

## CHAPTER 6 FINDINGS: MOTOR PROJECTS

If it diverts one persistent offender it must reduce car crime to a degree (Respondent X, in Groombridge, 1994)

Chapter 2 reviewed the few studies and evaluations of motor projects. In this Chapter the discussion of the literature on motor projects discussed in Chapter 2 is analysed with specific reference to the fieldwork at two motor projects and contacts with and documents from others. The difficulties that faced Martin and Webster (1994) about the definition of a motor project reflect the reality on the ground - apparently similar projects are very different. The reasons for these differences sometimes reflect the harsh realities of funding but those realities themselves often reflect a deeper underlying problem. That problem is the taken-for-granted, never-asked assumption that motor projects work without any clear idea how they might work.<sup>1</sup>

The bulk of the chapter is a discussion of what motor projects are for, drawing on the work of Jones (1993), and how whether they work might be examined, drawing on the work of Pawson and Tilley (1994). Finally the issue of how motor projects might work is examined. Throughout the discussion is informed by visits to and observations at motor projects and reference made to interviews and questionnaires. Some of this is set out prior to the conclusion. First, though, the heuristic device of examining some myths about motor projects is used to set the scene.

The myth that all motor projects are 'banger' projects is quite persistent. If the related myth that 'Banger' projects are all about racing is also believed this will certainly lead the public, media and sentencers to see the project as a 'treat for naughty boys'. It is a myth though. In the membership of the National Association of Motor Projects and outside it there is a wide variety of projects; some will be banger projects others will attempt to deal with car crime through group work involving no use of cars at all (Martin and Webster, 1994). Whether these might be better described as car education projects is a real issue that will be picked up later.

TRAX, for instance, race bangers but their DIAL and Car Crime Programme involve no driving. The COP programme run in Liverpool does allow some driving at a separate motor project in the last couple of sessions by way of reward (Chapter 2 and Goldson, 1996). The TRAX Car Crime Programme and the Bradford Motor Education Project place the emphasis on mechanical work. The National Protocol for Youth Justice Services has this to say about 'auto-crime projects':

Auto-crime projects have proved to be effective in addressing offending behaviour in relation to the taking of motor vehicles. Projects should provide instruction on mechanics, road safety and opportunities to drive vehicles in a controlled and safe legal environment. Opportunities to drive should be dependent on full participation in the programme. (1996:22-23)

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<sup>1</sup> This is not unusual in the penological field. Much of the argument about whether prison works derives from its organic growth and the mixed motives of its promoters and reformers let alone any latent functions it is seen to have.

In Autosport terms many projects race not 'bangers' but Minis or karts. Bradford Motor Education Project race bangers but also use, but do not race, a self-built hovercraft. Wolverhampton Wheelspin uses karts and cars but also motor bikes and mountain bikes in their work. Other projects offer driving lessons. The Driver Retraining Scheme (Harraway 1986) was a scheme started by ILPS Demonstration Unit for TDA offenders at Highbury and Islington Magistrates Court in the early 80s. No disqualification was made and no requirement added to the probation order but eight points were given towards disqualification. Offenders agreed to pay for their own driving lessons and test. In 20 months there were 132 referrals, 80 signed up and were accepted for the scheme, 66 started and 18 reoffended during course, 33% after 1 year and 53% after two years. 30 signed up for the driving test, 21 took it and 12 passed. It is significant that those attending the scheme had to pay for their own lessons, though loans were given. Other projects that have paid for lessons have usually had to endure a media storm of disapproval, sometimes based on inaccurate information (*Carweek* article on TRAX) or because of an earlier press interest ('Safari Boy given free driving lessons' *The Times* 29 March 1994).

The 'Banger projects are all about racing' myth can take a number of forms. On the one hand the media or sentencers may assume that all that goes on at motor projects is racing or preparation for racing so may not see projects as sufficiently punitive. On the other hand social workers or probation officers may not see the projects as providing sufficient social work input or work on offending behaviour. The argument is how can an activity that is so close to joyriding have an impact on joyriding? After all no other crime is treated in this 'homeopathic' way. Sex offenders are either punished or treated not given sex. The totally opposite point of view is that only something as exciting as banger (or other) racing can possibly work with a crime so exciting as joyriding. The arguments therefore boil down to these oppositions which might be termed 'puritanical' and 'homeopathic' respectively: Motor projects should not work on joyriding through racing because it is indistinguishable from it or; Joyriding is so exciting that only racing can work.

Both the puritanical and homeopathic arguments are faulty. Though all motor projects are not banger projects, as has already been explained, some are or have elements of banger or other racing. In reality how exciting are they and how much time does that leave for social work?

Banger racing like all Autosports is hedged round with technical rules to ensure fair competition and the health and safety of competitors and spectators. It is exciting and noisy to watch; exciting, noisy and dirty to compete in. It is also very scary, involves long moments of boredom and attention to detail. Moreover, a race may have only just started before it is finished for the driver because of mechanical failure or a crash as Pearce and Thornton (1980) noted (and I frequently observed in filedwork). Young and inexperienced drivers also discover that they are not as good drivers as they think as those studied by Briggs (1991) showed.

Not only can the actuality of racing therefore be considerably less exciting than might appear to be the case, that excitement usually has to be worked for. At both TRAX and the Ilderton Motor Project drives are the subject of rosters. Bad behaviour or poor attendance can lead to the loss of a drive. There is considerable effort expended in preparing the cars.

Opportunities to race may be many weeks apart and the race programme is seasonal so during the winter there is more work with less immediate reward.

Working on the cars often requires team work. Many projects appoint team leaders. Informal social work is often carried out in this time or during cigarette or chip breaks. Even racing-orientated projects can build in more formal opportunities for social work interventions. For instance, it is a condition of attending the Ilderton Project that members attend the Wednesday evening session where a good hour is spent on group issues. This may involve resolving simmering disputes or even mutual social control where someone's wrongdoing is dealt with by the group using punishments like cleaning the toilets, missing drives or expulsion.

Racing, however, does remain central to many projects. NAMP runs championships for member projects. For instance, the TRAX Project Managers First Report to the Management Committee (undated but presumably April '93) concentrated on racing. The report covered the first nine months operation of TRAX and is the first substantive comment on the operation of the project. After an introductory paragraph the second and third paragraphs concentrate on racing. The emphasis is on competition (two second, two thirds). Only one event had been entered at that time but they had also been Kart racing and ice Kart racing. Many projects also race at commercial venues. Ilderton hold licences that allow them to race against all-comers at Wimbledon Stadium. A friendly rivalry exists between TRAX and Ilderton.

So racing exists but is not as exciting as it might seem to outsiders and allows time for social work. Indeed motor projects may not be exciting enough to attract some joyriders. Certainly some committed drivers may find that the social work elements or, even, the requirement to do mechanics or painting - on 'your' car or others - too onerous. Any penal sanction or welfare intervention is only likely to work if the offender is receptive. If a young offender is taking ten cars a week (not unknown) then a drive of only a few minutes once a month cannot be equivalent.

Hudson argues that social welfare values and practice often reinforce and collude with conceptions of 'appropriate' youthful masculinity. She had in mind the tendency of youth work interventions (Intermediate Treatment specifically) to meet youthful male offending with equally macho activities such as outdoor pursuits. She also notes the good work that many men have done in these projects but suggests a specific attraction of male social workers towards the more macho activities:

There is a paradox in the maleness of motor projects: on the one hand the meaning of male delinquency is congruent with society's agenda for adolescent masculinity, but on the other the state punishes this particular form of male expression (particularly that by black and working class youth) by even greater doses of 'macho' medicine. (Hudson, 1988:35)

Hudson remarks specifically of TWOC, "delinquency is partly powered by a sexuality-focused and societally stimulated dynamic." (1988:37)

So just as some sentencers may see motor projects as treats for boys some female and anti-sexist male social workers or probation officers may see motor projects as toys for boys ie not just a treat but a specifically male treat. The punitive morality of the right may be matched by the politically correct morality of the left. For example, writing in the radical men's magazine *Achilles Heel*, Jackson (1992) writes about the hypocrisy of the headline writers reactions to joyriding and speaks sympathetically, perhaps romantically, of joyriders who "seize these symbols of middle-class authority and power" but roundly condemns motor projects in these terms, "Go-kart racing schemes or police invitations to young men to handle fast performance cars in controlled situations are like inviting alcoholics to a brewery." (p38) Or, Buckley and Young (1996:66) "...significant questions seemingly remain about work which involves activities which replicate the speed and excitement - the buzz - of risky driving."

There is no doubt that motor projects are very male places. They are more like garages than settings for social work intervention or punishment. The sociology of the workplace or of organisations or even management studies might be appropriate ways to study them. The enthusiasts of racing have not yet taken on board gender issues though some of these were raised in an article by Groombridge (1993a). The Annual Conference of NAMF has not discussed gender issues during the course of the research but amongst those attending it is a live subject (numerous personal communications). Indeed two projects just opened in London (Walthamstow and Tower Hamlets/Hackney) are keen to address the issue in their work. The Turas Project in Belfast is a detached youth project working with joyriders which is keen to work not only with the joyrider but the mothers and partners who may actually lose out if the house rather than the street is to be his arena.

The Ilderton Project has certainly had a young woman attend. The TRAX project did work with a Special Unit which meant that a number of young women were attending sessions for nearly a year (though separate to the TRAX evening sessions). TRAX now have one woman staff member. Most motor projects have women on the Management Committee and certainly TRAX and Telford DRIVE Motor Projects owe much to women founders. Both Bradford and Brixton Motor Projects run sessions for young women.

It is not enough to argue that since car crime is almost exclusively male and motor projects are for car crime it is no surprise that they are full of men and generate a male atmosphere; and that if there were more female joyriders they would provide women-friendly services. Moreover, just adding a woman staff member, sessions for young women or posting up an equal opportunities policy statement does not address these issues, though they are to be welcomed on equal opportunities grounds. Even in an all male setting gender issues should be dealt with.

There is a myth that motor projects are for high risk car crime offenders only. Some of the measures that probation-associated motor projects use to judge the success of their programmes is the extent to which Pre-Sentence Report writers target serious car offenders. There are related policy and economic reasons for this. Home Office guidelines backed by National Standards and legislation (particularly the Criminal Justice Act 1991) have required the probation service to

seek increasingly to work with serious offenders; to provide community penalties of sufficient severity leaving prison only for the most serious offenders (particularly violent and sexual offenders). Moreover, the various meta-analyses of 'What Works' indicate that programmes work best with those at serious risk of custody. To encourage this the Home Office awarded grants to voluntary projects such as TRAX under what became called the Home Office Supervision Grant Scheme. The expectation was that the grant scheme would 'save prison places'. Projects receiving funds were expected to concentrate on serious offenders rather than less serious offenders or those 'at risk' and certainly not for 'drop in' services. It might be seen as the young adult offenders equivalent of Intermediate Treatment which had been the subject of a Department of Health and Social Security initiative.

The 'just deserts' ethos of the Criminal Justice Act 1991 did not survive a year before key sections were amended and the whole Criminal Justice System realigned with a more retributive project. Additional to this legislative change was an administrative change. The money formerly disbursed under the Supervision Grant Scheme is now devolved to local probation services; subject to the proviso that 5% of the probation service's budget is spent on projects in the 'independent' sector. Projects are therefore judged against other ways of spending the money locally, and may even find they have private sector competition.

It is still not clear what the precise outcome of the incoming Government's plans for criminal justice will be but it seems likely that the probation service will continue to target serious offenders if only to try and keep them out of prison.

The move to local control brings in its train closer scrutiny. The suspicion in the Home Office was that whilst grant schemes (for supervision and the provision of accommodation) required the involvement of the local probation service (Chief Probation Officer approval, committee membership and liaison arrangements) the view taken locally was that the more resources the better as long as they were paid for by the Home Office; projects need only be a 'good idea' or useful. Now they will need to provide value for money - to be efficient, effective and economical.

Motor projects have particular difficulties with this. They can be capital and labour intensive and can only expect to work with small numbers. Moreover, such is the attraction and ease of stealing cars that Motor Projects can only fail if a short-term and abstentionist test of their value is applied. Arguing that Motor Projects, or any other community penalty, is cheaper than prison cuts little ice with the Home Office even though it controls both budgets. The capital and labour costs of prisons are such that only a scheme, or combination of schemes, that could promise the closure of at least a whole wing could argue that it deserved to receive money that otherwise went to prisons. There is an administrative/constitutional problem too. Money voted by Parliament for one thing is difficult to vire from one vote to another.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> It is for this reason that Oxfordshire Probation Service have been unable to promise TRAX funding beyond the expiry of Home Office funding next year. Unusually the Ilderton Motor Project has never been funded by Home Office grants but by the Probation Service directly for its probation work.

A contradictory myth is that motor projects are for low risk car crime offenders comes about because of the different definitions of motor projects. Thus motor project in the previous section meant one associated with community penalties whereas in this section it means crime prevention or diversion from the criminal justice system. Of nineteen respondents (three magistrates, four social workers and twelve probation officers) twelve saw TRAX as court-based or offender-orientated but only six saw it solely in those terms - five probation officers and one social worker (Groombridge, 1994). The realities of funding push some projects towards working with those in danger of imprisonment but the inclinations of many though are to work with those who are 'at risk' or on the periphery of offending. One practical reason for this, rather than a distaste for working in or with the criminal justice system, is the findings on joyriding (Light *et al* 1993, McCorry and Morrissey 1989) that there is a career ladder where joyriders move quickly from acting as look outs, to being carried, to stealing cars for fun and on to stealing cars for profit.

In the light of the myth that motor projects are for joyriders only some motor projects actively exclude those who are not joyriders or motoring offenders. Where they are aligned to very specific 'tackling-offending-behaviour' programmes this seems reasonable, but, if motor projects work for joyriders might they not also work for other offenders? Wilkinson and Morgan's (1995) work opens up this possibility. To answer that question, however, not only requires a knowledge of whether motor projects work but how they work. The purpose here is to suggest that - given the confidence of projects that they do work with joyriders - consideration should be given to whether they might also work with other offenders. The question of whether they do work and how they do so is examined later.

One immediate objection would be that motor projects have more than enough work to do without trying to squeeze in other offenders. Another would be the concern that non-joyriding offenders might 'learn' to become joyriders. This, however, is also an argument against prison. There is certainly anecdotal evidence (confirmed in fieldwork) that car thieves who before prison felt only able to steal certain makes of car broadened their skills. Learning may also go the other way. Joyriders may learn to become house burglars. If money has become their main motivation this may be the case. Whilst no better as a criminal justice outcome and distressing to the victim, burglary does not carry the dangers that joyriding does.

Motor projects must work on issues other than car crime. Even if those attending have been sent because of car crime there is no guarantee that they are not also burglars or drug users. Joyriding may be quite a singular activity but away from the driving wheel they have all the same problems as their peers; very few would 'solve' them solely through car-related crime. So the distinction between those who are joyriders and those who are not is false. Some studies of joyriding having suggested a degree of specialism (Gibbens 1958; Gibbons 1977; Light *et al*, 1993 and Wattenberg and Balistrieri 1952) and some joyriders in Belfast seek to distinguish themselves from both 'the hoods' (real criminals) and the paramilitaries (McCullough and Schmidt 1990). There have also been attempts to distinguish motoring offenders from 'criminals' (Hood 1972; Kriefman 1975; Steer and Carr-Hill 1967 and Willett 1964). Comparisons are difficult because different definitions are used. This may be because motoring offences are so

common amongst all sections of the population that there is an unwillingness to see those activities as indicative of criminality though illegal. A more useful criterion may therefore be to ask whether the 'offender' or person 'at risk' is interested in cars.

The purpose of this discussion has been to raise the suggestion that motor projects might also be used for other offenders, whatever their offence, provided they are interested in cars. In short motor projects might not be thought of as somewhere to send car criminals but a way of working with offenders in its own right.

In order to build on some of the issues raised in examining these myths it is necessary to examine the purpose of motor projects more critically by looking at the work of Jones (1993). Jones asks if motor projects are the answer to car crime why are shoplifters not sentenced to stack shelves? He does not conclude that motor projects are of no use or that shoplifters should stack shelves but emphasises the need for careful analysis of the nature of car theft by young people, the best means of prevention, and of sentencing those found guilty, of an offence of unlawful taking and driving away.

Jones (1993) draws on his experience of working for the Intermediate Treatment Fund (ITF) during which time he considered applications from over a hundred motor projects for funding.<sup>3</sup> He reports most had no clear idea of what it was they wanted to do beyond 'keeping them off the streets'. Whilst he recognises that such youth work or provision may be valuable in itself he makes it clear that motor projects need to offer something more if they are to justify their existence, prove their worth, and avoid being condemned by failing to meet the expectations they generate. That is motor projects need to be clear not only what it is that they wanted to do but remember the promises they may have made or expectations unrealistically raised amongst users, social and probation services, sentencers, funders and the community.

Jones (1993) notes the paucity of research into the effectiveness of motor projects and doubts the claim (rightly as no details were given of methodology) by the Home Office Standing Conference on Crime Prevention that only 100 young people reoffended out of 4,500 attending Motor Projects. Moreover, he opines that research will continue to offer little until projects are clear which particular type of offender they are addressing. He also accepts the gender imbalance in car theft and legal car use but does not ask why.

Unlike many commentators he recognises that cars are not just means of transportation but status symbols and even extensions to our personality and given the range of functions fulfilled by cars in our modern society, motor projects could only scratch the surface of the social problem of car theft by young men. He suggests a typology of car theft by under-age youth and explores whether motor projects are likely to be relevant sentences or diversionary activities for young people within each section of the typology.

Jones recognises that his typology, like all typologies, has limitations. There are overlaps but he hopes that the typology, will help motor projects, sentencers and politicians to be clearer

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<sup>3</sup> The ITF is now the Divert Trust.

as to the type of service motor projects should be offering and the suitability of particular young people for the programmes. The typology is set out in table 6.1 and discussed below.

Table 6.1 Jones typology of car thieves and their suitability for Motor Projects (adapted from Jones (1993))

Type	1	2	3	4	5	6
Description	The joyrider	The peaceful illegal driver	The Traveller	The Motor fanatic	The bored opportunist	The relatively deprived driver
Suitable for Motor Project?	'ill-equipped'	'could prevent re-offending'	'not appropriate'	'ideal'	maybe	'motor projects have nothing to offer'

As will be seen there are reasons to take issue with the typology and Jones' (1993) prescriptions but first it should be recognised that his typology, like others in the literature, is criminological not legal. This is both an advantage and a disadvantage. The disadvantages are that all the behaviour described is illegal whether straight theft, taking without the owner's consent or Aggravated Vehicle-Taking plus all the 'paper' offences associated with them. Sentencers and potential referrers to motor projects are obliged to consider the legal not the criminological issues. The circumstances and motivations might come out in proceedings, interviews or reports but charge and/or conviction does not follow Jones', or any other, typology.

The advantage is that because it does not follow the legal code it places the emphasis on what the car thief did, what it means to them and what might work with them. This should make sense to social workers and probation officers. It certainly informs their work and the Reports they make to sentencers. One of the reasons that Jones does not think that motor projects will work with some of his types may be that he subscribes to some myths about motor projects himself. Whilst he breaks down the types of car thief into six types he assumes a single type of motor project. Set out below is a synopsis of Jones typology with critical commentary.

The joyrider is the young man who regularly steals cars for the illegal thrill of it. Jones equates joyriding with displaying and mentions Blackbird Leys Estate as a prime example but wrongly claims that the whole estate turned out to watch (fieldnotes). The research discussed in Chapter 2 shows that most takers of cars start because of the buzz even if they continue because of the living to be made from car crime. Jones sees motor projects as ill-equipped to deal with such offenders because they cannot compete with the thrill of joyriding, the very legality of motor projects being a disincentive. This assumes that only thrills will work. These would be arguments against prison and for power boat racing, white-knuckle rides or bungee jumping as community penalties or crime prevention.

His argument about the legality of motor projects being a disincentive assumes that part of the buzz is the illegality of joyriding. This is a debatable; illegality may contribute to the fun but it is not the fun. Neither does it explain why a particular form of car use is chosen. The question that needs to be asked in a criminological discussion of joyriding is: is it the stealing of

the car that constitutes joyriding or the particular style of driving? The law does not recognize joyriding (even if the Aggravated Vehicle-Taking Act was prompted by it). It is the taking without consent that constitutes the offence. For the media and the general public the focus is on the way the cars are driven (spectacularly) and eventually left (burnt-out). Even though joyriders are more likely to call their activity twocing - indicating the strength of the criminal justice discourse - it is primarily the fun - the joy - that motivates them.

If the argument above is accepted then motor projects might be able to work with Jones' (1993) 'joyrider' type not by providing something equally thrilling but by providing genuine alternatives. This is the purpose of the non-workshop sessions in the TRAX Car Crime Programme; the Wednesday night meeting at Ilderton or the whole of Merseyside's COP (Goldson, 1996). If joyriders still need to do something illegal then there are other opportunities. Drug use is widespread amongst young people and the question arises is it the illegality or the fun? To argue that part of the fun of offending is the breaking of the law is no more profound than its inversion - that fun things are made illegal.

According to Jones the peaceful illegal driver gets a thrill from just driving a car. They'll drive it carefully all day abandoning it when it runs out of petrol. This is a form of joyriding that used to be more common. It may still be common but the legal/media focus has been on the more spectacular displaying. So great has the focus been on displaying that the possibility that joyriders might be able to drive well is near heretical.

Jones feels that motor projects that offer legitimate driving rather than racing or mechanics could prevent reoffending in this type. The DIAL programme at TRAX or the Telford Motoring Offenders Education Project (Hutchins 1993) could be seen as part of this process. A difficulty arises with this group of offenders in encouraging self-referral; catching such an offender or persuading a sentencer that the offence is sufficiently serious to warrant motor project time.

The Traveller is very much like McCaghy *et al's* (1977) 'short-term transportation'. The typical case is to get home after the close of public transport. Jones tells of a young man placed in residential care 60 miles from home using cars solely for the purpose of getting home. He says motor projects are not appropriate in these cases but better public transport might. However, whilst it is clear that some young men steal cars for this purpose it is less clear that they would use public transport. Public transport is low status. It is the transport of those without choice; cars are a dream of choice. So the motivation may be travelling but the choice of car is instructive.

Like some of the other types the common thread is the car and young men's relation to it. It is possible to conceive of a motor project which may or may not use cars but directs its attention to the relation of offenders and non-offenders to the car as many projects have sessions on this issue. Just as projects for violent men go through the argument about whether the staff, or even the Management Committee, should be all male - acknowledging the need for men to take responsibility for men's violence - or all female to prevent male collusion (for example Potts, 1996). If the collusion argument were accepted there would be a demand for female non-drivers

to staff such programmes. Female non-drivers would be easier to find than male but non-driving social workers or probation officers male or female are few.

For Jones the Motor fanatics are young men and adults fascinated by cars who enjoy tinkering with cars. Accordingly they may steal motor cars as the only way they can pursue this interest. Jones sees motor projects as ideal for young men and adults fascinated by cars. His contention that they might steal them because of this seems not to be supported by the evidence of the previously quoted research which suggests that reasons given for joyriding are, initially, the buzz and, later, the opportunity for profit. It is clear from visits to projects and the results of questionnaires that many are mad about cars. It should also be noted that many of those who work for Motor Projects are mad about cars too. There are also a vast number of motor fanatics in the general male population - witness the 10,000 who turned up to watch Nigel Mansell practice on his recent return to Formula 1 from Indy Car Racing, the numbers of car magazines which rival those of "men's" magazines and the turn out for the funeral of Ayrton Senna - a small memorial to whom, handwritten on the office whiteboard, appeared at TRAX immediately after his death (fieldnotes).

Jones notes a great deal of car theft - and other crime- is committed by young people who are simply bored. He distinguishes these bored opportunists from the 'real' joyriders of type 1. The Home Office's Working Group concentrated entirely on 'opportunist car crime' which they defined as a) theft or b) unauthorized taking away and c) theft from a vehicle by a person with no pre-conceived idea of theft who takes advantage of an opportunity such as being unlocked or easily/safely effecting an entry.

Better car security is the main means to prevent opportunist theft. Jones notes that a motor project may address the problem of boredom but so might a chess club or football team. The buzz of joyriding is often a cure for boredom and it seems unlikely that chess or a football team would work for all but a few. TV, video games and drugs are the more likely pastimes of bored joyriders (fieldnotes). Chess and football may be cheaper than motor projects but they should not be used unless appropriate. This might require a typology of chess players. If the bored opportunist car thief exists separately from the motor fanatic or the relatively deprived then motor projects might be an answer for them.

Jones recognises that income inequality, particularly unemployment and benefit cuts for the young, means some young people can never expect to legally own and use a car and therefore may take a car if only to join the world where cars, status and wealth are linked. He calls these the relatively deprived drivers. He is quite clear that motor projects have nothing to offer those who steal cars because of this sense of deprivation. Whether this is true or not there is a real problem that whatever type of joyrider a motor project is dealing with they will usually have lengthy disqualifications extending beyond the time to be spent at the project. Attendance at a project might provide some respite during such a disqualification.

The purpose of this discussion is not to demolish Jones typology prior to presenting an alternative typology here but to consider three intimately related matters in respect of motor

projects. First, precisely what it is they do; secondly who is it they are doing it for or with and thirdly evaluating whether they are doing it as they intended and with the group targeted. Considering Jones' typology, or any other typology, might be a useful way of going about the first two.

The elements of a new typology might concentrate on the relationship to the car, gender, class and race at one level and type of car used and driving indulged in on another. This would emphasize the closeness of joyriding to 'normal' motoring and allow connections to be made to motoring offences like speeding, drink driving or Driving Whilst Disqualified. To build on Jones' typology it is necessary to consider the work of Pawson and Tilley (1994).

Pawson and Tilley (1994) set out a 'scientific realist' challenge to quasi-experimentalism in evaluation research. Their work is relevant here because the most common question asked of motor projects - and other community penalties or 'alternatives to custody' - is 'Does it work'.<sup>4</sup> In essence Pawson and Tilley argue that it is essential to know how a project, that is to be evaluated, might work. It is this point that Jones (1993) is trying to make through his typology of joyriders.

'Scientific realism' suggests that the evaluation of outcomes requires a knowledge of both contexts and of mechanisms. Thus they suggest nine possible mechanisms and five possible contexts for the operation of CCTV within Car Parks against car crime. Translating this to the context of motor projects and car crime is not simple and none of the literature on motor projects examined in Chapter 2 attempts it. Methodological issues have not been in the forefront of these evaluations which have often been carried out locally to meet the requirements of management or a funder. With a variety of success and explicitness they adopt what Pawson and Tilley call the OXO model where the situation before and after ('O') is measured in some way - the offender was a joyrider and now isn't - and the intervention ('X') - the motor project - must therefore have been successful. This is insufficient for a number of purposes.

First, as Jones (1993) points out, not all joyriders are the same; second, as has been pointed out, not all motor projects are the same which relates to the third point. The third point is crucial. Even if, by an OXO evaluation, the motor project is seen to work what was it about the motor project that worked? Not only are motor projects all different they comprise many elements in themselves and are rarely used as the sole response to joyriding. Thus in an OXO evaluation the intervention - the 'X' - may itself comprise the process of detection, prosecution, sentencing, probation and attendance at the motor project which itself may offer mechanical work, racing, informal and formal social work and education. Moreover, none of this deals with the difficulty of measuring the 'O' elements, i.e. how much of a joyrider were they and have they given up offending, changed offending patterns or targets or merely not been caught. It is these difficulties that lead many evaluations to focus on the more easily monitored facts of attendance or management information like whether the project was being mentioned in Pre Sentence Reports and targeted at the 'right' group.

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<sup>4</sup> Such is the pervasiveness of the question that a group of practitioners, including McGuire and Priestley (1985), have formed a conference organising body called 'What Works'.

Returning to the 'X' factor was it the mere presence of the car, formal groupwork, informal befriending that had an impact on the problem? Some of these could be tested, for instance a search for a correlation between the number of cars prepared or the numbers of cars raced might indicate the extent to which the car was relevant.

It is not possible to offer a fully scientific realist evaluation of the motor projects that were the subject of fieldwork observations but a few contextual and mechanistic suggestions are made that build upon Jones (1993) theoretical observations and empirical fieldwork observations addressed to considering, not whether motor projects work but how they might work.

#### *discussion of fieldwork*

As is made clear in Chapter 4 the extent and nature of the fieldwork is inadequate to the task of explaining joyriding but was crucial in understanding motor projects and observing the variety of masculinities involved. Whilst throughout this thesis mention is made to fieldwork - and it has been influential in theory-building - it is appropriate to discuss it more fully here. Some of the differences between the two fieldwork sites are set out in Chapter 1 so the emphasis here will be on similarities. Themes that emerged were: car culture; media interest; gender and shop-floor/work/community. Some of these are discussed theoretically elsewhere, here the intention is to give observed examples. Many of these examples overlap with each other as will be seen but are discussed separately for analytical purposes. Material on joyriding and other law-breaking was presented in Chapter 5. The quotes are of fieldwork notes written up immediately after observation and sometimes contain direct quotes from respondents. However, direct quotes are few as this is not a verbal culture and much language is swearing and verbal vilification in personal terms which are highly significant for interactions between actors but do not add to the more abstract evidence presented here.

Car culture is referred to in Chapter 1 and returned to in Chapter 8, moreover as Chapter 4 argues it is not possible for non-drivers to avoid being involved in 'car-culture', let alone a car-driving criminologist investigating car crime. As some of the descriptive material in Chapter 1 and much of the discussion in this chapter suggests motor projects are saturated in car culture. Indeed the very impulse to set up motor projects as an answer to car crime is indicative of the strength of that culture. Here the intention is to be more specific.

At the races at Wimbledon Stadium (14 February 1993) and at Arena, Essex (12 April 1993 and 17 July 1993) the projects are racing amongst and against drivers who drive bangers for fun and not as part of any sentence of or diversion from a court. The boys and the project workers blend perfectly with all the other 'petrol-heads'. Much as the weather is said to be the conversational small change of the English so the car is a *lingua franca* for these young men. The offices of both projects (and others of which I have knowledge) feature pictures of cars or have car magazines scattered about. Many project leaders and helpers have car or motor bike racing experience. One project organised a fund-raising event where corporate teams had bangers prepared for them. Many projects use kart racing as a leisure activity or reward yet increasingly such racing is used as part of team-building or rewarding in business. At both projects I

witnessed, or had related to me, discussions between visiting police officers and staff and project members on the merits (speed) of various cars (10 May 1993 and 13 June 1994).

The extent of media interest in joyriding was such that methodological dreams of research into an undisturbed field proved fruitless. Both projects had frequent visits from the media - including that occasioned by the visit of the Prince of Wales to one of them. However, given the uncertainty of funding for such projects publicity is often a crucial means of securing ongoing funding or commercial sponsorship - both projects had car-related sponsorship in addition to probation or social services funding. Of the twelve visits made to one project journalists (sometimes more than one) were present on five occasions. For this reason I appear in a photograph in an annual report and on a BBC training video talking about joyriding. During this time the project leader and some of the project members appear on a daytime TV discussion programme. As this also illustrates some of the gender issues and is referred to in Chapter 8 (where the article is discussed) the visit of two women journalists is set out below as recorded in my fieldnotes:

As I arrive G and T are lounging outside enjoying the sun. I see that some of the guys are being interviewed by an attractive young woman and others are being photographed by another attractive young woman. I ask T and G what is going on. They tell me that the women are from the Sunday Sport doing a feature on alien joyriders and sex. Nothing the Sunday Sport does would surprise me and I understand that some of their women writers are chosen for their looks rather than their writing talents. So I sort of believe them but it turns out they are joking. I meet P and ask him what it's all about. He explains that they come from *Ms Magazine*. I am fascinated that a feminist magazine, albeit a long established and now mainstream one, is interested in joyriding. But again I am wrong. Eventually I get to talk to the journalist. She has not heard of Gloria Steinem and sets me right. They are from *Mizz* magazine which is aimed at 17 year old girls. The article is part of a series of true life type stories of overcoming problems - in this instant giving up being a joyrider. J, S and PE are interviewed and photographed. Others may have been interviewed before but I did not see this. The photographing occasions some sexual innuendo particularly when they are asked to sit on the bonnet or out through the sunroof<sup>5</sup> holding a tool. I join in the joking. The women don't seem to find this offensive. They seem secure in their position and not threatened by this boyishness. Perhaps they recognize the inversion here. It is they who take the pictures and ask the questions. It will be their young female readers who will judge the actions of these young men and gaze at the pictures. (28 April 1993)

As the vignette above suggests gender issues become very obvious when women enter this all-male world but as we shall see later gender and sexuality also exist even when women are absent but first two contrasting observations about the presence of women on two other occasions:

I ask D who the youngster working with C is. I don't recognize him but he seems to know the ropes. It turns out that he is actually a young woman. P tells me that LE is one of his 'off the books' ie she is in excess of

<sup>5</sup> Many of the cars have had sunroofs. For racing these will be covered up with a sheet of metal.

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the twenty the project normally holds. She has been at the project before. She is the only girl in a family of six Irish brothers. She is not a convicted joyrider but uncles apparently lend her their cars or encourage her in the unlicensed use of family cars. L's banning still rankles as some of last Wednesday's meeting is replayed over the chips and tea. This and a later story from M are accompanied by more "fucks" and "cunts" than I previously remember. This cannot be for my benefit. Perhaps LE is the target? She laughs a little nervously. L reminds the room that "that word" is banned. This seems not to prevent any of the swearing. (fieldnotes, 10 May 1993)

Is it R's presence that considerably lessens the number of 'fucks' and prevents any 'cunts'? (fieldnotes, 5 May 1994)

One possible reason for these differences is that R is a member of staff. The observations also have to be seen against the normally continuous background of swearing during breaks. Some of these issues will be taken up when the theme of the shopfloor is taken up. One aspect of shopfloor culture that is often noted is the homophobic content of conversations in such homosocial settings. Some quotes from fieldnotes illustrate the point:

I get a better chance to talk and listen at the break for chips mid-evening. There is a lot of talk about cars and crime; gossip about the activities of people they know. I see less racism but just as much swearing and homophobic comments. S eventually picks up on this and points out the green notice on which the project's equal opportunities/anti-discrimination policy is set out. A couple of times during the evening the expression 'green card' is used to suggest someone is in breach of the policy. Unlike the over 17s group I notice no discussion of women or girls - mothers got no mention. This and the condemnatory remarks about gay men do not suggest to me that they are gay or are worried about being gay but that in the absence of women in their lives one way of expressing their emerging young male masculinity is through comparison with and opposition to what they imagine to be a fully formed male homosexuality. (2 November 1993)

Discussion at break on homophobia, prompted by S's complaint that staff were to be sent on a course. SE mentions to approving laughter "thumb up bum" as part of a discussion of his own heterosexual practice. J2 says he doesn't want someone sticking their prick up his bum. I respond, here "What makes you think anyone would want to?" (3 March 1994)

Thus even in the absence of women, other 'others' are conjured up to reassure them that they are or will grow to become 'men'. However, project members were able to witness other male interactions, for instance:

MY certainly takes the opportunity to test my knowledge and rib me about my lack of it. This is part of MY's style - his male style. It also happens to be part of mine. I recognize this and the undercurrent of aggression I wonder if he does? Easthope (1992) sees male banter as covering homosexual desire. This must be a very generalised desire as I don't think MY and I fancy each other. Indeed both of us behave as we do towards each other towards others too - male and female. Perhaps it is a form of fencing or sparring designed to keep people at bay? 'New men' both we often hug on meeting but I think we are playing a game of chicken - not daring to pull out of the clinch. I suspect that without an audience - of shockable homophobic men, or better, appreciative women - we would not do it. If one of us were to up the stakes by going for a kiss then I'm sure we would. I already know that I have kissed gay male friends on the lips, perhaps in much the same spirit of male bravado. (fieldnotes, 29 March 1994)

Along with sexist, racist and homophobic banter the shop-floor or work situation is commonly associated with windups (Collinson, 1992). Whilst I observed many windups amongst

project members and between them and staff the observations set out below are windups involving me. As the example of the journalists from *Mizz* magazine already illustrates the windup has the purpose of checking out. I understand the reference to the Sunday Sport and share the assumption that the young women are attractive but spoil things by mentioning feminism. The example below illustrates the ‘testing’ that any researcher might experience in the field but the extent to which they rely on car cultural references is suggestive:

MY tells me his car is a “Rover Capri”. Is he making a joke about their use of Fords whilst being sponsored by Rover or testing my motoring knowledge? My first thought is the latter so quip that this is an interesting example of “badge engineering” by which I hope that they understand that I know that Rover don’t make Capris and that I know some terms.(6 January 1994)<sup>6</sup>

These observations on motor projects as male domains with similarities to work and leisure are discussed below and related to theory in later chapters.

*conclusion: how motor projects might work*

An undated (but 1994) editorial from *The Oxford Times* titled ‘The Unbeatables’ highly praises the TRAX Motor Project and concludes that, “the late Mr Ness must be doffing a phantom fedora to everyone associated with Trax.” Apparently Elliot Ness retired to Northern California, after bringing various Chicago gangsters to book, where he started a crime prevention scheme. According to the editorial, “he set up a detention camp in the woods, welcomed to it the most outrageous young male offenders known to the state correctional facility and made them into forest firefighters...and halved the recidivism rate.” This was, “...to prove their manhood...” and become, “confident of their masculinity”.

TRAX is favourably compared to the Ness ‘boot camp’. Clearly Ness, and possibly the editorial writer, sees masculinity as something to be achieved in a ‘this-will-make-a-man-of-you’ way. There are elements of this in the work of Bly (1990) and his insistence on a retreat to the woods to meet the Wild Man. It assumes that a form of masculinity can work on the deviant masculinities of young men much as the masculinity of ‘getting tough’ on crime is assumed to work.

My observations of motor project suggests they can give young men a place to safely explore what cars can do and to discover the legitimate limits to car use. But cars are dangerous even when not stolen. What are the legitimate uses of the car? These are being challenged not only by the green movement but increasingly by wider sections of the population concerned by road building. Every year the ownership and use of cars is increasingly hedged round by legislation and ways to enforce that legislation (for instance ‘green’ cameras to enforce exhaust emissions standards). It has to be recognised that the carefree ideal portrayed in car advertisements is increasingly at odds with the reality of traffic jams, high costs and legal regulation.

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<sup>6</sup> ‘Badge Engineering’ refers to the practice of motor car companies applying the badge of a well-known marque to an inferior product to create a newly ‘engineered’ car.

Joyriders have already discovered that the way round these problems, in the absence of money, is to take another person's car temporarily. Any motor project faces the problem of persuading TWOCers away from this 'successful' strategy for using cars towards behaviour that is extremely constrained legally (quite rightly in view of the dangers) and extremely costly (unfairly in view of the, albeit manufactured, need for a car today).

Two wide contextual factors have not been considered in examining motor projects. These are the extent of a car culture that embraces both joyriding and the assumption that motor projects would work with joyriders and the gendered nature of that car culture which lead some to oppose motor projects because they are 'macho' (see the myths discussed above). Clearly, but only implicitly, the assumption of the proponents of motor projects are that there is something about the car or working with cars that 'works'. Equally clearly, and more explicitly, the opponents presume that the connection between masculinity and cars is such that they cannot work and may exacerbate the problem. However, this connection between men and cars may offer a clue as to how motor projects do work.

That is, it may not be the presence of the car or working on it that works but the fact of being a safe space to be a young man in. But what about young women? Given the proportion of women and girls who commit car crime motor projects are always unlikely to have few or no women on it. However, if there were appropriate young women would social services or probation feel able to refer them? A similar problem has been found with Community Service in the past with the suggestion that some women receive custody because whilst a CSO might be appropriate in theory none of the schemes appear appropriate in practice. This is not just about the provision of child care but about the atmosphere of projects.

The atmosphere of a typical motor project is like a garage rather than a social work setting; it is male-orientated. When the talk is not of cars and local gossip (much of which revolves around drugs and stolen property) it often concerns sex. Even talk about cars and local matters is enriched with sexual metaphors and imagery. The work on the cars and the talk allows the boys/men to be together without feeling uncomfortable. Vass (1984) noted the talk of cars and sport in his observations of Community Service. He also observed the extent to which rather than CSO being 'hard labour' it was a 'soft option'. In many respects these observations mirror those many male groups in paid employment. This may be a particular difficulty for newcomers or those who cannot convincingly act 'like a man'. Acceptance by the group demands not only an interest in or facility with cars but an appropriate verbal style and repertoire.

Proponents of motor projects do not seriously claim that the mere presence of cars at the project or the application of engine oil to hands 'magically' works on car crime but the literature on and claims of supporters show a good deal of 'faith' and many unexamined assumptions made about how they work. What this research suggests is that the magic ingredient may be 'masculinity'. The project may actually work through giving young men another way to be young men. The project may have given them cars to work on and race but it also offered in the shape of the male staff different models for being a man; ways of being a man that were closer to those that might be provided in a workplace (Collinson 1992).

It is a good thing that the projects work; however, gender issues cannot be ignored. The gender issues are important for female staff, male staff and clients with marginalised sexualities, the female partners/parents of those attending and women in general. They are also important to male workers and clients more generally in establishing ways to be a man that do not involve the misuse of cars or the denigration of others by sex or sexuality.

Whilst motor projects have been criticised for their masculinity one of the conclusions of my observations is that whilst it may well be a problem it may also be the means by which such projects work. The driving/racing/fixing of cars may get young men through the door and keep them going through difficult times but it is the chance to become men that works.

It should be clear that this is not the same as the 'It will make a man of you' argument for National Service (or its civilian clones). In the expression 'become a man' both the act of becoming and 'a man' are deeply problematic. The 'National Service' argument assumed that the end product - 'manhood' - was fixed but the process was fraught with difficulties; there was a danger that on the path to manhood the young man might become a 'cissy' or a criminal. That is they may become insufficiently manly (the cissy, the queer) or over manly (the criminal, the wife-beater). The message of the new sociology of masculinity suggests that the cissy, the criminal and the 'real man' are all ways of doing masculinity, or being masculine. One of the findings of this research is that for some young men for a part of their life one way of doing masculinity is through stealing cars. It may be that the anecdotal evidence for the very small, but rising, number of young women involved in crime, including joyriding, is that it provides them with a way to 'do masculinity' as they see that it is a successful strategy for their fathers and brothers.

If motor projects work through helping some young men to discover others ways to do masculinity which are socially acceptable both feminists and ecologists might then point out that those socially acceptable ways may still be damaging to women and to the environment. True, but it is the illegal and dangerous use of cars that brings them to the project so the first priority of the project must be that. It is interesting to speculate on how projects to make young men more sympathetic to women and/or the environment would work, as these are clearly needed too. Many projects working with the perpetrators of violence against women take a deliberately pro-feminist line and Community Service can involve 'environmental' jobs.

Even if motor projects could not effect the immediate driving and car related constraints, nor wider socio-political issues, they must be aware of them. If they do work then they return their 'successes' to a culture where the car continues to be needed and so very available. It is not as if the former joyrider - having spent eight weeks addressing their offending behaviour - now avoids temptation. Temptation may be brought to him if he was known as a good driver (as was one of my informants). Whilst cars remain legal their cost should not be made prohibitive.

Connell is right to emphasize that even men who are not explicitly party to hegemonic masculinity share in the 'collective project of oppression' (1987:215). For these reasons, support for motor projects which use the car - an environmentally unfriendly and tool and trophy of hegemonic masculinity - can only be provisional and temporary. It has been argued that motor

projects work by using the car and use of cars to bring young men 'back on track'. They work in moving these young men away from the use of illegal cars to create and maintain their own masculinity. They do not move these men away from the dream of legal or tolerated use of cars in constructing those masculinities far less problematising the content and practices - hetero-sexist and racist - of those masculinities. Such is the danger and prevalence of joyriding they should be supported but the danger comes from the car and from the masculinities that use it.