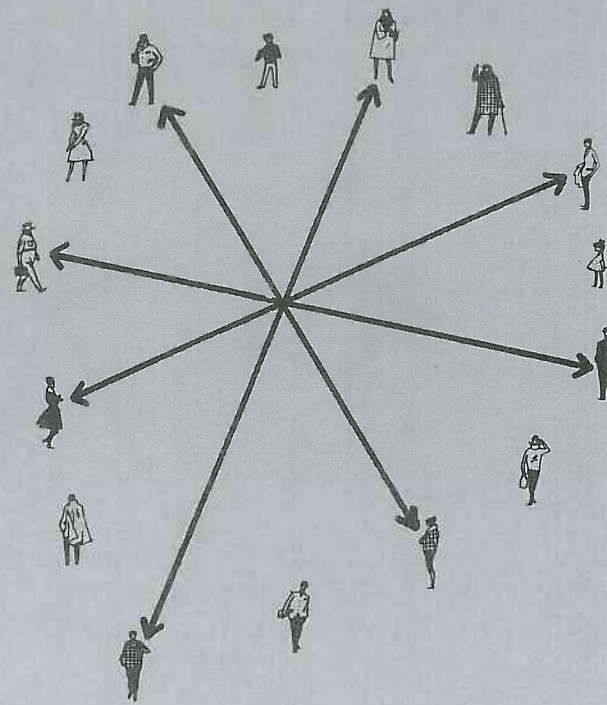


# *the Cornell Journal of Social Relations*

THE CORNELL JOURNAL OF SOCIAL RELATIONS

VOL. 2, NO. 1



Vol. 2 No. 1

Spring 1967

INTELLECT AND DISSENT:\*A Survey of Cornell Students

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The academic year of 1964-65 witnessed student agitations on a nation-wide scale. The movement reached its climax in California, at the Berkeley campus, where-as Lipset and Seabury (1965) described it- a "small scale but genuine revolution" took place.

It is not the purpose of this paper to discuss the causes that brought about the student outburst.<sup>1</sup> However, it should be pointed out that it has not been a sudden explosion but is rather the outgrowth of some eight years of expanding student involvement in academic as well as in non-academic affairs--mainly of a social and political nature.

The site for student agitations has been typically the campuses, but the movement has not been restricted to the university community; it has also been extended to matters affecting the whole society. The student revolt was supported by youths who cared about their role as students and their role as citizens. As students they revolted against "mass education" and the "impersonality" of the "multiversity", challenging the efficiency of the system in bringing about the university's goals. As citizens they have taken on the active defense of civil rights and civil liberties and have challenged the efficiency of the system in bringing about the goals stated in the country's Constitution. At both levels it seemed that these youths were acting according to what they thought were their rights as students and as citizens, rights which the traditional image of "adolescent on campus" has not entailed. At both levels, "disenchantment" with the current state of affairs seemed to be underlying their actions.

\*This paper is based on the thesis presented by the author in partial fulfillment of her Master's degree completed under a grant from the Consejo Nacional de Investigaciones Científicas y Técnicas, Argentina. The author wishes to acknowledge Rose K. Goldsen for providing the data and all the necessary aid that made this report possible.

## 1. Cornell in 1964-1965.

The climate of the new student movement settled over Cornell during the academic year of 1964-1965. There was not only informal and sporadic evidence of student unrest, but it also took institutional form. SFE stands for Students For Education, an organization that appeared on campus during the first week of March 1965. SFE described itself as a group of students wishing to express their concern about the quality of education at Cornell, and seriously interested in improving it.

SFE challenged the efficiency of the student government. SFE criticized the Cornell grading system and proposed the substitution of "Satisfactory" and "Unsatisfactory" for number grades. A reduction was requested in the number of required courses in the underclass years, along with a corresponding increase in elective courses. SFE members wanted more seminar and tutorial work, particularly in the upperclass years, and a credit revision by which large lectures would be audited and only courses of reasonably small size could be taken for credit. SFE's proposals also reached the facilities of the Campus Store where it was believed there should be more trade books and a more extensive selection of periodicals. Student wages, contract dining, housing, and personal freedom were among other issues discussed.

SFE members not only addressed themselves to the student body, they asked that students be included with the faculty and the administration in the decision-making process.

During the period this organization was active on campus, extra-academic issues were also a focus for agitation. Ad-hoc committees were activated both for and against American foreign policy in Vietnam. Civil rights advocates organized demonstrations on- and off- campus. The marijuana issue, which got publicity on a national basis, was the cause of discussions, articles and leaflets. Sit-ins, teach-ins, public debates and demonstrations were common on campus.

## 2. Purpose of this paper.

This paper is based on a survey of opinion conducted by Professor Rose K. Goldsen at Cornell in April 1965, soon after SFE appeared on campus. The students of the Public Opinion course, in the Department of Sociology collaborated in the research, as part of their course work. Three-hundred-fifty-one Cornell undergraduates were interviewed--two-hundred-seventy-six represented a cross-section from the American undergraduates on campus, and seventy-five students were added because of their known active participation in SFE. The date was gathered with the aid of a questionnaire of 162 fixed alternative questions, many of which surveyed the students' opinions and attitudes concerning issues raised at the meetings and in the documents of SFE.

The purpose of this paper is to discuss the nature of the "disenchantment"--concerning academic and non-academic issues--to explore the structural and socio-psychological characteristics that distinguish students who became "disenchanted".

### 3. A scale of "disenchantment": construction and validation.

Professor Goldsen's questionnaire provided an opportunity to develop a measure of disenchantment. As a matter of fact, one section explored the students' attitudes toward a number of aspects of American culture. Civil rights, imbalances in the economic system, American foreign policy in Vietnam were some of the issues explored. The questions we made use of and a summary of the students' responses are given in Table 1.

Table 1. The students' views of some social, economic and political aspects of American culture.

Some students have said that certain aspects of American culture indicate its <u>moral decay and hypocrisy</u> . What is your opinion?	Per cent * giving indicated response				
	Strongly Agree	Agree	?	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Our use of non-lethal gas in Vietnam.	9%	15	11	35	30
Our treatment of natural resources (forests, water resources, wildlife, etc.)	11%	29	18	35	7
Social and economic injustices such as our "pockets of poverty", disadvantaged children, etc.	11%	29	12	43	5
Our emphasis is on economic consumption regardless of social usefulness of product (built-in obsolescence)	13%	39	15	28	5
Terroristic tactics against civil rights advocates (Birmingham bombing, etc.)	45%	33	6	11	5

\* Percentages are to be added horizontally. They are based on N=351.

The tabulation shows that many students saw signs of decadence in American society. There was little evidence, however, of any blanket condemnation but, rather, of a differentiated view of the aspects of American culture examined. There was consensus on the civil rights issue as an indicator of cultural decadence and immorality. Disenchanted interpretations were, however, extremely rare concerning the war policy in Vietnam. The evaluation of the economic system revealed two roughly equivalent sub-groups, one who would and the other who would not interpret malfunctionings of the economic system as evidence of cultural decadence.

The analysis of the responses to the five items listed in Table 1. revealed that they form a cumulative scale, i.e., they were tapping a single dimension that we have called "disenchantment with American established institutions." The scale permitted divisions of the sample into six groups differing in their degree of disenchantment about the functioning of the particular established institutions listed.<sup>2</sup> Table 2. presents the distribution of the sample along the disenchantment dimension obtained by scoring the students' responses to the five items.

Table 2. Distribution of the sample according to the scale of "disenchantment with American established institutions."

low disenchantment end complacency: view none of the five items as evidence of decadence.

	<u>Score</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Per cent</u>
	0	24	7
	1	76	22
	2	89	25
	3	94	27
	4	51	14
high disenchantment end: view all five items as evidence of decadence.	5	17	5
		<u>351</u>	<u>100</u>

The distribution shows that the majority of the sample was located at the central points of the scale. Only very small minorities (5% at the high disenchantment end and 7% at the low extreme) took extreme positions.

Given that the items prove to be scalable along the "content" dimension (thus, allowing ranking the sample), it became possible to find more precisely which among the six groups were disenchanted, which ones were not, and which ones held a neutral attitude. The analysis of the "intensity"<sup>3</sup> of the responses permitted this finer estimate in which people with scores 0 and 1 were regarded as low in disenchantment (from now on "complacent"), people with scores 4 and 5 as high in disenchantment, and, finally, those with scores 2 and 3 as neutral, i.e., having no definite attitudes on these issues in either direction.

These results allowed collapsing the original six into four sub-groups: 0-1, complacent students; 2 and 3, neutral students; and 4 and 5 disenchanted students. The analysis also provided information about the proportions of students holding one of each of these positions, indicating that the sample was rather evenly divided between those relatively uncommitted and those whose views of the established institutions was intensely held. Of the latter group, relatively more were disenchanted (scores 4-5 33%) and relatively fewer were complacent (scores 0-1: 18%).

Given that this finding could have been the result of the fact that sample was deliberately enlarged with 75 activists in SFE, the same technique was applied to the cross-section exclusively. This time 52% of the students scored in a neutral position, while 29% were disenchanted and 20% complacent. It is evident, then, that the relative proportions of disenchanted, complacent and uncommitted students was roughly equivalent for both samples. In both, as could be anticipated, about half the students held no position. However, the striking finding was that among those with a definite attitude toward American institutions, more were disenchanted than complacent with the status quo. It should be remembered at this point that "disenchantment," as scored by the scale, was already a very strong term since it implied a belief that some aspects of American culture are indicative of moral decay and hypocrisy.

On the basis of the similarity of distribution of both samples, the decision was made to work with the whole sample of 351 students. The groups so identified permitted exploration of the extent to which attitudes toward non-academic matters - social, economic and political institutions - were in any way associated with attitudes toward academic matters - mainly those with which SFE was concerned.

Table 3. summarizes the findings. The students scored as disenchanted on the scale were likely to be actively engage in SFE. 44% of the (75) activists, the highest proportion, were recruited among disenchanted students, and only a small 10% among complacent students.

Table 3. Activists in SFE were largely recruited among disenchanted students.

Disenchantment scale	Per cent of activists at each subgroup of the disenchantment scale.
(complacent) 0-1	10% (8)
2	15% (11)
3	31% (23)
(disenchanted) 4-5	44% (33)
	<hr/> 100% (75) <hr/>

This finding does not imply that support for SFE came exclusively from disenchanted students. There is evidence that the movement received support from students who scored in all positions of the scale. But what cannot be overlooked is that a very high proportion of the disenchanted not only supported but were also actively engaged in SFE activities. This is evidence of the association between dissent on non-academic issues and dissent on academic ones.

In spite of this evidence, it was necessary to validate the scale before proceeding to using it. Only few of the tests of validity conducted will be reported here. In the first place we reasoned that perhaps the scale was not really tapping the specific attitude we wanted to elicit, but instead was tapping a more general trait of alienation and disaffection. The analysis of the agreement and disagreement response to the statement "These days a person does not know whom he can count on" (a general alienation indicator) revealed that 71% of the total sample disagreed with it and that this high proportion was relatively invariant for all four groups in the disenchantment scale.

On the other hand, when the students were asked their opinions about the social and political future of their country, a clear differentiation showed up: 76% of the complacent students reported "great or some" confidence that ten years from now "our country will not be facing a social revolution or upheaval", but only 48% of disenchanted students expressed such confidence.

Finally, a question about the Government policy in Vietnam - this time concerning goals rather than means - showed a real cleavage of opinion among sub-groups: 70% of disenchanted students agreed that "I often feel that our efforts in Vietnam are morally wrong"; only 15% among the complacent sub-group agreed. All the differences reported are significant at the .01 level and revealed that the measure developed served to differentiate sub-groups in the intended way.

#### 4. Structural and socio-psychological characteristics of disenchanted students.

##### 4.1 Who becomes disenchanted?

In Table 3. we presented evidence for an association between disenchantment regarding American established institutions and active support for SFE (disenchantment with academic matters) among students. In this section we will report on the specific characteristics of disenchanted students by comparing them with their complacent mates.

The data did not reveal significant differences between both sub-groups regarding structural aspects at the level of the whole society. That is, on the whole, the students polled, regardless of their evaluation of American institutions, were fairly homogeneous middle-class sons. They did not differ in any significant way in terms of religious origins or degree of "religiosity" declared,

themselves into the established occupational structure society has ready for them after graduation.

At the "fantasy" level, however, disenchanted students proved to be repelled by careers within business and government organizations, acting out their disenchantment with the establishment - though not as many are repelled as long for occupations outside the competitive established occupational ladder, especially those possessing an intellectual component (college professor, independent scholar, artist, or writer). Their differences with respect to the occupational attitudes of the rest of the students polled, particularly those sustaining the status quo, were statistically significant.

Two other major structural findings were revealed by the data: the proportion of disenchanted students was higher among females than among males, and disenchanted feelings seemed to be more widespread among under- than among upper-classmen. These two findings, however, have to be qualified. For one thing, the general climate of opinion varied from school to school within the university. The size of the sample polled allowed us to analyze the data for only three schools-- Arts and Science, Agriculture, and Engineering. These three schools mirror the whole range of the disenchantment scale. Arts and Sciences enrolls a plurality of disenchanted students (26%). At the other extreme stands Engineering with a plurality of complacent students (36%). Agriculture is in a middle position, showing no clear-cut orientation as a whole, but with a tendency toward complacency - 15% disenchanted and 29% complacent students - closer to Engineering than to Arts and Sciences as Table 5. shows.

Table 5. Per cent of disenchanted and complacent students in three different schools.

	<u>Engineering</u> (72)	<u>Agriculture</u> (60)	<u>Arts and Science</u> (150)
disenchanted	7%	15%	26%
complacent	36%	29%	23%

$$\chi^2 = 12.77; \text{ df} = 2; p < .01$$

Thus, the fact that the majority of female undergraduates in the sample were enrolled in Arts and Sciences (49%) helps to clarify in part the association found between sex and disenchanted attitudes.

Turning now to the effects that years in school play upon the students' attitudes, Table 6. reveals that while no college curriculum socializes students toward disenchantment, only one out of three curricula socializes students towards complacency. It seems that only among Agriculture students does the impact of the college years tend to socialize toward complacency. Here the proportion of complacent students increases significantly from 21% to 40% with years in school, while the proportion of disenchanted decreases from 22% to 5%.



except for some slight tendency on the part of disenchanted to be recruited among students of Jewish origins, predominantly "non-churchgoers".

These disenchanted students did not differ from the majority of students polled in the degree to which they felt they disagreed with their parents in attitudes toward political or religious affairs, occupational preferences or ideas about sexual behavior, suggesting that they were not primarily rebelling against parental ideas rather than broader social or academic conditions.

There were, nevertheless, significant differences in their characteristics within the college system. One major finding was a positive association between disenchantment with established institutions and academic achievement. In the lowest achievement group (under 74 point average), 7% of the students scored as disenchanted; in the next achievement group (grade point average between 75 and 79) 15% were disenchanted; in the group achieving an average between 80 and 84, 24% registered disenchantment. Finally, among the higher grade achievers, those with a cumulative average of 85 or better, 37% were disenchanted.

**Table 4.** Academic achievement is positively associated with a critical view of American established institutions.

	Disenchantment scale				Grade point average			
	0-1 (complacent)	2	3	4-5	-74 (66)	75-79 (123)	80-84 (114)	85+ (48)
	27%	32	34	7	27%	31%	26%	31%
		2	3	4	32	25	25	19
					34	29	25	13
					7	15	24	37

$$\chi^2 = 23.73, df=9; p < .01$$

While it is by no means certain that cumulative average is an accurate measure of commitment to the process of learning or the values of higher education, it is important to stress that if we make this assumption, there is evidence for the inference that students who were relatively more committed to the values of college education, were more critical about the establishment. The less academically committed, on the other hand, were less likely to be critical of the establishment.

Further analysis of the data collected confirmed this inference. The strongest evidence was provided by the examination of the students' occupational images and values. When the analysis was done at the "reality" level no major differences between students appeared. That is, asked about their occupational future, all students, including those who expressed disenchantment with current established institutions, planned to filter

Among the students enrolled in the other two schools, however, we do not find a general socialization towards complacency. The tendencies here are in the opposite direction - the Engineering students maintaining a complacent majority and the Arts and Sciences a majority of disenchanted students - but consistent with the initial proportions of one or the other tendency.<sup>4</sup> This result may indicate different recruitment into these colleges and/or the presence there of mechanisms of reinforcement for the maintenance of disenchanted or complacent attitudes.

Table 6. No college curriculum socializes students toward disenchantment; only Agriculture seems to socialize toward complacency.

Disenchantment scale	<u>Engineering</u>		<u>Agriculture</u>		<u>Arts and Science</u>	
	Class		Class		Class	
	<u>Under</u>	<u>Upper</u>	<u>Under</u>	<u>Upper</u>	<u>Under</u>	<u>Upper</u>
	(36)	(36)	(40)	(20)	(87)	(63)
(complacent) 0-1	39%	33%	21%	40%	22%	25%
2	25	36	39	25	20	24
3	28	25	18	30	30	29
4-5	8	6	22	5	28	22
	$\chi^2 = 3.42$		$\chi^2 = 7.94$		$\chi^2 = .85$	
	df = 3		df = 3		df = 3	
	p > .10		p < .05		p > .10	

The fairly homogeneous population on campuses forms a number of social sub-systems that, although oriented toward the common goal of pursuing education, interpret it in somewhat different ways. One such subsystem is formed by schools and colleges, but there are other significant informal and formal student groupings especially the fraternities, sororities, associations and co-ops which provide housing and play the role of true primary groups. The relationship between some characteristics of these groupings and disenchantment was explored. The survey revealed a clear attitudinal difference between disenchanted students and the rest of their peers: 49% among the former reported present or past membership in fraternities and sororities, but 72% among complacent students reported such experience.

Even though the figures are small, a correlation was observed between disenchantment with established institutions and affiliation with those associations and co-ops that do not emphasize values of exclusiveness. This refusal to affiliate with the "Greek Houses" on the part of disenchanted students is built upon a definite attitude against that system. When students were asked their opinion on the statement "Fraternities make a positive contribution to the campus as a whole," the majority (62%) of the students polled

agreed, while only a fourth (26%) disagreed. But looking only at the most disenchanted and most complacent students, 50% of the former disagreed while only 14% of the latter did so.

.2 What attitudes distinguish disenchanted from complacent students?

The analysis of the interviews revealed that a very high level of morale or satisfaction with Cornell prevailed among the students polled. The majority did not feel mishandled by any particular branch of the university system. In addition, a majority felt that, in case they needed it, they would be able to find channels for redress of their grievances. This satisfaction with Cornell was characteristic of all sub-groups of students and was not found to be linked either with a complacent or with a disenchanted view of American established institutions. On the other hand, the high respect students expressed for the faculty did not prevent them from registering certain criticisms. Again, in those as well as in other criticisms of the university regarding the efficiency of the student government and the grading system, no significant differences were found between nonconformist and conformist students.

In sum, then, there were many issues which equally appealed to all students sampled, regardless of their status here as "disenchanted" or "complacent". But there were other issues which clearly revealed differences, sometimes true cleavages. Those aspects which especially distinguished disenchanted students clustered around a strong rejection for the "impersonality" of college relations and the evils of "mass education". These students consistently registered a desire for a more personal kind of educational experience and a better educational atmosphere. It is important to recall at this point that the students who felt so deprived were among the highest grade achievers.

Most college students sampled at Cornell felt that the administration was treating them impersonally, but this negative feeling was significantly more typical of disenchanted students. And it was only among these students who were disenchanted with American established institutions to the point of viewing them as decadent, that the disappointment or resentment with the "multiversity" spilled over in such a way as to diminish their respect for the university administration and, to a lesser extent, for the faculty. Fewer than half the students agreed that "On the whole I have a high respect for the Administration at Cornell", but while a majority (55%) among the complacent sub-group said this, only 28% of disenchanted students agreed. And when the question referred to the efficiency of the administration in taking "into account the students' concerns, needs, grievances in making decisions that importantly affect students," 72% of complacent students agreed but only 45% of the disenchanted did so. Table 7 summarizes these findings.

Table 7. Disenchanted are more likely than complacent students to express dissatisfaction with and less respect for the university administration.

	Scale of disenchantment			
	(compl.)			(disench.)
	0-1	2	3	4-5
	(100)	(89)	(94)	(68)
On the whole I have a very high respect for the administration.				
	% giving indicated response			
Strongly disagree or disagree	22%	33%	47%	57%
?	23	16	17	15
Strongly agree or agree	55	51	36	28
	$\chi^2 = 26.72, df=6, p < .01$			

The university administration takes into account the students' needs, concerns, grievances...

Definite or probable no	28%	27%	37%	55%
Definite or probable yes	72	73	63	45
	$\chi^2 = 16.49, df= 3, p < .01$			

In addition, the desire for a more personal kind of educational experience had the effect upon disenchanted students of making them more critical of faculty-students relations. When the students were asked to evaluate this issue, a majority of all students polled, 64%, disagree that "on the whole, faculty-students relations are very satisfactory." The proportion of disenchanted students expressing such an opinion was significantly larger, 75%, than that of the complacent sub-group, 55%. On the whole a relative majority, 47% among all students polled agreed that "a close personal relationship with a professor is probably necessary for intellectual stimulation of the students." Again, the proportion of disenchanted students agreeing was significantly greater (68%) than the corresponding proportion of complacent students (34%).

Questions on the content of what is taught also makes for marked differences. When all students were asked to evaluate the statement "I have had at least one large course here which has interfered with or obstructed my education", the whole sample split almost in halves, 46% agreeing and 49% disagreeing. A majority of disenchanted students, 59%, indicted Cornell on this score but only 38% among the complacent students did so.

The same difference of opinion between these sub-groups was noticeable in another indictment of Cornell educational life, this time referring to the "mass education" characteristics of the learning situations. A majority of the students polled (53%) agreed that "charges of production-line teaching at Cornell are in my opinion, close to the truth," but the proportion of disenchanted students in agreement reached 67% while that of complacent students reached only 48%.

Finally, although the "mass education" characteristics of the learning situation at Cornell was acknowledged by a majority of the students polled, only a minority of them were willing to accept that the university had "sold out" to the establishment. Only one-third of the students agreed that Cornell is "a knowledge factory producing for the military-industrial complex, the government and academic establishment", and 57% disagreed. The proportion on agreement was much higher among disenchanted students (44%) than among complacent students (24%). Table 8. summarizes these findings.

Statement	Disenchanted	Complacent
Charges of production-line teaching at Cornell are in my opinion, close to the truth.	67%	48%
Cornell is "a knowledge factory producing for the military-industrial complex, the government and academic establishment".	24%	57%

Table 8. summarizes these findings.

Disenchanted students (67%) agreed that "charges of production-line teaching at Cornell are in my opinion, close to the truth," while complacent students (48%) did not.

Only one-third (33%) of the students agreed that Cornell is "a knowledge factory producing for the military-industrial complex, the government and academic establishment", while 57% disagreed.

The proportion on agreement was much higher among disenchanted students (44%) than among complacent students (24%).

Some other isolated issues having to do with academic matters and life at Cornell set disenchanted students apart from the opinions of their complacent mates, but space limitations precludes their discussion here. There is, however, one particular aspect that deserves special attention because of its importance in the college system - specifically the matter of the definition of the student role, i.e., the expectations the students hold for themselves as occupants of their position in the college system. The analysis here was done in terms of "rights" and "obligations", i.e., in terms of what the students--as role occupants--thought they could expect from others and what they thought others should expect from them.<sup>5</sup> The particular sectors about which the students role definition was explored in terms of "rights" and "obligations" were not those traditionally defining the college student role, but those debated on campus at the time the survey was done.

The presence of a role definition was operationally conceptualized as the acknowledgement on the part of the students of both "rights" and "obligations". The assumption is that the recognition of an "obligation" implies that the role definer, if he is at the same time the role occupant, will also acknowledge the "right" the role entails, i.e., the "right" that makes the fulfillment of the "obligation" possible. Since, however, the recognition of a right does not necessarily imply the felt obligation, both kinds of expectation--rights and obligations--should be acknowledged for us to say that a definition of role exists.

One such element in the role definition of college student has to do with the students' rejection of a passive attitude concerning the decision-making process. An absolute majority (64%) of all students polled disagreed that "Undergraduates ought not have the right to any student representatives consulting on decisions about university academic curriculum." The sub-group that drew the highest proportion expressing disagreement was the disenchanted sub-group, almost all of them, 91%, disagreeing while fewer, but still a majority, 84%; among complacent students did so.

More evident, indeed, were the differences in attitudes of both groups when it came to taking an activist position. Among all students a majority of 72% acknowledged their right to protest "when the teaching-and-learning situation falls short of some reasonable standard." However, 90% among the disenchanted students agreed with taking action, while only 56% among the complacent did so, as shown in Table 9.

Table 9. Higher proportions of disenchanted than of complacent students affirm that it is their right to participate in decisions about university curriculum and to protest against low standards of teaching and learning.

**Table 8.** Disenchanted students consistently register a nostalgia for a more personal kind of educational experience, and a better intellectual atmosphere.

	Scale of disenchantment			
	(compl.)			(disench.)
	0-1	2	3	4-5
On the whole, faculty-students relations at Cornell are very satisfactory.	(100)	(89)	(94)	(68)
	% giving indicated response			
Strongly disagree or disagree	55%	59%	73%	75%
?	15	12	11	3
Strongly agree or agree	30	29	16	22
A close personal relationship with a professor is probably necessary.	$x^2 = 17.2, df=6, p < .01$			
Strongly agree or agree	34%	44%	50%	68%
?	10	9	12	6
Strongly disagree or disagree	56	47	38	26
I have had at least one large lecture course here which has interfered with or obstructed my education.	$x^2 = 21.74, df=6, p < .01$			
Strongly agree or agree	38%	42%	49%	59%
?	4	9	5	5
Strongly disagree or disagree	58	49	46	36
Charges of production-line at Cornell are in my opinion close to the truth.	$x^2 = 12.89, df=6, p < .05$			
Strongly agree or agree	48%	43%	58%	67%
?	11	12	10	15
Strongly disagree or disagree	41	45	32	18
Cornell is mainly a knowledge factory producing for the military industrial complex, the government and academic establishment.	$x^2 = 16.60, df=6, p < .05$			
Strongly agree or agree	24%	34%	33%	44%
?	8	10	11	9
Strongly disagree or disagree	68	56	56	47
	$x^2 = 10.81; df=6; p < .10$			

Scale of disenchantment  
(compl.) (disench.)

	0-1 (100)	2 (89)	3 (94)	4-5 (68)
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Undergraduates ought not have the right to any student consulting on decisions about academic curriculum. % giving indicated response

Strongly disagree and disagree	84%	82%	84%	91%
?	7	6	6	3
Strongly agree or agree	9	12	10	6

When the teaching-and-learning situation falls short of some reasonable standard, students have a right to protest even if they must resort to demonstrations, sit-ins, picketing, and the like.  $x^2 = 12.82, df=6, p < .05$

Strongly agree and agree	56%	71%	76%	90%
?	14	3	9	4
Strongly disagree and disagree	30	26	15	6

$x^2 = 30.11; df=6; p < .01$

The study revealed a striking difference between the recognition of rights and the recognition of obligations. If a majority of students acknowledged their rights in the role of college students, the same did not hold as far as obligations were concerned. The questionnaire asked: "Some students say that being a student these days entails a certain special obligation of being informed above a certain minimum. Do any of these topics strike you as being the obligation of a college student in any way? Or are they mainly a matter of his own wish and convenience?" Then followed a series of issues--current on campus at the time--some of which touched upon academic matters restricted to the college life, and some others of concern to students as citizens.

In contrast with the wide majority who acknowledged rights, only small proportions of the total sample of students polled stated that any of the behaviors listed were to be viewed as obligations of a college student. Majorities, instead, favored a laissez faire attitude, implying that they did not see those issues in any way linked with their position in the university system but as matters of individual concern. 73% said that "acting to alleviate social injustices, e.g., in poverty programs, civil rights, substandard housing, tutorials", was a matter of "own wish", only 23% answered "obligation" and 4% "hands off". In the same way, 72% expressed that "exerting pressures to influence international policy, e.g., Vietnam, the Congo, etc." depended on the student "own wish", 15% considered it an



"obligation" and 4% "hands off". When it came to specific participation in the college decision-making process, 57% declared "exerting pressures on academic policy deciding on curriculum" to be a matter of "own wish", 31% instead saw it as a matter of obligation, while 12% voted for "hands off". Finally, 54% favored the "own wish" position regarding "exerting pressures on educational policy, hiring or promoting professors", 17% saw it as a matter of their "obligation" and 29%, almost one-third, reported that "hands off" was the way to act.

The conclusion is inescapable. The majority of the students polled did not see the issues proposed--those which they themselves were agitating on campus linked in any necessary way with their status in college. And even though many acknowledged their rights as college students, the conclusion must be that they were still far from including in their definition of their college student role the obligations entailed by the issues currently being debated on campus.

There was, however, a small group which leaned toward an active commitment. This small group drew the majority of its adherents from among those students holding a critical view of American established institutions. Although in no case did the proportion of these activist-oriented disenchanted students reach a majority, it is evident from the data summarized in Table 10. that there was a significant difference in this respect between these student and their more complacent peers.

**Table 10.** Higher proportions of disenchanted than of complacent students acknowledge as their obligations as college students certain kinds of participation in university, national and international affairs.

Some students say that being a student these days entails a certain obligation, e.g., to be informed above certain minimum. Do any of these topics strike you as being the obligation of a college student in any way?

Exerting pressures on educational policy, e.g., hiring or promoting professors.

	Scale of disenchantment (disench.)			
	0-1 (100)	2 (89)	3 (94)	4-5 (68)
Obligation	10%	11%	20%	33%
Own wish	55	55	52	50
Hands off	35	34	28	17

% giving indicated response

Exerting pressures on academic policy, e.g., deciding on curriculum.

$\chi^2 = 20.61; df=6; p < .01$

Obligation	22%	27%	34%	45%
Own wish	64	60	53	48
Hands Off	14	13	13	7

Acting to alleviate social injustices, e.g., in poverty programs, civil rights.

$\chi^2 = 12.77; df=6; p < .05$

Obligation	10%	15%	29%	45%
Own wish	87	83	65	53
Hands off	3	2	6	2

Exerting pressures to influence international policy, e.g., Vietnam, the Congo.

$\chi^2 = 33.08, df=6, p < .01$

Obligation	3%	15%	15%	35%
Own Wish	76	78	70	58
Hands off	21	7	15	7

$\chi^2=38.47; df=6; p < .01$

Disenchanted students appear to be a particular sub-group among the students polled. As compared with all students interviewed and particularly as compared with the complacent students, higher proportions of the disenchanted acknowledged both rights and obligations, suggesting that they have achieved a clearer and more complete definition of their position in the college system, and that this definition departs considerably from the traditional one of "adolescent on campus". These

students were clearly seeking to play a more active part not only on academic matters but also on matters of national concern.

### Summary

During the course of recent years, college campuses have seen an increasing commitment among students to dealing with political issues and existing social problems. Even the realm of higher education itself came under attack, raising doubts about whether or not educational institutions in America are achieving their goals.

This paper has reported some of the findings of an opinion survey conducted during the Spring 1965 at Cornell University, which was then the scene of considerable student unrest. The analysis of the data sheds light upon the climate of the campus at that time:

1. Disenchantment with "non-collegiate" issues was associated with disenchantment with academic issues. Students activists in SFE, a student organization concerned with improving the quality of education at Cornell, were predominantly recruited among students who viewed some national political, economic and social problems as indicative of moral decay and hypocrisy in American culture.
2. It can safely be said that half the students polled seemed to remain aloof from the "outside world"; they were uncommitted or had no position at all on wider social issues. But among those holding a definite position on such issues, more were disenchanted than complacent about the status quo. As far as the overall evaluation of the University institution, Cornell was ranked very high, positive attitude which did not preclude, however, many students from pointing out failures in the efficiency of the system--the administration, faculty-students relations, student government, grading system, and the like.
3. The small group of disenchanted students who were more critical of their country's institutions and also of their college experience shared with their college peers the highly positive evaluation of Cornell. But this group was particularly sensitive to the "impersonality" of the college system and the evils of "mass education"--a reflection of the establishment within the university. These criticisms came from a group of students who, measured by their grade point average, were among the more serious committed to the values of college education. Their claims were not the isolated gripes of deviant dissenters. They oriented their actions in terms of a particular definition of the college student role. Their quest for knowledge and a better intellectual atmosphere was pursued in the name of rights and obligations they felt their role entailed.

Any social movement expressing disaffection and dissatisfaction recruits, at the outset, a minority among a majority of apathetic and uncommitted people. These minorities are often recruited among the relatively more "deprived",--those who, having higher expectat:



NOTES

1. Even though psychological and socio-psychological factors are relevant to explain processes of social change, an approach preferred by Lipset (1965), they do not account for the whole process. Generational conflict, separation from the family, lack of security and emotional ties, youthful idealism, unanchored libidos are relatively permanent states of affairs in college generations. However important, they cannot fully explain a dynamic process.

The analysis of environmental structural and sociocultural changes at the level of the national and academic systems and the interplay of these at the level of the actors within the system seems to be a more fruitful approach. Demographic changes and their impact upon college enrollment, the specific demands of a booming economy, the central role that knowledge and research have come to play in the society, have all had a visible impact upon the institutions of higher learning, altering its functions and its reward system.

The mounting racial tensions of the last decade, the activities of the Peace Corps, welfare measures by the Federal Government and the re-orientation of official foreign policy are some other sources of change whose impact upon college students should be explored. Valuable sources in these respects are Gross's (1963) analysis of the organization of American universities, Kerr's (1964) discussion of the origin and conflicts of the "multiversity," and the analysis and documents collected in Lipset and Wolin (1965), and Miller and Gilmore (1965).

2. The scale was constructed according to the Cornell Guttman technique. The response categories were dichotomized. "Agree" and "Strongly agree" indicate disenchantment; "?", "Disagree" and "Strong disagree" indicate lack of disenchantment (complacency). Each disenchanted response was given a score of 1 and each complacent response a score of 0, yielding six sub-groups ranging from 0 to 5. Guttman's (1954) co-efficient of scalability (.62), and Goodman statistical test ( $-3.3 < -1.645$ ,  $p < .05$ ) yielded satisfactory results.

3. The "intensity" analysis-following Guttman's (1947) technique was done by cross-tabulating the answers indicative of approval or disapproval ("content" or direction) with the answers indicating the "intensity" of the attitudes. Intense attitudes are defined as those in which "strongly" is used, the assumption being that a person with a definite condemning attitude would be more likely to endorse a strong and firm opinion (i.e., strongly agree or disagree) while a person with a relatively mild opinion would be more likely to avoid such strong stands. This technique assumes the possibility of obtaining the "invariant cutting point" of an attitude scale; hence, the division of the study population into favorable and unfavorable groups in a way which is independent of the particular set of questions or even the wording chosen to explore the particular attitudinal area.

4. This conclusion, although not based in a "panel" study as would be desirable, is assumed to be valid since the basic sources of change that brought about the student outburst appeared more than four years ago, the maximum span of time being violated by considering four successive cohorts of college students as if they were a single one.

5. This line of analysis was suggested by Gross's (1958) discussion of role analysis. If followed strictly, this approach would have required asking the students about a single set of issues in terms of both rights and obligations. Unfortunately, the questionnaire was not designed for this purpose. The students were queried, instead, about one set of issues in terms of rights and about another set in terms of obligations. Both sets overlapped in only one issue, that concerning the right and the obligation towards "exerting pressures on decisions about the academic curriculum." The answers to this particular item supports the inference drawn on p. 20 concerning the clearest role definition that disenchanted students seem to have achieved.

6. Two other studies were conducted during the recent student outbursts. One is Somer's (1964) survey of opinion of the Berkeley students and the other is Heist's (1965) study of the psychological characteristics of student leaders in three different California campuses. In general their findings are consistent with ours at Cornell.

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ERRATA

VOL. 2, No. 1 (SPRING 1967)

p. 103 Table 1:

The fourth row category should read:

"Our emphasis on economic consumption regardless of social usefulness of product (built-in obsolescence)"

p. 104 Table 2:

The top row category heading should appear next to "score 0" and should read:

"Low disenchantment end (complacency): view none of the five items as evidence of decadence"

p. 107 Table 4 and

p. 109 Table 6:

The bottom category (scores 4-5) should be designated as "(disenchanted)".

p. 113 and 114 were reversed and the title heading for Table 9 on p. 115 is missing, incorrectly appearing at the bottom of p. 113. To ensure the correct reading of the paper, Tables 8 and 9 have been retyped and appear on the following ERRATA pages.

p. 120

Note 2, lines 7 and 8 should read:

"Guttman's (1944) coefficient of reproducibility (.90), Menzel's (1953) coefficient of scalability (.62), and Goodman statistical test (-3.3 < -1.645,  $p < .05$ ) yielded satisfactory results



Table 8. Disenchanted students consistently register a nostalgia for a more personal kind of educational experience, and a better intellectual atmosphere.

	Scale of disenchantment (compl.)			%	giving indicated response	Scale of disenchantment (disench.)		
	0-1	2	3			4-5		
	(100)	(89)	(94)		(68)			
On the whole, faculty-student relations at Cornell are very satisfactory.	55%	59%	73%	75%				
Strongly disagree or disagree	15	12	11	3				
?	30	29	16	22				
Strongly agree or agree								
A close personal relationship with a professor is probably necessary.	$N^2 = 17.2, df=6, p < .01$							
Strongly agree or agree	34%	44%	50%	68%				
?	10	9	12	6				
Strongly disagree or disagree	56	47	38	26				
I have had at least one large lecture course here which has interfered with or obstructed my education.	$N^2 = 21.74, df=6, p < .01$							
Strongly agree or agree	38%	42%	49%	59%				
?	4	9	5	5				
Strongly disagree or disagree	58	49	46	36				
Charges of production-line at Cornell are in my opinion close to the truth.	$N^2 = 12.89, df=6, p < .05$							
Strongly agree or agree	48%	43%	58%	67%				
?	11	12	10	15				
Strongly disagree or disagree	41	45	32	18				
Cornell is mainly a knowledge factory producing for the military industrial complex, the government, and academic establishment.	$N^2 = 16.60, df=6, p < .05$							
Strongly agree or agree	24%	34%	33%	44%				
?	8	10	11	9				
Strongly disagree or disagree	68	56	56	47				
	$N^2 = 10.81, df=6, p < .10$							

Table 9. Higher proportions of disenchanted than of complacent students affirm that it is their right to participate in decisions about university curriculum and to protest against low standards of teaching and learning.

	Scale of disenchantment			
	(compl.)			(disench.)
	0-1	2	3	4-5
	(100)	(89)	(94)	(68)

Undergraduates ought not have the right to any student consulting on decisions about academic curriculum.

% giving indicated response

Strongly disagree and disagree	84%	82%	84%	91%
?	7	6	6	3
Strongly agree and agree	9	12	10	6

$$\chi^2 = 12.82, df=6, p < .05$$

When the teaching-and-learning situation falls short of some reasonable standard, students have a right to protest even if they must resort to demonstrations, sit-ins, picketing, and the like.

Strongly agree and agree	56%	71%	76%	90%
?	14	3	9	4
Strongly disagree and disagree	30	26	15	6

$$\chi^2 = 30.11, df=6, p < .01$$