

FROM: McGill Studies in Caribbean Anthropology, ed. by Frances Henry. Occasional Paper Series, No. 5. Montreal: McGill University Centre for Developing-Area Studies, 1969.

Adolescent Groups and Delinquency in Mackenzie, Guyana¹

MARILYN SILVERMAN

MAJOR theoretical approaches to the study of delinquency in North America have as their bases R. K. Merton's theory of social structure and anomie.² Briefly, this formulation suggests four types of adaptation to social structure depending upon the goals and means that society defines as desirable. If common success goals are presented to the population at large, but are unaccompanied by the legitimate means for all to attain these goals, anomie and antisocial behaviour (innovation, ritualism, or retreatism) occur in contrast to a conforming adaptation.

I attempted to apply this formulation to a non-Western mining community³ with the specific intention of studying the etiology of delinquent behaviour. In brief, the findings indicate that the theory is inadequate for Mackenzie due to the nature of the particular culture that creates what would be categorized as a "nonadaptational response" in North America into a response which is an accepted mode of behaviour in Mackenzie—that is, a response of peer groupings and "liming."

¹The research for this study was carried out from May to September 1966. The work was also financed by the Research Institute for the Study of Man, in New York. Their support is gratefully acknowledged.

²R. K. Merton, "Social Structure and Anomie," *American Sociological Review*, 24, No. 3, (1959), 177-89.

³The research was done in Mackenzie, Guyana—a bauxite mining town 65 miles up the Demerara River from the capital of Georgetown. At the time, the community was relatively isolated from Georgetown and accessible only by river or jeep. The researcher spent four months in a house on the main road opposite the market.

An operationalization of Merton's theory required a study of the community means and adolescent goals. The institutional framework of occupational means had the following characteristics: National unemployment and underemployment is high. One company, the Demerara Bauxite Company, is the major employer of the community labour force. But 71.6 per cent of the company's labour force is made up of non-Mackenzie workers who have migrated to the area.⁴ Mackenzie youths (nonmigrants) form the majority of the labour force only in those areas which require commercial training, or training under company auspices. Although the rate of Mackenzie-youth (nonmigrant) employees has been increasing over the years, total employment opportunities in the company and in the community have increased only slightly over the past several years as compared with the normal increase in population plus the constant migration of people into the town. Therefore, the effect of the increase of nonmigrant employees is limited. A survey of other business establishments of the area indicates that they employ only a small labour force; hence, they cannot absorb the excess labour which could not obtain Demba (i.e., Demerara Bauxite Company) employment. Salaries are highest at Demba. Coupled with this is a situation of inflation which exists in the area since the prices of goods are geared to the higher-than-average Demba wage. Therefore, all the incentives are present to encourage labour to seek employment at Demba. But the company cannot absorb the existing or growing labour force.

In terms of educational opportunities and facilities, the following picture emerges. The school system is characterized by poor teaching, poor physical facilities and overcrowding.⁵ Furthermore, education is free only up to the end of primary school, with only a few scholarships available for attendance at secondary school. As a result, a primary school certificate is the most education that the majority of youths can hope to attain.

Recreation facilities were found to be numerous but inadequate due to the fragmentation, competition and repetition among

⁴Data on the nature of the mining labour force was collected using a 10 per cent sample of employees from the Demerara Bauxite Company's files. These files included such information as the employee's place of birth, employment history, level of education, technical training and present occupation. As such, the files were invaluable for the research.

⁵The major drawback of the educational system is that the facilities cannot possibly absorb the number of potential students.

the large number of formal clubs. Barely viable groups are created that do not appeal to youths and are therefore shortlived. Thus, although there are many youth clubs in the community, the recreation facilities are largely inadequate.

Given Merton's framework, it is necessary to compare these opportunities for employment, education and recreation with the aspirations of the youth of the area. If it is found that aspirations are greater than opportunities, one can expect a deviant response—retreatism, ritualism or innovation (delinquency).

The aspirations, studied through a questionnaire given to all students in the area over age 14, were found to be rather high, with a large proportion of the students desiring education far beyond that provided free by the government. Furthermore, the occupational aspirations implied jobs that required a high level of education. Finally, the number of students who felt that they would be able to attain their occupational and educational goals was 82 per cent of the total.⁶

In short, the questionnaire survey showed that students were highly motivated in both their educational and occupational desires with only a small minority realizing that opportunities to these goals were limited. Further, in the majority of cases, students were aware of the worth and requirements of particular jobs and had given indications that they had made specific personal commitments to obtaining the education and jobs they desire.

From the analysis of institutional means and opportunities as opposed to the explicit goals of the adolescents and the goals of young adults obtained from informal interviews, one must conclude that a situation exists such as that propounded by Merton and outlined above, that is, there are high aspirations with limited means for attaining these goals. The question thus arises as to how far the response of the community in general, and the young adults and adolescents in particular, can be of the deviant types predicted by Merton.

⁶The high percentage of unrealistic aspirations are to be found throughout the responses to the questionnaire. For example, 31.7 per cent of the male students aspired to jobs requiring university education; 70.1 per cent of the females aspired to jobs requiring specialized technical training such as nursing.

Related to this problem is the nature of social control in the community which can affect the specific type of response depending upon whether gossip, interpersonal ties, etc., serve as limitations and controls on deviant behaviour. Mackenzie has a high amount of migrancy⁷ and transiency.⁸ These tend to loosen face-to-face relationships which provided a large proportion of control in those areas from which the Mackenzie population had originally come. As such, the fact that most residents are migrants to the area, and the fact that there is much transiency of the unemployed from all over Guyana seeking work with the company, can be expected to limit controls and prevent tight community organization.

Also included in this area is the problem of overcrowded housing⁹ which tends to force individuals out of the house during their leisure hours and thus frees them to join one of the many peer or "liming" groups already active in the area.

Peer Groups and Liming

Every evening at seven o'clock, the main street of Mackenzie begins to fill up with people, mainly men, who wander in groups—large or small—from building to building in the market square, or along the major road, stopping occasionally to meet with several other men, or sitting down at a market stall to be served rum or beer, while listening to the blaring calypso or American rock-n-roll music as it pours out of two competing market stalls. Or the men might go into the rum parlours scattered throughout the back streets of the town or go into one of the three "night-spots," "punch a record" on the jukebox, gaff and drink.

⁷The extent of migrancy was measured from three sources: a) the Demba employee files which indicated each person's geographical mobility through his employment history; b) primary school records which indicated whether a child was a resident of the area at age 5, or whether the child had attended another school in another area; c) the questionnaire on aspirations which asked how long the student had been residing in the Mackenzie area. All indices showed that a major part of the Mackenzie population were migrants to the area.

⁸Transiency could not be measured quantitatively, and its occurrence has only been observed.

⁹The questionnaire on aspirations included a question as to the number of people and rooms per house. The mean is approximately 8 persons per 3.3 rooms.

Among these men are boys of all ages, who, like the older adults, walk around in groups, gaff with each other and drink rum or beer. But there are few women to be seen on the main streets. Instead, if one walks to the side streets, one may see the occasional woman entering the house of a friend. Here, no men or very few are present. If a young woman does happen to walk along the main road or pass a group of youths who are standing around gaffing, whistles and cat-calls will ensue until she is out of earshot, at which point the men in the group will continue their conversation and their drinking.

Motorcycles and the occasional car race by. The men in the group look at the licence number and identify the owner. Conversation then swings to which type of motorcycle is best, the cost of each and the practicality of getting one now that the road to the capital, Georgetown, is soon to be opened. But the problem is always how to get parts for these vehicles, and the cost of buying them at this time.

The conversation may then turn to the bauxite company and the union. They will talk about white staff men, incidents at work on that day and lapse into telling jokes and anecdotes. Talk will wander to Georgetown, and the fun each one had the previous weekend when he went to "town" and got away from Mackenzie—a place which is boring and offers people nothing to do when they are off the job.

These men and boys will soon be joined by others coming out of the cinema. Talk then switches to the movie, and if some say that it is worth seeing, several will go off to see the second and last show of the day.

Other groups of youths may sit in the park and tell jokes, and get particularly noisy if a girl passes by. They may even attempt to approach her and get her to stop and talk. They soon get up, walk around the market area, stopping to gaff every hundred yards, and then continue their stroll. In time, their total walk attains a kind of circularity so that they usually end up at the same place they began an hour earlier.

The groups will begin to thin at about eleven o'clock, and when the cinema lets out at about this time, most return home. By the time the streets have cleared of the returning shift workers who may have stopped off for a drink before going home, the area is almost deserted and the music is turned off.

What was described above is known to everyone in the community, and indeed, to most people in the Caribbean, as "liming." This is a socially sanctioned leisure time activity enjoyed by almost all men, but at the same time regarded with ambivalence. For although all state that it is an extremely enjoyable activity, they claim at the same time that it is done only because there is nothing else to do at night. This is why people say they go to Georgetown on weekends, for there, one always has something to do. But if you ask people what they do in town aside from visiting friends and relatives, they will state that they lime.

In short, the activity seems to be well liked and accepted in the value system of the people, while at the same time, the lack of formal recreation in the Mackenzie area is used as a rationale for an activity which in Georgetown needs no rationale. Liming in itself, apart from its setting, is regarded as good, but the particular situation in Mackenzie provides it with a different character than it has in other places. This character is extreme emphasis on peer group affiliation especially among the younger unmarried men and adolescents of the area.

It is at this point that it is necessary to discuss North American theories of gangs. Although sociologists maintain that many gangs are not delinquent, there is the explicit assumption that gang formation leads to delinquency.

For example, Miller's focal points of lower-class culture¹⁰ assume that the street gang is an essential mechanism for teaching these concerns to the lower class boy. Albert Cohen sees gangs as providing status for boys who are blocked from the status attainment of middle-class culture.¹¹ Thrasher maintains that the play group's conflict with legal authority and other equivalent groups transforms a harmless play group into a delinquent gang.¹²

The assumption by all these authors is that gangs are delinquent and that this is due to a hostile environment which literally forces the children into a no-choice situation, so that becoming

¹⁰W. B. Miller, "Lower Class Culture as a Generating Milieu of Gang Delinquency," *Journal of Social Issues*, 14, No. 3 (1958), 5-19.

¹¹Albert Cohen, *Delinquent Boys: The Subculture of a Gang* (Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press of Glencoe, 1955).

¹²F. M. Thrasher, *The Gang; A Study of 1,313 Gangs in Chicago* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1927).

part of a delinquent gang is the only alternative available for deprived youths.

My findings show that such a theory is inadequate to explain the situation as it exists in Mackenzie, and probably the West Indies generally.

Two sets of statistics on delinquency were gathered from the Mackenzie Police Station and from the personal files of the Probation Officer who has jurisdiction in the Mackenzie area. Both indicate, however, slightly different incidences of the same phenomenon as they were based on different methods of collection.

The Probation Officer's records indicated:

- 1964: 22 cases of juveniles brought before the magistrate. Of these, 12 involved larceny and 10 were misdemeanors.
- 1965: 50 cases of juveniles brought before the magistrate. Of these, 34 involved larceny, 1 involved assault and 15 involved misdemeanors.

The statistics from the Mackenzie Police indicated:

- 1962: 13 cases brought before the magistrate.
- 1963: 19 cases brought before the magistrate.
- 1964: 38 cases brought before the magistrate.
- 1965: 45 cases brought before the magistrate.

Although these two sets of figures differ, both indicate a low incidence of delinquency, first, in terms of the raw number of offenses, and second, in terms of the fact that in 1965 (according to additional information not presented in the first set of statistics), 31 of the 50 offenses were committed by just 11 youths. In short, there are few "delinquent" youths in the area. Most youths are one-time offenders, while a small minority cause the majority of illegal acts.

These findings demand an explanation, as other studies would lead one to expect a high delinquency rate, given the structure of means and opportunities and the proliferation of gangs in the area. One possible explanation emerges from Cloward and Ohlin's study which maintains that the individual must have the opportunity to practice criminal behaviour.¹³ It was therefore

¹³R. A. Cloward and L. E. Ohlin, *Delinquency and Opportunity* (Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press of Glencoe, 1960).

hypothesized that there may be a blockage in the illegitimate opportunity structure of the community which limits delinquent activity. An investigation was therefore made into the nature of the illegitimate opportunity structure. The results partially confirmed the hypothesis of blocked means.

First, according to reliable respondents in the police force and probation service, there is no highly organized criminal sub-structure,¹⁴ hence, many of the prerequisites for learning and practicing delinquent acts are denied the youth. There can thus be no age-grading of criminals to allow the transmission of the criminal role and no criminal structure to control, teach and absorb the youth into a profitable syndicate.

Second, there is police efficiency in certain areas of crime which makes certain illegal acts almost impossible.

Most of the managers of stores and the hucksters at the market stated that they had suffered few instances of breaking and entering, and even if they did, the culprits were caught and usually most of the goods were returned. They stated that the police do a very good job in this sphere. However, they said that shoplifting is quite widespread, and in few cases is the delinquent apprehended. A person can steal one bottle of rum at a time and sell it to anyone, for there is a ready and diffuse market for this. Or else, "someone may steal a pen for a friend and make a few dollars." In these cases, seldom is the culprit caught or the goods found. Almost all cases of theft which were reported to me were cases of shoplifting. In the one case in which a store had been broken into three times, the goods and persons responsible were retrieved each time. In short, police efficiency prevents large-scale robberies and limits stealing to minor and petty larceny and shoplifting, which results in no great loss to any one storeowner, and no great profit to any one delinquent. Further, these minor offenses do not result in the offender being caught, hence, they are not included in the crime statistics.

Police efficiency can be related to the size of the community and, thus, the difficulty of getting rid of a large amount of stolen goods. With the lack of organized crime and hence therefore, of efficient fencing, this problem is magnified. Anyone seen

¹⁴There is still the possibility that organized crime may be found in Guyana. If so, however, its effect in the Mackenzie context would appear to be negligible.

with a large quantity of goods is immediately suspect. Furthermore, people say that the police are trustworthy, and in most cases people are inclined to help them in investigations by presenting any information they may require. This too would add to police effectiveness. Finally, the police are local residents. They mingle freely with the people in their off-duty hours, and it is probably in such informal gatherings that much is learned about specific crimes.

Therefore, given police efficiency in certain areas of crime, particularly those which are profitable, and given the lack of organized crime and its implied opportunities for the learning and practicing of delinquent acts, the illegitimate opportunity structure is blocked except for the possibilities open for minor stealing.

One can then argue that the petty stealing is a delinquent response, and that, in fact, those involved in these activities—either gangs or individuals—are delinquents.

Again, the counterargument can maintain that this depends on the community's definition of delinquency.

The fact that people are willing to help the police to solve crimes of breaking-and-entering indicates that this type of crime is indeed negatively sanctioned by the community. Everyone one speaks to will say that such activities are wrong, and that the offenders should be caught and punished.

However, if people are questioned as to what should be done about shoplifting, stealing mangos, etc.—that is, those crimes which are not as serious and which are to the benefit, for example, of a person buying cheap shoplifted rum—there is no consensus and very mixed emotions on the topic. In most cases, the answer depends on the respondent's vested interests in the object stolen. For example, a person who owns a mango tree will maintain that stealing mangos is definitely illegal. But the person who does not own a mango tree, if asked if stealing mangos is illegal, will probably begin to reminisce of the time when he was young and stole mangos from under the nose of the owner.

But what about what we would term more serious stealing, such as shoplifting a bottle of rum? Here, too, the community's opinion shows no consensus. Obviously the storeowner will say it is illegal. Many men will also say it is wrong, but very few will refuse to buy a bottle at half price from a youth whose only access to the rum was by shoplifting it. In this case, actions do not

reinforce verbalized statements, hence, one cannot maintain that this activity is sanctioned as wrong and illegal by the people involved.

Thus, there appears to be a situation in which certain activities such as breaking-and-entering are regarded as illegal by general consensus. Furthermore, these deviant acts are most easily controlled by the police and thus appear in the crime statistics. However, on a different level, there are those activities about which there is no generalized sentiment or opinion. These activities also happen to be least controlled by the police and do not appear in the statistics. Further, it is the latter activities which are the most widespread of all types of "delinquency," but are the least enforced by community sanctions—positive or negative. Therefore, grave doubt can be raised as to whether these activities are "delinquent" and can be included when one is discussing a delinquent response to the environment on the part of gangs and individuals.

It is my opinion that because of the low degree of consensus on this matter, and because these minor offenses do not appear to lead the persons involved into a generalized life of serious criminal activity—as indicated by the low crime rates on the more serious offenses and by case studies—that these activities are not delinquent but form part of the total constellation of peer group activities, which in turn are part of the process of growing up in Mackenzie.

A similar problem emerges in the large amount of stealing from the bauxite company. The following recently appeared in the *Demba Digest*, a fortnightly newspaper published by the company.

All employees of Demba . . . should realize that industrial theft is as serious as industrial sabotage . . . There are too many stories of the theft of important industrial equipment. Superintendent Carmichael stressed the need for employees and the general public to co-operate more positively with the Security Department and the Guyana Police . . . It is in the interests of everyone in the organization to see that the efforts of the majority of workers are not spoilt by theft.¹⁵

This is the outsider's view of petty stealing. From the viewpoint of most Mackenzie residents, things appear differently and

¹⁵*Demba Digest*, 7, No. 3, (February 10, 1967), 1.

are bound up into the nature of community organization.

First, the company is seen as having unrestricted access to goods and services which are denied to the average Mackenzie dweller. Specifically, for example, parts for motor vehicles are difficult and expensive to obtain. However, the company has large quantities of these, and can obtain more quite easily if needed. In addition, the company is viewed as an alien institution on Guyanese soil. This feeling has become particularly acute with the advent of independence.

These factors limit any feelings of guilt that may emerge from the individual who steals from the company. But this fact is further reinforced by a system of reciprocity which exists in the community and is part of the complex of stealing from the company. This reciprocity also feeds into lines outside the company, and is tied into the total community structure. That is, workers steal from the company, and in doing so, obtain an object that a friend may need but does not have access to even though he too may work for the company. In return, the friend will do a favour for the individual who obtained the item for him. The reciprocal relationship is found outside the company as well, among people who work for storeowners. A bottle of rum is "bought" from a store, but is not paid for as the store clerk fails to ring it up on the cash register. But in return, the buyer will pay back the store employee with something he may have obtained from the company.

In short, there is widespread trading and reciprocity of stolen goods which are not readily available to the average person. It is the scarcity and the impersonal organization of the company that render this type of situation possible and efficient.

However, although we may term this criminal behaviour, it is regarded as a necessary part of life by the inhabitants of the area, and in view of the scarcity of goods, this is a realistic point of view. As such, the question of whether or not such behaviour is right or wrong becomes irrelevant to the persons engaged in such activities. And therefore, the activities cannot be regarded as deviant in that they are not treated as such by the people. In fact, the company's statement that people should cooperate with the police points to the heart of the problem. Currently, people do not cooperate in these minor thefts, for if someone sees another person tuck an object into his jacket or pants, there is little chance

that he will inform the authorities. There is a tacit agreement that this is the way things are and should be.

The existence of gangs or petty thefts by individuals in the area does not imply delinquency as defined by the local population or as enforced by them. Tacit approval is given to petty stealing, and stealing from the company. This in turn is tied into a system of reciprocity in an area where goods are scarce. Therefore, the petty stealing of the adolescent gangs leads logically into the adult system of minor stealing—but in neither case does this assume the existence of a vast delinquent subculture. For I am describing the total and major cultural patterns of Mackenzie characterized by extreme emphasis on peer groupings, maleness, and male cohesion in opposition to the company and groupings of females. Finally, these activities do not lead the individual or his group into a life of major criminal activity, nor are these activities regarded as particularly delinquent. In short, the response to the structure of the community is not one of innovation—to use Merton's terminology.

Ritualism implies the nonacceptance of culture goals with an emphasis only on the means. It is most commonly exemplified by religious cults and extreme emphasis on churchgoing. Hence, it is at this point that one must speak of the women of the community.

The married women of Mackenzie¹⁶ are largely cut off from the mainstream of employment, political conversation and other activities in which the men get involved. Most of the day is spent in keeping house and preparing meals. In view of this, one must accept the idea that their response to the structure of the community would be largely different from that of the men.

In fact, the women are extremely oriented toward churchgoing and church activities. In interviewing families, one will find that very few men, if any, attend church regularly. In fact, the

¹⁶The term "marriage" as used here is intended to take into account any of the types of unions which have been postulated for the West Indian situation. Although my data shows that 87.3 per cent of the students live in male-headed households (and this is not surprising considering R. T. Smith's hypothesis that high employment rates among males tend to eliminate the matrifocal household), the term "married women" is used here to connote any female who is recognized as being a responsible adult, and who is expected to behave as such regardless of the type of union. See Raymond T. Smith, *The Negro Family in British Guiana*, International Library of Sociology (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1956).

large majority never go at all. Not so the women. The average woman goes at least once a week and often more. At this point one must also keep in mind the separation of the sexes in all fields of recreation. Women seldom go to the cinema and to the dances. The lack of recreation facilities are substituted for by church facilities. The women of the community are thus the "ritualists."

As far as the unmarried younger women are concerned, one must remember that women marry between the ages of 16 and 20. After marriage, they are immediately absorbed by the ritualist subculture, since their husbands will join the male peer group for recreation soon after the hectic period of courtship has ended. In fact, even while courting, he will maintain ties with his male friends, often leaving his girlfriend at home alone. Since girls tend to marry soon after leaving school, there does not remain much time inbetween for them to have to adapt to a situation of complete freedom. The schoolgirl is bound to the family and her recreational activities include mainly visiting friends—girls—at their homes.

In short, therefore, the women of the community, also faced with the institutional inadequacies of the community, plus separation from male peer groups and recreation facilities, turn to the church. The men, however, are not involved in such activities, and since they are functioning constantly in the outer structures of the community, cannot be labelled ritualists, nor can one term their adaptation to the structure a ritualist one.

The final response is the retreatist one. Into this category are usually put peer groups which appear to be characterized by "hanging around street corners with nothing to do." Such a situation does occur among the Mackenzie peer groups. But it must be remembered that these groups fall within the institutionalized framework of the society. For example, the men are employed, and are, by liming, following the expectations of the consensus of the community. As such, to label these men "retreatists" would imply labelling the whole society (and indeed, the whole of West Indian society) retreatist. To apply such a North American label does not seem to be a useful procedure.

It is my opinion that despite outward manifestations of retreatist behaviour from the North American viewpoint, the men of the community are merely behaving according to expectation while at the same time these expectations fit into the institutional structure of the community.

This expected behaviour has been documented by several other anthropologists in the Caribbean, such as Y. Cohen, who maintains that there is extreme emphasis on "maleness" and separation of the sexes in all recreation activities.¹⁷ In Mackenzie, these two factors exist in that the community is small enough to allow cohesion, not as a total unit, but through networks of friendship and work relationships (among men only) that provide for consensus and communication that would not ordinarily be possible were it not for the unique work situation. Second, these men stand in opposition to a more powerful body—the company. This opposition is expressed when men speak about the company and its many directives and goals which are in opposition to their immediate desires, for example, of staying in Georgetown for an extra few days, but having to come back to work or risk being dismissed.

Despite poor employment opportunities for the youth, despite the fact that they may have to leave school before they wish, and despite the lack of recreation facilities, these factors do not create disintegration or confusion. For the expected behaviour pattern of the Mackenzie male allows the unemployed male to fit into the expected pattern to the same extent as the employed male.

This fact is further borne out if one looks at the nature and structure of the peer groups. Extensive study was made of one young adult group. A few comments will bring out the general thesis presented above.

Young adult groups were defined as those composed of all males over the age of 17 who were no longer in school and not yet married.

Marriage adds a different dimension to the groups as does the factor of no longer being in school. For the first factor definitely distinguishes the *young* adult groups from the adult groups in that the former group's main purpose can be summed up under the label of "the search for kicks." This factor tends to govern most of their activities and is not found among married individuals. It is also a verbalized distinction made both by married and unmarried men. The latter state that when they get married they

¹⁷Y. Cohen, "Adolescent Conflict in a Jamaican Community," (1955), reprinted in Y. Cohen, *Social Structure and Personality* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1961).

intend to settle down and stop getting involved in those activities which are deemed dangerous. The former often tend to reminisce about their younger days and to explain how they quietened down after taking on the responsibility of a wife and children.

Marriage and its accompanying sense of responsibility tend to distinguish this young adult group from the groups that are one level above them in terms of age and the logical progression of the life cycle.

In a similar manner, the young adult groups can be distinguished from groups which are one step lower—that is, the group of younger boys who are still in school and whose interests are slightly different from the group of young adults.

The particular group under study was made up both of employed and unemployed youths from the ages of 18 to 24. The core of the group—that is, the part that was constantly together, and limed with no other "side" (i.e., "gang" or group)—consisted of five individuals who at any particular time might be joined by several other youths. In short, the group's membership was fluid only on its periphery.

The activities of these youths exhibit the focal concerns of this age group for kicks. They would have rock fights between themselves; go for "joy rides" in land rovers that were "borrowed" but later returned; they would get into fights with other sides just to prove that they were the best fighters; and they would steal for kicks and to return a favour that was owed. The unemployed boys of this group suffered no disadvantage and in fact, one of them was the most popular in the group. The employed youths would buy the drinks for the whole group and there was the explicit assumption that the unemployed would not have to formally pay back the others, but that they would eventually do so by buying the drinks as soon as they got a job. In fact, one of the boys, who received an allowance from older employed brothers, would, as soon as he received his money, supply the group with cigarettes and drinks until his money ran out.

The fact that this group will eventually be absorbed into the adult pattern of liming is evidenced by the situation of one youth who became engaged to be married and immediately set out to find a job, whereas previously he had no intention of working at wage labour. Although the lack of a desire to work is not a general pattern, since most of the unemployed youths are seeking

jobs, this factor in the case of this particular youth was extremely pertinent in that he had been trying to build up his own business, and had wanted to see if it could work before he resorted to wage labour. In speaking with him on numerous occasions, it also became evident that after marriage he intended to stop stealing and running around in the carefree manner he had in the past. In short, he would be absorbed into the male adult pattern of liming for the purpose of passing the time, not for the sake of kicks, and of stealing merely to fulfill reciprocal obligations.

What this brief sketch indicates is that there is no distinct separation between those who are employed and those who are unemployed, as far as their membership in the young adult peer group is concerned. Thus the lack of employment and educational opportunities does not seriously hinder the unemployed young adult from fulfilling the male role in society. The above description also shows the continuity which exists at all levels of the society between the different age cohorts in terms of liming as the basic expectation of men, and the marital, school and age factors giving each level its own particular characteristics.

Merton's typology is inadequate to explain the response to the institutional structure in Mackenzie. Instead, what occurs is that the community expectation of male behaviour is the same as that behaviour generated by the institutional structure of the community.¹⁸ The result is the absence of social disintegration and confusion despite the institutional inadequacies, and the young male is able to fulfill his expected role in society.

¹⁸It should be apparent to the reader that this congruence between expected male behaviour and that behaviour generated by the social structure may possibly only exist up to a certain point in the individual's life. If, for example, he will wish or be pressured into the formation of some kind of stable union with a female, unemployment and a poor opportunity structure can become an extreme drawback and fatal to the stability of the union and the male-headed household. (See Smith, and Nancie L. Solien, "Family Organization in Five Types of Migratory Wage Labour," *American Anthropologist*, Vol. 63 (December 1961), pp. 1264-1280. However, such a situation depends upon an extensive analysis of such factors as the organization of adult male peer groups and their expectations that members be "married"; the nature of the "unmarried" and/or unemployed adult male role, etc. Such an analysis was not attempted in the course of research, but remains a possibility for further work.