

CHAPTER 3 THE RESEARCH PROBLEM: AIMS, OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE

In his foreword to Willett (1973), Mannheim notes the extent to which criminology has ignored the changes wrought by the car. The literature set out in chapter 2 and further discussed below can be seen as contributing, if only implicitly, to criminology's attempts to come to terms with the car and what is here called car culture.

There is some overlap between the literature on joyriding and motor projects because the research on joyriding has often been carried out at motor projects. Given the overwhelming preponderance of male car offenders there ought to be more overlap between these literatures and those on masculinity but other than occasional references to 'macho' this is not the case. For analytical simplicity the literature on joyriding, motor projects and masculinities will be set out separately below. First though the methods used by the researchers discussed in Chapter 2 are critically examined as they have crucially influenced what they found.

the methodologies of the literature discussed in Chapter 2

Most of the literature on joyriding discussed in Chapter 2 is focussed on why 'they' do it. So even if the researchers deploy a number of methods (and most do) the intention of the research is policy orientated. It is tempting to lump them all together as 'positivistic', as both feminists and Hammersley and Atkinson (1983) would understand it, but Briggs (1991) for instance, uses interviews, a survey and observation as well as documents (letters from joyriders in prison to their mates and the records of the agency). However, this breadth of techniques are all focussed on identifying and defining "the factors that cause and/or facilitate" joyriding (Briggs, 1991:abstract) to which end he seeks "first of all, to look at the problem of joyriding from the perspective of the young offenders involved", but only, as he goes on to admit, "as a way to determine how they make sense of their actions" (1991:3). He therefore uses some 'positivistic' methods and some more 'naturalistic' ones.

Even if the 'offender' is given the chance to give their perspective it is always on why they do it. Since he was dealing with young men who were all convicted or self-confessed joyriders the term 'offender' is technically unobjectionable but it does serve to separate them from the researcher and reader not only as the object of the research but as the officially denigrated object of research. Such an approach necessarily privileges official discourses over those of the young men he studied. Where he uses empathetic methods it is to gain the 'facts' that will be their undoing. As a former auto-engineer, Briggs was in a good position to be empathetic yet his interviews go straight to the offending, "How old were you when you first chorred (stole) a motor car," "Right Mark, I just want you to tell me, without exaggeration if you can, facts relating to twocking. You are 15 years and eight months old. How long have you been chorryng cars?" and "You're not yet seventeen. How many cars do you think you've taken unlawfully since your first one?" (1991:53,58 and 66) He then runs them through: what sort of cars; how they gain entry; where they steal from; how they drive and how fast; what their feeling for the victims are etc.

Light *et al* (1993) specifically offer the “Offender's Perspective” on “Car Theft” achieved by conducting 100 semi-structured interviews with car thieves aged 14-35 throughout England and Wales contacted through motor projects, probation day centres and NACRO training centres. However, and not unsurprising given the Home Office sponsorship, the questions on which the ‘offenders’ (again) are asked for their perspective are concerned with why they do it, and what situational measures or criminal justice sanctions are most likely to deter them.

Also officially sponsored (Sunderland Safer Cities Project) and published by the Home Office Spencer (1992) adopts a wider approach not only interviewing ‘offenders’ about all the same things that Briggs (1991) and Light *et al* (1993) do but also surveying 86 local school children about wider issues concerned with the Estate where joyriding was prevalent not asking about car theft until half way through the questionnaire. Similarly a group discussion at the local youth club focussed on why ‘friends of friends’ stole cars.

Whilst all these recent studies use surveys and sufficiently structured interviews to generate tables and graphs these positivistic methods are used to get at the meaning of the joyriders actions. However, those meanings are not in a tradition of Weberian *verstehen* but directed towards correcting the behaviour of the joyrider, the design of cars or the range of penal measures. A good picture emerges of what the typical joyrider is like, when they start, what cars they prefer, how they get into and start them, whether alarms or the criminal justice system can deter them. The settings chosen and the small samples mean that reliability might be a problem but neither my research nor any others have invalidated the findings.

One reason for this, is that the biographical and demographic details of joyriders appear no different to many other offenders, or indeed non-offenders. Thus Light *et al* (1993) found that 15 was the most common age to start (26 out of one hundred) and that most came from lower social classes, lived at home with at least one parent (44% both and 26% one parent) in homes where crime was disapproved of but not unknown. Many were unemployed (49%). Briggs (1991) mentions poverty, family breakdown, poor school achievement or attendance and inner city location. Spencer (1993) picks up on the area characteristics of the Estate 2.7% of the population had convictions or cautions for taking without consent as opposed to .08% of the population of England and Wales. It is not clear whether this is proposed as cause or effect. That is does the area have many of the people likely to take cars (for instance: poor, unemployed, carless) and therefore the figure merely records this or does the number of existing offenders itself create further deviance through ‘differential association’ (Sutherland and Cressey, 1947) or attract increased police attention to ‘primary deviance’ and thereby guarantee ‘secondary deviance’ (Lemert, 1971). The findings that joyriders sometimes truant to joyride again does not indicate the direction of causality.

These points about Briggs (1991), Light *et al* (1993) and Spencer (1993) are intended not to highlight methodological deficiencies which would invalidate their research but to note the focus and setting of their work which inevitably leads to theoretical narrowness and purely policy-related conclusions. It also leads, as Light *et al* (1993) recognize themselves, to an over

representation of offenders thought suitable for the programmes at which they were interviewed (ie later in their 'careers' but not sufficiently serious to warrant custody) and to being "uninformative on car offending within other social groups" (1993:2).

These studies clearly fall within what Young (1994) calls 'new administrative criminology'. The disposition of offenders, the meanings they attach to their offending, its wider significance nor its similarity to legitimated activity are not considered relevant. Questions about what sort of car, where they are stolen and how all help with the market research of Government, car manufacturers, car accessory manufacturers (considerable beneficiaries of car crime and fear of car crime), car park operators, police and planners etc. The class, gender and 'race' of offenders are not seen as relevant to the purely situational measures such as increased perimeter security of cars or car parks and only slightly significant in terms of criminal justice sanctions.

The only point made about class by Briggs (1991:3) is his contention that, "Middle and upper class adolescents may joyride in their parents', their friends' or even their own cars". Neither Light *et al* (1993) nor Spencer (1993) touch on these issues. Light *et al* (1993) interviewed two girls but thereafter the experience of these young women is aggregated with the young men so that throughout the report reference is made to 'young people'. Clearly two in one hundred is too small a number on which to base any statistical argument but to submerge their voice whilst claiming to be giving the "Offender's Perspective" is unhelpful. Briggs (1991) identified one girl but she refused to cooperate. 'Race' is totally ignored and as we saw in Chapter 2 Wilkinson and Morgan (1995) made nothing of the disparity between the proportion of ILPS workload who are black and those attending the Ilderton Motor Project.

As Chapter 2 shows and the discussion above emphasises previous studies of joyriding concentrate on and therefore give a good picture of the typical young, male, unemployed, white, car-mad, convicted 'joyrider'. They tell us little about joyriding as a cultural practice with roots in - and routes back to - a wider car culture. It is therefore necessary to note the scope of the methods previously used and particularly the low profile of methodological concerns for the researchers. For them, methodological problems are very briefly noted before moving on to produce the graphs and percentages that policy-makers demand. It is argued that this Fordist 'production line' technique is inappropriate and that a hand built method is needed to examine the full extent and meaning of joyriding. This is addressed in Chapter 4.

common ground in the literature on joyriding

The first thing to be noted is the small scale of most of the studies; for instance: Light *et al*'s study (1993) interviewed 100 'joyriders', Briggs (1991) interviewed 30 and analysed 200 questionnaires and Gibbens (1958) studied 50 borstal boys. The only large scale research is the American work of McCaghy *et al* (1977) who studied: 103 records of arrest in Toledo from October 1975 to May 1976; 231 records of autotheft from January 1975 to April 1976 and studied the records of 14,815 juveniles before the courts of Virginia from 1966 to mid 1973. Spencer's research (1991) though small scale attempted to gain a rounded picture by means of: a social profile of the Pennywell Estate; a profile of autocrime on the Estate; a questionnaire to 86

male juveniles through schools; interviews with nine 10-15 year olds at the local Youth Club and seventeen interviews with offenders aged 13-19 arranged through Probation. A questionnaire through the Probation Service went unanswered. Not only are most of the studies small but they also have a tendency to go over the same policy- related questions about situational crime prevention and criminal justice deterrence. They are largely atheoretical or 'pop' psychological.

The literature agrees that young men steal cars initially for excitement under peer pressure but increasingly for money. Despite the frequent mentions of the 'buzz' associated with joyriding the work of Katz (1988) is not mentioned. His work is not referred to here because the 'seductiveness' of joyriding is accepted and the 'sensual attractions' not followed up. Joyriding starts young and may be associated with other offending. It is intense and persistent. If not addictive it is certainly an effective 'solution' (Downes 1966) which is frequently and easily resorted to. It is less clear to what it is a 'solution' - unemployment, boredom and adolescent masculinity are all mentioned in passing.

Themes that consistently appear in the literature on joyriding are: 1) the argument about whether there is a car theft/joyriding specialism or whether, in the words of the Home Office Standing Conference on Crime Prevention (1988:19, emphasis added), "there is no joy in 'joyriding'. It is theft of a car in exactly the same way as 'shoplifting' is theft from a shop...."; 2) classifications and chronologies; 3) the assumption that joyriders cannot be good drivers; 4) what might be called 'market research questions' and; 5) correctionalism. Each of these themes from the literature are discussed below.

Many of the studies concern themselves with whether car theft is like other theft or is joyriding an entry offence leading to other offences.¹ Middle class joyriders may never become burglars so the bald assertion that joyriding leads to burglary would be wrong. Clearly joyriding leads to all sorts of traffic offences and thefts from or using the car - ramraiding for instance. Taking a car just to get home and leaving it unharmed - possible when security was simpler or where drivers are careless - also seems unlikely to lead onto other crimes in itself.

Whilst most researchers remark on the versatility of offenders, particularly juvenile offenders, Farrington *et al* (1988) found in their study of 70,000 juvenile offenders in the States that vehicle theft was one of the three most specialist offences. Tarling (1994) also found some evidence of specialisation amongst car thieves as did Wilkinson and Morgan (1995). Light *et al* (1993) found 35% of their sample had burgled. Only one of Gibbens' (1958) Borstal lads had no other property offences and Cooper (1989) reported early involvement in burglary before car thieving. Briggs (1991) found amongst respondents to his questionnaire 28% also had offences against property and 7.5% against the person and 64.5% had solely car related offences but this included Road Traffic Act offences. Groombridge (1994) found of ten young men attending a motor project five mentioned either serious or persistent offending - "2 Robberies"; "30 various"; and two bodily harm convictions (actual and grievous). All these findings are inconclusive. What is interesting is the emphasis placed on it.

¹. In the way that soft drugs are seen to lead inevitably to the use of hard drugs.

Some of the confusion as to whether joyriders are specialists is caused by confusion as to what is to count as criminal. Motoring offences are often seen to be different from 'crime' but the literature is marked by disagreements as to what should count as a motoring offence (Kriefman (1975), Willett (1964 and 1973), Steer and Carr-Hill (1967) and Martin and Webster (1971). Willett (1964) does conclude that motor offenders have criminal characteristics. Car use may now be so widespread that simple use is not sufficient to distinguish between types. It is necessary to go beyond use to the meanings given to that use. Drug use in the time and the scheme of Cloward and Ohlin (1961) was seen as a sufficient indicator of difference from other delinquents to merit a 'retreatist' category of its own. Admitted drug use by young people now is such that non-use could be seen to be deviant (Gilman, 1997) .

Attempts to classify auto-thieves, car criminals or joyriding are a common feature of the studies. McGaghy *et al* (1976) set out a six-fold classification that Briggs (1991) also uses as a base. Webb and Laycock (1992) and Light *et al* (1993) refer to Clarke's (1991) sixfold classification of theft from, theft of for joyriding, theft for other crimes, immediate transport, longer term transport and insurance fraud. These and Jones (1993) all attempt to define car crime or joyriding in ways that mix legal categories (theft or taking without consent) and the presumed intentions of the taker (short-term fun, longer term pleasure or permanently for profit). It is broadly agreed that cars may be taken for joyriding - to be one of the boys or to enjoy the thrill of speed - and it is recognised that this may overlap with theft or lead to professional car theft. What it does not capture is the history and sociology involved in all these.

The history suggests that what constitutes joyriding itself has changed. It was once the preserve of the rich, joyriding in their own cars. Increased car ownership allied to poor security allowed the development of joyriding to get home. Joyriding is no longer a spectacular display of wealth but of daring. Its media image is very much that of the inner city auto-test. These issues are discussed further in respect of the driving capacity of joyriders.

Gulliver (1991) in his work with identified car thieves suggests that they might be categorised as 'professionals', 'marginals' and obsessionals. Light *et al* (1993) found evidence of 'specialists'. McCullough and Schmidt (1990) report that in West Belfast joyriders are keen to distinguish themselves from the 'hoods'. Tremblay *et al* (1994) distinguish between 'Jockeys' (theft of cars for profit - whole or broken down into parts) and Joyriders (theft of cars for fun).

Moving on from a classification of types of car thief we have examples of chronologies - where car thieves move smoothly through the classifications. Parker (1974a) speaks of a career as do Light *et al* (1993) - a short apprenticeship as a look-out followed by increased skill and daring in thefts and driving. The opportunity is missed for the pun 'journeyman' to describe the position in the guild of joyriders between apprentice and master. McCorry and Morrissey (1989) set out a specific chronology observed in Belfast:

Table 3.1 Chronology of car theft career adopted from McCorry and Morrissey (1989)

The Car and Crime: Critical Perspectives
Nic Groombridge 1998

Age	12-14	14-15	14-16	15-18	15-18	18+
Phase	1	2	3	4	5	6
Description	becoming a passenger in a stolen car	driving an already stolen car	steal a car	steal goods from the car they've stolen	steal cars to remove goods	semi-professional car thief

Such chronologies suggest a conveyor-belt like progression from stage one to stage six. These stages certainly exist but some will enter at different points and not all will continue to become professional car thieves. Strictly such chronologies should perhaps start with being a passenger in a parent's or other adult's car. This may not lead to car theft but may well influence how cars are subsequently driven. The move to semi-professional status as either a car thief or stealer of goods from cars will depend on there being a market for stolen goods and access to that market. Tremblay *et al* (1994) show how changes in the market for stolen cars and parts can effect the balance between 'jockeys' and 'joyriders'. Parker (1974a) noted how the 'Boys' were eventually pushed out of car radio theft by concerted police action.

The problem with both classifications and chronologies is that they freeze the joyrider into a certain type or stage which does not relate well to the reality of their situation. Thus Parker's 'Boys' never got into joyriding though the younger 'Lads' did. Briggs (1991) respondents would not necessarily decide whether to steal a car or its contents until the opportunity arose. It also tends to assume that car thieves are different from other criminals and certainly from non-criminals. This classificatory urge might be seen as positivistic and policy-driven.

The Home Office Working Group (1988) were:

..very concerned about the portrayal of driving by the media. All too often we see examples of bad driving behaviour in films and TV programmes - high speed chases etc. Furthermore cars are invariably advertised as a kind of fantasy object to be attained, with no positive message about the need for safe, responsible driving. (Para 40)

Much of the literature considers the driving ability of joyriders. The findings point in a number of different ways but this might be due to differences of view of what constitutes joyriding and what constitutes good driving. The base assumption is that joyriding is bad driving. This ignores the necessity for good - or adequate - driving if joyriding for short-term transportation is intended or if the attention of the police is not to be drawn to car theft for profit. Support for this can be found in Gibbens (1957).² Parker (1974a:47) was of the opinion that two 'Lads' "Chalkie and Tiddler are now fairly safe drivers, with gear changes and improved cornering as part of their repertoire."

Briggs (1991) joyriders certainly reckoned themselves: only 5% rated their driving as average or below, 80% as good or very good and 15% exceptional. Many were so confident that 56% reckoned to be better than the police. Similarly Spencer (1992) found among her joyriders

² In uncited reports of Swedish criminologists.

that they were quick to describe other twockers as "maniacs" - possibly said with some admiration? - but they described themselves as "bloody brilliant". Two had taunted police and got away with it, bolstering their opinion of their driving skills. Briggs is very clear that the quite proper caution of the police in chases leads the joyrider to believe that they beat the police - and the police(man) to believe they have been beaten?

Only 13% of Briggs questionnaire respondents had read the Highway Code. Knowledge about cars was not necessarily better, for instance, Gow and Peggrem (1991) found two thirds of their respondents overestimated the top speeds of cars - too literal a reading of speedos or of the promise of advertising? - and 56% had no knowledge of braking/stopping distances and 95% did not know how many people died in road accidents or as a result of car thefts³. These findings and a consideration of the innate difficulties of driving and the growing difficulties posed by traffic suggest that these young men cannot be good drivers. However, it has to be considered how well members of the general public would do in tests of their driving skills or knowledge⁴.

Particularly how well would young men - the nearest matching group - who drive their own or parents cars do? Concern for the driving of young people more generally has now increased and research conducted into some of the differences between 'safe' and 'unsafe' young male drivers (AA, 1992). Finn and Bragg (1986) found that the majority of individuals consider they are less likely to have an accident than their peers, possibly because they thought themselves more skilful. Mathews and Moran (1986) found that vehicle-handling skills, reflexes and judgement were all the subject of over-confidence; young drivers were particularly confident.

Hutchings (1996) relates 'aggressive driving practices and road rage' (she makes the distinction) to masculine identity and found from her interviews with Police Drivers, Advanced Drivers, Other drivers and Convicted Offenders differing attitudes towards driving from 'roadcraft' to self expression which form part of a 'masculine car culture'.

Interestingly Hood (1972:61) found that half the Magistrates he studied rated their driving as "better than average," yet 60% had had an accident in their driving life (average 25 years) and one third had a driving conviction. McKenna *et al* (1991) found that, on a 0-10 scale of 20 aspects of driving, men rated themselves at 7.08 but the 'average driver' at 5.22, whereas women rated themselves at 6.52 against the average drivers 5.10. In the light of such findings it would seem that joyriders share a lot with other drivers.

As explained earlier it is not intended to review the purely situational crime prevention literature

³. This figure is not known but Briggs (1991) and the Home Office (1988) quote a figure of 200 times greater likelihood of a stolen car be involved in an accident. This stems from American work which reported a 49-200 times greater likelihood (Weglian, 1978). Whether this figure can be taken out of the American context and applied to Britain's roads and different car culture is moot. Moreover the crude figures show that deaths and injury on the road have been reducing year on year despite the increase in the numbers of cars on the road and those stolen. Falling from 5,501 road deaths in 1989 (Central Statistical Office 1991) to 3,598 for 1996 (The Independent 6 June 1997).

⁴. Sales figures for the Highway Code suggest that only those about to take their test read it. Moreover, presentations of this material to a variety of audiences suggests that a threat to test them on safe stopping distances would have been unwelcome. Shortest stopping distance at 20 mph is 12 metres and 96 metres at 70 mph.

but many of the studies reviewed do dwell on which car is the most popular to steal, whether evening or morning is the best time, whether car parks or roadside are the best places to take from whether a scaffold bar or 'jiggling' (using a key or possibly a screwdriver in the lock) is better to get in and start a car. And finally, 'why do you do it?' These questions can be seen as being related to the policy-orientation and correctionalism of much of the literature on joyriding.

Houghton's Theft Index (1992) sets out the relative likelihood of various makes and models of car being stolen. It is intended to influence consumers towards buying more secure cars and therefore through market forces to influence manufacturers to make more secure cars. However, the raw figures for theft (Houghton corrects for these) are as much a measure of consumer popularity as car sales.

There is sometimes disagreement in the literature as to whether Fords or Vauxhalls are the most attractive cars to steal but most agree that Ladas and Skodas are worst unless they have a good stereo. Rover cars usually rate little mention but fieldwork in Oxford showed a strong following for this locally produced car. The publication of the Car Theft Index should end some of these arguments as far as straight theft goes. Similarly there is disagreement about where it is best to take cars from. Light *et al* (1993) found car parks most popular at 37% against curbside 6%. Briggs (1991) and Gow and Peggrem (1991) agree that car parks are most popular at 53% and 66% respectively whereas Gulliver (1991) and McCullough and Schmidt (1990) found the roadside more popular. Light *et al* (1993) point out that 28% of their respondents took cars from anywhere and 18% from 'somewhere quiet'. This suggests that cars are taken from where they are found and that may differ over time and between regions responding to both intended and unintended changes in opportunities.

Aimed at the target-hardening policy maker other questions examine how entry is effected or cars started. More skilful and less damaging means of entry are learnt with age and experience but the purpose of entry can effect method too. A smashed window attracts attention if the car is to be used for joyriding but speed not neatness of entry is a greater consideration in theft of the stereo so more damage may result.

All the known UK research has been policy-orientated. Briggs (1991) was a social worker, Gulliver (1991) and Harraway (1986) work for Probation Services, Cooper (1989), Light *et al* (1993) and Spencer (1992) were all commissioned by the Home Office, Gow and Peggrem (1991) and McCullough and Schmidt (1990) all did their research for voluntary organisations providing 'alternatives to custody' or community penalties. It is not known who Gibbens (1958) was researching for but from the cooperation he received and the positivism of the Mannheim and Wilkins prediction scores he uses all indicate the intention to be policy useful. His chairmanship of the Institute for the Study and Treatment of Offenders (1972-1981) may suggest treatment or welfare rather than punishment. However, following Foucault (1977) and Cohen (1985), similar 'disciplinary' or social control intentions or effects might be assumed for both punishment and welfare to enable both to be subsumed here as 'correctionalist'.⁵

⁵ This is not the place to rerun the arguments between Foucault and 'whig' versions of penal history which either favour the purity of the progressive idea of reform or its good intention but ultimate failure. Vass (1990) gives a

This is not to suggest a conspiracy but to make the point that such research needs to be 'useful' if it is to be sanctioned and published. The concentration of work in the late 1980s and early 1990s is indicative of the real problem that joyriding posed authority, chose to see as posing a problem or was forced by media pressure to acknowledge as a problem. Despite the official tone, glimpses of the critical occasionally surface; these are discussed in the section on the gaps in the literature below.

Given the official nature of these reports it is not surprising that prevention and deterrence are to the fore. The market research questions are directed at informing crime prevention - particularly primary (Brantingham and Faust, 1976) or situational (Heal and Laycock, 1986) measures. Particularly correctionalist are the questions on the effectiveness of criminal justice measures.

Since much of the literature on motor projects is produced by supporters there is considerable common ground between them. Only Jones (1993) seeks to question some of the suppositions. There is less common ground in literature on masculinities discussed. Where some would take male gender to be indivisible from biological sex others see it as closely tied to appropriate sex role socialisation and others still (particularly those to be discussed in Chapter 7) see masculinities as being constructed and constructing. The sex role model has been hegemonic within criminology, if the issue has been addressed at all.

the gaps revealed (joyriding, motor projects and masculinities)

It should be clear from Chapter 2 and the discussion above that important social factors, the very stuff of sociological investigation, are missing. These missing factors are class, race, gender and culture. In comparison Parker (1974a) may say very little directly about car crime yet his ethnographic methods locate and give a context to the 'Boys' deviance that adds more to our knowledge than questions on where cars are most likely to be stolen from. Class, 'race', gender and culture are discussed below.

Newspaper and magazine coverage of early motoring referred to in the histories of the car (Flower & Jones, 1981 and Pettifer and Turner, 1984) and the Metropolitan Commissioner's Reports are revealing on the issues of class. The cost of motoring ensured only the wealthy could own cars. Complaints about noise, dust and poor driving were common. Webb & Laycock (1992) mention that the car was a luxury item affordable by only the wealthy who raced around the roads and became a nuisance - shades of Toad. The motorists in turn blamed the state of the roads, pedestrians and chauffeurs.

The organised voices of motoring and motorists, the Royal Automobile Club (RAC) and Automobile Association (AA), were stuffed with Establishment figures. The AA's early history is that of seeking to frustrate the attempts of the police to control speeding motorists on the London to Brighton road. It did this by organising parties of scouts to warn of the presence of officers

short summary of the debate and a defence of the possibility of 'alternatives' whilst Howe (1994) offers a post-modern feminist critique of the whole debate.

with stopwatches on measured stretches of road. Occasional attempts by the Home Office to stop what it saw as akin to aiding and abetting burglars ended when most of the Law Officers were found to be members.⁶

The 'favoured group' theses of the early British (Gibbens, 1958) and American researchers (Wattenberg and Balistreri, 1952) are not fully fledged class studies, though their implicit treatment of class makes for a more rounded analysis than the later British 'correctionalist' studies (Cooper, 1989; Light *et al*, 1993 and Spencer, 1992). The high point of the favoured group thesis is, perhaps, most strongly exemplified by Wattenberg and Balistreri (1952) and even as late as 1977 as Gibbons summarises the literature and his own research to conclude that joyriders are more middle class than other criminals.

Of later studies Light *et al* (1993) explicitly recognize that their methodology picked up only lower class car thieves. Their published work makes no mention of middle class involvement but their respondents knew of uncaught middle class youth who liked to hang about with joyriders for 'street cred'.⁷ Other studies take their samples from inner city areas or from convicted populations so cannot avoid a bias towards the working class. A question that needs to be asked is whether the class of joyriders has changed, is an artefact of the methods chosen or if joyriding itself has changed and moved down market like other pastimes. It is, of course, provocative to call joyriding a pastime but it is possible to see joyriding as a dangerous street sport - another motorsport discipline - but with a democratic ruling body of one's peers.

Information gleaned during fieldwork suggests young black men were involved in 'displaying' on Blackbird Leys, yet despite the media's normal treatment of black people and crime there was nothing made of it. There were no 'black joyrider runs down blond-haired girl' headlines like the 'black mugger' headlines of the early 70s (Hall *et al*, 1978). Where available, figures suggest (Procter and Townsend, 1994) and observation suggests that young black men do not attend motor projects. If true, there might be a number of reasons this might be: first that this represents a real lower involvement of black men in joyriding or second, and not incompatible with the first reason, that if involved they are sent to custody or receive other community penalties. Graham and Bowling (1995) found - though not statistically significant - a cumulative male self-reported participation in car theft as follows: White (4%); Black (1%); Indian (2%); Pakistani (8%); and Bangladeshi (3%).

Reasons for lower involvement might be: first a different relationship to the car amongst young Afro-Caribbean men, that is they may be keen on cars but not for the short-term gratification offered by joyriding or displaying. That is it may not be 'cool' or 'phat' (hot) to joyride. When the police stop you it is important to be the owner of the car and have all the documentation in order. It enables you to maintain a 'cool pose' (Clatterbaugh, 1990). Moreover,

⁶ See Plowden (1971) and Brendon (1997) for more details. The AA soon moved to become more recognisably like its modern incarnation but anecdote has it that the patrolman's salute to members was used - until its abolition - to signal the presence of the police by a pointed failure to salute.

⁷ Personal communication with Roy Light.

like new clothes the car is to be seen, to be appreciated by your friends.⁸ You cannot cruise the block if the police are chasing you. 'Respect' is earned not by short-term flashy display of a car but the long-term use of a car. Joyriding may not be a way of doing masculinity but a way of doing white masculinity. Back (1994) notes how young white men adopt music and clothes come from black styles. The reverse does not appear to operate in respect of cars. Moreover, Graham and Bowling's (1995) findings on different patterns of drug use between different groups indicate different attitudes to drugs. For instance, 12% of white males reported amphetamine ('speed') use at some time against less than 1% for blacks. Other figures for drug use and crime more generally show equivalent overall offending rates so these differences in patterns of offending suggest different attitudes to the practical and symbolic components of crime.

Whilst in no way conclusive, the contention that young black men may have a different relationship to the car is supported by the lyrics of 'rap' songs like DJ Jazzy Jeff and the Fresh Prince's 'Summertime'. Several verses make passing reference to cruising in, or looking after, cars. One verse combines all these themes.

Chillin' in a car they spent all day waxin'
 Lean to the side
 But you can't speed through
 Two miles an hour
 So everyone can see you
 (1991, A Taylor/C Smith/ R Bell/Hula/K Fingers/W Smith Zomba Productions)

Alternatively young black men may have an equal propensity and opportunity to take cars but do not do so for fear of discriminatory policing catching them at a greater rate than white colleagues. Carl Josephs a young black man has been stopped 34 times in his car in the last two years (The Observer, 8 June 1997). According to the second Islington Crime Survey (Crawford *et al*) both Middle Aged White Men (23%) and Women (17%) have high levels of police stops but Young Middle Class White Women (26%), Young Working Class Black men (21%) and Women (22%) also have high levels too, all twice the rates for Young Working Class White Men (9%) and Women (10%). Whilst some of these rates are similar the underlying construction of them may be different. The white middle class stops may be for traffic offences but the black ones on suspicion of other offences. Reasons for higher custody or other community penalties might be that they are not referred to projects, or if referred not accepted or given a custodial sentence irrespective. This would imply discriminatory practices by probation officers, youth justice workers, project workers and sentencers.

Work in California (Schwendinger and Schwendinger, 1985) suggests that young Hispanic Men in gangs have a different relation to the car. Instead of the speed and immediate excitement they prefer a Lo-rider; a car deliberately lowered to hug the ground which is chromed and tricked out with lush fittings. It is driven very slowly round the neighbourhood to flaunt ownership and style. They could not be driven at speed whilst in the lowered position and would not be. The

⁸ Bayley (1986) notes that "cars were a form of display" (p1) that "The cars provided the costumes." (p2) and "For some people, owning a new car is the nearest they will ever get to perfection in an otherwise flawed and soiled life." (p4)

point is to impress your friends and irritate your enemies by driving around very slowly with the window down. Non-hispanic groups prefer to customize cars by raising the back-end and emphasising speed through coachlines and flame graphics that suggest the dragster or the hot-rod.

Only the American studies mention race though the smaller studies by the probation service in this country routinely monitor race. Neither address the issue. The American studies mention race to disprove the 'favoured status' hypothesis and the probation studies mention but do not dwell on race as an issue. Thus Davies (1993) mentions that 4.2% of West Midlands Probation Service women motor offending clients were black as were thirteen percent of male motor offenders. There is no discussion of what this means. Is this low or high for the area? Moreover as Davies examines both motoring offences and motor theft offences together it is not possible consistently to pull out the full facts for car taking. The numbers for the combined totals are such that the numbers of black joyriders would be too small for useful statistical treatment. It is however important to consider the issue of black involvement in car taking.

The question then is do young black men joyride? Full ethnic monitoring of the Criminal Justice System will, in due course, reveal the extent to which there is differential involvement in - or policing of - car crime. This would still leave unresolved the question of joyriding given the difficulties of defining it set out in Chapter 1. Even, if a greater or lesser involvement in car crime could be shown it would still not indicate whether young black men took cars for the same reasons as young white men.

Some facts are known about black car use, for instance of Afro-Caribbean women only 10% use cars as the driver and 45% as a passenger. The figures for Asian women are higher on both 22% as drivers and 64% as passengers (GLC 1984 and 1987). The stereotype of the young black man, and sometimes the fantasy of those young black men, places him behind his shades, behind the wheel of a BMW (Black Man's Wheels).⁹ Whatever the reason for joyriding - drift, status frustration, sub-culture, unemployment or class warfare - these will be shared by many young men and women. Theoretically then, young black men should be as involved in joyriding as young white men. Even with official statistics it would be difficult to be sure but the absence of media finger-pointing, anecdotal evidence, the findings of McGaghy *et al* (1977) and monitoring by and observation at motor projects raises the possibility that joyriding is largely a white phenomena. Hudson (1988:35) referring to breaking and entering and to taking and driving away a car says "It may be that for some white male youth at least, delinquency is partly powered by a sexuality-focused and societally stimulated dynamic."

Feminism rightly raised the issue of how women were ignored or badly treated by theory, policy, practice and research. One response to that has been to take women seriously but increasingly to recognize that men too have a gender (see discussion in Chapter 2 and 7). The

⁹ It is not clear whether this is a racist usage or an ironic appropriation by those young men, taking and driving away the initials but not the product. In another context the initials stood for Baader-Meinhof Wagen, as this left-wing terrorist group favoured these vehicles in undertaking their terminal critique of the bourgeois society that produced them. The proper meaning of the initials is Bayerische Motorenwerke.

literature on joyriding and motor projects like much criminology has not yet incorporated such developments.

Where masculinity is mentioned in the studies the problem is seen to be in traversing adolescence rather than any doubts about what it means to be a man. Both Briggs (1991) and Light *et al* (1993) found young women who joyride. Their respondents said they knew girls who did joyride but got away with it because the police did not stop them. An alternative explanation would be that they drove better. However, the recorded figures show that of all crimes, car crime is a crime of young men. Most studies mention this but only in passing. A self-report study shows a sex ratio of 5.9:1 for car theft (and 13.6:1 for motorbike theft) (Graham and Bowling, 1995:111).

The implicit suggestion is that the problem is not masculinity itself but the transition to an unproblematised masculinity. Briggs observation was that joyriders were 'wimps'.¹⁰ This might be a value judgement on their masculinity but it is true that joyriding offers opportunities not to appear to be a 'wimp' in that it requires nerve and skill and can confer status. However - and this would be attractive to a 'wimp' - joyriding requires little strength and rarely brings direct confrontation with a victim as burglary can and robbery does. Fieldwork observation suggests that some who attend Motor Projects could be seen as 'wimps' but by no means all. Closer observation and operationalisation of the concept would be required to take this further.

It is not true that criminology has totally ignored gender but as Naffine (1987) notes of its treatment of women it has reflected the views of the time. Thus Cohen (1955:164) is explicit about absolute gender differences in *Delinquent Boys*:

Because of the structure of the modern family and the nature of our occupational system, children of both sexes tend to form early feminine identifications. The boy, however, unlike the girl, comes later under strong social pressure to establish his masculinity, his *difference from* female figures. Because his mother is the object of the feminine identification which he feels is a threat to his status as a male, he tends to react negativistically to those conduct norms which have been associated with mother and therefore have acquired feminine significance. Since mother has been the principal agent of indoctrination of 'good' respectable behaviour, 'goodness' comes to symbolize femininity and engaging in 'bad' behaviour acquires the function of denying his femininity and therefore asserting his masculinity. This is the motivation to juvenile delinquency. (Emphasis in original.)

It is, perhaps, this sort of thinking that leads for calls for a campaign to depict joyriding as "unmanly" (Cooper 1989) or the Home Office Working Group (1988) which recommended (Para 44 (b)) "the use of a popular figure to whom young people can relate, to get across the message that car crime is not 'macho' or fashionable.". However, the Home Office (1993b) claims that its depiction of car criminals as hyenas was successful, yet the outsider, the outlaw, is an archetype of male identity. Labelling perspectives too would suggest that this outsider status which might lead to deviancy amplification.

¹⁰ Personal communication

Both Cooper (1989) and the Home Office Working Group (1988) recognize the power of advertising and cultural images of the cars desirability that would make their suggestions difficult to implement but fail to understand the deeper location of notions of masculinity in society. Moreover, to suggest that a hero might work is to use a patriarchal logic - a 'good' father, rather than a 'big brother' for these 'bad boys'.

Jefferson (1992) and Jackson (1992) adopt a more complex position on car crime, criminology and masculinity. Jackson (1992:18) says, "...joyriders bind themselves into emotional and social prisons through their struggles to build identities that they can walk tall in." Social deprivation and heterosexual masculinity are the relevant context for building those identities.

Amongst other things Jackson considers whether young male joyriders seeking a police chase would do so if police drivers were women. This is close to putting a civilising duty on women and ignores the practical difficulty of knowing, from a distance and at speed, the gender of another driver. The civilising influence of women is not explicit in studies of car crime but 'growing up' and increased responsibilities are often cited as reasons for giving up joyriding. Women are often seen to be behind this.

'Impressing women/girls' scores low as a reason for joyriding. It is not mentioned by Light *et al* (1993) respondents as a reason for starting or continuing with car crime; neither do Spencer's (1992) or Cooper's (1989). Only 7% of Briggs' (1991) sample said they stole cars to impress girls whereas 21% said to impress my friends. Perhaps these young men know young women like Karen who told Foster (1990):

I think most of the boys his age, who live round my area, the ones that I know, have all been in trouble with *TDA and silly things* (emphasis added) like that. I mean Terry's always been very easily led: if someone says 'Oh come and do this, come on, do that' he'll do it.

More generally, Jefferson (1992) notes that joyriding, ramraiding and hotrodding are all sexualised terms. Much advertising continues to use sexual imagery to sell cars. Most cars are advertised to men or to families. It must be assumed that what sells cars also makes them attractive to thieves. Both manliness and advertising will be examined in Chapter 8.

It is not argued here (though see Chapter 1 and 8) but it is contended that Britain does have a car culture. It is not complete and it is contested - for instance, note the direct action against road building at Twyford Down, the M11 extension and the Newbury By-Pass. In the literature the car is often explicitly recognised as a prime consumer good and cultural icon but this recognition is not followed up. Conversely books on the history cars - celebrations of car culture - rarely have much to say about crime (Pettifer and Turner, 1984; Marsh and Collett, 1986).

Thus Briggs (1991:49) notes "Motor cars are an omnipresent, inescapable feature of contemporary life..." and the Home Office Working Group concurs (1988:Para 40), "We recognize that there is a powerful 'car culture' in our society whereby the car is a symbol of status and power which is particularly attractive to young people." and again Webb and Laycock

(1992):

The car has become a central and dominating feature of life, with much of the environment being designed to accommodate it. More and better roads had to be built, fuel had to be easily available, house design had to include garaging or off-street parking, and town and city centres had to be planned to cope with traffic and parking requirements.

Yet the concept of a car culture is never followed up in the literature. Observations are routinely made about car culture in introductions or as asides before returning to the categorisation of offenders and potential ways to stop them. If the concept of a car culture is to be taken seriously then studies of car crime should start with the car. Car culture, whilst strongly influenced by America, will be different in Britain and, possibly, different in various parts of Britain - Belfast, Oxford and Newcastle all show differences in patterns of joyriding (McCorry and Morrissey, 1989; McCullough and Schmidt, 1990; Campbell, 1993). The lower driving age in the United States and the wider ownership of cars suggests that some of the reasons given for offending by joyriders in this country may not be applicable in the States. The corollary of this would be that the rate of joyriding for pleasure should be lower and theft for long-term transportation or profit higher than in Britain. This would be difficult to test since the ratio in neither country is known precisely.

a set of propositions to fill the gaps

The policies that might arise from a fully contextualised view of joyriding would need to link up attempts to control joyriding with attempts to control dangerous or drunken driving. Those efforts need to connect to road safety issues more generally from traffic calming to increased public transport. Less driving of any sort is required. Other questions that might be asked, not necessarily of joyriders, are set out below. They invert, enlarge or subvert the themes set out above.

What is it that prevents young women from stealing cars? This inverts the assumption that criminology is about explaining male deviant action not female compliance?

Do young black men steal cars less? What does this say about the stereotype of black involvement in street crime or the policing of black motorists?
Is it only young white working class men who get caught joyriding? Do women or the middle classes get away with it?

Does joyriding say something about car culture - do the changes over time and the variations between regions indicate something about society's relation to the car? Are more cars 'torched' now and is this to remove fingerprints or evidence that like most take-aways cars are to be thrown away once consumed? Is joyriding a sport whose popularity might wane in the face of a new fashion?

Any classification or chronology needs to be more sophisticated and take into account

connections with legal driving and motoring offences.

As the social conditions often associated with crime are shared by detected criminals and specialist joyriders alike is it not legitimate to ask if joyriding prevents some becoming involved with other crime rather than escalating into more serious crime?

How can less, and better driving, by all be encouraged? What constitutes good driving? How can the attractiveness of the car be reduced not how secure can the car be made? This inverts the situational prevention logic of most studies.

If the effectiveness of motor projects is to be measured what might be considered to constitute success, desistance or harm reduction, a problematised view of masculinity or acceptance of local or class norms? Are these aims best served using cars - banger racing or car mechanics - or not. Motor projects are environmentally unsound but so are Grand Prix racing and petrol-driven lawn mowers. What effective work can be done in prisons if the punitive atmosphere heralded by the Aggravated Vehicle Taking Act and the 'prison works' philosophy of Michael Howard (only partially disavowed by Jack Straw) holds sway?

the scope of the research (ie which gaps are to be filled)

Just addressing a few of the questions above would warrant a study in its own right. Some would offer methodological problems and ethical difficulties. Participant observation of joyriding and the associated culture of the young white men and the locality in which they live would be difficult - though not impossible - but may not be able to touch on the issues of class and 'race'. Finding groups of upper class or black or female 'joyriders' might take a very long time. Observation of the operation of motor projects for joyriders is more easily managed but may reveal little about joyriders and the practice of joyriding. Moreover, it may reproduce some of the deficiencies of the studies discussed above.

Whilst it is clear that there are empirical gaps in our knowledge the gaps have as much to do with theoretical issues than the failure to carry out sufficient empirical studies. The major theoretical problems with the extant studies are the failure to theorize the car, its relation to society and its intersection with issues of class, 'race', gender and sexuality. Given the overwhelming over-representation of young men amongst those criminalised for joyriding and the continued over representation of men amongst motoring offenders and as customers for the products and accessories of car culture a major issue is masculinity. However, the starting point for this discussion - joyriding - should not be abandoned as this too relates to both car culture and to masculinities so is discussed in Chapter 5. Motor projects are seen by many as an answer to joyriding but without recognising what this may say about masculinities and car culture so this is discussed in Chapter 6. Given the significance of theories of masculinity to this study the whole of Chapter 7 is given over to this issue. In Chapter 8 joyriding, motor projects and masculinity are combined and placed within an environmental - green- perspective. The extent to which the specific gaps identified above are filled is small but a map now exists on which the areas of masculinity (including research into masculinity, see Chapter 4) and car culture are better defined

so that empirical explorers will not be detained as I have by them. Some empirically-based, policy-directed - but not necessarily readily-useful - conclusions are offered in Chapter 8.