to the actual experiences of commuters and residents. In particular, sound qualitative study and evaluation of the commuter's experience is lacking. Thus while studies such as Chickering's note the disadvantages of not being a residential student we do not know for certain that being a commuter doesn't at the same time reap some benefits. It would be valuable to add to the literature studies which more clearly examine this question.

Additionally, we would suggest that it might be profitable in studies of commuters to more carefully investigate the variable of distance from the college. Not only do we feel that the distinction made in the present research between local (coming from the community in which the college is located) and commuter (all others who commute to the campus) is an important one worthy of further investigation, but also that it would be useful to examine the possibility that there is variation in college experiences amongst commuters depending upon how far from the campus they live. In other words, commuters might fruitfully be typed in terms of commuting distance so that studies of commuters no longer presume that commuters vary only from residential students but that there may be variations amongst themselves due to their place of residence.

The "town-gown" literature has, we suggested, ignored the question of whether there are any effects on the local students due to tensions between campus and community. While the present study begins to fill this gap, the subject certainly merits further investigation. The topic is clearly outside of the "mainstream" of concerns in "town-

gown" studies but in our present period of concern with consumers this particular problem might appropriately be pursued.

Labeling theory is an important tool for the analysis of social behavior. While, as we noted earlier, the theory has been criticized on various grounds it remains an insightful and useful approach. Although it is very "open-ended", labeling theory can be tightened up through investigations seeking to specify how it operates. The present study suggests one such parameter. More studies of this nature can strengthen the theory's utility by examining given cases in order to understand more clearly the conditions under which individuals or groups are labeled and the relationship between the severity of the labeling and its impact upon those labeled.

A final bit of speculation. Two present-day facts may very well predict some future change in what has been found in this research. These two points are the rising costs of higher education coupled with the expected fall off in enrollments due to lowered birth rates. Colleges will be striving harder to keep their enrollments up at the same time that more students will be looking toward keeping their costs down. More students who reside in a community which has a college may choose to save money by staying at home and attending that college. Thus, such colleges may find themselves more populated with local students, students whose enrollment becomes ever more crucial to the viability of the institution. The potential for effects on how the institution will view these local students is obvious. As they, the local students, become ever more important to the college's future stability, they will become more valued in the eyes of those at the

college who in the past may have been able to "afford" to view them negatively. It is probable that they will no longer be able to do so. At the same time we may speculate that a community will view more favorably a college more heavily populated with its own youth rather than with those who come from other places. Some form of replication of the present research may very well bear out these points.

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