

THE ASSIMILATION OF THE ADULT INTO THE COMMUNITY:
THE COMMUTER STUDENT AT TEXAS WOMAN'S UNIVERSITY

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Dedicated to
my beloved husband, JOE,
whose love, encouragement, support and help
have sustained me throughout this entire process.

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CHAPTER I

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to study the process of assimilation of an adult into a community and the effects of the process upon the feelings of power/powerlessness and self-esteem of that adult. Specifically, the purpose is to study the assimilation of the commuter student into the life of the university campus.

Sociological Frame of Reference

The problem stated above can best be examined in terms of the processes of social interaction and group relations. From the sociological point of view, the basic unit of society is the group. A group, sociologically defined, is something more than a collectivity of individuals. The basic criterion of whether or not a collectivity of persons does or does not constitute a group is the presence or absence of interaction among its members over a period of time. Interaction is a reciprocal process; it is taking into consideration the other and regulating one's actions accordingly.

Social interaction is the dynamic interplay of forces in which contact between persons and groups results in a modification of the attitudes and behavior of the participants.¹

Perhaps the best known analysis of social interaction has been made by Park and Burgess in terms of what they have called social processes.

The social processes described by Park and Burgess refer to "the repetitive forms of behavior which are commonly found in social life" and are a series of stages which begin with initial contact and ideally culminate in assimilation.² The classic definition of assimilation by Park and Burgess is

a process of interpenetration and fusion in which persons and groups acquire the memories, sentiments, and attitudes of other persons or groups, and, by sharing their experience and history, are incorporated with them in a common cultural life.³

It is to be understood that this merging can be between two distinct groups or can involve the absorption of an individual into an existing group. The stages leading to assimilation are identified as: (1) communication, (2) cooperation, (3) competition, (4) conflict, (5) accommodation, and (6) assimilation. The processes are not mutually exclusive, nor do they naturally or necessarily lead from one to the other. The progression

¹Robert L. Sutherland, Julian L. Woodward, and Milton A. Maxwell, Introductory Sociology, (5th ed.; New York: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1956), p. 225.

²Paul B. Horton and Chester L. Hunt, Sociology, (2nd ed.; New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1968), p. 298.

³Sutherland, et al, Introductory Sociology, p. 203.

does not necessarily terminate in assimilation but may terminate at any point in the stages of progression. Within any specific group all of these stages of interaction may be found simultaneously.

To clarify the entire process, each stage will be briefly defined and examined.

(1) Communication is the first major stage and is basic to social interaction. It is the process by which messages are transmitted and received by persons through the media of language, of gestures, and of behavior. The persons involved must have common understandings and definitions of the situation. In order for any contact between two or more people to be social and meaningful, there must be communication.¹

(2) Cooperation is the activity shared by two or more persons when the activity is oriented toward the achievement of common goals or rewards. Since the beginning of time, cooperation has brought people together and held them together in durable group relationships, for man relies on others for many things from food to affection.² There are three types of cooperation: deliberate primary-group, deliberate secondary-group, and impersonal or symbiotic cooperation. Deliberate primary-group cooperation is the face-to-face relationship upon which our daily existence depends and is often taken for granted. Deliberate

¹Ibid., p. 205.

²Mabel A. Elliott and Francis E. Merrill, Social Disorganization, (4th ed.; New York: Harper & Brothers, Publishers, 1950), p. 7.

secondary-group cooperation reflects the need to work together as seen in governments, consumer and producer cooperatives, religious organizations, fraternal bodies or special interest groups. Impersonal or symbiotic cooperation is not based on deliberate planning but grows, almost accidentally, from the efforts of organisms and/or persons to survive. The world of business is an example where man produces that which will sell; others create services in order for the product to reach the market and the consumer.¹

(3) Competition is the struggle for an object of value -- tangible or intangible -- of which the supply is limited. It is the process of "seeking to obtain a reward by surpassing all rivals."² Competition may be personal, as when two persons seek an elective office, or impersonal, as when one is not aware of the others' identity in competing for standing on a Graduate Record Examination. The position of an individual or of a group in society is always subject to competitive forces.

(4) Conflict is the struggle for an object of value -- tangible or intangible -- by eliminating or weakening competitors rather than by surpassing them. Conflict between individuals may be intensely personal, whereas conflict between groups tends to be impersonal. Conflict affects the individual and his status directly. It can affect groups by unifying relationships within the group while it breaks down unity between groups.

¹Horton and Hunt, Sociology, pp. 299-302.

²Ibid., p. 302.

Conflict causes issues to be defined and sometimes to be settled.¹ Conflict is not always found as one of the processes leading to assimilation, but it does occur in some particular instances, e.g., the drug addict in the early stages of his participation in anti-drug group therapy.²

(5) Accommodation is the process of adjustment by which persons or groups, divided by differences, can still function within the same community or society. Accommodation often follows when competition has led to conflict in which the struggle has been fierce and exhausting. When two opposing forces (whether they are individuals or groups) find that differences have not been eliminated and that they must exist side by side, there may be give and take which allows both factions to function with a minimum of friction.³ Accommodation can take one or more of several forms each of which is a possible way of reducing or resolving rivalries. A few of the recognized forms of accommodation include: (a) the truce -- "the cessation of rivalry for a definite or indefinite period with the issues in no sense settled"; (b) compromise -- the

¹Ibid., pp. 306ff.

²Lewis Yablonsky in The Tunnel Back: Synanon (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1965) describes one of the first anti-drug communities which have been formed to aid the drug addict in his rehabilitation. Synanon, a privately-funded community, is a new kind of group therapy. Within this community a person finds himself through the use of small leaderless groups in which he must see himself as he really is. It is this situation which leads to a person's conflict with himself as well as with those around him on his way to assimilation into this anti-drug, anti-crime community.

³Sutherland, et al, Introductory Sociology, pp. 220ff.

agreement of both parties to certain conditions with the right and power to continue covert rivalry and with an assumption of approximate equality between the parties; (c) subordination-superordination -- an arrangement by which one of the rivals has secured a partial advantage and is dominant over the other; (d) arbitration -- "the termination of a rivalry on the basis of a decision reached, and possibly enforced, by some third party"; and (e) toleration -- the informal procedure by which each party to the rivalry allows the other to exist without further rivalry.¹ Adjustment can be made on a temporary or permanent basis; it may be rapid or slow. Accommodation is a conscious, external adjustment to persons, conditions or situations.

(6) Assimilation is the fusion or blending of two divergent entities -- an individual into a group or two previously distinct groups into a single unit. It should be understood that any statements made concerning persons or individuals and the process of assimilation are just as applicable to groups. Assimilation has been seen as an inevitable, irreversable, and unilinear progression.² Others have agreed that assimilation is inevitable, although slow and unconscious.³ Persons cannot divest themselves completely of their old cultural patterns;

¹John F. Cuber, Sociology: A Synopsis of Principles, (5th ed.; New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1963), p. 626.

²James W. Vander Zanden, American Minority Relations, (2nd ed.; New York: Ronald Press, 1966), p. 308.

³William Carlson Smith, Americans In The Making: The Natural History of the Assimilation of Immigrants, (New York: D. Appleton-Century Co., Inc., 1939), pp. 119-123.

however, changes do take place within a person after a period of time in a new environment, no matter how resistive or unchanging the person thinks he is.^{1, 2} The changes may come slowly, and the assimilation of an adult is seldom complete. The assimilation of groups may be an even slower process, for example, the assimilation of an immigrant group may take two or three generations. The changes often occur unconsciously and are not recognized by the individual until there is an opportunity to contrast the new with the old; e.g., the immigrant returns to his homeland and sees things the way they have always been and realizes that he no longer feels the old way is the only way. Research has yielded a number of generalizations concerning assimilation and the factors relevant to assimilation. While much of the research has dealt with immigrants from one country to another, the generalizations may prove useful in considering other situations involving the assimilation of groups or of individuals.

The degree of assimilation achieved by an individual or by a group may be influenced by many factors. Conditions are present in any given situation of culture contact which may either facilitate or retard assimilation. Basically, the more similarity there is between the two parties involved, e.g., the newcomer and the "host," the more rapid the

¹Ibid., p. 121.

²Everett V. Stonequist, The Marginal Man, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1937), p. 87.

assimilation. Conversely, the more disparity between the parties, the slower the process of assimilation. Probably the primary factor seen as slowing the assimilation process is the mutual prejudice which often results from extreme differences in cultural backgrounds or from physical differences between persons or between groups.

Prejudice is a preconceived judgment or opinion; it is "an attitude that considers selected categories of people in terms of stereotypes, usually for some purpose (conscious or unconscious) believed to be of advantage to the person who has the prejudice. Usually used to refer to a negative attitude toward a racial, religious, or nationality group."¹ The attitude, however, can be positive or negative. Often a person is prejudiced against those objects of which he has no factual knowledge, with which he has had little or no contact, and, therefore, fears. He tends to be prejudiced for the objects with which he is somewhat more familiar, with which he has had some contact, and which he does not fear. However, these generalizations do not always hold true. For some persons a little knowledge and a little contact may create stereotyping, the putting of a person into a "pigeonhole" or a category based on his group affiliation rather than on his individual characteristics, a development which can be detrimental to further knowledge of, or to contact and participation with the object if the stereotyping is of a negative nature.

¹Arnold M. Rose, Sociology: The Study of Human Relations, (2nd ed.; New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1965), p. 729.

If the cultural backgrounds of the newcomer and of the host group are similar, the factor of prejudice is less likely to interfere with the process of assimilation. The newcomer quickly learns the practices of the host group, and misunderstandings are reduced to a minimum. If differences are great, the cultural background and values of the newcomer become stumbling blocks to assimilation. If the manners and traditions of the newcomer are extremely different from its own, the host group may find them difficult to understand and accept, and hostile attitudes may develop. Under such conditions, the newcomer will have trouble either in modifying his own behavior or in adopting new behavioral patterns.

In the case of immigrants some of the more relevant cultural differences are those involving patterns of family life, language, and religion. Home life in the United States, for example, generally tends to be more-or-less democratic. Thus, the "typical" Virginian, seeing the absolute rule of the Czech man over his family, would probably view this type of home life with distaste.¹ Without a common language there can be no means of communication and no interchange of ideas or information; the newcomer is left out of many contacts which might aid his assimilation into the new group. But the language barrier can be more easily broken if the language root system is similar. Thus, the Englishman with his

¹Smith, Americans In The Making, p. 145.

common tongue, or the German or Italian are more easily assimilated in the United States than is the Chinese or Czech.¹ A common religion is also an aid to assimilation, for it gives the newcomer and the host a common background of intellect and beliefs which engenders more contacts, more participation and may lead to understanding and assimilation. Protestants of most nationalities have had less difficulty in becoming assimilated in the United States than have Catholics.²

Physical differences are, at the same time, the most difficult and the easiest barriers to overcome. If the physical difference is the style of hair, dress, or other folkway which marks the "greenhorn," the difference can be easily overcome by changing to the style of the host. If the physical difference is one of skin color, race, age, or sex, these differences are difficult, if not impossible, to overcome.

Secondary factors which may tend to exaggerate or to minimize the effects of cultural and/or physical differences in the assimilation process include: the size of the newcomer group, the rate of influx into the host community, the access to the homeland by the newcomer immigrant, and the degree of economic competition resulting from the relative socio-economic statuses of newcomer and hosts.

All other things being equal, the larger the newcomer group, the slower is the rate of assimilation. The newcomer, as does everyone,

¹Ibid., pp. 148-149.

²Ibid., pp. 149-152.

has needs which must be satisfied in some manner. These needs include security, response, recognition, and the need for new experiences. If these needs are satisfied by those around the newcomer, he has no motivation or impetus to seek elsewhere. If the newcomer group is large enough to be a segment of the "old country," the norms and expectations of the group tend to remain the same and changes occur slowly. The larger the group, the greater is the resistance to change, and the chances for contact and participation with the host group diminish. If, however, the newcomer group is small, the tendency to go outside the group to seek satisfaction for needs is greater, and the chances for contact and participation with the host group also increase. The relatively small numbers of the first contingent of newcomers are more likely to contact and have participation with the host community than those who follow. The latter will tend to seek advice and information from the first newcomers rather than the host group. The more rapid the influx, the larger the newcomer group becomes, and chances for interaction with the host group lessen. Thus, the larger the newcomer group, the more visible it becomes to the host group and the more isolated. It is possible for a rapid influx of newcomers to be more easily assimilated if the newcomers are spatially dispersed thereby not creating a large group of newcomers in any particular locale.

The accessibility of the homeland to the newcomer is also a factor in assimilation. Regardless of the spatial distribution or the rapidity of influx or the size of the newcomer group, if the homeland of

the newcomer is easily accessible, the newcomer is more apt to look for and find the recognition, the security he needs in his group in the homeland rather than in any host group. If the homeland is not accessible, the newcomer will be more apt to seek satisfaction for his needs in his adopted land whether from his own group or from the host group.

The socio-economic status of both host and newcomer group effects their view of one another and can magnify or minimize their cultural and/or physical differences. In the United States the socio-economic status of a person is largely determined by his level of education and by his occupation. If the newcomers are of relatively equal socio-economic status with the hosts, the competition for jobs may become keen; the host group might feel threatened and display hostility rather than hospitality toward the newcomers. If, however, the newcomers are of a different socio-economic status -- either higher or lower -- than the host group, the newcomers would not generally compete for jobs similar to those held by the host group but might fill in those occupational areas which the host group might have need, e.g., professionals such as doctors, teachers, researchers or non-professional such as laborers, maids, cooks, gardeners. If the newcomers do not compete but rather complete the occupational range of a community, the cultural or racial differences might be more likely to be minimized. On the other hand, if the educational/occupational level between the newcomer and the host group are too great, the differences between them become exaggerated and assimilation is

slowed, e.g., a doctor in a mining community or a laborer in a college community.

If both the newcomer and the host expect changes in the status quo, then the assimilation of the newcomer will tend to be accelerated. If either newcomer or host expect relatively few or no changes, then the assimilation will be slowed. Expectation of change indicates an openness of attitude; with such openness there is relatively little shock, confusion, misunderstanding when the inevitable changes come.

Thus, the process toward assimilation can be seen to be affected by many factors which can either impede or encourage assimilation depending upon the situation. The process may halt at any point along the continuum. Somewhere along this continuum the time comes -- usually some type of crisis -- when the newcomer realizes he has a feeling for both the old and the new, the traditional and the modern. He finds himself divided between these two loyalties. He finds he is a "marginal man" caught between two cultures, two classes, two distinct groups, or even two communities. He is part of both and yet not wholly belonging to either. He finds himself on the edge of both groups. In this situation, he can see the contrasts between the two and feels confusion, conflict, and an inability to influence either group because of his marginality. This exclusion from decision-making, conflict, lack of control can lead to a feeling of powerlessness, alienation, anomie. Until this marginality is resolved by the newcomer -- through assimilation into the host group, through the retreat to the old group, or through an adjustment to marginality by becoming

critic or intermediary -- his feeling toward self may take one of several forms: ambivalence, excessive self-consciousness, excessive race consciousness, an inferiority or superiority complex. All of these feelings influence the newcomer's self-esteem, i. e., the value or estimate he places on himself and his dignity and worth.¹

Just as the individual can find himself caught between two groups, the group can find itself caught between two ideas. In the early studies of assimilation, especially of the immigrant, it was assumed the logical and inevitable end product of immigration was assimilation, but recent studies indicate assimilation has not been accomplished over the years with all groups. It has been recognized that many groups, especially those ethnically similar, were assimilated into America, but other groups remain somewhere on that continuum between cultural estrangement and assimilation. The United States has not become the "melting pot" of the world but is rather a pluralistic society in which the differences of the various groups enhance the life of the community as well as increase the problems of the same community.²

Previous Studies of Assimilation

Studies of Group Assimilation

The concept of assimilation has been used by sociologists in the

¹Stonequist, The Marginal Man, pp. 175-178.

²Nathan Glazer and Daniel Patrick Moynihan, Beyond the Melting Pot, (Cambridge, Mass.: The M.I.T. Press and Harvard University Press, 1963), pp. 1-23.

study of intergroup relations for at least sixty years, especially with reference to immigrant groups. Almost every country in the world has had a number of its people come to the United States; almost every such group has been examined, probed, dissected, analyzed for understanding of the problems of adjustment to the new social environment, of factors retarding assimilation and of those conducive to assimilation. Many books and papers have been published regarding these findings; some have become classics in the field of sociology.¹ Recent studies sponsored and encouraged by UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) have led to world-wide conferences resulting in new understandings in the field of international migration and the complex economic, sociological, demographic and cultural issues.²

¹The better known of these include: Thomas Capek, The Čechs in America, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1920); Louis Wirth, The Ghetto (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1928); Stonequist, The Marginal Man, 1937; Smith, Americans In the Making, 1939; George C. Homans, The Human Group, (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1950); Benjamin Kaplan, The Eternal Stranger: A Study of Jewish Life in the Small Community, (New York: Bookman Associates, 1957); William I. Thomas and Florian Znaniecki, The Polish Peasant in Europe and America, (Vol. I and II, 2nd ed.; New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1958); Thomas B. Hinton, A Survey of Indian Assimilation in Eastern Sonora, (Tuscon, 1959); Herbert J. Gans, The Urban Villagers, (New York: The Free Press, 1962); Henry Eugene Fritz, The Movement for Indian Assimilation, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1963); Nathan Glazer and Daniel Patrick Moynihan, Beyond the Melting Pot, (Cambridge, Mass.: The M.I.T. Press and Harvard University Press, 1963); Milton M. Gordon, Assimilation in American Life, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964); John F. Kennedy, Nation of Immigrants, (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1964); Nathan Hare, The Black Anglo-Saxons, (New York: Marzani & Numsell, 1965).

²Brinley Thomas, International Migration and Economic Development, (Unesco, 1961), pp. 51-63.

Studies of Assimilation of the Individual

The concept of the assimilation of the individual has also been studied. The neighborhood boy into the gang¹, the woman into the world of prostitution², the drug addict into the anti-drug community³, and the criminal into the non-criminal world⁴ are a few examples of the research done in the area of the assimilation of the individual into a particular group.

Although it is true much research and writing has been done in regard to the assimilation of groups to larger or different groups and individuals to groups, little attention has been directed toward the assimilation of the commuter student or non-resident student into the college or university community.

The literature regarding adjustment of the college student to his new environment has revealed that there are a number of sources of marginality. One such marginal status is that of the married student. Married students generally do not live in the college dormitory as do the unmarried students but live off-campus and commute to their classes.

¹Lewis Yablonsky, "The Delinquent Gang as a Near Group," Deviance, Simon Dinitz, Russell R. Dynes, and Alfred C. Clark, eds.; (New York: Oxford University Press, 1969), pp. 179-191.

²Harold Greenwald, "The Social and Professional Life of the Call Girl," Deviance, ed. Dinitz, et al, pp. 400-411.

³Rita Volkman and Donald R. Cressey, "Differential Association and the Rehabilitation of Drug Addict," American Journal of Sociology, Vol. 69 (September, 1963), pp. 129-142.

⁴Donald R. Cressey, "Changing Criminals: The Application of the Theory of Differential Association," American Journal of Sociology, Vol. LXI (September, 1955), pp. 116-120.

One study of marriage and marginality was done on the campus of the Texas Woman's University and compared graduate students and undergraduate students regarding their understanding of the roles of wife and student. It was found that there were no significant differences between the graduate and the undergraduate student; in fact, they were "very similar." It was found, however, that a relationship existed between the marginality of the student and the number of courses being taken during the semester. The majority of those students taking fewer than five courses expected their at-home roles to remain as they had in the past and their grades in courses to be better than average. When these expectations were not fulfilled, the students became confused and marginal. The majority of students taking five or more courses expected changes in their at-home roles and only average grades in their courses. When these expectations were fulfilled and grades were better-than-average, the students were pleased and were not considered marginal.¹

Other studies of the married woman have been undertaken in the field of education. One such study grew out of "concern for married students... They are in the college community but not fully (recognized as) part of it." The researchers sought to identify the special needs and problems of such students in continuing their education. Married students and wives of students were questioned on the University of Illinois campus.

¹Lois Pauline Coppage, Marginality of Married Students at the Texas Woman's University, (Unpublished Thesis, the Texas Woman's University, 1964), pp. 88ff.

The findings, based on responses to questionnaires, included the following information: 80 percent wanted to continue their education; 68 percent had ranked in the top quarter of their high school class; 50 percent were in the 20-24 year age range; 75 percent were under 30 years of age. The researchers also found many of these women worked full- or part-time and could, therefore, attend classes only on a part-time basis. They had need of baby-sitting or nursery facilities, desired greater flexibility in degree and residency requirements, and wanted counseling aid and financial assistance. The researchers felt this study to be significant in that it illustrated an untapped source of able womanpower; it indicated an earlier readiness among women to continue their education; it highlighted the need for more institutional consideration of the part-time student; and it showed an increasing readiness of educated women to combine marriage and work.¹

Myers came to similar conclusions in her study of "retreads" (mature women returning to college as undergraduates). She found these women faced unique problems because of the age, home responsibilities, and experience. It was concluded that the institutions might help this particular group with more flexible degree and residency requirements and more coordinated counseling.² The common institutional attitude

¹Miriam A. Sheldon and Betty L. Hembrough, "The Student Wife and the Married Woman Student: Their Educational Needs, Desires, and Backgrounds," (Unpublished study done for the Office of the Dean of Women, University of Illinois, 1964), pp. ii, iii, 84-86.

²Cora H. Myers, "Special Problems Encountered by Mature Women Undergraduates," National Association of Women Deans and Counselors Journal, Vol. 27, (Spring, 1964), pp. 137-139.

seems to be reflected in this statement by Blackwell,

Some college trustees and administrators seem to have a built-in adolescent bias and a corollary prejudice against mixing adults with regular students of so-called college age. In some instances there are unfavorable faculty attitudes toward adult women as students.¹

Other studies in the field of education have compared resident and commuter or off-campus students. The results of these studies are sometimes contradictory. A study by Stark, comparing male and female commuter and resident students on the basis of their expressed personal problems, study habits and reading skills, found the two groups of commuter students had a greater number of problems than did resident students and had lower scores on reading and vocabulary tests. No differences were found in regard to the level of comprehension, study habits and attitudes.² A study on the State University of Iowa campus using male freshmen and their choice of housing -- fraternity house, residence hall, at home, and off-campus -- revealed there were no significant differences in the first semester grade point averages in all four types of housing, nor any significant differences in the grade point averages in the nineteen fraternity chapters on the campus. The study seemed to indicate that entering male students of equal academic ability had an equal probability of performing at a specified level of academic achievement

¹Gordon W. Blackwell, "The College and the Continuing Education of Women," Education and a Woman's Life, ed. by Lawrence E. Dennis, (Washington, D. C.: American Council on Education, 1963), pp. 72ff.

²Matthew Stark, "Commuter and Residence Hall Students Compared," Personnel and Guidance Journal, Vol. 44, Part I, 1965-66, pp. 277-281.

regardless of where they lived.¹ A study comparing social traits and achievements of students in various living groups indicated students living in fraternity and sorority houses were more socially oriented and had more social achievements than students living at home or off-campus, but they were not superior in other areas of non-academic achievements or in grades. These findings were interpreted as showing "that the effects of living groups are small."²

On the other hand, a comparison of residence hall and at-home students disclosed the living situation to be significantly different in the area of college longevity. The residence hall student stayed in college longer than did the student living at home. The family socio-economic level and the number of years of education of the father was higher among the residence hall students. These two factors were seen to be motivating forces in persons who have more education achieve a higher socio-economic level and, therefore, focus on the advantages of higher education. The majority of the fathers of those in residence halls had some college education while a majority of the fathers of students living at home had not finished high school. On several aptitude tests the scores of residence hall students were lower than those of the students living at home. The author indicated that motive, not aptitude, contributed to college longevity.

¹Ralph E. Prusok and W. Bruce Walsh, "College Students' Residence and Academic Achievement," Journal of College Student Personnel, Vol. V, 1964, pp. 180-184.

²Leonard L. Baird, "The Effects of College Residence Groups on Students' Self-Concepts, Goals, and Achievements," Personnel Guidance Journal, Vol. 47, no. 10, (June, 1969), pp. 1015-1021.

Results of this study also conflict with those of the Stark study in that residence hall students were found to be worried about more different things than at home students.¹ Research done on student characteristics and student choice of housing indicated the off-campus group of students "may be a special problem."²

Another study of commuter and resident students showed no difference in academic achievement as indicated by the grade point average after one semester, but the students did differ on several adjustment variables. It was found the commuters had poorer mental health and poorer curricular adjustment (a variable measured but not specifically defined in the College Inventory of Academic Adjustment--CIAA). The commuter also showed less maturity of goals and aspirations, which indicated the students' personal and educational development could be impeded by the status as a commuter. The researchers seemed to feel that special attention needed to be provided for the commuter student in the areas of special orientation programs, faculty advisor sensitivity to needs of the commuter, special facilities in the Student Union, and specific communications for the commuter student.

¹James Drasgow, "Differences between College Students," Journal of Higher Education, Vol. 29, 1958, pp. 216-218.

²Robert J. Dollar, "Student Characteristics and Choice of Housing," Journal of College Personnel, Vol. 7, 1966, pp. 147-150.

Much of the satisfaction and meaning of the academic course content is achieved outside the classroom setting. Such extracurricular activities may help make the academic curriculum become much more meaningful for commuters.¹

Summary

The group is essential to society; once its interactions are initiated they tend to become repetitive and to form particular patterns of behavior which have been analyzed as social processes. The social processes form a continuum between estrangement and assimilation with at least five recognizable intervening stages which include communication, cooperation, competition, conflict, and accommodation. The newcomer does not necessarily progress from one end of the continuum to the other but may pause, temporarily or permanently, at any point along the continuum.

Some early studies, especially those of the immigrants to the United States, assumed the progress along the continuum to be inevitable, irreversable, and unilinear, but others, whose ideas are supported by recent studies, realized the progress could be interrupted or terminated, e.g., the creation of the marginal man and the consequences of his marginality. Thus, not all individuals or groups who begin on the contact-assimilation continuum necessarily become assimilated but may remain "different."

¹Robert W. Graff and Gary R. Cooley, "Adjustment of Commuter and Resident Students," Journal of College Student Personnel, Vol. 11, no. 1, (January, 1970), pp. 54-57.

The studies reviewed above seem to indicate there are students on the college campus who do not conform to the usual concept of "college student" because of age, marital status, or off-campus residency. Conflicting conclusions regarding the effect of residence patterns on academic, social and non-academic achievement, personal problems, college longevity, and marginality indicate further studies are needed. Studies have not been made regarding the factors inherent on the college campus which might facilitate or hinder adjustment to or assimilation into the college community of that "different" student. Few descriptive studies of that student have been made.

The present study has been undertaken in order to get a more specific description of the commuter students at the Texas Woman's University, to determine the degree of assimilation achieved by these students, and to note the presence or absence of several visible avenues of assimilation in the lives of the commuter students.

CHAPTER II

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Restatement of the Purpose

The purpose of this paper is to study the process of assimilation of the adult into a new social situation. The problem is examined within the context of social interaction and group relationships and focuses on a study of the components which may affect the process of assimilation and on the effects of the process itself upon the feelings of the adult with special attention to the feelings of power/powerlessness and of self-esteem. Specifically, the purpose of this chapter is to examine the concepts set forth in the previous chapter as they pertain to the commuter student at the Texas Woman's University.¹

The objectives of this study are as follows: to obtain a description of the commuter student attending TWU during the fall semester of 1969-1970; to ascertain the presence or absence of some of the observable components seen as relevant to the assimilation process; and to determine the relationship between variation in the degree of assimilation among commuter students and some of the consequences of such variation, including the feelings of power/powerlessness, the feelings of self-esteem, and the selection of a role paradigm.

¹Hereafter, the Texas Woman's University may be abbreviated as TWU.

In terms of purely descriptive data the image of the commuter student is unclear; she has been seen only as a "retread,"¹ a "second-class citizen,"² different -- seemingly negative terms. It is hoped this study will enable the reader to see the commuter student in more detail and in a more positive light. The commuter student will be described in terms of her school responsibilities -- classification, major, number of hours carried, method of financing her education, and method of travel -- and of her other responsibilities -- home, job, marital status, number of children, and number of organizations to which she belongs.

In endeavoring to examine the relationships among the variables applicable to the study of the commuter student and to her assimilation into the college community, a series of propositions is suggested. The propositions are of two types: one set deals with the determinants of the degree of assimilation, and the other deals with the results of variation in the degree of assimilation.

Factors Relevant to Commuter Student Assimilation

A partial inventory of the determinants of the degree of assimilation of the commuter student would include the number of points of contact or components of assimilation available to her or utilized by her,

¹Cora H. Myers, "Special Problems," pp. 137-139.

²David Klein, "Commuting to College," Seventeen, (April, 1968), pp. 212ff.

the number of days spent on the campus per week, prior attendance at TWU, and the age of the commuter student.¹

It has been noted that the greater the degree of contact and participation between the newcomer -- e.g., the commuter student -- and the host -- e.g., the student body -- the more rapid is the assimilation of the newcomer into the host group. If the newcomer has only a few contacts, she is generally characterized by "negative membership or by isolation." If the contacts are many and there are a number of groups to which she belongs or a number of activities in which she participates, on the surface it may appear that the individual is fragmented or "spreading herself thin," but actually, through participation, the individual may gain acceptance and approval.² Thus, the greater the number of points of contact for the commuter student, the greater the degree of assimilation of the commuter student (Proposition I). Also, the frequency of contact may have an effect; therefore, the greater the number of days spent on the campus per week, the greater the degree of assimilation of the commuter student (Proposition II).

¹The use of the concept and terms of an "inventory of determinants and results" has been borrowed from Hans L. Zetterberg in his On the Theory and Verification in Sociology, (3rd ed.; New York: The Bedminster Press, 1965).

²The "contacts" referred to in this research deal with surface, rather than in depth, contacts of students with college campus. Hubert Bonner, Group Dynamics: Principles and Applications, (New York: The Ronald Press Co., 1959), pp. 9, 10.

Another possible indicator of frequency and the quality of contact would be the number of hours carried by the commuter student in the course of her studies. In the Coppage study¹ it was indicated that the greater the number of semester hours being taken by the student the less was the marginality perceived among the married undergraduate and graduate students being studied on the TWU campus. It would follow that if this is true then the number of hours may be a predictor of degree of assimilation. Therefore, it is predicted that there will be a direct relationship between the number of semester hours being taken by the commuter student and the degree of assimilation of the commuter student (Proposition III).

The belonging to organizations which are college-connected but which are not part of a particular class or department of the school might also be a possible indicator of the frequency and quality of contact between the newcomer and the host group. Bonner has stated, "An individual with a low degree of group membership has few contacts, or few localizations in sociological space."² It is predicted, therefore, there will be a greater degree of assimilation for those students belonging to at least one college-connected organization than for those who do not belong (Proposition IV).³

¹Coppage, Marginality of Married Students, pp. 88ff.

²Bonner, Group Dynamics, pp. 9, 10.

³The questions used by the researcher to determine organizational association were not used in ascertaining the degree of assimilation. The questions regarding the degree of willingness on the part of the commuter student to become involved in the school dealt with class and department activities not with organizations outside the realm of the class or department to which each student is involuntarily a part.

It has been stated that the more the similarity in cultural backgrounds, the more rapid is the assimilation of the newcomer into the host group. Thus, if the commuter student has attended the University prior to the time of the study, she may have a certain amount of knowledge regarding the organizational structure of the school, the traditions of the student body, and the expectations of both students and faculty which might enable her to share and to "be at one with" the student body in these particular areas even if there might be other factors which would tend to separate the commuter student from the total student body. Therefore, the degree of assimilation will be greater for those students who have previously attended the Texas Woman's University than for those who have never attended the Texas Woman's University prior to the time of the study (Proposition V).

If similarity between newcomer and host accelerates assimilation, then, conversely, the less the similarity or the more the difference between the two, the less rapid will be the process of assimilation. If the difference between the newcomer and the host is visible, the difference may become a "permanent badge around which irritations and animosities incidental to human contacts tend to focus," and assimilation may be retarded.¹ One generally assumes the college student to be a young person, and, therefore, one such difference might be a disparity in age between the commuter student and the resident student. Therefore, it is

¹Smith, Americans In the Making, p. 140.

predicted that there will be an inverse relationship between the age of the commuter student and the degree of assimilation (Proposition VI).

Another difference between the newcomer and the host, which is not visible, might be the involvement in and commitment to activities or organizations outside the realm of the University. Granted, the resident student might also be involved in outside activities, but because the resident student lives in a relatively confined area -- the college campus -- the probability of her becoming involved outside this area is less than that of the commuter student who lives and moves outside the college campus area. Since the commuter student may have other important reference groups, she may be less motivated to participate in campus activities than is the resident student. Therefore, it is predicted there will be a lesser degree of assimilation for those students belonging to organizations not college-connected than for those who do not belong (Proposition VII).

Consequences of Variation in Degree of Commuter Student Assimilation

A partial inventory of results would indicate the possible consequences of variations in the degree of assimilation of the commuter student, in the feelings of power/powerlessness, in the evaluation of self, and in the choice of a role paradigm.

Given variation in the degree of assimilation, one might assume that the consequences will be such that the greater the degree of assimilation -- reflecting greater knowledge of, involvement in, and familiarity

with the expectations of the school -- the less the feeling of confusion, misunderstanding, and of being apart from the total group. Familiarity with the school, the students, and the surroundings may also bring a "sense of common effort" in which the commuter student might be stimulated by the other students to do the same things they are doing. A sense of identification might also be present in that commuter students and resident students are -- presumably -- after the same goal, that of an education.¹ But if there is no familiarity, no feeling of unity with the other students, there tends to be a feeling of frustration which can leave a person in a "condition of impotent rage," or of helplessness, or with a feeling of powerlessness.² Thus, it is predicted that there will be an inverse relationship between the degree of assimilation and the degree of feelings of powerlessness among commuter students (Proposition VIII).

"Mobile persons must change their social habits according to models which they do not precisely see and understand, and there is no one to teach them."³ Commuter students, because of their non-residence on the college campus, cannot view or interact with the resident students except in the classroom and whatever superficial contacts are made outside the classroom unless special efforts are made. The classroom generally affords the commuter student visual contact with many and verbal contact

¹George H. Mead, Mind, Self and Society, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1934), p. 273.

²John Dollard, et al, Frustration and Aggression, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1939), p. 75.

³Ibid., p. 71.

with only a few of the resident students. The faculty member, on the other hand, is always present and visible in the classroom; he is also publicly scheduled to be in particular places at particular times. Therefore, he is generally available for counseling and/or conversation with the commuter student. Consequently, the greater the degree of assimilation, the more likely it is that the commuter student will use the resident students as role paradigm. Conversely, the lesser the degree of assimilation, the more likely it is that the commuter student will use the faculty members as role paradigm (Propositions IX and IX').

The probability exists that so long as the individual feels a part of the group, is participating in shared activities, and is striving toward a common goal, she is likely to receive the acceptance and approval of those with whom she has contact. She perceives that others regard her as an individual of dignity and worth and, hence, comes to regard herself in the same light, i. e., has a regard for self as an individual of dignity and worth.¹ Therefore, since assimilation itself would seem to be a reflection of perceived mutual acceptance on the part of the commuter student, it is predicated that the greater the degree of assimilation of the commuter student, the greater the degree of self-esteem (Proposition X).

¹Leonard Broom and Philip Selznick, Sociology, (3rd ed.; New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1963), p. 102.

Summary of Propositions

A partial inventory of the determinants of the degree of assimilation among the commuter students at the Texas Woman's University has been set forth in the following propositions:

Proposition I. The greater the number of points of contact for the commuter student, the greater the degree of assimilation of the commuter student.

Proposition II. The greater the number of days spent on the campus per week, the greater the degree of assimilation of the commuter student.

Proposition III. There will be a direct relationship between the number of semester hours being taken by the commuter student and the degree of assimilation of the commuter student.

Proposition IV. There will be a greater degree of assimilation for those students belonging to at least one college-connected organization than for those who do not belong.

Proposition V. The degree of assimilation will be greater for those students who have previously attended the Texas Woman's University than for those who have never attended the Texas Woman's University prior to the time of the study.

Proposition VI. There will be an inverse relationship between the age of the commuter student and the degree of assimilation.

Proposition VII. There will be a lesser degree of assimilation for those students belonging to organizations not college-connected than for those who do not belong.

A partial inventory of the results or consequences of the variations in the degree of assimilation has been set forth in the following propositions:

Proposition VIII. There will be an inverse relationship between the degree of assimilation and the degree of feelings of powerlessness among the commuter students.

Propositions IX and IX'. The greater the degree of assimilation, the more likely it is that the commuter student will use the resident students as role paradigm. Conversely, the lesser the degree of assimilation, the more likely it is that the commuter student will use the faculty members as role paradigm.

Proposition X. The greater the degree of assimilation of the commuter student, the greater the degree of self-esteem.

CHAPTER III

TECHNIQUES OF INVESTIGATION

Several terms used throughout this study need to be clarified, and several of the variables called for by the hypotheses being tested in this research need to be explained in terms of the instrument used and types of questions asked.¹ The techniques of the investigation will be described in this chapter.

Definitions

In the present study the commuter -- also designated as the "newcomer" -- is the undergraduate student who does not live on the Texas Woman's University campus or in the community of Denton, where TWU is located. The commuter resides off-campus, outside Denton, and travels between her residence and the campus.

The community or "host group" is the student body of TWU. The majority of individuals which compose this community are resident students -- those students who live in the dormitories and residence halls on the campus and who, for the most part, are within walking distance of class and/or school activities. It is the assumption of the researcher

¹Information pertinent to this study has been collected by means of a self-administered questionnaire, a copy of which is found in Appendix A. Question numbers in this chapter refer to Appendix A.

that it is with this group that the incoming student -- resident or commuter -- tends to wish to be identified.

Assimilation is that process of blending and fusing through which the individual or group makes the transition from the "out" to the "in" group. In this study the concept of assimilation will be reflected by certain aspects of the knowledge of or familiarity with specific subcultural traditions and of identification with the subculture. The indicators of these aspects of assimilation are a knowledge of a few of the better-known, prominent traditions of the student body, a willingness to become involved in the activities of the school -- particularly those activities dealing with the class or department to which the student belongs -- and the sentiment or feeling about being a student at the Texas Woman's University.¹ An assimilation score has been compiled from the answers to eleven questions scattered throughout the questionnaire.

Questions 34, 35, 42, 46, and 51 are aimed at ascertaining the respondent's knowledge of several of the traditions of the TWU campus.

34. I know the Villagers Club is
 - a) a club for all commuter students
 - b) a club for Senior Citizens
 - c) a club for commuter students living in Denton County
 - d) a club about which I have not heard
 - e) other (please specify) _____
35. The Honor Code applies to:

a) resident students	d) all students
b) commuter students	e) other (please specify) _____
c) graduate students	

¹George C. Homans in The Human Group, (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1950) used in his conceptual scheme similar elements of human behavior. He used activity, interaction, and sentiment to describe the behavior of persons in groups.

42. When I see a faculty member carrying a single long-stemmed red rose wrapped in florist paper, I think
 a) someone is buttering her up. d) ignore the whole thing.
 b) she has a rose garden. e) undecided.
 c) she has been honored by someone.
46. If I see a stranger cut a piece of cake across the length of it and turn the pieces so that the icing is on the inside, I would think
 a) what a peculiar nut! c) that's a TWU student!
 b) what poor manners. d) ignore the whole thing.
51. If I hear of a group of girls celebrating an engagement by sitting in a circle and passing the ring around in a hollowed out white satin pillow, I think
 a) that's a TWU tradition c) I really don't know
 b) that's not a TWU tradition

Questions 36, 39, 45, 57, and 58 are designed to probe the respondent's degree of willingness to participate or to be involved in activities of the class, of the department, and/or of the school as a whole.

36. I know when elections on campus are held.
 a) Always c) Sometimes
 b) Most times d) Never
39. If my instructor asked me to come to the school on a day I am normally not on the campus, I would
 Come gladly Not come, feel guilty
 Come grudgingly Not come, not feel guilty
 Undecided
45. I am a member of a particular department here at TWU; if I were asked to help decorate tables for the annual banquet, I would be
 Glad Not willing
 Willing Resentful
 Undecided
57. If I am asked to stay and meet with a group after class hours, even if it is not possible that particular time, I am usually
 Glad Not Willing
 Willing Resentful
 Undecided
58. I see signs and posters indicating a campaign for CGA officers; voting day arrives and I
 a) Vote c) Undecided
 b) Plan to vote, but don't d) Plan not to vote

Question 63 was asked to ascertain the degree of the feeling of pride in attending TWU.

63. To say I am a student at TWU makes me
- | | |
|----------------|------------------|
| a) Proud | d) Hesitant |
| b) Pleased | e) Uncomfortable |
| c) Indifferent | |

Responses for each question were scored in the following manner: a score of 5 was high on any of the questions; a low score of 0 was possible for six of the questions, and a low of 1 was possible for the remaining five questions. Thus a score of 55 would indicate the greatest possible degree of assimilation and a score of 5 would indicate the lowest possible degree of assimilation.¹

Powerlessness is seen as a feeling of lack of control over the social environment of the individual,² the exclusion from the "prerogative of decision-making,"³ a feeling of helplessness, dependence, and frustration. It is assumed by the researcher that this concept is seen as a continuum with the feeling of greatest control over one's environment at one end designated as "power," and the feeling of absolutely no control at the other end of the continuum designated as "powerlessness." When the term "powerlessness" is mentioned, it is meant to convey the idea of variations in degree rather than a fix designation (attribute).

¹The actual scores obtained and the division of them into ordinal categories for assimilation and all other scales are described in Chapter V.

²The definition is a paraphrase of Thomas Ford Hoult's definition of power found in the Dictionary of Modern Sociology, (Totowa, New Jersey: Littlefield, Adams & Co., 1969).

³Simon Marcson, ed., Automation, Alienation, and Anomie, (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1970), p. 377.

A powerlessness score has been constructed from responses to two sets of questions: one, dealing with the feelings of restriction and regimentation; the other, with the commuter students' recognition of the utility of participation in the decision-making processes on campus.

Questions 37, 43, 47, 52, 59, and 61 are constructed to deal with the respondent's agreement or disagreement with statements concerning restrictions, regulations, and regimentation on the campus. Each question was constructed to be answered with a Strongly Agree -- Agree -- Undecided -- Disagree -- or Strongly Disagree.

- 37. Commuters are so regimented on this campus that there's not much room for choices even in personal matters.
- 43. I always feel "an hour late and a dollar short" when it comes to hearing about campus activities.
- 47. Many times I feel that I have little influence over the things that are happening to me here at school.
- 52. Commuters have no collective way of making their voices heard in the TWU community.
- 59. I feel commuters need some voice in those affairs of the campus which affect the commuter student.
- 61. I do not feel one unified voice for commuters would make any difference in the policies of the school.

Each question was scored so that the answer indicating the greatest feeling of repression was 5; the answer indicating the least feeling of repression was scored 1.

Questions 38, 41, 49, 58, and 60 deal with the student's recognition of and involvement in decision-making situations.

- 38. I, as a commuter, want to be involved in campus activities.
a) Yes b) No Why? _____
- 41. I feel the following way about voting in campus elections:
a) It's the only way to help make changes in school policies.
b) My vote doesn't make any difference.
c) Undecided
d) Other (please specify) _____

49. I ignore campus politics.
a) Yes b) No Why? _____
58. I see signs and posters indicating a campaign for CGA officers; voting day arrives and I
a) Vote c) Undecided
b) Plan to vote, but don't d) Plan not to vote
60. I would be willing to work in some way to enable commuters to have a voice in campus affairs.
- | | |
|----------------|-------------------|
| Strongly Agree | Disagree |
| Agree | Strongly disagree |
| Undecided | |

These five questions were scored in such a way that the greater the recognition and involvement, the lower the score.

The scores of the two sets of questions were pooled for a comprehensive powerlessness score. A score of 8 would indicate the lowest possible degree of powerlessness; a score of 55 would indicate the greatest possible degree of powerlessness.

Self-esteem is the value one places upon himself and upon his dignity and worth. Cooley has stated that early in life an individual "takes on a view of himself from observing the way others respond to him." This aspect of personality development continues throughout life.¹ Thus, question 64 was asked in order to ascertain the respondent's degree of self-esteem. A table of ten characteristics was set up, and the respondent was asked to evaluate herself on these particular characteristics -- happy disposition, friendly, enthusiastic, intelligent, admits own faults, dependable, loyal, honest, industrious, and looks at things objectively. Each characteristic was to be rated from a high of 5 to a low of 1 with 3 as

¹Broom and Selznick, Sociology, p. 102.

average. The commuter student was also asked to rate herself on these same ten characteristics with the same rating scale as she felt the resident student, the other commuter students, and the faculty member would rate her if they had the opportunity to do so. The scores were totaled and divided by 10 for the individual respondent's self-esteem score. The highest possible score would be 20.0 and the lowest possible score was 4.0.

The components of assimilation, also referred to as points of contact, for this research are the visible avenues of assimilation which are the tangible, enumerable activities or events or publications which are ostensibly available to all students for their edification regarding the campus, the activities, the participants, the community of the University in general. For this particular study these components include attendance at the orientation session and the reception for new students; the availability of the campus newspaper -- THE DAILY LASS-O; the receiving of THE UNIVERSITY WOMAN -- a brochure which explains some of the rules and regulations of the school; and the receiving of the "Ready Reference" sheet -- a sheet listing the various facilities and services available to all students on the campus of TWU. The questions were to be answered with "Yes" or "No" answers. The "Yes" answers were added together for an over-all score.

27. I attended an orientation session for new students when I first came to TWU.
30. Do you have access to THE DAILY LASS-O?
53. THE UNIVERSITY WOMAN, which was available during fall registration, has been a helpful guide to me.

55. The "Ready Reference" sheet, which was available during registration, has been helpful to me.
56. Did you go to the reception for new students held in early fall?

Two other questions regarding the places the respondent might meet friends (Question 24) and places the respondent might eat lunch on the campus (Question 33) were included to ascertain what specific locations were being utilized by the commuter students.

When the adult goes to school, the event involves a change of habits. There are new tasks to be faced, new vocabularies to be acquired, former skills to be sharpened. There must be a readjustment in thinking, in values, in roles.¹ In order to adjust more easily to the situation, the researcher assumes that a model, an ideal, a role paradigm is selected by the commuter student. This selection of a role paradigm might be conscious or unconscious.

Questions 40, 44, 48, and 54 were asked in order to determine who -- resident student, commuter student, faculty member, staff member, or other person -- is the most influential to the respondent with regard to behavior in the classroom and on the campus, in help in selection of materials for studies, and in the decision of the length of hemline worn by the commuter student.

40. Who do you feel most influences your behavior in the classroom?
44. Who do you feel was the most help in your finding materials, books, resources for use in your studies?

¹John Dollard, et al, Frustration and Aggression, pp. 71-73.

48. Who do you feel most influences your behavior on the campus?
54. Who most influences your choice of hemline for on-campus wear?

Questions 25 and 26 were asked to determine which segment of the community was friend to the commuter student. Questions 50 and 62 were asked to ascertain the persons liked most and least by the commuter student in the community of the University.¹

College-connected organizations are those groups to which a student may voluntarily belong which are part of college life but are not those groups to which a student belongs by virtue of scheduled classes or particular majors. Responses to questions 16 and 17 were used to ascertain whether the commuter student did or did not belong to a college-connected organization.

16. To how many college-connected organizations do you belong?
17. They are: _____

Noncollege-connected organizations are those groups to which a student may belong which have no connection with the college. These groups may be church affiliations, social clubs, political organizations, or any other type group. Responses to questions 18 and 19 were used to ascertain whether the commuter student did or did not belong to any noncollege-connected organizations.

18. To how many noncollege-connected organizations do you belong (such as clubs, church, etc.)?
19. They are: _____

¹A summary of the areas to be studied and questions pertaining to those areas will be found in Appendix B.

In addition, the propositions call for the following pieces of information: number of days spent on campus (Question 20); number of semester hours carried (Question 12); whether or not there had been attendance at TWU prior to the semester in which the study was being carried out (Question 11); and the age of the respondent (Question 4).

20. I spend the following number of days each week at TWU:
 a) 1 c) 3 e) 5
 b) 2 d) 4 f) 6
12. How many hours are you carrying this fall semester, 1969, at TWU? _____
11. Please list chronologically colleges you have attended and the dates:
 a) _____ c) _____
 b) _____ d) _____
4. Age: a) 15-19 d) 30-34 g) 45-49
 b) 20-24 e) 35-39 h) 50-54
 c) 25-29 f) 40-44 i) 55 and over

Administration of the Questionnaire

In order to investigate the process of assimilation in terms of its determinants and the consequences for the commuter student, a self-administered questionnaire consisting of five pages was devised as the instrument of primary data collection. The questionnaire was pre-tested in a seminar of known graduate students. The scales on assimilation and powerlessness were relatively accurate in the predicted variations of the degree of assimilation and the degree of powerlessness for the individual students. Revisions in wording and phrasing were made as suggested by the graduate students and by the members of the thesis committee. The questionnaire was constructed so that the time required to complete all

the questions was approximately thirty minutes. Each questionnaire was numbered, and the cover letter¹ explained the numbering to the respondents and also assured the confidentiality of the answers. Respondents were asked to fill out the questionnaire and to return it to one of three special receptacles at the University. These receptacles were brightly-colored cloth bags attached to white posters with the following heading: "COMMUTER QUESTIONNAIRES RETURNED HERE." The posters were placed in those locations which seemed to the researcher to be most centrally located or easily accessible; one in each of two classroom buildings and one in the Student Center in the Locker Room, which is unofficially designated as the Commuter Room.

The instrument was mailed to 491 students selected from a list of all the off-campus students with their home addresses provided by the Dean of Women's office and the Data Processing Division of the Texas Woman's University.² One month after the initial mailing 325 post cards were sent to those students who had not returned their questionnaires. In all, 197 questionnaires were returned; of these 132 were usable.

¹See Appendix A.

²The total number of students on the list was 1,898 -- approximately one-third of the total number of students enrolled at TWU for the fall semester, 1969-1970. All students who were graduate students were eliminated as were those who were registered in absentia and not actually commuting to the campus on a regular basis. Students taking only one course were eliminated. Also eliminated were nursing majors, the majority of whom spend no more than three out of eight semesters on the Denton Campus since the bulk of their training takes place in clinical centers in Dallas and Houston.

One hundred thirteen usable questionnaires were returned within three weeks; 19 usable questionnaires were returned after the second mailing. Fifty-eight other questionnaires were returned but rejected for various reasons. The data in Table 1 indicate the disposition of the questionnaires.

TABLE 1
DISPOSITION OF QUESTIONNAIRES

Disposition	Percentage	Number
Returned -- usable	26.9	132
Returned -- not usable*	13.2	65
Not returned	59.9	294
Total	100.0	491

*The questionnaires were not usable because they did not fall within the limits set by the researcher. One graduate student, two Denton residents, 19 part-time students, and 36 nursing majors returned their questionnaires. Seven were returned by the Post Office Department as undeliverable.

In addition to the information necessary for the construction of the measure of variables, the respondents were asked for descriptive information which will be examined in Chapter IV.

CHAPTER IV

DESCRIPTION OF THE COMMUTER STUDENT

The first research objective stated in Chapter II was to obtain a general description of the commuter student to the Texas Woman's University during the fall semester of 1969-1970. A composite made up of modes and means indicates the "typical" commuter student in this study is of junior standing, is a member of the College of Arts and Sciences, takes 15 or more semester hours, spends 3.6 days per week on the school campus, travels to school alone by car and drives approximately 111.7 miles per round trip each day she comes to school. She is married with 1.67 children; her husband has a college degree and is financing this educational venture so that she does not have a job outside of school and home. She is not a member of any college-connected organization but does participate in some noncollege-connected organization. Details of these findings are examined in the remainder of the chapter.

By definition, a commuter student commutes. Table 2 shows the number of commuter students from the various cities, towns and communities surrounding Denton who travel to the Texas Woman's University. A map found in Appendix C shows the approximate location and distance of these communities from the University in Denton. The

TABLE 2

TOWNS AND DISTANCES FROM WHICH COMMUTER STUDENTS
COME TO TEXAS WOMAN'S UNIVERSITY

Name of Town	Distance from Denton in Miles	Number of Respondents
Dallas	40	44*
Fort Worth	38	14**
Richardson	35	9
Irving	30	8
McKinney	32	5
Garland	40	4
Plano	31	4
Pilot Point	18	4
Sanger	11	3
Argyle	9	3
Aubrey	11	3
Krum	15	3
Hurst	31	2
Celina	22	2
Lewisville	25	2
Paradise	37	2
Roanoke	18	2
Denison	55	2
Tyler	135	1
Decatur	30	1
Lake Dallas	15	1
Waxahachie	65	1
Grand Prairie	40	1
Kaufman	70	1
Arlington	40	1
Forestburg	38	1
Gladewater	148	1
Mesquite	50	1
Fort Wolters	70	1
Lancaster	52	1
Bridgeport	40	1
Weatherford	55	1
Frisco	20	1
Justin	12	1

*Includes one from Farmer's Branch and two from Carrollton.

**Includes one from Saginaw, two from Keller, and one from
Haltom City.

approximate total number of miles traveled by the commuter students in this study each time they come to class is 14,744 miles. The average number of miles per respondent traveled in a round trip is 111.7 miles.

The classification data on the commuter students indicate that 6.1 percent (8) of the students were freshmen; 25 percent (33), sophomores; 40.1 percent (53), juniors; and 28.8 percent (38) were seniors.

The data on the age of the commuter students presented in Table 3 indicate that a majority are under thirty years of age with only one respondent admitting to an age over 55. All respondents who are between the ages of 15-19 are either freshmen or sophomores; no freshmen respondents are in the 20-24, 30-34, 50-54, or 55-and-over categories. The one respondent in the 55-and-over category is a senior. The modal age is between 20-24; the median age is 30.0 years; and the mean age is 31.05 years.

The marital status of the commuter student has been categorized as follows: single, married, separated, divorced, widowed, and other. The results indicate that 16.7 percent (22) of the students are single -- 2 did indicate they were engaged -- and 80.3 percent (106) are married. Only 1.5 percent (2) of the commuter students are divorced and 1.5 percent (2) are widows.

The respondents indicated they had a total of 221 children; thus, the average number of children per respondent is 1.67 children. Forty-seven of the respondents have no children, while only one respondent had as many as six children. Table 4 shows the number of children in the families of the respondents.

TABLE 3
AGE OF COMMUTER STUDENTS

Age	Percent	Number	Percent	Number
15-19	6.96	8		
20-24	28.03	37	48.49	64
25-29	14.40	19		
30-34	15.91	21		
35-39	15.91	21	41.66	55
40-44	9.84	13		
45-49	6.06	8		
50-54	3.02	4	9.85	13
55 and over	0.77	1		
Total	100.00	132	100.00	132

TABLE 4
NUMBER OF CHILDREN IN FAMILIES OF PROCREATION
OF COMMUTER STUDENTS

Number of Children	Percent of Respondents	Number of Respondents
0	35.6	47
1	11.4	15
2	17.4	23
3	25.0	33
4	7.6	10
5	2.3	3
6	0.7	1
Total	100.0	132

Each of the married respondents indicated that her husband had gone beyond the eighth grade in his own education. Table 5 presents data on the educational status of the husbands of the commuter students.

Thirteen and six-tenths percent (18) of the respondents' husbands have between 9 and 12 years of education; 20.5 percent (27) of the respondents said their husbands have 13 through 15 years of education -- indicating some college; the majority of the respondents -- 47 percent (62) -- indicated that the husband has at least one degree from college. A study by Drasgow indicated that the more education the father of a student in college had the more motivation was provided for the student.¹ It might be indicated by the findings of the research that the more education the husband of the college student has the more motivation he provides her.

TABLE 5

YEARS OF SCHOOLING OF HUSBANDS OF COMMUTER STUDENTS

Grades	Percent
1-8	0
9-12	13.6
13-15 (some college)	20.5
16 or more (a degree)	47.0
No answer	18.9
Total	100.0

¹James Drasgow, "Differences between College Students, " Journal of Higher Education, Vol. 29 (1958), pp. 216-218.

The occupations of the husbands of commuter students varied; they ranged from medical doctor to filing clerk; from computer programmer to telephone switchman. A detailed list can be found in Appendix D.

The respondents were all full-time students carrying at least nine semester hours. Most courses are equivalent to three semester hours, and, thus, a load of 12 hours typically would indicate 4 courses. Table 6 shows that at the time of the study most of the students were taking at least 5 courses or 15 or more semester hours -- 40.1 percent -- while 32.6 percent were taking at least 4 courses and the remainder -- 27.3 percent -- were taking at least 3 courses.

TABLE 6
NUMBER OF SEMESTER HOURS BEING TAKEN BY COMMUTER
STUDENTS IN FALL SEMESTER OF 1969-1970

Courses	Semester Hours	Percent	Number
At least 3	9-11	27.3	36
At least 4	12-14	32.6	43
At least 5	15 or more	40.1	53
Total		100.0	132

The majority of the commuter students have their education financed by the husband of the commuter student. A number of respondents indicated they had more than one method of financing their education.

Table 7 shows the data regarding the student's method of financing her education. Although a majority of the commuter students are being financed by husband or by parents, others have jobs or scholarships or loans to help them pay for their schooling. Veteran's Administration benefits, Social Security benefits, and savings and educational funds are other sources of money.

TABLE 7
METHOD OF FINANCING EDUCATION BY COMMUTER STUDENT

Method of Financing	Percent	Number
Husband paying	52.0	93
Working way through	12.8	23
Loan or scholarship	10.6	19
Parents financing	19.6	35
Other means	5.0	9
Total	100.0	179

Twenty-nine of the respondents have jobs for which they are paid some type of remuneration. Five or 3.8 percent of these respondents have jobs only during the summer months or during holiday periods. Twenty-four or 18.2 percent work regularly throughout the school year. These students work an average of 16.9 hours per week at their jobs. One hundred three or 78 percent of the respondents do not have jobs outside school or home for which they receive pay.

The major field of study varies for the commuter students. Over one-third of the respondents are enrolled in the College of Arts and Sciences; one-third are enrolled in the College of Education; the remaining respondents are enrolled in the several colleges and schools of the Texas Woman's University excluding the School of Nursing. Table 8 shows the distribution of the respondents in the various colleges and schools of the University.

TABLE 8
COLLEGE OR SCHOOL IN WHICH COMMUTER STUDENT
IS ENROLLED

College or School	Percent	Number
College of Arts and Sciences	36.4	48
College of Education	33.3	44
College of Household Arts and Sciences	12.9	17
College of Fine Arts	6.1	8
College of Library Science	5.3	7
College of Health, Physical Education and Recreation	1.5	2
School of Occupational Therapy	1.5	2
School of Physical Therapy	0.8	1
No Answer	2.2	3
Total	100.0	132

Data revealed that 28.8 percent of the respondents belong to at least one college-connected organization and 71.2 percent do not. It was also revealed that 81.8 percent belong to some type of organization which is not college-connected, whereas only 18.2 percent do not belong to any type of noncollege-connected organization, e.g., social clubs, churches, service clubs, etc.

A majority, 67.4 percent, of the respondents spend three days per week on the campus of the University; 30.3 percent spend more than three days; and 1.5 percent spend less than three days on the campus. The mean was 3.6 days; the median, 3.2 days; and the mode, three days.

Travel by the commuter student is assumed to be by automobile with 50.7 percent of the respondents traveling from home to school alone; 24.2 percent travel with one other person; 17.4 percent travel with two companions; and 7.6 percent travel with three other commuter students. The median is 1.47 persons traveling together; the mean, 1.82 persons; and the mode, one person traveling alone.

Thus, the "typical" commuter student is well on her way to a degree from the College of Arts and Sciences, having Junior standing and taking 15 or more semester hours. She also has responsibilities at home because she is married and has 1.67 children, but she does not have another job to pay for her education for her college-educated husband is financing this venture. She does spend three days a week on the campus but does not belong to any of the college-connected organizations.

She does have responsibilities outside home and school for she belongs to at least one civic, church or social organization. She travels to school by car alone and travels 111.7 miles per round trip. She does not have a high degree of assimilation with the student body or the community of the University. In the following chapter an attempt will be made to examine some of the determinants and results of her degree of assimilation.

CHAPTER V

PRESENTATION OF RESULTS OF STUDY

Introduction

In the present chapter an attempt is made to examine the findings of this research in light of the propositions stated in Chapter II. It has been suggested that the degree of assimilation is determined by several factors which are inherent in the situation, in the attitude of, and in the biological makeup of the commuter student. Variations in the degree of assimilation, in turn, have their effect upon the feelings of the commuter student in the area of power/powerlessness and in the degree of self-esteem. The propositions will be restated, and the findings will be examined in the light of each specific proposition and hypothesis.

Tests of the Hypotheses

Operational definitions of the variables suggested by the propositions of Chapter II allow the translation of the propositions into a series of testable hypotheses. Some of the variables are measured in more than one way. Thus, while there are eleven propositions, there are twenty hypotheses stated and tested in the present chapter.

In each of the hypotheses tested either the independent or the dependent variable is the degree of assimilation of the commuter student. The degree of assimilation was ascertained by arbitrary scores assigned to the responses to eleven questions. A score of 55 was the highest degree of assimilation possible, and a score of 5 was the lowest degree possible. The scores actually obtained ranged from a high of 52 to a low of 19. The modal score was 30; the median score, 33; and the mean score, 33.58. For purposes of hypothesis testing the assimilation scores have been divided in the following manner: scores of 40 and above are termed "high"; scores ranging from 30 to 39, "medium"; and scores of 29 and below, "low." Similar classifications and/or orders are described for each of the other variables in the sections which follow.

Number of Points of Campus Contact

Proposition I states that the greater the number of points of contact, the greater the degree of assimilation of the commuter student. It had been decided that the orientation sessions, the reception for new students, and three publications of the University were five of the many visible, available avenues of assimilation open to all students -- commuter and resident. One of the three publications is THE DAILY LASS-O which is the campus newspaper published four times a week and free to all students. A second publication, THE UNIVERSITY WOMAN, is a "student handbook... assembled and published to provide a convenient reference

manual dealing with many facets of student life at the Texas Woman's University." This publication was made available to each student as she registered for the fall semester of 1969-1970. The "Ready Reference" sheet is a single mimeographed sheet of paper describing the various facilities and their location and various services which are available to the student body. This sheet was also made available to all students during the time of registration. The orientation session is held for all new students to the University shortly before the time of registration for the semester. The reception for new students is placed on the calendar of events and is one of the first social events available for the new student.

Granted that many other avenues of assimilation exist on the University campus, these five were chosen for this particular study. The respondents were asked only for a "yes" or "no" on their participation in the activities or the acquisition of the periodicals in question. A score of 1 was assigned to each "yes" answer; a score of 0 to each "no" answer. Thus, the possible range of scores is from 5 to 0. The actual range obtained was from 4 to 0. The distribution was bimodal -- 1 and 2 components utilized. The median was 2; the mean, 1.56.

Hypothesis I

Among commuter students at TWU there will be a direct relationship between the number of points of campus contact and measures of the degree of assimilation. The number of the points of campus contact

and the assimilation scores for the commuter student are given in Table 9. The hypothesis was tested by means of a measure of association (gamma). The gamma coefficient was $+.46$ which suggests a moderately strong direct relationship between the number of points of campus contact and the degree of assimilation of the commuter student. The data, thus, support the hypothesis.

TABLE 9
RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN NUMBER OF POINTS OF CAMPUS
CONTACT AND DEGREE OF ASSIMILATION

Degree of Assimilation	Number of Points of Campus Contact				
	4	3	2	1	0
High	0	8	14	4	1
Medium	3	9	22	27	7
Low	0	3	9	14	11
Total	3	20	45	45	19
Gamma = $+.46$		N=132			

Since the measure of the independent variable was constructed of such disparate elements, the possibility exists that the individual variables have unequal importance in determining the relationship to the measure of the degree of assimilation. It might be of interest (and importance) to examine the effects of the individual campus "contacts" on the degree of assimilation; therefore, five additional hypotheses have been tested. The respondents were asked for only a "yes" or "no"

answer to each of the components. Such answers do not yield truly ordinal data when considered individually; therefore, a gamma score cannot be utilized. For the purpose of testing the five hypotheses a Yule's Q will be used as a measure of association. The degrees of assimilation have been dichotomized into "high" and "low" by the arbitrary division at the median score of 33. Scores of 33 and below were termed "low"; scores of 34 and above were termed "high."

Hypothesis Ia

Among commuter students at TWU measures of the degree of assimilation will be higher for those who attended an orientation session than for those who did not attend. Table 10 gives the percentages of those who did and did not attend the orientation sessions and the degree of assimilation. The hypothesis was tested by means of Yule's Q. The Q coefficient was .78 and indicates a strong association. The hypothesis that those commuter students who attended an orientation session will have higher degrees of assimilation than those who did not attend is supported.

TABLE 10

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ATTENDANCE AT ORIENTATION SESSION AND DEGREE OF ASSIMILATION

Degree of Assimilation	Attended Orientation Session			
	Yes		No	
High	43	(74.1%)	19	(25.7%)
Low	15	(25.9%)	55	(74.3%)
Total	58	(100.0%)	74	(100.0%)
Q = +.78		N = 132		

Hypothesis Ib

Among commuter students at TWU measures of the degree of assimilation will be higher for those who attended the reception for new students than for those who did not attend. The findings in Table 11 indicate that one hundred percent of those commuter students who attended the reception had a high degree of assimilation while only 46.2 percent of those who did not attend had a high degree of assimilation. The Q coefficient of 1.0 does not actually indicate a perfect relationship, for one of the limitations of Yule's Q is that if any one cell is empty -- or 0 -- the coefficient will always be 1.0. Moreover, since only two of 132 students did actually attend the reception, no conclusions can really be drawn from the cross tabulation. Simple inspection of the data in the table suggest that the hypothesis is not supported by the data.

TABLE 11

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ATTENDANCE AT NEW STUDENT RECEPTION AND DEGREE OF ASSIMILATION

Degree of Assimilation	Attended Reception			
	Yes		No	
High	2	(100.0%)	60	(46.2%)
Low	0		70	(53.8%)
Total	2	(100.0%)	130	(100.0%)
Q = +1.0		N=132		

Hypothesis Ic

Among commuter students at TWU measures of the degree of assimilation will be higher for those who have access to copies of the campus newspaper than for those who do not have such access. The data in Table 12 show that 52.6 percent of those students who have access to copies of the campus newspaper, THE DAILY LASS-O, have a high degree of assimilation while only 39.6 percent of those students who do not have access to the newspaper also have a high degree of assimilation. The Q coefficient was .24 which indicates only a slight degree of association between the availability of the campus newspaper and the degree of assimilation.

TABLE 12

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE AVAILABILITY OF THE
CAMPUS NEWSPAPER AND DEGREE OF ASSIMILATION

Degree of Assimilation	Availability of Newspaper			
	Yes		No	
High	41	(52.6%)	21	(39.6%)
Low	37	(47.4%)	32	(60.4%)
Total	78	(100.0%)	53	(100.0%)*
Q = +.24	N = 132		*1 No answer	

Hypothesis Id

Among commuter students at TWU measures of the degree of assimilation will be higher for those who received a copy of the student

handbook than for those who do not have copies. The data shown in Table 13 indicate a moderate degree of association between the availability of the student handbook and the degree of assimilation. The Q coefficient of .40 and the moderately high percentage of students who did have copies of the handbook and a high degree of assimilation would tend to support this hypothesis.

TABLE 13

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN AVAILABILITY OF STUDENT
HANDBOOK AND DEGREE OF ASSIMILATION

Degree of Assimilation	Availability of Handbook*			
	Yes		No	
High	18	(64.3%)	44	(43.6%)
Low	10	(35.7%)	57	(56.4%)
Total	28	(100.0%)	101	(100.0%)
Q = +.40	N = 132	*3 No answer		

Hypothesis Ie

Among commuter students at TWU measures of the degree of assimilation will be higher for those who received a copy of the "Ready Reference" data sheet than for those who did not receive such a copy. The findings in Table 14 indicate that only 46.3 percent of those students who received the data sheet had high degrees of assimilation while 50 percent of those who did not receive the data sheet also had high degrees of assimilation. The Q coefficient of .07 indicates almost no relationship

exists between the receiving of the data sheet and the measure of the degree of assimilation. The data do not support the hypothesis.

TABLE 14

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN AVAILABILITY OF STUDENT DATA SHEET AND DEGREE OF ASSIMILATION

Degree of Assimilation	Availability of "Ready Reference" Sheet			
	Yes		No*	
High	19	(46.3%)	42	(50.0%)
Low	22	(53.7%)	42	(50.0%)
Total	41	(100.0%)	84	(100.0%)
Q = +.07		N = 132	* 7 No answer	

Generally, in relation to the five avenues to assimilation which were chosen for examination, those students who availed themselves of the event or publication had a higher degree of assimilation than those students who did not avail themselves of these particular avenues of assimilation. In the examination of the individual variables -- the individual avenues of assimilation -- the data reveal that they are of unequal strength or importance. The attendance at an orientation session and the receiving of a copy of the student handbook have a stronger association with a high degree of assimilation than do the other variables -- attendance at the new student reception, the availability of the daily newspaper, and the availability of the student data sheet.

Familiarity with the Campus

Proposition II states that the greater the number of days spent on the campus per week, the greater the degree of assimilation of the commuter student. It was assumed that no commuter student spent more than six days a week on the campus of the University because classes meet only six days a week. If the commuter student did spend a seventh day, it was assumed this was exceptional rather than routine. The modal number of days spent on the campus was 3; the median number of days, 3.2; the mean number of days, 3.6.

Hypothesis II

Among commuter students at TWU there will be a direct relationship between the number of days spent on campus and measures of the degree of assimilation. The number of days spent on the campus and the assimilation scores can be seen in Table 15. The hypothesis was tested by means of a measure of association (gamma). The gamma coefficient was +.36 indicating a moderate and direct relationship between the days spent on the University campus and the degree of assimilation of the commuter students. The hypothesis is supported by the data.

TABLE 15

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN NUMBER OF DAYS SPENT ON
CAMPUS AND DEGREE OF ASSIMILATION

Degree of Assimilation	Number of Days Spent on Campus per Week*					
	6	5	4	3	2	1
High	4	6	1	14	1	0
Medium	8	12	4	43	0	1
Low	0	4	1	32	0	0
Total	12	22	6	89	1	1
Gamma = +.36		N = 132		*1 No answer		

It would seem possible that at least some of the commuter students would not necessarily have all their classes back-to-back but would have some time off between classes in which the time could be spent in contact with some part of the student body or in familiarizing themselves with some part of the campus. For example, in a question asked about eating places, 29.5 percent of the commuter students indicated they ate lunch in the Student Center; 2.2 percent, in the Commuter Room in the Student Center; 2.2 percent, at the campus drugstore; 4.3 percent, at the ice-cream parlor; 4.3 percent, in one of the restrooms on campus (one commuter remarked "Ugh!" in replying to this particular question); 5 percent ate in the faculty cafeteria which is open to commuter students; and 35.2 percent replied they ate in some other place --in their cars in the parking lot, in the library, on the way home, or at home.

Sixteen and five-tenths percent of the respondents do not eat lunch at all on school days and 0.7 percent did not answer.

The commuter student also takes time to meet her friends in various places on the campus. Thirty-one percent of the commuter students meet friends in the Student Center, but not in the Commuter Room; 3.5 percent meet in the Commuter Room; 11.9 percent meet in a building adjacent to the campus in one of the various stores in the building; 2.1 percent did not answer this question; and 46.2 percent of the commuter students said they met their friends in places other than those mentioned in the questionnaire.

Proposition III states that there will be a direct relationship between the number of semester hours being taken by the commuter student and the degree of assimilation of the commuter student. The respondents were all full-time students carrying at least nine semester hours. Most courses are equivalent to three semester hours and thus a load of twelve hours typically would indicate four courses.

Hypothesis III

Among commuter students at TWU there will be a direct relationship between the number of semester hours being taken and measures of the degree of assimilation. The hypothesis was tested by means of a measure of association (gamma). The gamma coefficient was $+.18$ which suggests only a very slight degree of association. The hypothesis is not strongly supported by the data as can be seen in Table 16.

TABLE 16

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN NUMBER OF SEMESTER HOURS
BEING TAKEN AND DEGREE OF ASSIMILATION

Degree of Assimilation (at least 5 courses)	Number of Hours Being Taken		
	15 or more (at least 5 courses)	12 - 14 (at least 4 courses)	9 - 11 (at least 3 courses)
High	11	14	2
Medium	28	20	20
Low	14	9	14
Total	53	43	36
Gamma = +.18		N = 132	

Proposition IV states there will be a greater degree of assimilation for those students belonging to a college-connected organization than for those who do not belong. The organizations to which this proposition refers do not include those classes or department of which a student is a part by virtue of having a particular schedule or major.

Hypothesis IV

Among commuter students at TWU measures of the degree of assimilation will be higher for those students who belong to at least one college-connected organization than for those who do not belong. The hypothesis was tested by means of a measure of association (Yule's Q). The Q coefficient was .65 indicating a strong association between the belonging to a college-connected organization and the degree of assimilation. The data in Table 17 show this relationship. Of the commuter

students who belong to a college-connected organization 73 percent have a high degree of assimilation, whereas only 37 percent of those who do not belong to a college-connected organization have a high degree of assimilation. Twenty-seven percent of the commuter students who belong to a college-connected organization have a low degree of assimilation, whereas 63 percent of those students who do not belong have a low degree of assimilation. The hypothesis is supported by the data.

TABLE 17

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN BELONGING TO A
COLLEGE-CONNECTED ORGANIZATION AND
DEGREE OF ASSIMILATION

Degree of Assimilation	Belonging to a College-Connected Organization			
	Yes		No	
High	27	(73.0%)	35	(37.0%)
Low	10	(27.0%)	60	(63.0%)
Total	37	(100.0%)	95	(100.0%)
Q = +.65		N = 132		

Proposition V states that the degree of assimilation will be greater for those students who have previously attended the Texas Woman's University than for those who have never attended the University. It was presumed that if a commuter student had attended TWU prior to the time of the study, whether the semester before or twenty years before, she would have a higher degree of assimilation than would a commuter student who had never attended TWU because of her familiarity with some areas

of the campus, some knowledge of the expectations of student and faculty, and, perhaps, acquaintances among the students and/or faculty members.

Hypothesis V

Among commuter students at TWU measures of the degree of assimilation will be higher for those students who have previously attended TWU than for those who have not done so. The data in Table 18 show that 53.9 percent of those students who had attended TWU had a high degree of assimilation whereas only 32.6 percent of those never having attended TWU had a high degree of assimilation. The data also indicate that 67.4 percent of those commuter students who had never attended TWU had a low degree of assimilation while 46.1 percent of those having attended TWU had a low degree of assimilation. The hypothesis was tested by means of Yule's Q; the Q coefficient was .42 indicating a moderately strong relationship between prior attendance and the degree of assimilation. The hypothesis is supported by the data.

TABLE 18

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PRIOR ATTENDANCE AT TWU AND DEGREE OF ASSIMILATION

Degree of Assimilation	Prior Attendance			
	Yes		No	
High	48	(53.9%)	14	(32.6%)
Low	41	(46.1%)	29	(67.4%)
Total	89	(100.0%)	43	(100.0%)
Q = +.42		N = 132		

Disparities Between Resident and Commuter Students

Proposition VI states that an inverse relationship will exist between the age of the commuter student and the degree of assimilation. "College age" generally implies a person old enough to be out of high school and yet under 25 years of age. Those persons who come to college when they are beyond those years do not fit the stereotype. As the disparity in age grows, age tends to become a visible badge of difference which cannot be hidden by hair dye, eye make-up, or a short skirt.

Hypothesis VI

Among commuter students at TWU there will be an inverse relationship between age and measures of the degree of assimilation. Table 19 gives the data necessary for the testing of the hypothesis. It was found that 48.5 percent of the commuter students are under the age of 30 years; 41.7 percent are between 30 - 44 years of age; and only 9.8 percent are over 45 years of age. The hypothesis was tested by means of gamma and the coefficient was $-.61$. The gamma indicates a strong inverse relationship between the age of the commuter student and measure of the degree of assimilation. The hypothesis is supported by the data.

TABLE 19

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN AGE AND DEGREE OF ASSIMILATION

Degree of Assimilation	Age		
	45 years and over	30-44 years	15-29 years
High	0	4	23
Medium	7	28	33
Low	6	22	9
Total	13	54	65
Gamma = $-.61$		N = 132	

Proposition VII states that there will be a lesser degree of assimilation for those students belonging to organizations not college-connected than for those who do not belong. A disparity which is not visible might be that resident and commuter students may differ in their activities and organizational participation outside the University context. It has been assumed that although the resident student might be involved in and committed to organizations not college-connected, the focus of her attention would be in that area in which she lives and moves the majority of the time. The focus of the attention of the commuter might be more diffused because she moves between her residence and the college.

Hypothesis VII

Among commuter students at TWU the measures of the degree of assimilation will be lower for those students who belong to at least one noncollege-connected organization than for those who do not belong.

The data in Table 20 give the necessary information for the testing of the hypothesis. The data indicate that 44.4 percent of the commuter students who belong to noncollege-connected organizations have a high degree of assimilation, while 58.3 percent of those who do not belong have a high degree of assimilation. More importantly, the data indicate that 55.6 percent of those commuter students who belong to noncollege-connected organizations have a low degree of assimilation while only 41.7 percent of those students who do not belong have a low degree of assimilation. The hypothesis was tested by means of Yule's Q; the Q coefficient was $-.27$, thus indicating a rather weak inverse relationship between the belonging to noncollege-connected organizations and the degree of assimilation. The hypothesis is weakly supported.

TABLE 20
RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN BELONGING TO
NONCOLLEGE-CONNECTED ORGANIZATIONS AND
DEGREE OF ASSIMILATION

Degree of Assimilation	Belonging to Noncollege-Connected Organizations			
	Yes		No	
High	48	(44.4%)	14	(58.3%)
Low	60	(55.6%)	10	(41.7%)
Total	108	(100.0%)	24	(100.0%)
Q = $-.27$		N = 132		

Consequences of Variation in the Degree of Assimilation

Proposition VIII states that an inverse relationship will exist between the degree of assimilation and the degree of powerlessness. The degree of powerlessness was ascertained by the arbitrary score assigned to the possible answers to eleven questions in the questionnaire. The lowest degree of powerlessness was indicated by the lowest possible score of 8; the highest degree of powerlessness was indicated by the highest possible score of 55. The range of powerlessness scores actually obtained was from 18 to 48. The median score was 35; the scores were tri-modal including those of 34, 36, and 37; the mean score, 34.5.

Hypothesis VIII

Among commuter students at TWU there will be an inverse relationship between measures of the degree of assimilation and measures of the degree of powerlessness. The data needed for the testing of this hypothesis are seen in Table 21. In order to test the hypothesis by means of a measure of association (gamma), the scores of the degree of powerlessness were divided into three categories. Those with scores of 40 and above were termed "high"; scores in the 30's were termed "medium"; and scores of 20 and below were termed "low." The calculated gamma coefficient was $-.57$ indicating a moderately strong inverse relationship between the degree of assimilation and the degree of powerlessness; thus supporting the hypothesis.

TABLE 21

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DEGREE OF ASSIMILATION AND
DEGREE OF POWERLESSNESS

Degree of Powerlessness	Degree of Assimilation		
	High	Medium	Low
High	0	9	12
Medium	15	49	21
Low	12	10	4
Total	27	68	37
Gamma = -.57 N = 132			

Proposition IX states that the greater the degree of assimilation, the more likely it is that the commuter student will use the resident student as role paradigm; conversely, Proposition IX' states that the lesser the degree of assimilation, the more likely it is that the commuter student will use the faculty members as role paradigm. How does an individual know the role he is to play when placed in a new social situation? To whom does the individual turn for role identification? What is the role of the student on the campus, in the classroom, in matters of receiving help, and in the matter of dress? It was assumed that the commuter student would wish to be identified with, to share in knowledge, experience, and background with the resident student--the student body. It was also presumed that the greater the desire to be "like" the student body, the greater would be the effort to be assimilated into that group.

Thus, the greater the degree of assimilation, the more likely it would be that the resident student would be influential in molding the behavior and attitude of the commuter student. Eight questions were formulated to help ascertain the commuter student's paradigm. Four questions were discarded, for they only ascertained the commuter student's personal preference or prejudice. Four questions were retained and dealt with the student's opinion of who influenced classroom and campus behavior, who was most help in finding materials for school and class work, and who most influenced the choice of the length of the student's hemline. The situations in which the student was chosen were added together for a score; similarly, the situations in which the faculty was chosen were added together for a separate score.

Hypotheses IX and IX'

Among commuter students at TWU those having the greater degree of assimilation will be more likely to choose the student as role paradigm the greater number of times in the four situations presented. Conversely, among commuter students at TWU those having the lesser degree of assimilation will be more likely to choose the faculty as role paradigm a greater number of times in the four situations presented. The respondents were asked to indicate who influenced them most in the areas mentioned above. The choices given were the following: "Resident Student," "Commuter Student" (hereafter referred to as "Student"), or "Faculty Member" or "Staff Member" (hereafter referred to as "Faculty"), and "Other." The

number of times the respondent indicated her choice of student or faculty as most influential was tabulated. Table 22 shows the data on the relationship between the degree of assimilation and the choices made by the respondents for "Student." The hypothesis (IX) was tested by means of gamma. The gamma coefficient was $+.06$ indicating a negligible relationship between a high degree of assimilation and the choice of student as role paradigm.

TABLE 22

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HIGH DEGREE OF ASSIMILATION
AND MEASURE OF STUDENT AS ROLE PARADIGM

Choice of Student as Role Paradigm	Degree of Assimilation		
	High	Medium	Low
4	0	1	0
3	2	8	0
2	4	10	5
1	10	20	17
0	11	29	15
Total	27	68	37
Gamma = $+.06$		N = 132	

Table 23 shows the data on the relationship between the degree of assimilation and the number of choices made by the respondents for "faculty." The hypothesis (IX') was tested by means of a measure of association (gamma). The gamma coefficient was $+.14$ indicating a very

slight relationship between the low degree of assimilation and the choice of faculty as role paradigm. Thus, hypotheses IX and IX' are not supported sufficiently by the data.

TABLE 23

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LOW DEGREE OF ASSIMILATION
AND MEASURE OF FACULTY AS ROLE PARADIGM

Choice of Faculty as Role Paradigm	Degree of Assimilation		
	High	Medium	Low
4	0	0	0
3	4	9	2
2	13	15	15
1	7	28	12
0	3	16	8
Total	27	68	37
Gamma = +.14		N = 132	

Since the measure of the variable of role paradigm was constructed of such disparate elements, the possibility exists that individual elements have unequal relationships to the degree of assimilation. Although the hypothesis is not actually supported by the data, it might be of interest to examine the four elements individually.

Hypothesis IXa

Among commuter students at TWU those having a high degree of assimilation will be more likely to choose the student as role paradigm

for classroom behavior than will those with a low degree of assimilation. The data for testing the hypothesis are seen in Table 24. The hypothesis was tested by means of Yule's Q; the Q coefficient was .51 indicating a rather strong relationship between a high degree of assimilation and the choosing of a student as role paradigm for classroom behavior. Of those respondents with a high degree of assimilation, 16.3 percent chose the student while only 6 percent of those respondents with a low degree of assimilation chose the student. But, 83.7 percent of the students with a high degree of assimilation chose the faculty member as role paradigm and 94 percent of those with a low degree of assimilation chose the faculty member. Thus, the hypothesis is supported.

TABLE 24

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DEGREE OF ASSIMILATION AND
CHOOSING OF STUDENT AS ROLE PARADIGM FOR
CLASSROOM BEHAVIOR

Choice of Role Paradigm	Degree of Assimilation			
	High		Low	
Student	8	(16.3%)	3	(6.0%)
Faculty	41	(83.7%)	47	(94.0%)
Total	49	(100.0%)	50	(100.0%)
Q = +.51		N = 99		

Hypothesis IXb

Among the commuter students at TWU those having a high degree of assimilation will be more likely to choose the student as role paradigm

for campus behavior than will those with a low degree of assimilation. The data for testing the hypothesis are seen in Table 25. The hypothesis was tested by means of Yule's Q; the Q coefficient was .26 indicating a rather weak relationship between a high degree of assimilation and the choosing of the student as role paradigm for campus behavior. But, 52.7 percent of the students with a high degree of assimilation did choose the student while only 39.4 percent of those with low assimilation chose the student. Therefore, the hypothesis is weakly supported.

TABLE 25

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DEGREE OF ASSIMILATION AND
CHOOSING OF STUDENT AS ROLE PARADIGM FOR
CAMPUS BEHAVIOR

Choice of Role Paradigm	Degree of Assimilation			
	High		Low	
Student	19	(52.7%)	13	(39.4%)
Faculty	17	(47.3%)	20	(60.6%)
Total	36	(100.0%)	33	(100.0%)
Q = +.26		N = 69		

Hypothesis IXc

Among the commuter students at TWU those having a high degree of assimilation will be more likely to choose the student as role paradigm for helpfulness in seeking out resources for the classroom than will those with a low degree of assimilation. The data for testing the hypothesis are seen in Table 26. The hypothesis was tested by means of Yule's Q;

the Q coefficient was $-.20$ indicating no relationship between the degree of assimilation and the choosing of student as role paradigm for helpfulness. Of the respondents with a high degree of assimilation 46.5 percent chose the student while 56.9 percent of those with a low degree of assimilation chose the student. But 53.5 percent of those with a high degree of assimilation chose the faculty member as role paradigm for helpfulness and 43.1 percent of those respondents with a low degree of assimilation did the same. Thus, the hypothesis is not supported by the data.

TABLE 26

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DEGREE OF ASSIMILATION AND
CHOOSING OF STUDENT AS ROLE PARADIGM FOR
HELPFULNESS IN CHOOSING MATERIALS FOR
CLASSROOM AND STUDIES

Choice of Role Paradigm	Degree of Assimilation			
	High		Low	
Student	20	(46.5%)	33	(56.9%)
Faculty	23	(53.5%)	25	(43.1%)
Total	46	(100.0%)	58	(100.0%)
Q = $-.20$		N = 104		

Hypothesis IXd

Among the commuter students at TWU those having a high degree of assimilation will be more likely to choose the student as role paradigm for appropriateness of on-campus attire (specifically the length of the hemline) than will those with a low degree of assimilation. The data for

testing this hypothesis are seen in Table 27. The hypothesis was tested by means of Yule's Q; the Q coefficient was $-.38$ indicating no relationship between the high degree of assimilation and the choosing of the student as role paradigm for appropriateness of on-campus attire. Although 83.3 percent of those with a high degree of assimilation did choose the student, 91.6 percent of those with a low degree of assimilation also chose the student as role paradigm in this particular area. Therefore, the hypothesis is not supported by the data.

TABLE 27

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DEGREE OF ASSIMILATION AND
CHOOSING OF STUDENT AS ROLE PARADIGM FOR
APPROPRIATENESS OF ON-CAMPUS ATTIRE

Choice of Role Paradigm	Degree of Assimilation			
	High		Low	
Student	10	(83.3%)	11	(91.6%)
Faculty	2	(16.7%)	1	(8.4%)
Total	12	(100.0%)	12	(100.0%)
Q = $-.38$		N = 24		

Proposition X states that a direct relationship will exist between the degree of assimilation and the degree of self-esteem. Self-esteem is assumed to be that value one puts upon himself as an individual of dignity and worth. The self-esteem score was based on the ratings done by the commuter student on herself in respect to ten characteristics. She was also asked to rate herself on the same ten characteristics as she thought

others would rate her, e.g., the resident student, other commuter students, and faculty members. The ratings were from a high of 5 to a low of 1 with 3 as average for the individual characteristic score. The final self-esteem score was a total of every rating score divided by ten. The mode was 14.8; the median, 14.1; the mean, 14.3. The highest possible score was 20.0 and the lowest, 4.0. The scores actually ranged from a high of 18.9 to a low of 11.1.

Hypothesis X

Among commuter students at TWU there will be a direct relationship between measures of the degree of assimilation and measures of the degree of self-esteem. In order for the hypothesis to be tested by means of a gamma, the self-esteem scores were divided into three categories: scores ranging from 10.0 to 12.9 were termed "low"; scores ranging from 13.0 to 15.9 were termed "medium"; and scores from 16.0 to 18.9 were termed "high." The gamma coefficient was $+.11$ indicating a very weak but direct relationship between the degree of assimilation and the degree of self-esteem. The data for testing the hypothesis can be seen in Table 28. The hypothesis is considered to be weakly supported by the data.

TABLE 28

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DEGREE OF ASSIMILATION AND
DEGREE OF SELF-ESTEEM

Degree of Self-Esteem	Degree of Assimilation		
	High	Medium	Low
High	5	9	6
Medium	18	40	21
Low	4	19	10
Total	27	68	37

Gamma = +.11

N = 132

An examination of the findings of this research reveal that the following hypotheses have been supported or at least slightly supported by the data: Hypotheses I, Ia, Ic, Id, II, III, IV, V, VI, VII, VIII, IX', IXa, IXb, and X. These hypotheses were not supported by the data: Ib, Ie, IX, IXc, and IXd. Conclusions and interpretations of these data and findings follow in Chapter VI.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSIONS AND INTERPRETATIONS

The purpose of this thesis was to study the assimilation of an adult into a community, specifically the assimilation of the commuter student into the community of the Texas Woman's University. A self-administered questionnaire was sent to the 491 full-time undergraduates of the University who live off-campus and outside Denton, Texas. Questions were asked which enabled the researcher to formulate a description of the "typical" commuter student of this study, to evaluate some of the relevant determinants of assimilation, and to ascertain the consequences of the variations in the degree of assimilation.

In the concluding chapter of this thesis, an attempt will be made to examine some of the limitations of the study, to summarize the findings of the research, to interpret the findings from a sociological point of view, and to note possible future avenues of study.

Limitations of the Study

A number of limitations must be recognized in any attempt to evaluate the findings of a study such as that presented here. Among the more serious ones are: the lack of data for the residential student comparable to those obtained for the commuter student; lack of control for a

number of relevant variables; and the relatively small number of returned questionnaires.

Ideally, the propositions stated in the study should have been tested on both resident students and commuter students in order that comparisons of the two populations could have been made. In lieu of any empirical evidence, it has been assumed by the researcher that the resident student is completely assimilated into the community of the University by the end of her first semester on campus; that the communication system between the University and the resident student is totally operative; and that the resident student is aware of and utilizes all the resources, facilities, and services of the University. There is no reason to believe that this is, in fact, the case. However, it is within the context of this hypothetical ideal situation for the resident student that the commuter student is examined.

If research were done under ideal conditions there would be both awareness of all relevant variables and the ability to measure and to control for them. The research reported here obviously was not carried out under ideal research conditions. A limited number of concepts was utilized, and, perhaps, too few variables were taken into account. A number of plausible variables -- the academic standing, the specific responsibilities of the commuter in the home setting, the specific goal of the education undertaken, the specific needs and desires of the commuter student in regard to activities, assimilation, resources, and

publications -- could have been examined, thus yielding a more thorough understanding of the needs, concerns, and problems of the commuter student.

Summary of the Findings

Predictions regarding the determinants of the degree of assimilation were largely validated. Hypotheses I through Ie which dealt with number and types of contact at TWU and variation in the degree of assimilation were confirmed, for the most part, by the data. It had been predicted that the greater the number of points of campus contact, or components of assimilation, utilized by the commuter, the higher the degree of assimilation. The prediction was supported, although it was found that the specific points of contact differed in their relative strength in aiding the commuter student in becoming assimilated. The orientation session and the student handbook seem to have been of more value to the commuter student than attendance at the reception for new students, the accessibility of the campus newspaper, or the acquisition of the data sheet. Both the orientation session and the student handbook can be seen as "intrinsic" points of contact in that they give the new student -- commuter or resident -- a basis of knowledge concerning the physical layout of the campus, the expectations and the norms of the academic community, and the traditions and rules of TWU. The orientation session not only supplies knowledge but also gives the new student an opportunity to see

and perhaps meet other new students, more experienced students, and some of the faculty and staff. The handbook can be perused at leisure to study the values and goals of the TWU community. The other three components of assimilation studied are only fleeting or "extrinsic" points of contact.

The predictions with regard to commuter students and their familiarity with the social setting of the college were supported by the data (Hypotheses II through V). The number of days per week spent on campus, previous attendance at TWU, and the belonging to at least one college-connected organization were factors of college life which contributed to a higher degree of assimilation for the commuter student. All of these factors have some aspect of enabling the commuter student to acquire or to have acquired some knowledge of, and, therefore, some familiarity with the college and its expectations, values, norms, goals, and even its physical layout. The hypothesis regarding the number of semester hours and its relationship to the degree of assimilation was supported only weakly. The difference in the degree of assimilation between the students taking nine semester hours and those taking fifteen or more semester hours was not great, but all of these respondents were considered full-time students. If the part-time commuter students had been used in the study, perhaps the differences might have been greater than they were. The commuter student who takes nine or fifteen semester hours can possibly arrange her schedule so that all her classes are

"back-to-back," and this type of schedule would not allow her to have the time to familiarize herself with the campus or with the student body.

The predictions of degree of assimilation from indicators of disparities between the commuter student and the resident student were supported (Hypotheses VI and VII). It was found that the age of the commuter student was an important factor in the degree of assimilation attained by the commuter student; the greater disparity in age between the "typical" college student and the "typical" commuter student, the lower the degree of assimilation of the commuter student. Although age is a visible badge of difference (or similarity), age per se is not the factor which affects the degree of assimilation. Age is the symbol of differences in attitudes, responsibilities, goals, and values which are the actual contributing factors to the degree of assimilation. The hypothesis concerning the belonging to noncollege-connected organizations and the degree of assimilation was weakly supported. The commuter students who belonged to organizations outside the realm of the school might be different from the "typical" college student because she might have different reference groups and, therefore, would feel less need to identify with the student body on the campus.

The predictions regarding the consequences of the variations in the degree of assimilation were partially substantiated by the data. The commuter student with the greater degree of assimilation had a lesser degree of powerlessness than the commuter student with a lesser degree

of assimilation. Thus, some knowledge of the traditions of the school, willingness to participate in class and department activities, and a degree of pride in the school seem to aid the commuter student in combating frustration, confusion, misunderstanding -- the feeling of powerlessness.

The prediction regarding the degree of assimilation and its relationship to the degree of self-esteem was supported only weakly by the data. The measure of degree of self-esteem might have been more accurate had the commuter student been asked for her perception of reference group ratings rather than of the academic group ratings.

The prediction regarding the degree of assimilation and the selection of the student as role paradigm was not supported by the data (Hypotheses IX through IXd). The questions concerning the influence felt by the commuter student may have been too general; they, perhaps, should have been directed toward specific situations and the specific persons who were influential. The woman of today is bombarded with the idea of individuality through all types of mass media; the commuter student answering this questionnaire might have felt threatened by the implication that her behavior was being unduly influenced by others.

Interpretation and Value of the Findings

The specific purpose of this paper was to study the assimilation of the commuter student into the community of the college in terms of the processes of social interaction and group relationships. Many

previous studies done on the assimilation of the immigrant into the United States have yielded a number of generalizations concerning assimilation and the factors relevant to assimilation. The basic assertion is that the more similarity there is between the newcomer -- immigrant or commuter student -- and the host group -- the United States or the student body at TWU -- the more rapid and the more complete the assimilation. The converse of this assertion is that the more disparity between the parties the slower and less complete the assimilation.

Propositions regarding the determinants of the degree of assimilation included as predictors the number of points of campus contact, familiarity with the campus, and disparities between the resident and commuter student. Previous studies done on the assimilation of immigrants into the United States indicated the greater number of contacts the newcomer had with the host group, the more rapid was his assimilation. It was found in this study that the greater the number of points of campus contact the commuter student had the greater was her degree of assimilation. It would seem that the commuter student who endeavors to participate in whatever activities and events are offered by the school gains a greater knowledge of the traditions and expectations which are a part of the campus culture. It was found that those points of campus contact which explicitly communicate the expectations of campus behavior -- the handbook and orientation sessions -- were more accurate predictors of the degree of assimilation than were those points of contact which were

"extrinsic" -- the reception, the accessibility of the school newspaper, and the data sheet. While over 50 percent of the respondents indicated that they had access to the campus newspaper, these responses did not reveal whether the students actually picked up and read the paper. The four other points of campus contact were used by less than half of the respondents. This might indicate further research should be done on other points of contact, their relevance to the commuter student, and their availability to the commuter student.

Previous studies have suggested that the greater the familiarity of both newcomer and host group with one another, the less prejudice is experienced by both and the more rapid is the assimilation of the newcomer. The predictions with regard to the commuter students and their familiarity with the college setting in relation to their degree of assimilation were supported. It was found that the greater number of days spent on the campus, previous attendance at the school, and belonging to at least one college-connected organization were each conducive to a higher degree of assimilation. These three factors presumably enabled the student to familiarize herself with the campus -- its surroundings, its expectations, and its people. This familiarity could lead to a better understanding of rules and regulations, to less confusion and misunderstanding regarding activities and events, and to less prejudice on the part of the commuter student against the resident student and the school. The number of semester hours being taken by the commuter student was

not as strong a predictor of the degree of assimilation as was expected. Previous studies have indicated that marginality -- or a low degree of assimilation -- is common among students who are taking only a few semester hours. The results of the present study do not support these earlier findings. This may be due to the fact that full-time students were used in this study. It may have been a stronger predictor had part-time students also been used, so that a comparison could have been made.

Earlier studies suggest that the greater the number of differences between the newcomer and the host group, the more difficult and the less rapid is the assimilation process. The predictions of this study with regard to the relationship between the degree of assimilation and indicators of disparities between resident and commuter students were supported by the data. One visible indicator -- age -- and one "invisible" indicator -- the belonging to noncollege-connected organizations -- were used in this study. Both were found to be successful predictors of degree of assimilation with age being the more successful of the two. Age is not a factor which can be hidden or changed by the individual and was found to be strongly associated with the degree of assimilation. Belonging or not belonging to a noncollege-connected organization is a matter of individual choice. Many respondents indicated they had given up all outside activities in order to concentrate on their school studies. Still others said they felt they had no time for organizations which did not pertain directly to their families or to school work. Although respondents without

"outside" interests tended to have higher assimilation scores than those who had such affiliations, the degree of relationship was not very high. Therefore, it would seem that those disparities between the resident and commuter students which can be manipulated are probably not as important as predictors of the degree of assimilation as those disparities which cannot be manipulated by the individual.

Propositions regarding the consequences of variation in the degree of assimilation were set forth and substantially supported by the data. It was found that the greater the degree of assimilation, the less the degree of powerlessness in the commuter student. It would seem, then, that the more knowledge of the traditions of the host group, the greater the willingness to participate and share in activities which become common history to both newcomer and host, and the greater the feeling of pride in the community, the greater the degree of assimilation. At the same time this same knowledge, willingness to interact, and pride contribute to a better understanding of the host community, a better understanding of the expectations for the newcomer, and less confusion, misunderstanding, and frustration for the commuter student. With more understanding and less confusion, the commuter is better able to control -- or understand the controls of -- her social environment.

The prediction of the consequences of variation in the degree of assimilation for the degree of self-esteem was only weakly supported by the data. It might be the case that the commuter student has reference

groups outside the community of the school which are more important to her and to her view of self than are the groups on the school campus -- other commuter students, resident students, and faculty members.

Previous studies have indicated that immigrants who had easy access to homeland found it more difficult to assimilate with the host group than those who had difficulties in going back "home." The commuter student goes back "home" every day, and, thus, might find her satisfactions, needs, and views of self are influenced primarily by home setting rather than the school setting. More questions regarding this aspect of assimilation and self-esteem might be warranted in any further study.

The predictions concerning relationship between variation in the degree of assimilation and the selection of role paradigm by the commuter student were not supported by the data. The questions asked in this area were so general that the respondents might have found it difficult to give a specific answer which might have to cover a large area of their behavior. For example, classroom behavior may differ from class to class, and the respondent might find it difficult to pinpoint the influential person in as many as five classes. The respondents might have felt threatened by these questions in that they might have felt an implication of a lack of individuality, a lack of maturity, or a lack of responsibility. Over half -- 51.5 percent -- of the respondents were over thirty years of age. This one factor might have influenced the findings in that persons over thirty might generally feel they are "mature" and, therefore, should be able to adapt to any situation and to be responsible for their own behavior.

The findings of this research on the commuter student are more-or-less in accord with generalizations made regarding the newcomer. The variables examined in this study which aided the commuter student to acquire similar knowledge, similar memories, and similar attitudes and led to the sharing of experiences and history with the student body were those variables which affected a higher degree of assimilation in the commuter student. Specifically, these variables were as follows: attendance at the orientation session, possession of the student handbook, the number of days spent on the campus, membership in college-connected organizations, previous attendance at TWU, and the similarity of age to that of the "typical" college student.

Although no final conclusions can be drawn from this study, if some of the findings and some of the propositions are valid they might provide fertile ground for more extensive or more refined studies of the commuter student and her assimilation to the college community.

A comparative study done on resident students and commuter students might reveal similarities and/or dissimilarities between the two populations which might indicate a direction for an easier or more complete assimilation of "the student" into the college community. Variables which might be studied are academic standing, specific home responsibilities, specific desires regarding assimilation, specific attitudes toward education, specific goals of education, variations in the understanding of symbols on the college campus, marginality, status,

and the role of the student in various settings. A study of the commuter students who are nursing majors and their problems of assimilation to the academic, the hospital, and the home setting might also be interesting.

Whatever their limitations the findings of this research may have some practical implications for both the community of the University and the commuter student herself. The research on the commuter student might be of value to both the University and the commuter student. The school, in the interest of the nearly one-third of the student body who are commuter students, might seek to devise a handbook designed and directed toward the commuter student based on the findings presented here. The handbook would enable her to familiarize herself with the physical, tangible surroundings of the school and the community of Denton. Also, the handbook would enable her to familiarize herself with the intangible surroundings in the traditions of the school and their history, with the facilities and services available to her, and with the values, goals, expectations of students and faculty at the Texas Woman's University. A handbook, by definition, would facilitate the commuter student's learning process by having the information in a concise form at hand rather than in an irregular series of announcements, letters, or sheets of mimeographed paper. The handbook could be mailed to those students making application for admission to TWU who do not also make application for dormitory reservations. A calendar of events would enable the commuter student to

familiarize herself with events and activities considered important by the school. The University might also designate a specific person on campus who would know the policies and regulations of the school with respect to degree programs, procedures, dress regulations, etc., who could counsel with the commuter students regarding their problems, needs, and concerns.

The commuter students might benefit from the study by the realization that the availability of information, events, and publications are of no value to her unless they are used, attended, or read by her. The commuter student might become aware that her assimilation into the community of TWU is partially her decision based on her desires and needs, her willingness to be involved, her willingness to exert the effort needed in availing herself of the resources, facilities, and services which are made available to her by the University.

The practical relevance of the findings for the commuter student and for the academic community rests upon the assumption that both are aware of the needs and expectations of the other, that both are willing to put forth some effort, and that both will utilize the energies, services, and resources of the other for the good of the commuter student and the Texas Woman's University.

APPENDIX A

COVER LETTER AND QUESTIONNAIRE ON THE
TWU COMMUTER AND HER NEEDS AND CONCERNS

Dear Fellow Commuter Student,

The commuter student has not recently been studied nor consulted about her feelings, needs or desires. This questionnaire concerning your thoughts and opinions and facts about you is one of the first directed toward the commuter student, and it will be used as a basis for my thesis which is a requirement for a Master's degree in Sociology. I need you to fill out the questionnaire and return it to me before January 15, 1970; your answers are most important to me, and I would appreciate your cooperation.

Your name does not appear on the questionnaire and you are not asked to sign it. There is a code number which is for my convenience, but YOU, as an individual, will never be identified nor quoted in the research. The information gathered will be grouped and reported only as percentages or averages (eg., A certain percentage of commuter students are married and have so many children, or The library is used as a meeting place by a certain percentage of commuter students.). Most of the questions have no correct or incorrect answers; they are asked only to ascertain your opinion or feeling. Therefore, please feel free to answer the questions honestly and frankly.

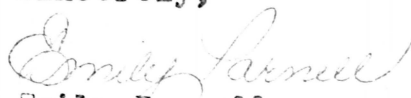
Many of the questions have several possible answers. Please circle the most appropriate answer (only one answer unless otherwise directed). You may circle either the entire answer OR the letter in front of the answer you desire to give (eg., Classification: a) Freshman OR b) Sophomore, etc.).

Please bring the questionnaire back to the campus after the holidays and drop it in the receptacle marked "COMMUTER QUESTIONNAIRES" in any of the following places:

- 1) the Sociology office - 3rd floor CFO building
- 2) the Sociology bulletin board - 2nd floor Arts
& Science building
- 3) the Commuter Room on the 1st floor of the new
Student Center.

I thank you so much for your cooperation and your precious time. Hopefully we shall have a clearer picture of the commuter student at TWU and her problems, needs and concerns. A copy of this thesis will be in the library by the summer of 1970 - in case you are curious about the findings.

Sincerely,


Emily Parnell
13227 Veronica Road
Dallas, Texas 75234

COMMUTER QUESTIONNAIRE - page 2

20. I spend the following number of days each week at TWU: a) 1 b) 2
c) 3 d) 4 e) 5 f) 6.
21. I usually travel to school: a) Alone b) Carpool of 2
c) Carpool of 3 d) Carpool of 4 e) Carpool of 5.
22. The members of my carpool are: a) from my immediate neighborhood
b) from my area of town c) other (please specify)_____
23. I spend the following number of hours on school-related activities
(dressing, study, travel, meetings, time in class, etc.)
a) on regular class days_____ b) on days I do not attend class_____
24. When on campus, I usually meet my friends: a) Commuter Room in Sub;
b) elsewhere in the Sub; c) in the Library; d) Voertman's building;
e) other (please specify)_____.
25. Most of my on-campus friends are:
a) resident students only d) faculty members
b) commuter students only e) other (please specify)_____
- c) both resident and commuter students
26. My closest friend on campus is a
a) resident student d) staff member
b) commuter student e) other (please specify)_____
- c) faculty member
27. I attended an orientation session for new students when I first came
to TWU. a) Yes b) No
28. If the answer to number 27 is "Yes", did you find the session to be
beneficial to you? a) Yes b) No
29. If the answer to number 27 is "No", what was your reason for not
attending?_____.
30. Do you have access to THE DAILY LASS-O? a) Yes b) No
31. If "Yes", do you read THE DAILY LASS-O?
a) Always b) Sometimes c) Rarely d) Never
32. I usually pick up my copy of THE DAILY LASS-O in (please specify place)
_____.

33. I usually eat my lunch or snack

- | | |
|----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| a) in the Sub | e) in one of the restrooms |
| b) in the Commuter Room | f) in the Faculty cafeteria |
| c) at the drugstore | g) other (please specify) _____ |
| d) at the ice cream parlor | h) I don't eat |

34. I know the Villagers Club is

- a) a club for all commuter students
 b) a club for Senior Citizens
 c) a club for commuter students living in Denton County
 d) a club about which I have not heard
 e) other (please specify) _____

35. The Honor Code applies to:

- | | |
|----------------------|---------------------------------|
| a) resident students | d) all students |
| b) commuter students | e) other (please specify) _____ |
| c) graduate students | |

36. I know when elections on campus are held.

- a) Always b) Most times c) Sometimes d) Never

37. Commuters are so regimented on this campus that there's not much room for choices even in personal matters.

Strongly Agree Agree Undecided Disagree Strongly Disagree

38. I, as a commuter, want to be involved in campus activities.

- a) Yes b) No

Why? _____

39. If my instructor asked me to come to the school on a day I am normally not on the campus, I would

Come Gladly	Come Grudgingly	Undecided	Not Come Feel Guilty	Not Come Not Feel Guilty
-------------	-----------------	-----------	----------------------	--------------------------

40. Who do you feel most influences your behavior in the classroom?

- | | |
|----------------------|---------------------------------|
| a) resident students | d) staff members |
| b) commuter students | e) other (please specify) _____ |
| c) faculty members | |

41. I feel the following way about voting in campus elections:

- a) It's the only way to help make changes in school policies.
 b) My vote doesn't make any difference.
 c) Undecided
 d) Other (please specify) _____

42. When I see a faculty member carrying a single long-stemmed red rose wrapped in florist paper, I think

- a) someone is buttering her up.
- b) she has a rose garden.
- c) she has been honored by someone.
- d) ignore the whole thing.
- e) undecided.

43. I always feel "an hour late and a dollar short" when it comes to hearing about campus activities.

Strongly Agree Agree Undecided Disagree Strongly Disagree

44. Who do you feel was the most help in your finding materials, books, resources for use in your studies?

- a) resident students
- b) commuter students
- c) faculty members
- d) staff members
- e) other (please specify) _____

45. I am a member of a particular department here at TWU; if I were asked to help decorate tables for the annual banquet, I would be

Glad Willing Undecided Not Willing Resentful

46. If I see a stranger cut a piece of cake across the length of it and turn the pieces so that the icing is on the inside, I would think

- a) what a peculiar nut!
- b) what poor manners.
- c) that's a TWU student!
- d) ignore the whole thing.

47. Many times I feel that I have little influence over the things that are happening to me here at school.

Strongly Agree Agree Undecided Disagree Strongly Disagree

48. Who do you feel most influences your behavior on the campus?

- a) resident students
- b) commuter students
- c) faculty members
- d) staff members
- e) other (please specify) _____

49. I ignore campus politics. a) Yes b) No

Why? _____

50. The person I like least on the TWU campus is a

- a) resident student
- b) commuter student
- c) faculty member
- d) staff member
- e) other (please specify) _____

51. If I hear of a group of girls celebrating an engagement by sitting in a circle and passing the ring around in a hollowed out white satin pillow, I think

- a) That's a TWU tradition
- b) That's not a TWU tradition
- c) I really don't know.

52. Commuters have no collective way of making their voices heard in the TWU community.

Strongly Agree Agree Undecided Disagree Strongly Disagree

53. THE UNIVERSITY WOMAN, which was available during fall registration, has been a helpful guide to me.

a) Yes b) No

Why? _____

54. Who most influences your choice of hemline for on-campus wear?

a) resident students d) staff members
b) commuter students e) other (please specify) _____
c) faculty members

55. The "Ready Reference" sheet, which was available during registration, has been helpful to me. a) Yes b) No

Why? _____

56. Did you go to the reception for new students held in early fall?

a) Yes b) No

Why? _____

57. If I am asked to stay and meet with a group after class hours, even if it is not possible that particular time, I am usually

Glad Willing Undecided Not Willing Resentful

58. I see signs and posters indicating a campaign for CGA officers; voting day arrives and I

a) Vote b) Plan to vote, but don't c) Undecided d) Plan not to vote

59. I feel commuters need some voice in those affairs of the campus which affect the commuter student.

Strongly Agree Agree Undecided Disagree Strongly Disagree

60. I would be willing to work in some way to enable commuters to have a voice in campus affairs.

Strongly Agree Agree Undecided Disagree Strongly Disagree

61. I do not feel one unified voice for commuters would make any difference in the policies of the school.

Strongly Agree Agree Undecided Disagree Strongly Disagree

62. The person I admire most on the TWU campus is a

a) resident student d) staff member
b) commuter student e) other (please specify) _____
c) faculty member

63. To say I am a student at TWU makes me

- | | |
|----------------|------------------|
| a) Proud | d) Hesitant |
| b) Pleased | e) Uncomfortable |
| c) Indifferent | |

64. Please rate yourself on the following characteristics as you see yourself in the TWU community in column I. Ratings are from 1 (low) to 5 (high). 3 is average. Thus, if the trait is "friendly" and you feel you are friendlier than average, you would rate yourself 4; if you feel you are very friendly, rate yourself a 5.

Then rate yourself as you think resident students would rate you in column II; as you think commuter students would rate you in column III; and as you feel faculty members would rate you in column IV. Please use the same rating system as above.

CHARACTERISTIC	Self-rating	Self as rated by resident students	Self as rated by commuter students	Self as rated by faculty members	
1. Happy disposition					
2. Friendly					
3. Enthusiastic					
4. Intelligent					
5. Admits Own Faults					
6. Dependable					
7. Loyal					
8. Honest					
9. Industrious					
10. Looks at things Objectively					

65. Please feel free to make any comment, suggestions regarding this particular questionnaire or any aspect of campus life in the following space or on the back of this page.

THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR TAKING YOUR PRECIOUS TIME TO ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS.

APPENDIX B

SUMMARY OF AREAS TO BE STUDIED AND
QUESTIONS RELATED TO THESE AREAS

AREAS AND QUESTION NUMBERS

Assimilation:	Knowledge of traditions 34, 35, 42, 46, 51
	Willingness to participate 36, 39, 45, 57, 58
	Sentiment 63
Powerlessness:	Feelings of restriction 37, 43, 47, 52, 59, 61
	Involvement in decision-making situations 38, 41, 49, 58, 60
Self-Esteem:	64
Components of Assimilation:	27, 30, 53, 55, 56
	Meeting places 24
	Eating places 33
Role Paradigm:	Influence and help 40, 44, 48, 54
	Friends 25, 26
	Least and most liked 50, 62
Descriptive:	1-8, 10-14, 16, 18, 20, 22

APPENDIX C

MAP OF DISTANCES TRAVELED
BY THE COMMUTER STUDENTS

NORTH



OKLAHOMA

ARKANSAS

WICHITA
FALLS

TEXAS WOMANS
UNIVERSITY

DENTON, TEX.

DENISON

GAINSVILLE

PARIS

SHERMAN

FORESTBURG

PILOT POINT

SANGER

AUBREY

CELINA

DECATUR

KRUM

JUSTIN

FRISCO

ARGYLE

ROANOKE

LEWISVILLE

IRVING

HURST

FORT WORTH

ARLINGTON

GRAND PRAIRIE

DALLAS

MESQUITE

LANCASTER

KAUFMAN

WAXAHACHIE

HILLSBORO

WACO

CORSICANA

GLADEWATER

LONGVIEW

TYLER

GREENVILLE

PLANO

RICHARDSON

GARLAND

MCKINNEY

LAKE DALLAS

BRIDGEPORT

PARADISE

MINERAL WELLS

WEATHERFORD

TEXARKANA

RED RIVER

TEXAS

10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100 110 120 130 140 150 MILES

TEXAS

NOTE:

MILEAGE SHOWN IS BY AIR - ADD
APPROX. 10% FOR ROAD
DISTANCE FROM DENTON, TEXAS
COMMUTER STUDENT RESIDENCE
TOWNS UNDERLINED

APPENDIX D

LIST OF HUSBAND'S OCCUPATION
OF COMMUTER STUDENTS

Accountant	Doctor
Airline	Editor
air traffic	Electrician
air traffic control instructor	Electronic technician
flight engineer	
flight simulator technician	Engineer
Armed forces	Farmer
Auto mechanic	Filing Clerk
Bank representative	Foreman
Businessman	Insurance agent
Buyer	Interviewer
Cabinet maker	Lawyer
Cattleman	Machine operator
City inspector	Machine repairman
Clerk	Managers
Coach	Display
Computer	Gas company
analyst	General
marketing	Office
programmer	Personnel
Contractor administrator	Pipeline company
County commissioner	Program
	Ranch
	Sales
Dairy farmer	Minister
Dentist	Part and body shop
Draftsman	Pharmacist

Principal

Printer

Railroad carman

Realtor

Representative -
credit corporation

Retired

Salesman

Sheriff

Soil conservation

Superintendent of schools

Supervisor - oil company

Teacher

Technical writer

Television technician

Telephone switchman

Tool and die maker

Vice president -
insurance company

Warehouseman

Welder

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