

ALIENATION VERSUS STUDENT
PARTICIPATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

by 6791

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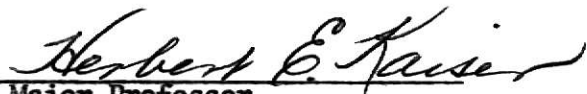
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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

In the decade of the sixties, colleges and universities across the country witnessed a general rise in student protest and student unrest. Though much of the activism was concerned with social and political problems, according to a 1969 Gallup Poll (Robinson and Shoenfeld, 1971: 5, 15 B), at least 42% of 1030 youths in 55 colleges believed that student protestors biggest complaint was concerned directly with university problems and policies. Students complained about the irrelevance of many of their educational endeavors. They challenged and questioned the validity of their educational experiences to the modern world and its problems. They decried the depersonalization they experienced as a number known only to a computer and resented their isolation from and powerlessness in the decision-making process. Protestors subsequently cried out for student power to correct these "evils" and a few, in fact, did temporarily assume control of the administrations of several universities by force.

From the literature it seemed that many educators in seeking to understand this phenomena have related it to the problem of alienation; they have viewed student unrest as a reaction to an underlying problem of student alienation. Thus, many concerned educators have acknowledged the need of greater understanding of alienation and have been searching for a possible solution for it.

The Problem

The purpose of this study was to investigate the problem of student alienation in higher education. This investigation was focused on three central questions: what is alienation; how did it come about in higher education; how can it be reduced?

Importance of the study. Since alienation is such an abstract term, one which implies different meanings when used in different senses, it seemed important to define it, to establish a definite meaning of the term for use in this study. By first defining this term and then by relating this definition to the organizational structure of higher education, a greater understanding of the problem of alienation was facilitated and a perspective from which to evaluate institutions of higher education was presented.

To understand how a problem came about is important not only for the sake of finding a solution for it but also for preventing its reoccurrence in the future. Thus, to meet these needs, the rise of alienation within institutions of higher education during the past decade and a half was traced and the possible factors which contributed to this condition were analyzed.

Alienation as defined and analyzed in this report was presented as an undesirable condition. The proposal of some possible means of reducing the problem was therefore important, not only from the viewpoint of student unrest but also from the perspective of the quality of life within institutions of higher education.

Limitations of the study. The limitations of this study arising from the nature of the problem and from the nature of the research were as follows:

1. Because alienation is an abstract term it was necessary to assume a definition of it and a frame of reference from which to examine it. This

was intended as a means of approaching an abstract term. It is acknowledged that this did not negate or deny other definitions or other points of view.

2. Almost all of what was written in educational literature left the term alienation undefined. It was therefore assumed that the term did correspond to the general phenomenon defined in this study.

3. The study of alienation as defined in this report focused on the "objective situation" of alienation, on the institutional factors which might elicit alienation as opposed to the "subjective situation" of the individual person.

4. This study was based strictly on library research, therefore, what was concluded was derived from a theoretical basis.

5. The term "higher education" was used in general. It is acknowledged that not all schools became alienating, but as the literature presented it, there was a trend toward alienation in higher education. It was this general trend in higher education which was discussed.

6. Alienation was presented as a complex problem. It is therefore acknowledged that no single solution will absolutely "cure" it. Thus, student participation was proposed as a possible means of reducing alienation.

Chapter 2

ALIENATION: A PERSPECTIVE FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

In recent years amidst cries of student protestors for "student power" and for "relevance" in education, there has been a new application for the meaning of "alienation." That ambiguous term which has been used to decry the condition of the laboring industrial man as well as to philosophically define man's existence on earth is now being applied to students in their educational experience.

It was the purpose of this chapter to examine the phenomenon of alienation and to study its relationship to the organizational structure of higher education. By first defining alienation and then by attempting to understand it within an organizational context, this chapter should provide a new perspective for evaluating or reorganizing institutions of higher education.

Frame of Reference

From the literature on alienation it became evident that there was great diversity in the meanings of the term and even in the senses in which it was used. Keniston (1965), in his detailed description of alienated youth, claimed that there are two traditions of studying alienation: as a personal problem and as a social problem. Epperson (1966), in preparing a long-range study of alienation in a community college, likewise maintained that alienation is a function of the character a person brings to a situation and of the nature of the environment itself. Thus in studying alienation one could focus on the person himself, on the psychological or philosophical factors in his

makeup which he brings to the situation. One could investigate, for example, why one man in a certain situation would be alienated while another man in that same situation would not be. In focusing on the person one could also look at the characteristics he possessed after he became alienated, as does Keniston.

On the other side of the coin, one could explore alienation as the result of some social arrangement. One could look at the organization of the environment and try to determine what factors are inherently alienating. Both Warner and Hansen (1970), who as counselors researched alienation in education, and Minear (1969), while admitting the personal factors and internal workings involved in alienation, urged an examination of the problems arising from the structure of the social system itself. This emphasis on the qualities of the objective situation of alienation was the orientation of this study. While it seems obvious that each particular case of alienation is the result of the interaction of the person and the situation, it seemed reasonable to focus one's attention on the latter if, as Etzioni (1968:870) said:

Most of the alienation, however, seems to result from sources which are reducible, most directly from socio-cultural patterns which can be made much more responsive to basic human needs than they are. . .

Before one can reduce these alienating socio-cultural patterns, one must know what they are. Alienation is a feeling. If that feeling is not based on an objective situation one must deal with the person. But if that feeling is in response to some objective situation, an organizational or social structure which embodies the very thing the person feels or which by its nature tends to give rise to alienation and perpetuate it, one can change the structure.

Alienation

To analyze what it means to say of someone that "he is alienated" is primarily to observe how those who have introduced the term into contemporary discussion have used it (Schacht, 1970:LXI).

Alienation has already been introduced as a feeling. But in this discussion it was assumed that this feeling does correspond to reality. So, for example, if a person experiences himself as powerless it is because in fact he is powerless.

What then is alienation? Trying to comprehend and define this word is like trying to define love. One may have experienced it and reflected upon its many aspects, but any one definition that could be conjured up would seem to fall short of truly expressing what it is. So rather than a single explanation, various aspects of the "syndrome" of alienation have been examined with the hope that a fuller picture of the meaning would be attained.

As powerlessness. Fromm (1964:69) claimed that man in the state of alienation ". . .does not experience himself as the active bearer of his own powers and richness, but as an impoverished 'thing' dependent upon powers outside of himself." "A person is powerless when he is an object controlled and manipulated by other persons or by an impersonal system. . .and when he cannot assert himself as a subject to change or modify this domination" (Blauner, 1964:16). Blauner, who conducted a sociological study of the relationship between technology, social structure and the personal experiences of factory workers, continued saying that like an object a person reacts rather than acts, is directed and dominated rather than self-directing. Thus the alienated person would be unable to direct his own behavior, to seek his own goals or rewards, or to make his own decisions. He would not be free to decide what he

wanted to do and then do what he decided nor would he have the power to alter this dominating situation.

As meaninglessness. In such a powerless situation where man finds himself acting and doing what someone or something else dictates, where he could not define his own goals but had to accept the external goals handed down to him, man would tend to see his own behavior as meaningless. ". . . [H]is individual acts seem to have no relation to a broader life program" (Blaumer, 1964:32). Since his goals are set by someone else and do not belong to him they are unrelated to him. Their meaning is extrinsic to him and since he has not chosen to accept them but rather since they have been imposed on him he finds them and his subsequent actions to fulfill them meaningless. In such a situation he would be functioning as an object and as such his actions would have no significance for himself.

As isolation. The person who feels no sense of belonging to or identity with an organization or group and its goals would experience the alienation of isolation. As an isolated person he would lack membership in the institutional or organizational community and would feel separate and apart from it.

If the person also found himself in the powerless and meaningless situations described above, functioning as an object at the "mercy" of someone else's goals, someone whom he is powerless to influence or relate to, then he would also find himself completely isolated from and lacking connection with that person. This isolation from the person or organization which directs him is another facet of alienation.

As self-estrangement. Finding himself powerless in a meaningless and isolated situation in which he still functions, a person may find that a large part of his being, of his life and activity is estranged from what is real and meaningful to him. Speaking of this condition among factory workers, Blauner (1964:26) stated, "Self-estrangement refers to the fact that the worker may become alienated from his inner self in the activity of work, particularly when an individual lacks control over the work process and has a sense of purposeful detachment rather than an immediate involvement or engrossment in the job tasks." In a very real sense he is out of touch with himself for many of his actions are not his own (Fromm, 1964). In this sense the alienated self-estranged person fits easily into Fromm's "marketing orientation." "Clearly, his sense of his own value always depends on factors extraneous to himself, on the fickle judgment of the market, which decides about his values as it decides about the value of commodities" (Fromm, 1964:81). He is Riesman's "other-directed" person who in his alienated state has lost contact with his "fundamental self."

This self-estrangement has several consequences which become part of the alienation syndrome. When a person is not immediately involved with what he is doing, when he is working towards somebody else's goals and not his own, the situation may be boring and monotonous to him. Blauner elaborated on this by saying that:

Self-estrangement is experienced as a heightened awareness of time; as a split between present activity and future consideration. Non-alienated activity consists of immersion in the present; it is involvement. Alienated activity is not free, spontaneous activity but is compulsive and driven by necessity. In non-alienating activity the rewards are in the activity itself; in alienated states they are largely extrinsic to the activity which has become primarily a means to an end (1964:29).

To clarify this one only has to think of the "clock-watching" factory worker or the "diploma-minded" college student to get Blauner's point. Both seem to exemplify the type of uninvolved, unsatisfying functioning which typifies the self-estranged individual.

Alienation. There are many aspects of alienation which have not been presented. Even what has been written only begins to hint at the complexity which the word embodies. But, if E. Shaffer's (1970) statement that a method of social science is to impose thought on reality to abstract an ordered view of phenomenon is true, then perhaps the goal of presenting a working understanding of alienation has been accomplished.

Alienation and Organizational Structure

After examining alienation, the next step was to discern what in an organizational structure might be alienating.

How does an organization render a person powerless? Both Etzioni (1968) and Aiken (1966) looked to the decision-making process for an answer. The former asked how much and what part of the decision-making is shared with lower ranking men. The latter, who studied various aspects of alienation at 16 welfare agencies, examined two aspects of the term "Centralization" to seek the answer. Centralization includes the degree to which staff members participate in setting goals and policies of the entire organization (the degree of participation in decision-making). It also includes the extent to which members are assigned tasks and then provided the freedom to implement them without interruption from their supervisors (Aiken, 1966:498).

The findings of a number of studies suggest that highly centralized organizations - those with little autonomy over individually assigned

tasks and little participation in agency-wide decisions - are likely to have high rates of work alienation (Aiken, 1966:498).

If the powers of participating in decision-making and of substantially controlling the worker's own tasks are withheld this would seem to render the individual powerless within the organization. It was not surprising then that there was high alienation among such highly centralized organizations. The powerlessness of the individual was not only a feeling but a fact.

Aiken found similar results in studying the degree of alienation associated with what he termed "Formalization." Formalization is the degree of work standardization and the amount of deviation that is allowed from standards. In organizations with a high degree of Formalization, with numerous rules defining jobs and specifying what is to be done and the enforcement of those rules, Aiken also found a high degree of work alienation. Once again it seemed that the powerlessness actually experienced in a rigidly codified and monitored organization was associated with a high level of alienation.

Studies in the sphere of higher education provided examples of how an organization can promote the condition of meaninglessness. Warner and Hansen (1970) referred to the culturally defined goals which a school imposes on its students. They claimed that for many students these goals appeared to have no relation to what is relevant to their lives and are therefore meaningless. R. Shaffer (1967), from his experience as Dean of Students at Indiana University, echoed this view stating that many students complain that the college experience, especially curriculum, is irrelevant to the concerns which are important to them. He continued saying that the conflict stems from conflicting views of the educational process. The students who enter the educational system encounter goals and processes set down and defined by educators, which for many students are very different from what they

themselves would define. Depending on how different the educators' goals are from their own the students will experience a relative degree of meaninglessness.

A look at the bureaucratic structure of an organization can give some estimate of the degree of isolation a person within the structure actually experiences. If, as in a highly centralized structure, the person is excluded from the decision-making process, he is in fact isolated from those involved in the process. If there are no channels through which he can voice his opinions or if those channels are only hollow token gestures, then he is unable to really communicate with significant others in the structure. This inability to relate to them renders the individual isolated from them. This lack of connection with them and inability to influence or even communicate with them does seem to really leave the individual isolated from those "in power." It was interesting to note the lack of cohesion that Aiken and Hage (1966) found among staff members themselves in highly centralized organizations. This seemed to imply a degree of isolation from co-workers as well as from those "in power" among alienated staff members.

What of self-estrangement? Can an organization through its structure give rise to this also? Blauner stated:

Self-estrangement is absent in two main situations: When the work activity, satisfying such felt needs as those for control, meaning and social connection, is inherently fulfilling in itself; or when the work activity is highly integrated into the totality of an individual's social commitments (1964:26).

The converse of this, presenting a situation in which self-estrangement would be present, seemed to answer this question. While an organization cannot directly make a person self-estranged, as it can make him powerless, it can be arranged in such a way as to make self-estrangement a likely

possibility. If it fails to meet the needs which Blauner mentioned, thereby leaving the work activity unfulfilling, it sows a fertile seedbed for self-estrangement. Without any control, meaning, or connection the person is functioning not as a subject but as an object on behalf of someone else. When the activity is unrelated to what is real and meaningful to him, when it is completely separate from the individual's social commitments, again the individual is functioning in a self-estranged manner. The organization which creates a situation in which the person's activities are really not his own may very likely give rise to self-estrangement as part of the "alienation syndrome."

A Perspective for Higher Education

"To the extent that personal social malaise is the result of something called alienation, any effort towards understanding it seems justified" (Harkins, 1965:78). It is with this view in mind that institutions of higher education should take a good look at their organizational structures. E. Shaffer (1970) warned, however, that institutions can assume a reality of their own if the awareness of their human authorship is lost. This is perhaps true of many organizations which are reluctant to change and which take their own structures for granted as ends in themselves. But if an organization cares about its members and truly wishes to meet their needs, then it must be willing to assess its structures and to evaluate the impact they have on its members.

With all the talk of student alienation and the cry for relevance it seemed obvious that many students' needs are not being met. If the university really cares about its students it should be concerned not only with aiding the individual in solving his personal problems but with evaluating and perhaps restructuring its own organization so that it does not by its nature

create or elicit an alienating situation.

What then, were some of the guidelines which could be gleaned from this study?

Though each aspect of the alienation syndrome (powerlessness, meaninglessness, isolation, self-estrangement) is different, it is obvious they all interrelate. From an organizational point of view, then, it seemed reasonable to agree with Clark (1959), that there is an isolable feature in all of them: man's lack of means (power) to eliminate or change the alienating circumstances. Clark said, for example, that those who feel that their actions are meaningless would make them meaningful if they could. In other words, those who are alienated because of the organization are also powerless to alter their situation because of the organization. The key, then seemed to be power or control.

"Studies. . . have shown that students who feel they have some control or say in events that affect them will not become alienated but will be full participants in the school structure" (Warner and Hanson, 1970:447). They did emphasize, however, not full student control but student participation. R. Shaffer (1967:261) also advocated ". . . extensive student involvement in university policy formation and decision-making as a means of reducing alienation from the educational community and the consequent feeling of the irrelevance of the traditional educational experience." It seemed important to mention here that just mere tokenism or student participation without any real influence over outcomes may not be sufficient to ward off alienation. Clark (1959), studying the relationship between alienation and power, participation and knowledge, found that merely participating in or obtaining knowledge about an organization would not lessen alienation. The relationship between power

and alienation was much more direct (Clark, 1959:851). What this seemed to say was that merely discussing with students while actually ignoring them or failing to take into account what they say would not greatly reduce their state of powerlessness, hence alienation.

Besides reducing the student's state of powerlessness, what were some other results of "student control?" For one thing it would allow the student to work with counselors, teachers and administrators to determine, understand and act on their needs. They would have an opportunity to express their own wants and expectations rather than just have the administrators tell them what students want. With whatever influence they had, students could then work in conjunction with counselors, faculty and administrators to establish goals which would aim at meeting their real needs and priorities. They could work together to formulate a broadened concept of higher education experiences and options necessary for those who reject the traditional educational process (Dobbins, 1970). In short, their education, as a process of moving towards goals which they helped establish, could really be meaningful and relevant to them. Both Heath (1970) and White (1967), in opposing authoritarian teachers and domination in the classroom, seemed to agree that this same type of student involvement on a lower organizational level, the classroom, is necessary and beneficial also.

The same student involvement which gives the students control and meaning would also give them a genuine connection with the university and its staff. Being included is the opposite of being isolated. By working together and communicating with the staff the students could feel a part of the organization because they would, in fact, be a vital part.

In providing the students the control, meaning and connection that have been outlined above, the organization would also decrease the possibility

of self-estrangement among students. If the student is working towards his own goals through activities which are relevant and meaningful to him then he is not acting as an object functioning for someone else. As a person who can influence the direction and course of his education, the student's activities can be fulfilling and integrated into his self. If he is not working solely to fulfill someone else's goals or to meet someone else's expectations for him then he can grow as a whole person.

In summary, the organization, by providing a certain degree of student control, can greatly reduce the alienating organizational conditions of powerlessness, meaninglessness, isolation and self-estrangement. While "All power to the students" was not urged, an evaluation of the organizational structures of higher education was encouraged with the perspective that a certain amount of student participation and control can help to alleviate an alienating situation.

Chapter 3

THE RISE OF ALIENATION IN INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION

How does an organizational structure become alienating? Perhaps a look at history can provide some insight.

Prior to the industrial revolution there was relatively little of what could be termed "work alienation." There was no mass production, no huge impersonal factories and there were few bureaucratic organizations handing down dictates to the workers on exactly what they should do and how they should do it. Rather, man felt more connected with his work, took pride in it and found it intrinsically meaningful.

It was the onset of technology with its new "more efficient" ways of doing things that brought about the organizational and technological structures which elicited the sense and actuality of worker alienation and the resulting philosophical and sociological studies of it.

It was interesting to note that in the educational index there was no listing of the category "alienation" prior to 1966. Certainly universities had been less than perfect for quite a while and there had been books and studies written on student alienation prior to that year, so why did discussion of alienation become so voluminous within the years following that date? Had there been something akin to an "educational revolution" which too had changed structures rendering them more alienating?

Though there were some aspects of this notion which appeared true, the rise of alienation within institutions of higher education seemed too complex to explain so simply. Through discussion in this chapter an attempt was made

to analyze some of the possible factors which contributed to the upsurge of alienation; to provide a more concrete picture of alienation in higher education than was presented in the first more theoretical chapter.

Organizational Factors

As mentioned above, there were some aspects of the "educational revolution" notion which did appear tenable. Technology played an obviously important role in the "industrial revolution." In looking at the history of education during the past decade and a half, technology seemed to have indirectly had a major influence in that realm as well. Heath (1970), in his discussion on student alienation based on his previous experiences with students and teachers throughout the country and on his research on student development, saw the advent of Sputnik as having a major impact on education. The drive to improve education sparked by the Russian satellite in 1957 brought about tremendous improvements in educational facilities. Schools expanded their pupil personnel services, "modernized" their curriculums, featured enrichment courses and advanced placement and fostered an expanding educational technology (Heath, 1970). The more material improvements and educational innovations a school could provide, the better it was thought to be. Subsequently, the quest for excellence seemed to require an enlargement of institutions of education. Large schools, with their potentials for a more comprehensive educational experience, providing more diversity and more specialized courses, were thought to be the way to "excellence." This "excellence," however, was defined by narrow academic considerations which ". . . may have improved the academic preparation of some students, but may also have narrowed their sense of competence, limited their self-esteem and made increasing numbers of them closed to subsequent intellectual growth" (Heath, 1970:527).

Emphasis on the growth of a student as a whole person, "human excellence," was eclipsed.

Heath, based on his study of student development, claimed that there was little evidence that the alleged benefits of large schools made any noticeable contribution to any educational outcome.

...[T]he crucial educational determinants of a student's development are the humanistic climate or atmosphere of the school, the student's sense of participant involvement and the student's identification with the purposes of the faculty (Heath, 1970:526).

These determinants, he said, were not necessarily fostered by an enlargement of the system and were possibly stifled by it. Heath urged educators not to build larger schools without assessing the effects they have on their students. This point of view was very much in harmony with the alienation perspective proposed in the second chapter which urged an evaluation of the impact of organizational structure on the members of the institution.

What were some of the effects of the enlargement of schools?

Mullenberg (1970), in his study of the causes and cures of alienation, claimed that the smaller colleges of the past provided an identity to youth. Students, he said, felt recognized and accepted as individuals and considered themselves part of the institution. The growth in size of many institutions, however, led to impersonality within schools and a corresponding loss of stature for individuals within them. As only one person among an increasingly larger number of people, the student began to experience a greater feeling of anonymity as well as a decreasing sense of involvement with and relation to the university. Heath (1970) observed an inverse relationship between the school's size and the determinants of student development which have been mentioned. He said that the larger the school, the more it was characterized by

impersonality and bureaucracy, less student involvement with activities and less student identification with the academic purposes of the faculty. As the school grew the extracurricular activities did not grow proportionately. Consequently, there were relatively fewer students involved with school activities or leading them and therefore fewer students who felt an identification with or a real membership in a large school. Likewise, as classroom enrollments grew, there was less personal contact with faculty members which decreased the possibility of students really knowing the faculty or identifying with their purposes.¹

The general trend, as schools increased in size, seemed to be toward a more impersonal structural organization which left the student feeling separate and isolated from the institution and lacking an identification with it. Though students had not previously participated in the decision-making process, as a result of the increased bureaucracy which a large organizational structure necessitated, the student found himself even farther away from the nameless and faceless "they" who handed down decisions to him. Looking at the results of an enlarged educational system from the "alienation" perspective, it appeared that schools which grew without any consideration or compensation for these effects of size were also fostering the alienating conditions of isolation.

Conflicting Views

As had been mentioned before, the rise of student alienation cannot

¹Clark and Trow (1966) substantially backed up Heath's analysis of the impact of size on the organizational structure and of the structure's impact on students. Clark and Trow went on to say that the effects of size can be changed by changing the nature of the organization of substructures.

be explained simply. The previous analysis of certain organizational factors did not render a complete picture of it. There seemed to be an interaction of other factors in addition to and including these organizational ones, which resulted in the increase of student alienation.

One factor which appeared to be significant was the various conflicting views of the educational process. R. Shaffer (1967:261) in his analysis of student dissatisfaction claimed that:

Educators traditionally have defined the role of the university as teaching, research and public service with emphasis upon teaching at the college level. They see the dominant teaching task as contributing to the academic growth and intellectual development of the individual.

The post-Sputnikian push for academic excellence and progress, particularly in research, seemed to reinforce this notion. R. Shaffer continued, however, that contrary to this:

. . .students feel that their own personal maturation, the establishment of an identity and the development of a philosophy of life vis-a-vis the chaotic world are their most important problems (1967:261).

So, for these students:

. . .the characteristics of traditional higher education, such as grades, courses, majors and subject-centered study, not only are meaningless but actually detrimental to their primary purpose of an education (R. Shaffer, 1967:262).

While this view was probably true to a point, it seemed to be an over-generalization in light of several studies on the various types of student sub-cultures, only some of which were interested in these goals.

The road to diversity. Though the processes of selective recruitment and self-selection (schools' admitting the "right" students; students' selecting the "school for them") tend toward placing a certain type of student into a certain type of school, there are other factors which have led to a

diversity of student types within a university. Both Clark and Trow (1966) and Mayhew (1966), from his study of institutional factors and the learning environment at 19 colleges, cited size as a factor contributing to sub-cultural complexity. The larger the institution was, the more likely it would contain all four student sub-cultures: the collegiate, which emphasized social life and sports, and was resistant to the serious academic demands of the faculty; the vocational, which was interested in obtaining a diploma for job purposes and which found the academic demands irrelevant to their future jobs, thus irrelevant to them; the academic, which did accept the intellectual values and goals of the faculty and identified with them; and the non-conformist, which was involved with ideas but could not accept the traditional academic orientation of the university.

The non-conformist sub-culture. From the definition of this group, it seemed to be the one most likely to be involved with the student's view of the educational process that R. Shaffer cited.² Like R. Shaffer, many other authors in describing the students who reject traditional education as irrelevant to the needs of today and who see the authoritarian teaching of the university as failing to answer the new questions, have generalized these qualities to a wide range of students. Again, it seemed that these descriptions also best applied to the non-conformist group.

This non-conformist group was part of a generation made aware of the present social needs and injustices of racial discrimination, of the cruelties of an undeclared war and the absurdities of an unresponsive government, of the technological garbage which polluted their environment. Through the

²Since the lines between these groups are fluid, members of other sub-cultures may also be involved with these ideas.

immediacy of television these problems were brought home in living color. With the unsurpassed material security which afforded them a relative freedom from concern of survival needs (Halleck, 1968), these students began to challenge the educational status quo. As the students who did not accept the traditional answers within the traditional framework, some of these students began to demand new roles, not only for themselves in the process of higher education, but for the institutions themselves as power centers to correct the evils of society (R. Shaffer, 1967:262).³

The vocational sub-culture. Size, which has already been cited as a factor spawning a diversity of student sub-cultures, seemed to have had another important effect. The studies of both Clark and Trow (1966) and of Mayhew (1966) noted that the larger the institution, the more it seemed to encourage the vocational sub-culture. There were various other interrelated factors which also seemed to facilitate this trend. Societal views of the necessity of education led many students to seek a college diploma as a necessary prerequisite to obtain any good job. As the schools enlarged more and more of these vocationally minded students could find a place within the university. As the need for a college diploma did become more urgent for the job market, more and more of these students were seeking college admission, pressing the already expanded university to grow more. Clark and Trow (1966) cited

³The distinction that Halleck (1968) and Keniston, in various works, made between those who responded to this situation in an active way, "activists," and those who responded in a more passive, withdrawing way, "alienated" (not the same "alienated" as defined in this study), should be made though not elaborated here. The point is that there was a group which rejected traditional educational goals, values and systems for the reasons stated. The questions how and why each group responded as it did were beyond the scope of this study.

the responsiveness of the public colleges to this demand for growth as a significant factor in the "Triumph of Vocationalism."

Thus, there was an increasingly larger number of students who were interested in a college degree primarily to increase their salability on the job market. Much of their intellectual academic training was therefore irrelevant to them since it had no direct application to their future jobs. Many considered their four years of training as necessary "time-serving" before they went out into the "real world."

Relation to Alienation

How did all this relate to the study of alienation? It was the combination of all these factors which helped contribute to the rise of alienation. On one hand, institutions were enlarging themselves and emphasizing the traditional goals of academic excellence which were acceptable to and desired by the academic sub-culture. On the other hand, however, there were groups of students emerging with different goals and different aspirations. That same enlarging process, along with societal pressures, was also bringing in and fostering a large group of vocationally oriented students which was not really interested in the academically oriented goals of the institution. Simultaneously, the non-conformist sub-culture was growing in the university. For these students, many of whom valued "human excellence" above "academic excellence," the traditional ivory tower educational experience, with its emphasis on course work and grades, was no longer sufficient, no longer relevant.

The university, which traditionally excluded students from decision-making, did not respond to the changing needs and desires of the students it was to serve. It maintained the strictly intellectual orientation which was desired only by the academic sub-culture. Consequently, it appeared more and

more arbitrary and archaic to the other groups each new school year (DeCecco, 1970. ". . .[T]he seeming unresponsiveness of curriculum and personnel to student requests for change, relevance and participation have resulted in a disturbing degree of student mistrust and bitterness" (Commission on University Governance, 1970). By treating all students as if they were the same and by not making allowances for their differences, the university not only depersonalized the students even more but it also gave rise in many to the feeling of meaninglessness in their education and to the realization of their powerlessness to do anything about it.

In summary, the university which grew without any consideration or compensation for the effects of size on its students contributed to the alienating condition of isolation. If the university also neglected to take into account the differences which new student populations brought to it, then it also contributed to the condition of meaninglessness and to the students' realization of their powerlessness. Failing to meet students' needs for connection, meaning and control, the university also helped elicit the condition of self-estrangement which, as defined in Chapter 2, arises in situations such as this. The picture of alienation as defined in this study was therefore complete.

Chapter 4

STUDENT PARTICIPATION VERSUS ALIENATION

In the preceeding chapter it was described how the university, through the ramifications of its tremendous growth and through its lack of organizational responsiveness, had given rise to an alienating situation. Obviously, a university cannot revert to the past to combat this. It cannot close the door to all new students until it dwindles down to its previous size. It cannot simply expel all those students who have different concepts of what education should be and do. It also cannot continue to ignore the problems which have elicited so much student unrest and which will continue to do so until these problems are met.

The perspective outlined in the second chapter provided an optimistic way of addressing the problem of alienation in higher education. It maintained that if an organization gave rise to alienation through its structure, the structure could be changed to render it less alienating, thus alleviating the situation. The second chapter also proposed that providing a certain degree of student participation and control in the decision-making process would be a way of altering present structures which would do just that. Some student control would help to lessen the conditions of powerlessness, meaninglessness, isolation and self-estrangement. To incorporate students into the decision-making process, however, is no easy task.

Chapter 4 focused on student participation as a means of reducing alienation. A more detailed rationale for why student participation is a possible solution was presented. The pros and cons of "student power," with which any university considering student participation as an alternative to

alienation must deal were examined. Finally, student participation was defined in a way that would facilitate the reduction of alienation if it were implemented.

Participation: an Answer to Alienation

Behind many demands for student control was the underlying sense that power should be in the hands of those whom it affects, that those whom the decisions affect should have some say in their determination. Rather than in the hands of students, this control was largely in the hands of bureaucratic administrators, the nameless, faceless "they" from whom the students were isolated. Their decisions affected many students but rarely ever touched their own lives. Warner and Hansen (1970:447) in response to this alienating situation of powerlessness said, "The crucial issue is the inclusion of students in planning and development. If we are to solve the problem of alienation among the young then we must provide them with situations in which they can experience some control of their own destinies." Eisner (1969) also saw the need for some mechanism through which students could not only make their opinions known but also make their own decisions in matters which affected them. As stated in the second chapter, this participation in the decision-making process would help decrease the student's sense of powerlessness because he would, in fact, have some control of the decisions which affected him.

The other implications of student control, its relation to isolation and meaninglessness, which also were mentioned in that chapter, have even greater significance in light of the way alienation developed in higher education.

As the university grew, students began to feel more isolated and anonymous and less involved with or related to the university. As part of the decision-making process, however, they could realize that a student could have

an impact on the university. Students' opinions did matter because they would see these opinions reflected in the decision-making process. Working with the faculty and administration, the students would have an opportunity to get to know them and in that way also come to a sense of belonging to and identifying with the university community. Treated as legitimate members of the decision-making process, the students would be acknowledged as persons with valuable ideas, who could make a contribution and who would mean more to the university than just an I.D. number. All these affirmations of the students as vital and necessary parts of the college community would help to decrease their sense of isolation in the university.

The unresponsiveness of the growing university to meet the changing needs and wants of its students left many students with a feeling of meaninglessness in their educational experiences. "Participating in the making of decisions," however, "is the way individuals and groups keep institutions responsive to their changing needs and interests. . . .[I]t helps the dissatisfied voice of their own complaints and expectations, hear those of others and negotiate changes which reconcile old and new demands" (DeCecco, 1970). As part of the decision-making process, not only would students have an opportunity to voice their opinions, but they would be in a position to implement them as well. Together with the faculty and administration they could work out policies and goals and programs which would aim at meeting the diverse needs of the diverse student population as well as maintaining educational standards. Through this cooperative effort, the students' demands for relevance and meaning could become realities.

Thus, as was indicated in the second chapter, student participation has much potential as a means of reducing alienation and also as a way of

revitalizing institutions of higher education and keeping them responsive.

Attitudes, Pros and Cons

If student participation had been a well accepted solution and one that could be easily applied then the reduction of alienation through increased student power would have been a relatively simple matter. This, however, was not the case. The literature revealed much variation in the meaning understood by "student participation" as well as in the attitudes toward it. Though there were many arguments in favor of student participation in addition to what has already been presented here, there were also many good arguments against it which must be acknowledged and dealt with in any tentative application of student participation.

Attitudes toward student participation. Hekhuis (1967), in a study conducted at Michigan State University, found that "participation" meant different things to different groups. Students tended to regard participation as the sharing of authority with faculty and administration, while the faculty and administration viewed student participation as advising or recommending. There were differences also in the level of participation in which these groups thought students should be involved. According to Main (1969), there were three levels in which students could be involved: student affairs in which students alone were primarily affected, such as dorm regulations, etc; joint affairs which concerned all members of the university at a general level, such as cultural programs and parking; and joint affairs which dealt with educational policy, such as curriculum and tenure. Various studies revealed where each group thought students should be on these continuums and how it viewed "student participation."

Of all the groups within higher education, the trustees presented the

greatest resistance to student participation. It was the consensus of the trustees of ten universities that students should not be represented on the governing boards (College and University Business, 1969). Harnett (1969), investigating the attitudes of trustees, found that trustees generally favored a hierarchal system in which decisions were made at the top and passed down. Even in such student-centered areas as the choice of a commencement speaker only 20% would give a major role to the student.

The faculty was found to be the next most conservative group.

Researchers agree (Milton, 1968; Wilson and Gaff, 1969) that, whereas most faculty members believe that students should formulate social relations and make their ideas heard in other areas, they would give the student little or no formal control over the curriculum, degree requirements and faculty evaluation (Robinson and Shoenfeld, 1970:1, 15B).

Faculty members were reluctant to extend student authority into areas they had traditionally controlled. This was a very important factor in that increased student participation could only be effective to the extent that it was welcomed by the faculty since the changes sought by the students had to be approved by the faculty (Aceto, 1967).

The administration, on the other hand, would allow more student participation than the faculty (Milton, 1968). An article in College Management (1969), reporting on the views of 212 deans, claimed that about half of the deans indicated that the current voting power of the students was too low. 61% also believed that student members of governing boards were as responsible as regular members.

The students, as might be expected, were the ones most in favor of increased student participation. A 1969 Gallup Poll (Robinson and Shoenfeld, 1970:5, 15B) of 1030 youths in 55 colleges reported that 81% believed that students should have a greater influence over the academic realm of college

life. The resolution on student power adopted in 1967 by the 20th Congress of the National Student Association stated that all regulations which applied only to students should be controlled by students exclusively, while administrative and educational problems (policies, course requirements, the hiring and firing of faculty) should be under joint faculty, administrative and student control (Lewy and Rothman, 1970). Since 1967 more and more students have echoed these same ideas.

In any kind of organizational change it is important to know the attitudes of those involved with the change and how their attitudes might affect the change. Though the trustees vocalized the strongest resistance to student participation, the faculty, by virtue of its greater influence in the ordinary decision-making process, presented the greatest obstacle in bringing about increased student participation. Thus, it is the faculty especially which must be convinced that the assets of student participation outweigh the liabilities, that the reduction of alienation which would result is worth having to share some power.

Arguments against student participation. Those who opposed student participation for reasons other than tradition or fear presented some thoughtful arguments against it.

Students, said J. Shaffer (1970), citing frequent arguments against student participation and then refuting them, were thought to be unsophisticated about the policy process itself. They lacked the skills of diplomacy and had very little experience as policy makers. They had either an incomplete or an inaccurate concept of who had power and how the university was organized and operated. In other words, students were considered ill

prepared to assume the responsibilities of decision-making. Subsequently, students were sometimes treated in a condescending manner by those with whom they participated.

Another argument cited by Shaffer and espoused by others was the problem of the student's transiency. Lewy and Rothman (1970) reasoned that students did not have to live with the policies they enacted for any length of time, thus they had no real stake in the decisions that they made. These opponents of student participation also claimed that because of the short amount of time that students spent in the university, they were in no position to evaluate the legislation enacted by their predecessors. Eckert (1970), from another point of view, saw students' short terms of service as permitting them little beyond gaining a general orientation of a committee's role or current problems.

Student apathy was another problem cited by Lewy and Rothman (1970). Students were often apathetic about voting and if their elected leaders assumed the responsibility in the policy making of the university, the implications of this apathy would be greatly magnified. Leaders in crucial areas could be elected on the basis of popularity, rather than qualifications, by a limited number of voters.

Student's lack of time, reported J. Shaffer (1970), was another difficulty of student participation. Students were students first and policy makers second. Their academic responsibilities, especially around examination time, and their absence from campus during vacations limited their efforts as policy makers.

The other arguments opposing student participation were focused more on the perceived nature of the "system," rather than on the attributes or

lack of attributes of the students. Spurr (1970), Lewy and Rothman (1970) and Morris (1969) rejected what they called the "democratic model" as an inappropriate model for the university.

The university's special mission requires the authority of the teacher and the communication of knowledge is impossible without hierarchy and discipline. The different roles which professors and students play in the university are built into the essence of the institution (Lewy and Rothman, 1970:28).

Thus, they did not consider the members of the university community equal in status. Since they thought that decisions should be made on the basis of competence, and since students were not considered equal in competence, they concluded that students should be excluded from academic decision-making. They felt that the only participation that students should be allowed was on an advisory basis. This, they thought, would be sufficient.

Though this list of arguments against student participation was not exhaustive, it did represent some of the major views that were found in the literature against student participation.

Arguments for student participation. The rationale for student participation as a means of reducing alienation has been well established. Giving students some control of the decisions which affected them would render the students less powerless. It would keep the university more responsive to its students needs thus making students' educational experiences more meaningful. It would acknowledge and include students as vital members of the decision-making process lessening the students isolation. All these factors would work to decrease their self-estrangement. There were other arguments in favor of student participation, however, which not only reinforced what has been said but also provided answers to many of the arguments against student participation.

Many have affirmed student participation as beneficial to the university. Marchese (1969) expressed a strong plea for involving students in governance as a means of improving the range and quality of advice to decision makers while enlarging and enriching the input into the planning process. Even Spurr (1970:37), who opposed the democratic model, admitted that "students can bring to academic decisions a freshness of opinion, an uninhibited critical appraisal and an evaluation of the academic institutions of the majority who constitute its chief clients and indeed its only reason for being." The Oregon State Board of Higher Education (1969) agreed with this line of thinking, claiming that in some matters wisdom was not the monopoly of any single element. The faculty and administration, the Board said, could gain much from the opportunity to sense the character of student concerns and the nature of student views. The Board proposed that students should be involved in the formulation of institutional policies, rules and regulations since they had "much to contribute to the deliberate process in many areas affecting their academic lives" (1969:9). The Board reasoned further that the students' commitments to the resulting policies, rules and regulations would be more meaningful if the students had participated in their formulation. Finally, Brunson (1969:171) claimed that "Student involvement in the governance of the university makes a great deal of sense if the institution is viewed as a community." Though the university has been referred to as a "community of scholars," she continued, relatively few institutions have regarded the student, who has much to contribute to it, as an active citizen. Brunson called for the revitalization of the college community and saw student involvement as a necessary prerequisite. It would seem that the university itself had much to gain from including the student in its decision-making process.

The students too would benefit from the policy making experience. Nicholas (1970:86) stated, "There is no better model of learning for a student than the direct and meaningful experience of working with an adult who wants to and does learn from him." He also thought that the mutual exploration of values, methods and performances would promote a feeling of responsibility for and understanding of policies growing out of these discussions. Marchese (1969) as well as the Oregon State Board (1969) agreed that joint participation of students, faculty and administration would offer unique learning experience for all concerned.

Many of those who advocated student participation in university decision-making acknowledged the genuine problems involved and offered various solutions for them.

The lack of skill, experience and knowledge which J. Shaffer (1970) attributed to students presented a very real problem but not an insurmountable one. The answer which he proposed would not only help solve the difficulty in terms of student participation but it would also provide additional educational experience for the student. J. Shaffer proposed that student naivete should be met by offering a regular academic course dealing with the university policy process. In preparing the student to become an effective member of the policy process this course would also help to sharpen the student's perceptions, to develop his necessary skills and to inform him of needed background information and possible policy alternatives involved in the decision-making process.

Though Brunson (1969:170) would also admit the students' youth and lack of experience, in contrast to those who treated students condescendingly, she asserted that many students were surprisingly mature. "Their maturity becomes apparent when they are given meaningful responsibility and involvement."

Hodgkinson (1968) also believed that students were competent to participate meaningfully in academic governance. This competence and maturity would allow them to utilize well the course experience which Shaffer proposed and to contribute meaningfully in the process.

Those who talked of student transiency were dealing with an obvious fact. Most students do remain on campus for only four years. The question that was significant, however, was whether or not this really was a problem. Both Martin (1967) and Brunson (1969) claimed that it was not. According to them, mobility was a mark of the times. There was no guarantee that anyone in either the faculty or the administration would be at one school for more than four years. If their ability to contribute to the administrative process was not questioned, then there was no reason why the students' ability should be questioned on that basis either. If faculty could make a contribution in a short period of time, then so could students.

From another viewpoint the students' transiency could perhaps be seen as an asset. Since new students were not involved in all the previous decision-making, since they were free from old loyalties and associations, they could see and evaluate previous legislation from a more objective standpoint. They could offer the perspective that only someone from outside the system could provide.

As for the problem of the students' having only enough time to gain a general orientation to the decision-making process, the course proposed by Shaffer, along with any other institutional aids that the university could establish, would help to reduce if not eliminate this liability.

The problem of student apathy was a more difficult one to deal with, one that would take a greater amount of time to overcome. J. Shaffer (1970)

pointed out that students will vote and will enforce the responsiveness of their elected leaders only when self-interest demands it. Students, he said, were so used to viewing their student governments as "Mickey Mouse" organizations dealing only with trivia, and to seeing the actions of its student governments so often overruled by the administration that they have lost faith and interest in them. Before this apathy can be overcome, students must realize that they have an important stake in the decisions of those who represent them and that they as voters do have the ability to influence those decisions. This, Shaffer said, can only be accomplished when student leaders are invested with real power in significant areas of student life. When students realize the impact that their leaders can have on their lives, their self-interests would demand greater interest and participation to keep their leaders responsive to their needs and wants.

To remedy the problem of students' lack of time because of scholastic responsibilities, both Smith and Reitz (1970) and J. Shaffer (1970) recommended that universities grant academic credit for participation in the policy process. Considering the general view that such participation is in itself a highly educational experience, this recommendation did not seem unreasonable.

Much of what has already been stated in terms of student potential for meaningful contribution can be used to refute the rejection of the "democratic model" in favor of the traditional hierarchical system. No one would deny that the faculty and administration by virtue of their advanced study and experience have certain competencies which exceed those of students. These competencies should be used well in the decision-making process. However, as the report of the Study Commission on University Governance established at Berkeley said:

There is no group on campus -- administration, faculty members, students or any sub-group -- that has a monopoly on the wisdom

needed for serious deliberation on questions that affect the common welfare. Only when the entire community is able to interact in an open manner can we be relatively sure that all the implications of a proposed policy have been explored and that all alternatives have been considered. Searching dialogue is needed to enlarge the range of criteria used in formulating issues and making decisions, and to eliminate both the sense and the reality of unilateral imposition of decisions that has so often characterized this campus (Brunson, 1969: 172).

Participation: advice or control. The various attitudes toward and the pros and cons of student participation have been discussed, but the question of where student participation should actually lie along the continuum from passive acceptance of decisions to complete control remained unanswered. The following discussion examined that question.

According to the alienation perspective proposed in the second chapter, mere participation without any real influence over outcome, without power, might not be sufficient to lessen alienation. In addition to the reference of Clark (1959) cited in that chapter, an analysis of Etzioni (1968) provided further insight into the reasons behind that statement.

Etzioni claimed that to determine to what extent a social system or organization is responsive to its members' needs, the differences between appearances and underlying realities should be taken into account. He claimed that if both the appearance and the reality of the underlying structure were responsive to basic needs then the organization was authentic and non-alienating. If both the appearance and the underlying structure were unresponsive to these needs then the organization was obviously alienating. But if only the appearance of responsiveness was maintained when the underlying structure was unresponsive, if the appearance of participation was actually covering an underlying exclusion, then the organization was inauthentic (Etzioni 1968:880). This condition presented a more subtle, less obvious but nonetheless alienating situation.

Student participation without any real power could easily fall into this last category of inauthenticity. If the facade of student involvement in the form of advising or recommending were maintained while the students' ideas were actually not considered, then this inauthentic and alienating situation would be fact. Without any power to directly influence the outcome of a decision, students could seem to be really participating while in fact they could be ignored as they had been right along. It is for these reasons that some degree of power, some means of directly influencing the decision-making process should be implied in the term student participation if the reduction of alienation is desired.

As for the question of in what areas should students be allowed to participate, the answer has already been implied. Power should be in the hands of those whom it affects. For student participation to decrease alienation, it must be extended to more than superficial areas. To experience a real sense of control in their lives within the university system, students must be allowed to have some say in the issues that are really important to them. Concessions to the traditional spheres of influence of the faculty and administration members of a committee could be used to maintain the faculty's traditional prerogative in that area. But the student must be included. The student must be able to have some real impact on the decision-making process or student participation will not answer the problem of alienation.

Summary. Both the attitudes toward and the definitions of student participation varied within the group under consideration. Although the trustees were found to be the group most resistant to student participation, the faculty, because of its more direct relation to the student in the decision-making process, presented the biggest obstacle to greater student involvement.

There were a number of arguments both practical and theoretical presented against student participation. These were answered either by specific measures designed to eliminate or reduce each particular problem, or by general arguments affirming the need and the benefits of student participation.

Finally, the questions of what degree of student participation is necessary and in what areas should it be extended were answered. Student participation must include some means of really influencing decision-making and must be extended to significant areas of the students' lives if it is to lessen alienation.

Implementing Student Participation

From all that has been said about the necessity of the university's meeting the needs of its members, it seemed reasonable to agree with Hallberg (1969) that governmental form should grow out of the needs and purposes expressed by those governed. Each university must evaluate the impact its structures have on its members and determine how they can be changed to better meet its members needs and to alleviate the problem of alienation.

In terms of implementing participation through some model of governance certain ideas should be kept in mind.

The Commission on University Governance (1970:16) stated, ". . . that there is reason to doubt whether anything approaching a majority of undergraduates truly desire the drain of time and energy implicit in regular participation in departmental governance. . ." While this seemed very realistic, it still seemed necessary, as DeCecco (1970) indicated, that students should have the opportunity to participate in decision-making where they felt their vital interests were at stake. In other words, it seemed necessary that there be some group of students who were willing to put out the time and the effort, and

who did have some decision-making power to whom the generally apathetic group could appeal when their needs demanded it. Through this representative group, students could thus make their needs known to those elected to represent them and to facilitate the meeting of their needs.

That last sentence included two important assumptions: that student decision makers should represent their constituents and that they should effect the satisfaction of their needs. These seemed to be important factors if student participation were to lessen alienation and they raised the problem of just how to organize student involvement in decision making.

One possible means of effecting such representation would be to work through the departments as a means of "lower level" grass roots participation. There are many decisions which can be made on the departmental level. Students could be elected in each department to work with faculty and administration in formulating departmental policy and in making departmental decisions. These students, elected from peers with common interests and problems, would be able to represent their constituents since they would be acquainted with their common needs and would be in a better position to associate more frequently with these students. As representatives of a definite group of students, they would be accountable to that group. If the department also provided some means of getting its students together to discuss ideas on an informal basis as well as on the formal policy making one, this would also help its students to feel more of an identification with the department and less isolated from it as well as to make their ideas known to their representatives.

There are many decisions within a university, however, which cut across departmental lines. This would seem to necessitate some sort of general "college council", some broader decision making body. If the students' representatives

for this body were also elected from each department rather than from the student population at large, then the same type of representation of "like minded peers" would be facilitated. Again, the necessity of informal student involvement seems obvious to assure that all student voices could be heard, but it would seem that departmental representation would in itself help to make "student representation" more valid.

While departmental representation may be the solution for one university it should be restated that each model for student participation in university governance should grow from the particular needs and structures of each school. No matter what structure is evolved, what seems to be important is the process of students working together with the faculty and administration. Hopefully, the structure would provide a means of student participation by which students as well as faculty and administration, would really be included as trusted, respected, and potent members of the decision-making process who would help keep the university responsive to its members' need and thereby help to decrease the problem of alienation.

Chapter 5

SUMMARY

This report contained answers to the three questions posed in the first chapter: what is alienation; how did it come about in higher education; what is a possible solution for it?

Alienation was defined as a feeling of powerlessness, meaninglessness, isolation and self-estrangement. It was assumed that the feeling did correspond with reality.

The relationship between alienation and the organizational structure of an institution led to the perspective that if the structure was in itself alienating, it could be changed to alter or to eliminate its alienating aspects. Some degree of student participation and control was proposed as a means of changing structure which would do just that.

The rise of alienation within institutions of higher education was traced in this report. The advent of Sputnik led to an enlargement of institutions of higher education with emphasis on academic excellence and to the subsequent isolation of students within them. The enlargement also led to a diversification of student sub-cultures. The universities with their emphasis on academic excellence were unresponsive to the new and changing needs of their diverse populations. As a result, more and more students began to view their educational experiences as meaningless and irrelevant and began to realize their powerlessness to change the situation. These conditions prepared a fertile seedbed for the fourth aspect of alienation, self-estrangement, thus rendering a complete picture of alienation, as defined in this study, in higher education.

Student participation was proposed as a means of alleviating the problems of alienation. Through participation the students would have some control over the decisions which affected their lives, thus decreasing their state of powerlessness. In the process of participating, the students would also get to know the faculty and administration, have a genuine connection with them and come to a sense of belonging to the university. Being included is the opposite of being isolated. As an accepted part of the decision-making process, acknowledged as persons who really have something to contribute, students would be involved with the university, would have some identification with it and thus would be less isolated. Finally, student participation, as a means of rendering the university more responsive to the needs of its members, would help to make the experience of higher education more meaningful to the students. Students together with the administration and the faculty, could work together to make the demand for relevance a reality.

It was acknowledged, however, that the implementation of student participation was not an easy task and was not favored by all members of higher education. The faculty, whose cooperation was necessary for effective student participation, presented the greatest obstacle to increased student involvement.

The various pros and cons of student participation were also discussed. Though there were many thoughtful and realistic arguments against student power, these were answered either by specific measures or by general arguments affirming the need and benefits of student participation.

Finally it was concluded that student participation must include some degree of power, some means of really influencing the decision-making process or it would not be an effective means of reducing alienation.

In applying the idea of student participation no one model can be proposed, no one set of guidelines can be validly offered for all universities. Each university must assess its own needs and its own structures. Each university must evaluate the impact its structures have on its students and determine how they can be changed to better meet the students' needs and to decrease the problem of student alienation.

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ALIENATION VERSUS STUDENT
PARTICIPATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

by

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Student alienation is a problem which concerns faculties, administrations and students throughout the nation. This undesirable condition has affected many students and concerned educators are searching for a better understanding of the problem and for a solution to it. This study, in seeking these same goals, attempted to answer the questions: what is alienation; how did it come about in higher education; what is a possible solution for it?

Alienation was defined as a feeling of powerlessness, meaninglessness, isolation and self-estrangement. It was assumed that the feeling did correspond with reality.

The relationship between alienation and the organizational structure of an institution led to the perspective that if the structure was in itself alienating, it could be changed to alter or to eliminate its alienating aspects. Some degree of student participation and control was proposed as a means of changing structure which would do just that.

The rise of alienation within institutions of higher education was traced in this report. The advent of Sputnik led to an enlargement of institutions of higher education with emphasis on academic excellence and to the subsequent isolation of students within them. The enlargement also led to a diversification of student sub-cultures. The universities with their emphasis on academic excellence were unresponsive to the new and changing needs of their diverse populations. As a result, more and more students began to view their educational experiences as meaningless and irrelevant and began to realize their powerlessness to change the situation. These conditions prepared a fertile seedbed for the fourth aspect of alienation, self-estrangement, thus rendering a complete picture of alienation, as defined in this study, in higher education.

Student participation was proposed as a means of alleviating the problems of alienation. Through participation the students would have some control over the decisions which affected their lives, thus decreasing their state of powerlessness. In the process of participating, the students would also get to know the faculty and administration, have a genuine connection with them and come to a sense of belonging to the university. Being included is the opposite of being isolated. As an accepted part of the decision-making process, acknowledged as persons who really have something to contribute, students would be involved with the university, would have some identification with it and thus would be less isolated. Finally, student participation, as a means of rendering the university more responsive to the needs of its members, would help to make the experience of higher education more meaningful to the students. Students together with the administration and the faculty, could work together to make the demand for relevance a reality.

It was acknowledged, however, that the implementation of student participation was not an easy task and was not favored by all members of higher education. The faculty, whose cooperation was necessary for effective student participation, presented the greatest obstacle to increased student involvement.

The various pros and cons of student participation were also discussed. Though there were many thoughtful and realistic arguments against student power, these were answered either by specific measures or by general arguments affirming the need and benefits of student participation.

Finally it was concluded that student participation must include some degree of power, some means of really influencing the decision-making process or it would not be an effective means of reducing alienation.

In applying the idea of student participation no one model can be proposed, no one set of guidelines can be validly offered for all universities. Each university must assess its own needs and its own structures. Each university must evaluate the impact its structures have on its students and determine how they can be changed to better meet the students' needs and to decrease the problem of student alienation.