Drinking Behavior in City Gangs

“Can’t you guys lay off the booze for one night? It won’t kill you.”

“You kiddin’? You can’t have a good time without a couple of drinks!”

--Junior Outlaws

Drinking as Ritual

Drinking was a central concern of all Midcity gangs. Gang members were active drinkers. Forms, circumstances, and meaning of drinking were frequent topics of discussion. Individuals maintained firm personal opinions as to the rightness or wrongness of alternative drinking practices. The one issue not swept up in the arena of concern was whether or not to drink. All group members drank—some rarely, some moderately, some seriously, some with deliberate intensity. But the alternative of not drinking at all was seldom seriously entertained. The periodic consumption of alcoholic beverages was a demand behavior for the Midcity corner-group adolescent.

Drinking was anything but a random or fortuitous activity, undertaken as an occasional response to some emergent emotional need. It was, on the contrary, deeply entrenched within the system of community mores and intimately related to many other behavioral forms. Drinking was buttressed by a variety of supportive sentiments and perceptions, and girded about by a readily accessible set of directives which apprised the drinker when to drink, where to drink, with whom
and how much to drink, what to drink, how to behave when drinking or drunk, and what reasons to forward for drinking or having drunk more or less intensively.

State law made it a crime for minors to purchase liquor, but not for them to drink it. This law, however, constituted a negligible impediment to consistent drinking since each group had developed and maintained a set of adult intermediaries or “connections” who made the actual purchase. Drinking was carried on according to well-established and predictable routines; one frequent pattern proceeded as follows: activity was initiated when a group of youngsters decided to “take up a collection” or pool their resources to establish a “booze kitty.” Obtaining enough money to buy liquor seldom posed a major problem; one reason for this was that the purchase of liquor was perceived as a major reason for obtaining money, so that the allocation of available funds to this end held high priority. Occasionally a group member with enough money would offer to “treat” the group; this was a very high-prestige act. The money was given to one of the group’s customary adult liquor intermediaries, who generally received a can of beer or pint of wine in return for his service. Group members would then embark on collective drinking. In many instances this occurred in public, and in a locale of high visibility such as a playground, a public park, the inner court of a housing project, in front of a settlement house, or on a well-traveled street corner. Drinking was open, conspicuous, and ostentatious.

As drinking progressed, behavior became increasingly boisterous and flamboyant. Sometimes the disorder was sufficiently intense as to produce a complaint to the police, who then would direct the boys to disperse and cease the disturbance. The group might then move to another public locale such as a movie theater or public sports event where their drinking was even more likely to be noticed and to evoke repressive action. Frequently a group engaged in extended drinking would seek out some form of “trouble” beyond the more readily achieved offense of being “drunk and disorderly” such as the theft of a car, burglary from a store, robbery of an individual, fighting with another corner group, damaging
following the drinking episode group members would assemble and rehash the events of their “spree.” Discussion revolved around predictable and recurrent themes—the boys boasting of how drunk they had been (“Man, was I stoned! I was out of my skull!”), what hangovers they had (“My head is as big as a basketball.”), and how much trouble they had gotten into (“...and when them cops come after me, I cut out and...”). They would tease each other about the same topics, describing to others events they had not mentioned or claimed not to have remembered (“You were so out of it you went up to this broad, see, and said to her...”). Equally frequent was a ritualized vow of abstention (“That’s it...the last time! Never again. What a head! It just ain’t worth it.”).

Although this pattern was repeated with many variations, and some of its stages could be omitted or telescoped on different occasions or by different groups, in its essential outline it provided a well-defined, sequentially developed guide to customary drinking behavior. The maintenance of this pattern was supported by many components of the community milieu and paid high returns in personal gain for its participants. The obvious fact that alcohol induces desired psychological states, while patently constituting one component of the motivation for drinking, appeared clearly secondary to the motivating power of certain symbolic meanings of drinking. Two states ardently aspired to by the boys were manliness and adulthood, and participation in culturally patterned drinking paid off handsomely in both respects.

It was clear to the boys that persistent and consistent drinking was an indispensable component of manliness. Virtually every adult male within the boys’ immediate purview drank; there was no dearth of direct models. In addition, high prestige was accorded the capacity to “drink like a man”—to consume considerable quantities of alcohol without loss of “control”—and since the significant males in the boys’ lives were sensitively ranked along this scale, it was essential that they too determine and develop their respective positions in this regard. Virtually all of the
boys' fathers drank, and it is significant that when the boys did condemn such drinking, it was not the father's drinking that was decried, but rather that he did not drink like a man. One boy, terribly embarrassed when his father staggered up to his group mates and drunkenly challenged them to fight, remarked in disgust, “Ah, him! I bet he ain't had but one shot!” Moreover, virtually every boy who evinced disapproval of his father's drinking habits was himself known to the group as a committed drinker. So well established was the belief that all adult males drank that the boys frequently made an automatic assumption that adults were drinking when in fact they were not; assuming, for example, that “cokes” drunk by adults in their presence had secretly been “spiked.”

Drinking not only symbolized maleness, but was seen as an essential attribute of adulthood. The press to achieve this badge of adult status was great. Patterned drinking was definitely established in the youngest of Project groups whose members were twelve or thirteen. Concomitant with early adolescent drinking was a pattern of anti-drinking admonition by older adolescents, young adults, and older adults—most of whom drank themselves. Particularly prevalent were injunctions by older corner-group members to their juniors—“You little kids crazy, doin’ all that drinkin”? You ain’t big enough for that.” It would appear that these injunctions were interpreted by the younger groups as an arbitrary and unjust effort to deny them the privileges and symbolic appurtenances of adulthood, and served to spur rather than inhibit drinking. In any event, it was clear that the ubiquity of adult drinking provided models for emulation whose force was insignificantly diluted by the seniors’ injunctions; the general group attitude was “If you do it, why shouldn’t we?”

Insofar as drinking symbolized manliness and adulthood it also served to denote membership in those cultural groups in which these attributes were prized. In the perceptual world of Midcity corner-group members, individuals fell into two distinct and mutually exclusive classes—drinkers and non-drinkers. Being a “drinker” was a precondition of membership in the cultural orbit of greatest
importance to group members—that of the estimable adult male—and thus was also a necessary requirement of membership in good standing in the street-corner group.

Acceptance within this milieu depended on evidence that one was a drinker; non-drinkers were regarded with considerable suspicion and not a little hostility; they were seen as essentially untrustworthy, unless they could produce an acceptable justification for not drinking—such as medical injunctions. There was a sense of ritual contamination about a non-drinker. This was demonstrated dramatically in the case of a fifteen year old Junior Outlaw who had tentatively defined himself as a non-drinker. He had developed sufficient skill in basketball to attract the attention of the Senior Outlaws and appeared to possess all qualifications except one for acceptance by the older boys, one of whom remarked, “He’s a good kid, except he don’t drink enough.” Since he would make a valuable member of their team, the older group set about deliberately to remedy the boy’s one serious defect. He was taken into a vacant lot with a pint of whiskey and urged to drink. The honor of acceptance by the older boys was a strong incentive, so the younger boy, despite his resolve, tried to drink as much as he could. He could manage only a small amount of the strong liquor so the older boys poured the rest of the bottle over his body in a ritual induction ceremony with obvious parallels to baptism. The boys used the term “baptism,” in fact, to characterize their attempt to purge the impure state of “non-drinker” and induct the boy into the company of “real” men. Following this incident, the boy began to adopt the practices and attitudes appropriate to patterned drinking, although his heart was not really in it.

**Reasons for Drinking**

Why did the boys drink and why did drinking symbolize valued objectives? Two orders of explanation emerge from the data: the set of reasons explicitly advanced by the youngsters themselves, and the more implicit principles underlying actual practice. Sometimes these two levels corresponded to one another, sometimes
they were in opposition, and sometimes had little direct relation to one another. Reasons for drinking most frequently forwarded by the boys fell roughly into five categories. Drinking was undertaken 1) as a “demanded” response to certain recurrent events or situations; 2) as a facilitative device for a range of undertakings or activities; 3) as an antidote to boredom; 4) for psychological or emotional reasons; and 5) for physical health purposes.

Drinking was considered a necessary concomitant of major life cycle events (birth, marriage, death); major holidays, secular and religious (New Year’s, Easter, Independence Day, Thanksgiving, Christmas); and events meriting “parties” or “celebrations” (graduation, departure for armed service duty, return from armed service duty, engagement, athletic victories, athletic defeats, commitment to correctional institutions, return from correctional commitment, and others). The most frequent of the regularly recurrent drinking triggers was the weekend. Saturday night drinking was demand behavior for all, but others defined both Friday and Saturday as “drinking” nights; a group of more dedicated drinkers firmly maintained the importance of Friday, Saturday, and Sunday drinking. Reasonably faithful adherence to only one of these rules—the rule enjoining Saturday drinking—would have been sufficient to insure consistent drinking.

Alcohol consumption appeared almost required as ritual sanctification of major life cycle events; one drank when a man was born, when he married, when he died. The pattern of heavy drinking in connection with death was especially prevalent among the Catholic boys, as institutionalized in the rite of the wake. Whether a holiday was secular or religious (Independence Day vs. Christmas) had little relation to the amount of drinking seen as appropriate; there was some suggestion that the more “important” the holiday, the more drinking was called for—for example, the issue of “Christmas Drinking” commanded much attention, and, in fact, drinking was particularly heavy before, during, and after Christmas.

Drinking was conceived as a facilitating agent for a wide range of important activities and a variety of contrasting circumstances. Alcohol was used to enhance
masculine camaraderie and warmth in all-male gatherings such as a stag party or a night of “hanging out” with the boys, but it was also used to enhance hatred and belligerence in hostile encounters with other groups of men. Drinking on dates or at parties was used to ease the strain of association with girls. It was utilized to help one face “showdowns” with one’s parents, or “serious” discussions with priests, judges, teachers, social workers. It helped to lessen tension preceding an important athletic contest. It frequently accompanied violative behavior. The role of liquor in connection with the public dance and violative behavior merits special mention.

Going to or putting on a public dance was a major and recurrent collective enterprise, and the issue of “drinking at the dance” inevitably arose. Two sets of factors, in clear mutual opposition, were involved. The “no-drinking” position was supported by important practical considerations. Drinking by adolescents was expressly forbidden at all locales available for dancing—public dance halls, settlement houses, church halls, etc. A group involved in a serious disturbance at such a dance would thenceforth be denied the use of that particular facility. One Project group, the Senior Bandits, having established a community-wide reputation as drunken brawlers, had exhausted every potential facility in or near the district and had to utilize various subterfuges in order hold a dance—such as persuading a “front” group to be the official dance sponsors. In addition, permitting drinking at dances posed a real danger of “outside” gangs coming to the dance, getting “liquored up,” and utilizing the dance floor as an arena for combat with the sponsoring group or its friends.

But pressures toward drinking were of considerable weight. The dance elicited two explicit definitions regarding drinking: one attended a dance to have a good time and it was definitely maintained that “You can’t have a good time without drinking!” One also encountered girls at a dance and the idea that “babes and booze” were desirably paired was well established. An equally compelling, although less explicit, reason derived from the equation of liquor use with adult status. It was important that the dance be seen as an adult rather than a “kid” affair, and one of
the best ways to forestall this possibility was the use of liquor. Dance-planning sessions included intense and extended debates around this issue; in one such debate by the Junior Outlaws a prime protagonist of the “drinking” position repeated with great insistence, “You gotta have booze at a dance! You just gotta!”

Actual practice reflected various types of compromise between opposing positions. Drinking almost always occurred, but in varying degrees of openness. Dance patrons would bring a “jug,” but retire to the men’s room for drinking or for spiking legally sold carbonated beverages. Frequently girls were used as jug bearers since policemen or other male adults had restricted access to the girls’ room. For a club to stage a dance with a minimum of drinking was considered a major triumph for the advocates of “control;” on the other hand, “getting away with” drinking at a dance also was seen as a major accomplishment.

Liquor was a frequent concomitant of many forms of violative behavior. The question of whether youngsters committed crimes because they drank or drank so as to commit crimes will be discussed subsequently. In some instances, drinking itself constituted a violation (e.g., drinking on school premises or in movie theaters); in others violative behavior was a likely consequence of collective drinking (e.g., trespassing, creating a public disturbance); and in others drinking served to facilitate planned delinquencies. Auto theft, one of the most frequent forms of delinquency, almost always occurred in conjunction with drinking.

Drinking figured in assaultive behavior in several ways. Fights between two people—sometimes members of the same group—frequently occurred in connection with drinking. Pool hall or bowling alley managers were sometimes attacked when they attempted to curb the disorderly behavior of drunken patrons. However, the type of incident where a group of drunk and aggressive youngsters decides to go out and “beat up on” an “innocent bystander”—an adult or peer not part of the group’s social network—was not recorded once for any Project group.

In the case of the “gang fight,” liquor played a different role in small scale and large scale engagements. Small scale forays sometimes grew out of drinking
sessions when a group of drinkers might suggest, “Let’s go and beat up on some of them street guys.” In the case of the full scale gang war engagement, however, a different situation occurred. In contrast to the person-to-person fight or the drinking-spurred foray, the full scale engagement required deliberate planning, recruitment of allies, formulation of strategy, and careful execution of a plan of attack or defense. Effective execution of these processes would have been impeded by uncontrolled drinking. Pre-combat consumption of alcohol served two major purposes—the psychological purpose of bolstering courage and allaying anxiety, and a ritual purpose, analogous to the use of alcohol in the group induction rite. This practice finds analogies in many primitive tribes where a war party or combat venture is preceded by pre-combat rites (e.g., War Dance of North American Indians) designed to ensure the support of supernatural forces, reaffirm group solidarity, and instill courage. In one pre-gang-fight situation the “war counselor” of the Senior Bandits, who was coordinating combat activities for the Junior Bandits, directed each member of the younger group to kneel in line, with higher status group members in front. Each boy then took one drink from a common bottle of beer held by the war leader before rising to join the battle. The amount of liquor consumed was enough to give ritual sanction to the intended action, but not enough to impair fighting effectiveness.

Drinking was seen as an appropriate facilitating agent for cross-sex interaction in general and mating activity in particular. For the younger boys especially, liquor helped to allay the anxiety and embarrassment attendant on making contact with girls, and this practical use was augmented by the cultural concept that when “babes and booze” were mixed, something special would happen. The girls were aware of the male conception that girls became more sexually accessible when drinking, and frequently drank liquor at dances or on dates. However, few of the girls drank as heavily or as consistently as the boys, and it is likely that at least some of the girls drank in cross-sex situations because they felt that such drinking would enhance their desirability in the eyes of the boys.
One reason for drinking frequently forwarded by the boys was the avoidance of boredom. “Nothin’ ever happens around here. Let’s get a jug and find a little excitement.” This particular reason was welcomed by recreation workers, settlement house workers, and others with “programs” to offer. If the boys drank because they had nothing better to do, an obvious solution would be to provide opportunities for involvement in organized recreational activities. On one level, the “boredom antidote” rationale had some validity. Past experience had shown that some sort of “exciting” involvement was indeed a likely consequence of drinking. But on another level, the rationale was spurious. It has been shown that drinking was a consistent concomitant of a whole range of events and activities—holiday observance, parties, special celebrations, athletic contests, dances, dating, and others. If one drank because of “nothing to do,” he drank even more readily when there was something to do—a dance to attend, a holiday to observe, a special event to commemorate, a game to play, a wedding or birthday to celebrate. One result of Project efforts was to fill the lives of the boys with a great variety of activities—dances, games, club meetings, and so on. However, the introduction of these planned activities into the claimed vacuum of street life had negligible impact on the frequency of drinking. As will be shown, the amount of involvement in organized activities arranged by the workers had little relationship to a reduction in drinking. For example, the Senior Bandits engaged in fewer organized activities than any other male group, while their younger brother group, the Juniors, became involved in an extensive activity program. Yet for both groups change in drinking behavior was negligible, and, in fact, the much-programmed Juniors showed a slight increase in Project-disapproved forms of drinking.

Although the effect of drinking on emotional states was evidently important, the alleviation of depression, anxiety, or subjective tension was rarely cited as an explicit reason for drinking. Using alcohol for curing the “blues” or coping with fatigue apparently was not considered “manly” or tough. Drinking to alley sorrow or disappointment was a reason more likely to be given by girls. The medicinal efficacy
of alcohol was occasionally cited as a reason for drinking, on the “good-for-what-ails-you” theory, but this reason was not given frequently, nor did the boys identify the physical ailments for which alcohol was a specific.

Reasons for not drinking were also adduced, frequently during hangovers, sometimes during intra-group debates over drinking in specific situations. During one of these debates, a Junior Outlaw claimed that drinking “keeps you broke, and you feel bad when it’s over.” It was also felt that a habitual drinker could not be trusted with group funds since he would be under repeated temptation to spend them on liquor. However, condemnation of drinking as a general practice was expressed rarely and with little conviction. The major explicit reason for limiting drinking—the conflict between liquor and physical fitness—will be treated in the discussion of controls over drinking.

Reasons for drinking explicitly acknowledged by group members—whether publicly asserted or privately admitted—were only part of the picture. Deeper influences—of which individuals were unaware or only dimly aware—played an implicit but nonetheless compelling role. The symbolic significance of drinking in contrast to its more obvious psychological functions has already been mentioned. The use of liquor symbolized manliness and adulthood—both positively by indicating directly that one was a man and an adult, and negatively by dissolving the taint of being a child. Alcohol also symbolized the identity and solidarity of the group. The boundaries of the group itself were set, in part, by whom one drank with. Within the group, drinking helped to solidify friendship bonds by establishing a camaraderie with fellow drinkers and to strengthen the network of reciprocal relations by setting up a system of mutual drinking obligations revolving around who owed whom a drink, who “treated” whom last time, and so on.

Psychologically, drinking played a role on both conscious and unconscious levels. Some explicit reasons given by the boys have already been cited; drinking to alley anxiety with girls, to facilitate a “good time,” to mitigate tension before an important athletic contest or gang fight. But drinking also affected emotions in
ways of which the boys were far less aware. Two emotional areas more covertly influenced by drinking were those of aggression and dependency.

Drinking was related to aggression in several ways. The act of drinking itself could denote direct defiance. As already mentioned, the adult injunction against juvenile drinking—enforced both by law and local practice—was interpreted by many youngsters as an unjustified attempt to deny them rightful privileges, so that the pattern of drinking in public—ostentatiously, flamboyantly, defiantly—served to convey their resentment at this perceived injustice. Drinking also served to facilitate the direct expression of aggression since overt aggression was normally inhibited by fear of counter-aggression, and drinking reduced such fear. A few drinks, and a boy was ready to take on almost any adversary. But beyond this commonly recognized relation of drinking to aggression was one less obvious; drinking served not only to facilitate aggression but to legitimatize it as well.

Since fighting was recognized as a customary response to drinking, a drinker could engage in fighting or other forms of hostile behavior with a reduced feeling of individual responsibility for his actions. Forms of hostile behavior for which a sober person would be readily condemned were tolerated or even partially condoned for the drinker. He was to some extent absolved from responsibility for his acts. “He don’t really mean it; it’s just the liquor talking.” Drinking thus provided a mechanism by which personal hostility could be vented without serious disruption of one’s important social relationships since the hostile behavior could be attributed not to the personal feelings of the individual but to forces beyond his control. In the extreme situation, an individual could totally disclaim any responsibility for his actions by claiming he did not know what he was doing, thus providing a legitimate basis for acceptance of his post-drinking apologies for hostile behavior.

The role of alcohol in facilitating personal desires to be dependent was more subtle and covert than its role in facilitating aggression—since dependency was so much less admissible. While extreme expressions of aggression were generally condemned, many forms of aggressive behavior were supported and even rewarded
by the corner group; open admission of a desire to be taken care of by others, in contrast, was essentially tabooed. The consistent stress in the corner group on personal competence, the ability to stand on one's own two feet, and adult autonomy inhibited group members from expressing openly any desire to be cared for by others. Inwardly, however, such a desire was strong in many of the youngsters, and drinking provided them a vehicle for expressing dependency cravings without sacrificing prestige in the group.

Drinking—whatever its explicit rationale—frequently engendered a situation wherein the drinker found himself in the position of being protected and nurtured. Such nurturance might come about in several ways. The most direct of these was the pattern of mutual protection. An established rule of collective drinking was that the less drunk take care of the more drunk. A heavily intoxicated youngster ran serious risks of physical harm through falling down, passing out in cold weather or on the street where he could be hit by a car, and so on. To forestall such eventualities, his less intoxicated companions would “take care of him,” see that he was not hurt, revive him if he passed out, and make sure that he was returned home. Foreknowledge of this potential nurturance made it possible for a boy to let himself get much drunker with much less risk than if he were on his own. The less intoxicated were most conscientious about their responsibility for nurturing the more intoxicated, and frequently went to considerable lengths to fulfill this obligation. In one instance, members of the Senior Bandits, protecting a Junior Bandit who was severely drunk, stole a car in order to get their ward out of the cold and safely home, and when this car was smashed up, stole a second to complete their mission.

But nurturance also resulted from drinking in a way even less explicitly recognized. The discussion of correctional behavior shows that commitment to a correctional institution was frequently desired as a means of securing care, and that many of the boys equated firm restrictiveness with nurturance. Those who set out to get drunk were at least partially aware that this course of action might lead to
trouble, that trouble might lead to arrest, and that arrest might lead to incarceration—with this eventuality an implicitly held reason for undertaking the drinking spree in the first place.

Securing nurturance either through direct or indirect routes constituted an effective method of obtaining care without running the risk of having one’s autonomy or manhood called into question. Drinking was manly; getting drunk was manly; committing ostentatious crimes was more manly; being sentenced to a correctional institution as a consequence of crimes was even more manly; thus, a series of events which paid off handsomely in conferring “masculine” prestige had as a final consequence a situation of virtually complete dependency—with one’s basic subsistence needs and major day-to-day decisions taken care of by an established institutional structure.

This kind of situation elicits an issue previously raised: to what extent was violative behavior an unintended consequence of drinking and to what extent did one drink so as to facilitate the commission of delinquent acts? The case for the first alternative is simple and coincides with the rationale frequently used by the boys themselves. One starts to drink to “have a good time.” The more one drinks the less he is able to control criminal impulses, and finally, with his inner controls weakened, commits violative acts against his better judgment or due to pressures beyond his control. The basic premise of this rationale—that people are “bad” inside, or that the individual possesses an inner core of “anti-social” impulses, or that humans have a basically “sinful” or animal nature which is normally held in check by conscious control but which can slip out or escape when such control is weakened by liquor—is shared by many theological positions and some schools of psychoanalytic thought. In lower class adolescent culture this position is stated as— “I can’t figure out why I got in trouble. I guess I just got so drunk I couldn’t help it.”

Although alcohol-induced relaxation of conscious controls undoubtedly played a part in some violations by some youngsters in some instances, the weight of evidence would indicate that this process seldom operated so simply or in isolation,
and that less overtly recognized processes were of equal or greater influence. Subsequent discussion will show that the amount one drank was subject to well-established cultural controls, and that very few Project group members appeared unable to govern their actions by these rules of limitation. It would follow that drinking to the point where one knew that violative behavior would almost certainly result represented a fairly deliberate intention on the part of the individual, and that such drinking served as a means of implementing positively conceived objectives rather than producing an inadvertent immersion in a set of unsought consequences.

Since the commission of certain forms of crime served to confer prestige and could thus function as an end in its own right, and since correctional commitment as a consequence of crimes could also be a desired objective, then drinking which eventuated in these objectives could be seen as a means to an end, or a means to a means to an end rather than as an end in itself which engendered unwanted consequences. Although Project groups differed from one another and individuals within these groups also differed in this regard, the phenomenon of drinking as a culturally prescribed avenue to secondary and tertiary goals was clearly in evidence.

**Ways of Drinking**

With culturally prescribed drinking so prevalent in Project groups, one would expect to find different patterns of drinking and types of drinkers. The distinction between the “drinker” and “non-drinker” has already been mentioned; a declared “non-drinker” was acceptable to the group only under the most unusual circumstances.

Although the boys recognized several different types of patterned drinking, there was no set of categories used to refer to these types. Distinctions were based on types of drinkers rather than patterns of drinking. People would be termed “off-and-on” drinkers, “weekend drinkers,” “dead” or “far gone winos,” “winebenders,” or
“whiskeyheads.” These types were distinguished on the basis of a complex of factors, including the frequency and regularity of drinking, the amount drunk, circumstances of drinking, type of beverage (beer, wine, whiskey), characteristic behavioral responses, and others. Although various combinations of these factors could logically produce an almost continuous scale of drinking types from “very light” to “extremely serious,” it will be necessary to distinguish only four major types. These refer to “patterns of drinking” rather than “types of drinkers” since the same individual or group could and did utilize different patterns at different times or shift from one pattern to another. General designations and some characteristics of these four patterns follow:

**Four Patterns of Drinking Behavior**

- **Light Drinking:** Occasional, not regularly recurrent, amount small. Beverage generally beer, drinking as “expected” requirement of collective situation. Intoxication infrequent, “normal” functioning essentially unimpaired.
- **Moderate Drinking:** On regular schedule, every Saturday, sometimes Friday or Sunday as well; also on all “demand” occasions (parties, celebrations, holidays, etc.). Beverage beer or whiskey, amount moderate. Overt reason to “have a good time.” Intoxication or hangover infrequent. Other demands may take precedence over drinking. Seldom during day, in “private” and/or “appropriate” situations, not ostentatious. Slight impairment of “normal” functioning.
- **Heavy Drinking:** On regular schedule, other times as well. Weekend and demand-occasion drinking, also on weekdays, during day. Whiskey, wine, beer, considerable amounts. Overt reason to “raise hell.” Intoxication or hangover frequent; considerable impairment of “normal” functioning, few other demands supersede drinking. Frequently in public and/or “inappropriate” situations, ostentatious.
- **Serious Drinking:** Irregular or sporadic. Wine, whiskey, beer, frequently during day, large amounts, extended periods without sobering up (“bender” pattern), smaller groups of drinking companions, sometimes alone, few other demands allowed to interrupt or take precedence over drinking. Greater stress on “psychological” reasons (job loss, love loss, etc.). Intoxication frequent, substantial impairment of functioning.
These four “patterns” do not correspond directly to invariable types of behavior, nor was each cited feature characteristic of that pattern alone; rather, the four patterns represent “ideal” types which were seldom duplicated in actual behavior.

Project groups differed from one another in the number of individuals adhering to a given pattern; some groups such as the Molls and Junior Outlaws contained mostly “light” and “moderate” drinkers; most of the Senior Bandits followed the “heavy” pattern. In addition, although individual group members tended to maintain a given pattern quite consistently, individuals did move back and forth between different patterns depending on a range of life circumstances; for example, some moved from a “moderate” to a “heavy” position during the summer or other vacations. Further, various factions within groups tended to espouse different patterns; there was almost always a “more” and “less” heavy drinking faction in each group, although the opposing positions could be maintained by proponents of the “light” versus “moderate” pattern in one group, and “moderate” versus “heavy” in another.

The majority of male group members followed patterns two and three; the number following pattern four—a consistent pattern of heavy drinking—was low. Of 125 youngsters whose drinking habits were known, only three could be considered “serious” drinkers. This scarcity of “serious” drinkers calls for an explanation. As already shown, many forces pressed in the direction of heavy drinking; drinking had a high prestige pay-off—most adult “models” drank; liquor was readily available, and allocation of funds for liquor held high priority; drinking was “demand” behavior in many recurrent situations; important psychological needs of the boys were met directly or indirectly through drinking. Furthermore, it has been claimed that “moderate” drinking is particularly difficult for adolescents, who have not yet established a reliable set of internal “controls” in this regard. But counterpoised to these pressures toward “serious” drinking was an effective “control” mechanism—the definitions of proper “limits” of drinking maintained and sanctioned by the group itself.
Controls Over Drinking

Drinking behavior—in common with other behavioral forms—involves at least four separable facets. One is what people actually do; a second concerns the reasons they give in public for what they do; a third involves their deeper more private reasons or motives; a fourth facet is their conception of what they should do—their image of “correct” or “proper” behavior.

These four facets, or any set of them, may correspond or may differ one from the other. For example, people may give others different reasons for their actions than they privately admit. Discrepancies very frequently exist between what people do and what they think they should do. Previous sections have discussed actual patterns of practice—the first facet—and reasons for drinking, both explicit and implicit—the second and third facets. What was the groups’ conception of “correct” drinking behavior?

For all male groups, with the possible exception of the Senior Bandits, the pattern of “moderate” drinking represented the “ideal” norm. This pattern provided a clear conception of how one “should” drink and behave while drinking. One should drink to “have a good time”—to grease the wheels of social interaction. One should recognize his “limits” and not drink to the point of intoxication. Active and intense argument with one’s group mates was appropriate, but should not move over into undue bellicosity. When members of other peer groups were involved, a higher degree of belligerence was condoned. However, as in the in-group situation, belligerence should not reach the point of provoking counter-aggression—unless such provocations were deliberately intended. The most “appropriate” times for usual non-holiday drinking were nights and weekends; drinking during the day or on weekdays was looked on with some suspicion. One should drink enough to “show” he had been drinking, but not enough to seriously impair physical functioning, either while drinking or for forthcoming athletic activities. There were
“appropriate” and “inappropriate” locales and circumstances for drinking; one should not drink in church, during confession, during athletic contests, in the presence of most adult women of higher social status, in the presence of some adult men of higher social status. One should not drink, limit drinking, or drink surreptitiously in many public situations—in school, at most sports events, on public transport vehicles, and elsewhere.

Group definitions of more and less “appropriate” circumstances for drinking served as “natural” or culturally inherent devices for limiting drinking. These definitions were reviewed, modified, and reinforced by recurrent discussion where the major issues were whether to drink and how much to drink under what circumstances. The most highly charged of these issues concerned drinking and physical fitness. The inherent conflict between alcohol and good physical condition was a dominant concern not only of corner-group members but of the entire male population of Midcity. Two major bases of masculine prestige were physical prowess—as manifested by athletic skill, muscular strength and physical endurance—and drinking prowess—as manifested by the amount one could drink without loss of control and how frequently he drank. It is evident that these two bases of prestige were mutually inconsistent. Recurrent forms of behavior reflected various attempts to reconcile the conflicting demands of drinking and physical fitness.

Group members would drink heavily the night before an athletic contest and appear for the event in limited numbers, late, and with “big heads.” Although the boys were generally able to put a team on the field, their performance would be characterized by faulty coordination, limited stamina, and varying degrees of physical impairment. If defeated there would be fervent vows of abstention—“Never again! You just can’t mix booze and baseball (or football, or basketball, or boxing).” However, a creditable performance under these circumstances conferred higher prestige than victory without the handicap of a hangover; it was doubly the sign of a man to perform ably in the aftermath of heavy drinking. The nation’s major
example of the capacity to drink heavily and maintain the ability to perform prodigious physical feats, John L. Sullivan, learned his drinking habits on the street corners of Midcity.

For the average group member, however, too frequent resort to this double-pay-off route to prestige was not feasible; the boys were well aware that continued heavy drinking would inevitably result in physical deterioration. Stories were told of boxers or baseball players who had fallen from the heights or ruined their chances to rise by hitting the bottle too much. Since few gang members were so “tough” as to disdain athletic prowess as a badge of manliness, the prevalent concern over the deleterious effects of drinking on physical fitness served as one of the most effective cultural curbs to excessive drinking.

Another issue of considerably less concern involved drinking and church attendance. The consensus of one group was that drinking was appropriate both immediately preceding and immediately following confession or mass, but not during. The “before-and-after-but-not-during” rule was also applied in other situations such as club meetings and athletic contests. Although the boys were quite familiar with the code governing “correct” drinking behavior, each of its strictures, as might be expected, was violated at some time by all group members, and fairly often by a few. Drinking undertaken with the expressed intention of “having a good time” would often become heavier and move in the direction of “trouble.” This is not surprising. Violation of one of the many circumscribing rules could easily result when one’s “limits” were even slightly exceeded.

Often a stated resolve to limit drinking did not reflect actual intention. The frequently expressed sentiment “I’m gonna cut down on my drinking” sometimes indicated real dissatisfaction with one’s drinking behavior, but at other times it was primarily an attempt by a neophyte drinker to earn prestige by assuming the customary attitudinal stance of the mature and experienced drinker. Even when the resolve was quite genuine, however, implicit motives could outweigh intentions to adhere to the ideal. For example—although the “correct” pattern called for a curb on
highly aggressive behavior while drinking, drinking also served, on a more implicit level, to legitimize aggression, as has been shown. When these two definitions came into conflict, the more implicit pressure often superseded the conscious resolve. Thus deep cultural influences both limited and sustained drinking; just as cultural proscriptions served as vehicles of control, so did prescriptions undergird customary drinking with more than enough force to sweep away the repeated vows to “lay off for good this time.”

Despite infractions, however, the conception of “correct” drinking behavior made its influence felt. A boy who supported the correctness of “moderate” drinking but occasionally drank heavily was aware of the discrepancy between action and ideal, and this awareness served as an implicit inhibiting force. Considerably more explicit were the sanctions brought to bear by one’s group mates. These were roughly of three kinds, each of increasing severity. A boy who manifested “inappropriate” drinking behavior, if not too severe or frequent, was subject to persistent but kindly teasing. His indiscretions were pointed out, mocked, sometimes mimicked in a mixture of gentle reprove and restrained admiration. More frequent or severe transgressions evoked serious accusations, angry imputation of blame, and direct injunctions to “straighten out” or else. The “or else” could mean exclusion—the group’s ultimate sanction—or the categorization of a group member as “crazy” or abnormal—“What’s the matter with him—he’s drinking like a crazy man...” This was almost equivalent to exclusion since the group had low tolerance for “craziness.” This was one reason why groups included so few “serious” drinkers.

The failure of the group to apply limiting sanctions and the resultant assumption of “heavier” drinking patterns frequently meant that drinking was being used as a semi-explicit instrumentality of demand or symbol of discontent. For example, a group who resented exclusion from a recreational facility or program would quite deliberately adopt a pattern of conspicuous and “trouble”-oriented drinking as one means of signaling their dissatisfaction.
Despite the fact that the set of prescriptions and proscriptions governing drinking behavior was well defined and quite effectively enforced, group members had limited confidence in these group-originated control mechanisms. One reason was that they were not explicitly aware of the existence of their own code. In consequence, group members under certain circumstances sought out curbing influences which originated outside the group. Such external curbs were especially important during periods when pressures to exceed condoned limits were high (e.g., holidays, periods of intra-gang “tension,” times of police “crackdowns”) and under circumstances where excessive drinking could readily produce unwanted “trouble” (staging public dances, using public athletic facilities, attending public sports events). A major device for bringing external curbs to bear was introducing into the group milieu categories of persons who were seen as negatively judgmental toward drinking, in the hope that their presence would buttress group-originated limiting sanctions.

One such category of individuals was women, although the perceived curbing potential of different categories of women was by no means uniform. Adult women in general were seen as a reasonably effective curb. Drinking heavily in the presence of one’s mother was for the most part disapproved, although this stricture was weakened if the mother herself was a heavy “drinker,” and also by the notion that drinking was more permissible in the presence of relatives. One boy, chastised for drinking in the presence of his mother and aunt, countered with, “What the hell, they’re only my family...” Another boy justified his heavy drinking on the grounds that he was trying to teach his heavy-drinking mother a lesson.

Female peers also served as drinking curbs, but as in the case of adults, the curbing potential of different categories of girl varied. Bringing a girl to a dance was one way to limit drinking since boys with “dates” were permitted to drink less heavily without losing face. On the other hand, the presence of girls who themselves drank or evinced little censure of drinking had little inhibitory force, and in fact could spur drinking on the assumption, already cited, that a mixture of “babes and
booze” could have pleasant consequences. As shown in the discussion of sex and mating, the distinction between “nice” and “bad” girls reportedly prevalent elsewhere had limited force in Midcity. This kind of distinction, however, was reflected in the fact that unknown girls from other areas were often assumed to be of higher status or more judgmental than familiar local girls, and thus had a somewhat greater limiting influence than neighborhood girls. On the other hand, the position on drinking attributed to those in the category “wife” was definite and unambiguous. Wives were seen as dedicated partisans of a consistently uncompromising “anti-drinking” position, and fear of violent physical retribution by one’s wife was occasionally given as a reason for limiting drinking.

Priests and other clergymen were seldom cast in the role of drinking curbs. The general position of the church, and of the priest as its representative, was perceived as unrealistically extreme and thus of little use. To be effective, an agency of limitation had to recognize the inevitability of some measure of drinking, and within this basic premise press for the maintenance of reasonable limits. Suggestions to have priests or other clergymen serve as adult sponsors of dances or parties were rejected on the grounds that their expectations with regard to appropriate patterns of drinking were unrealistic. Similarly, a social worker or recreation worker known to maintain a rigid stand in regard to drinking would be avoided.

**Differences Among Groups in**

**Disapproved Forms of Drinking Behavior**

Midcity gang members, as has been shown, maintained definite conceptions of what constituted “acceptable” and “unacceptable” forms of drinking behavior. These conceptions derived from the cultural system of the corner group, and reflected general standards of lower class adolescent culture. Project workers, for their part, were obligated by virtue of their job mandate to secure adherence to
drinking standards derived from the cultural system of middle class adults. In theory, therefore, the effectiveness of the workers’ efforts would have to be judged according to their success in inhibiting those forms of behavior which failed to accord with adult middle class standards. In actual practice, however, workers developed a set of criteria of “acceptable” behavior which fell somewhere between the standards of the middle class adult and those of the lower class adolescent. In regard to adolescent drinking, for example, the general attitude of most middle class adults could be summed up quite simply; adolescents, especially younger ones, should drink minimally or not at all.

Project workers, through their experience in the community, soon came to realize that the pattern of adolescent drinking was far too well entrenched to make its abolition a feasible objective. For one thing, they realized that this would be difficult or impossible; nor were they, as individuals, particularly adverse to “controlled” adult drinking. In fact, given the community definition that non-drinkers were “strange” or essentially untrustworthy, a militant anti-drinking stance would have seriously jeopardized their chances for community acceptance, especially during early phases of contact. The workers thus put their support behind those alternative drinking practices least likely to produce detrimental consequences—supporting, for example, private rather than public or “moderate” rather than “heavy” drinking.

It is necessary, therefore, to measure the effectiveness of the workers’ efforts against a set of “normative” standards which represented a compromise between adult middle class standards and those of the adolescent lower class. On this basis, behaviors which the workers supported or condoned will be called “approved;” those they opposed will be called “disapproved.” Forms of “approved” and “disapproved” behavior in the area of drinking are cited in Table 1.10. These forms, as in the case of other listings, were derived through consideration both of evaluative statements
made by workers and of their actual practices in supporting or opposing given forms of behavior.\footnote{Appendix reference to rationale, derivation, method, and use of “disapproved” index.}

In addition to the distinction between “approved” and “disapproved” forms of behavior, Table 1.10 incorporates a distinction between “action” and “sentiment.” Previous sections have stressed the importance of considering both what people claim to favor and what they actually do as a basis of analysis. In this study, the term “action” will refer to behavior actually observed to occur (refusal to join drinking party), and the term “sentiment” to statements of intention (“I'm gonna lay off booze from now on.”) or attitude (“Boozin' just don’t pay off!”). The “action-sentiment” distinction, as will be seen, is of critical importance since these two levels of behavior frequently showed differing or even directly contrasting trends.

It is important to examine the general “standing” of each of the Project’s seven analysis groups in regard to disapproved behavior. Were the groups which showed higher levels of disapproved behavior male or female, white or Negro, older or younger? Table 2.10 ranks the seven groups according to the amount of disapproved behavior engaged in by each during the entire study period, ignoring, for the time being, changes through time. While such changes did occur, standings in drinking behavior remained relatively stable, with appreciable change occurring in only one instance. These data provide an additional dimension to the foregoing description of drinking behavior by showing how factors related to age, sex, ethnic and social status influenced the patterning of “disapproved” behavior, and also provide one kind of baseline against which to measure change trends.
### Table 1.10

**Forms of Drinking Behavior**  
(Relative to Project Evaluative Position)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Actions Approved by Project</th>
<th>Sentiments Approved by Project</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) Avoidance of drinking, “drinkers,” drinking places</td>
<td>1) Stated intention to limit or curtail future drinking, avoid association with “drinkers”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) Private in preference to public drinking</td>
<td>2) Disapproval of serious or uncontrolled drinking; support of limited or controlled drinking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) Refusal to buy or accept liquor</td>
<td>3) Stated intention to drink privately rather than publicly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) Discouraging, prohibiting, attempting to limit drinking</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5) Reducing frequency of drinking</td>
<td>Sentiments Disapproved by Project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6) Encouraging, engaging in moderate rather than heavy drinking</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7) Refraining from public display of purchased liquor</td>
<td>1) Stated intention to increase or continue drinking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8) Control of, attempts to control disorderly drunken behavior</td>
<td>2) Approval of continual or heavy drinking</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Actions Disapproved by Project</th>
<th>Sentiments Disapproved by Project</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) Getting drunk, going on drinking sprees</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) Public in preference to private drinking</td>
<td>3) Stated intention to drink openly or to behave drunkenly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) Association with “drinkers,” frequenting of drinking places</td>
<td>4) Bragging of one’s drinking prowess or capacity; belittling drinking prowess, capacity of another</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) Purchasing, arranging for purchase of liquor</td>
<td>5) Defining drinking as inevitable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5) Encouraging, supporting, arguing in favor of drinking</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6) Increasing frequency of drinking</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7) Public display of purchased liquor</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8) Resisting efforts to control disorderly drunken behavior</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Considering the drinking behavior of all group members during the full study period, “disapproved” actions, as shown in Table 2.10, were about four times as numerous as “approved” actions. Comparing the all-group figure of 78.4% “disapproved” actions to other forms of behavior shows that drinking was second
only to theft in relative frequency of disapproved actions. On the level of sentiment, however, approved sentiments were expressed just as frequently as disapproved sentiments, so that drinking sentiments ranked just about midway in comparison to other areas of behavior. It is thus evident that sentiments expressed by group members regarding drinking did not correspond to their actual actions. The discrepancy between word and deed in this area was among the highest of all behavior areas, with disapproved actions exceeding disapproved sentiments by almost 30%. This finding accords with the discrepancy between the ideal and the actual in drinking practice already discussed; if what group members said about their drinking behavior rather than what they did had been taken as the basis of analysis, a misleading picture would have emerged.

What were the characteristics of those Project groups which manifested higher levels of disapproved action? First, it is of interest to note how similar the groups were in their disapproved-action standings. Five of the seven fell within six percentage points of one another—an unusual degree of closeness in the face of differences in age, sex, and ethnic status. However, an examination of group standings in regard to these latter factors reveals quite a clear pattern.

The three older male groups ranked at the top; the Negro female group at the bottom; the two younger male groups and the white girls occupied an intermediate position. These standings furnish some evidence as to the relative influence of sex, age, class status and ethnic status on drinking patterns. The association of these factors with disapproved drinking actions was as follows:
This suggests that there was a fair relation between being of lower social status and engaging in disapproved drinking actions, and the best relation with a combination of being older, male, and of lower social status. These findings can be clarified by considering the forces previously discussed which served to inhibit or impel drinking. Established drinking was the badge of a man—denoting both adulthood and manliness. The older boys, whether Negro or white, more or less socially aspiring, did more disapproved drinking than either the younger boys or the girls. This would indicate that patterns of drinking became more entrenched as the boys grew older. Thus age and sex would appear to have been the major factors related to the amount and seriousness of drinking. What was the role of ethnic and social status?

Within each of three groups—older boys, younger boys, and girls—groups of lower social status ranked higher in disapproved actions. The position of the Negro groups is of note. The Negro Kings engaged in fewer disapproved actions than the other older male groups, and the Negro Queens manifested fewer disapproved actions than the white girls. It should be recalled that the Negro groups had higher social aspirations than the other groups. Both boys and girls in the Negro groups were well aware of the notion that entrenched drinking was associated with lower

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Group Characteristic</th>
<th>Correlation</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lower Social Status</td>
<td>0.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Older Age</td>
<td>0.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Older Age; Male Sex; Lower Social Status</td>
<td>0.89</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
class status and was thus detrimental to upward movement. For the girls, the strength of this definition, along with the fact that “femininity” as such was not enhanced by drinking, operated to keep their disapproved drinking behavior at a low level; for the Negro boys, however, the inhibitory influence of the conception that “drinking is lower class” was counterbalanced by the “drinking-is-adult-and-manly” idea, so that they stood at an intermediate level.

Disapproved sentiments showed quite a contrasting picture. The all-group level of disapproved sentiment was considerably lower than that of actions. The positions of the older and younger boys were reversed, with the older ranking lower than the younger. The older boys also contrasted with the younger in showing a considerably higher discrepancy between act and sentiment. The older boys engaged in more serious drinking but did less talking about it, while the younger boys drank less but talked more about how much they drank or were going to drink.

There were several reasons for this. Intensive discussion of drinking by the younger boys served to delineate and muster collective support for a pattern of behavior they were in the process of adopting; once the pattern was established, such verbal reinforcement became less necessary. Second, as has been shown, the younger boys did a great deal of boasting about what big drinkers they were to show how grown up they were; it became less necessary to flaunt drinking as a badge of adulthood as they became more adult in actuality. Third, as the boys moved into later adolescence and their social horizons widened, they became both more aware of and more concerned about negative reactions of outsiders to their drinking behavior. In an effort, therefore, to avoid outside censure, they became more secretive about their drinking so that the verbal picture they presented bore progressively less relation to actual practice. This is reflected in the high discrepancy between the acts and sentiments of the older boys, as shown in Table 2.10. For the younger boys, the act-sentiment discrepancy was quite low.

Sensitivity to outside opinion also figured in the gap between act and sentiment noted for the girls. The two girls’ groups, the white Molls and the Negro
Queens, stood at opposite extremes in regard to the discrepancy between actions and sentiments. In disapproved actions, the Molls were close to the “high disapproved” position of the boys, while the Queens ranked lowest of all groups. In sentiments, however, the Molls ranked lowest, while the Queens were close to the “high disapproved” groups. The Molls evidenced the greatest discrepancy between act and sentiment of all groups—with disapproved actions far more prevalent than disapproved sentiments, while for the Queens, disapproved sentiments outnumbered disapproved acts.

Differences in the drinking behavior of the white and Negro girls were related to the identity of their respective “reference groups”—who the people were whose reactions mattered most to them. The girls’ groups resembled each other in being more sensitive than the boys to outside reactions to their drinking behavior; they differed as to the group whose opinions concerned them most. The white girls were in fairly close contact with a number of adult women from middle class communities who maintained negatively judgmental attitudes towards female drinking. These women included staff members of a local settlement house, visiting welfare workers, and the girls’ own Project worker. Contacts with these women activated in the girls a sense of stigma over the drinking customs of the local community. The more meaningful were the Molls’ relationship to these women and the more affection they felt for them, the greater their desire to please them by expressing sentiments in line with known middle class values.

Their own drinking practices, however, continued to conform to the “high disapproved” pattern of the local neighborhood, resulting in a discrepancy between word and deed. For example, the girls defined a “nice” boy as one who did not drink; however, most of the boys they did associate with were “drinkers.” The girls also expressed disapproval of “little kids seeing drunken women all over the place;” however, most of their own mothers frequently became “drunken women.” The fact that most of the girls’ mothers, in common with many local women, were “drinkers” meant that they were not in a good position to censure the drinking behavior of...
their daughters. The “do-as-I-say-and-not-as-I-do” stand taken by the mothers had limited force; maternal example rather than maternal precept operated to establish and reinforce the girls’ drinking patterns. Some of the girls’ heaviest drinking, in fact, occurred in connection with their mothers’ drinking sprees. The Molls’ unusually high expression of “approved” sentiments in regard to drinking, then, served not only to convey an impression of support for a course of action they themselves did not follow, but also to protect their own mothers from anticipated censure by the “outside” women. Although the girls could do little to alter the entrenched drinking customs of the neighborhood, they could inform the worker that they knew of an alternative set of values, and indicate their approval of these values.

The Negro girls, in contrast, had less direct contact with “outside” women and seemed to care less about the opinions of those they did contact. Their major object of concern in this regard was the Kings, their brother group. The Queens were eager to find favor in the eyes of the Kings, whose esteem they valued highly. The Kings maintained the “entrenched” pattern of drinking practice characteristic of the older male groups; the Queens, on the other hand, whose femininity was not enhanced by drinking, and whose social aspirations made them particularly sensitive to the notion that “drinking” indicated lower class status, engaged in less “disapproved” drinking than any Project group. However, in order to appear to the boys to share with them those values which supported a heavier pattern of drinking, they expressed sentiments to drinking which were more in conformity with the heavier drinking practices of the boys than with their own. Table 2.10 shows that the Queens ranked next to the Kings in level of drinking sentiment; many of these sentiments, expressed in the presence of the boys, were designed to create an impression of support for male drinking behavior.