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**AUTO THEFT AND YOUTH CULTURE:
A NEXUS OF MASCULINITIES, FEMININITIES
AND CAR CULTURE**

By

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A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies
and Research in partial fulfillment of the
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Master of Arts

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ABSTRACT

This exploratory research project examines young people's participation in motor vehicle theft within Canada. It draws on interviews conducted with young offenders as part of the 'National Study of Young Offender Involvement in Motor Vehicle Theft' which is part of 'The Automobile of the 21st Century' (or AUTO21) national research initiative. Young people in Eastern Ontario were interviewed about their experiences with motor vehicle theft and their motivations for participating in this criminal activity. Interviews with young auto thieves revealed different patterns of auto theft between young men and women and different practices of femininity and masculinity. Despite having both participated in the same crime (auto theft), it was found that young men's masculine identities formed in relation to hegemonic masculinity while young women's feminine identities formed in dialogue with hegemonic femininity.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

This thesis forms part of the 'National Study of Young Offender Involvement in Motor Vehicle Theft' which is part of the 'The Automobile of the 21st Century' (or AUTO21) research initiative. AUTO21 is a Canadian research project that aims to strengthen and improve Canada's automotive industry. As part of this initiative an exploratory research project was undertaken to better understand young people's participation in motor vehicle theft in Canada.

This research project had two objectives. First, part of this study was designed to replicate a national level project on youth involvement in auto theft. Researchers in five centres across the country administered interviews to young people who had been convicted of auto theft. General information was sought in these interviews including the demographic and socio-cultural characteristics of the youth involved, the nature and extent of their involvement, and the motivations for their behaviour. Second, this study set out to examine how youth identity and youth culture influences participation in illegal activity such as auto theft¹.

In-depth interviews were conducted in Eastern Ontario with young people who had been convicted of auto theft. These interviews explored the images that these young people had of themselves, the motivations they had for being involved in auto theft and their own understandings of their behaviour. The goal of the research was to develop an in-depth sociological/criminological understanding of motor vehicle theft in Canada.

¹ Automobile/auto theft, car theft and motor vehicle theft are used interchangeably throughout this thesis to refer generally to the theft of passenger vehicles. This includes, but is not limited to, such vehicles as cars, trucks, and vans.

The literature suggests that motor vehicles help to shape the social, political, and economic realms of a society (Gilroy 2001). Motor vehicles provide people with mobility and help to determine where they will live and work (Miller 2001). While the importance of the car in shaping Western society cannot be understated, very little sociological research exists on 'the car' and the role that it plays in people's lives. The literature that does exist suggests that motor vehicles act as a symbol of status (Holden 1998; Walker et al. 2000; White 1990) rather than simply reflecting an act of consumption.

There is also limited sociological and criminological literature surrounding the theft of motor vehicles, especially in Canada (notable exceptions include Fleming et al. 1994; Tremblay et al. 1994; and Wallace 2003). Unfortunately, motor vehicle theft is often ignored in the criminological literature while prominence is given to violent offences. However, given the number of people involved, the harm it causes and the amount of financial loss it represents, motor vehicle theft is an important social issue in Canada. This thesis attempts to add to the criminological and sociological literature by furthering our understandings of 'the car' and car theft.

THE CRIME OF AUTO THEFT

Given the stature and role that motor vehicles have in our society, auto theft represents a unique type of criminal offence. Motor vehicles are very publicly visible pieces of property, which makes their illegal possession problematic for offenders. The car is one of the only pieces of property that has its own identification number and owners are required to register and license them with the state (Herzog 2002). Unlike other types of property crime, people are more likely to report their vehicles being stolen due to the

high cost of vehicle replacement and that the vehicle's theft is likely covered by insurance. This allows stolen vehicles to be tracked more easily than the theft of other types of property (e.g. stereos, jewelry). In addition to this, the number of un-recovered vehicles can be used to estimate the extent of organized crime involvement in auto theft, whereas recovered vehicles provide a measure of joyriding and other utilitarian uses (Herzog 2002; Tremblay et al. 1994). Also, car theft is unique amongst property crimes in that the property is often returned to the owner (McCaghy et al. 1977).

People participate in motor vehicle theft for a variety of reasons and in different ways. For example, Fleming et al. (1994) note that females and males differ with regards to their involvement in auto theft suggesting that gender is an important theme for understanding participation in this type of criminal activity. Cunneen and White (1995) argue that it is impossible to understand why young men participate in motor vehicle theft without a thorough understanding of masculinity. However, much of the literature surrounding masculinity and crime has tended to focus on violence (e.g. Messerschmidt 2000; 1999; 1997; Polk 1994; Totten 2003). Little work has been completed on understanding masculinity in relation to other types of criminal activity. This could help explain why much of the criminological research done on men thus far has had difficulty explaining why men are far more involved in crime than women.

THE CAR AS CULTURAL ICON

Another important theme for understanding young people's participation in auto theft is the significance they place on 'the car'. The motor vehicle is particularly prominent in many men's lives, since in Western culture the car acts as a symbol of

freedom, success, excitement, power and change (Dawes 2002; Holden 1998; Walker et al. 2000; White 1990). This is evident in many movies, television shows/commercials, and books (Dawes 2002; Holden 1998). Technology and its relation to men is an under-explored aspect of research on men, yet technology makes up a significant part of what many men consider to be masculine (Mellstrom 2004).

Participating in 'car culture'² helps men to even things out in an unfair world. This is especially important for marginalized men or those with little access to power. Attraction and interest in cars gives men and boys something to take pride in and to enjoy. This interest can provide a sense of identity and belonging and counteract feeling isolated and forgotten by society. Men's knowledge of cars can provide them with a certain level of status among close friends and acquaintances. Participating in car culture also provides opportunities for men to demonstrate their knowledge, stand out, be unique, and feel that they have met societal definitions of masculinity (or that they have what it takes to be a man). For example, technical prowess in fixing or modifying cars, blasting stereos, outrunning the police, and driving at high speeds all provide men (especially young men) with an opportunity to demonstrate their unique manhood (Walker et al. 2000).

These themes and the research conducted to explore them are discussed in greater detail in the body of this thesis. Chapter 2 provides a literature review on motor vehicle theft in Canada. This includes an examination of the costs associated with auto theft and the characteristics of the people that participate in this type of criminal activity. The

² Car culture is described as "competitiveness, freedom, mateship, display, technical skill and agility, speed and performance" (Walker et al. 2002). Basically, the motor vehicle acts as a symbol of masculine success and power in a society (Cunneen and White 1995).

motivations that people have for stealing motor vehicles are also discussed. This includes a review of the literature surrounding typologies of auto theft, joyriding and stealing motor vehicles for profit.

Chapter 3 presents the methodology for this study. It provides a discussion of grounded theory and the exploratory nature of the research design informing this project. A detailed account of sampling techniques and ethical standards is also provided. The questionnaire's design is discussed at some length and focuses on the various themes present in the questionnaire and what each theme hoped to measure.

The findings for this research project are found in Chapter 4. The findings section presents the results of the interviews conducted for this thesis. It is organized sequentially and explores the complexities inherent in the crime of auto theft. The following themes are discussed in detail: 'Schooling, Employment and Family', 'Other Criminal Activity', 'Getting Involved in Auto Theft', 'Motivations for Motor Vehicle Theft', 'Joyriding', 'Profit-Making', 'The Process of Theft', and 'Preventing Motor Vehicle Theft'.

Finally, Chapter 5 presents a discussion of the findings in relation to the existing literature on gender, car culture and youth. Drawing on the work of Connell (1995) and Messerschmidt (1993), gender is envisioned as a social construction. In particular, masculinities and femininities are discussed as performative expressions of gendered practice. Paechter's (2003a) conceptualization of gender as communities of practice is utilized to explore young people's involvement in motor vehicle theft. This includes a consideration of the various influences (e.g. car culture, marginalization) on young people's identity formation. The exploration of these issues leads into a brief discussion on the pleasures of crime and avenues for the prevention of motor vehicle theft. This

thesis concludes with a discussion of the limitations of the research project and possible avenues for future research.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical explanations as to why people (especially young people) steal motor vehicles are varied and underdeveloped in the literature. This is surprising considering the significance placed on motor vehicles in society and the considerable costs associated with motor vehicle theft. This chapter begins with a discussion of what is known about the nature and extent of car theft in Canada. The literature surrounding motor vehicle theft is then examined to determine what we know about people who participate in this crime. Finally, people's motivations for participating in auto theft are explored to help understand why people participate in this activity.

MOTOR VEHICLE THEFT IN CANADA

In recent years, motor vehicle theft has come to account for an increasing proportion of property crime in Canada. While accounting for only 8% of property crimes in 1991, auto theft comprised 14% of property crimes by 2001. This increase comes at a time when overall property crime rates are declining. However, it is important to note that the increase in motor vehicle theft varies greatly according to geographic location. In 2001, the number of vehicles reported stolen to the police in Canada was 170,213 (or 548 per 100,000 people). The rate for Ontario in 2001 was 422 stolen vehicles per 100,000 people (or 50,067 motor vehicle thefts) with Ottawa reporting a rate of 488 and Toronto a rate of 370. These rates are relatively low when compared to cities such as Regina (1,996 per 100,000 people in 2001), Winnipeg (1,581 per 100,000 people) and Vancouver (1,149 per 100,000 people) where rates well exceed the national average (Wallace 2003).

The high rates of auto theft experienced by some western cities are attributed largely to young people's involvement in stealing motor vehicles. Approximately 75% of all people accused of auto theft in Canada in 2001 were under the age of 25. Young people aged 12 to 17 accounted for 42% of all people charged with stealing a motor vehicle in Canada (Wallace 2003). However, while examining auto theft in British Columbia, Fleming et al. (1994) found that a large number of car thefts were attributable to only a small number of youth. This group of young people tends to be predominantly male, since in 2001, females accounted for only 12% of all people charged with stealing a motor vehicle in Canada (Wallace 2003). Other authors (e.g. Copes and Hochstetler 2003; Cunneen and White 1995; Dawes 2002) in the United States and Australia have also found that auto theft is a crime primarily participated in by men.

The cost of motor vehicle theft can be immense given that this often involves the loss of a vehicle. Approximately 25% of stolen vehicles are never recovered (Wallace 2003). Even if the vehicle is recovered, it will likely have been stripped of its valuables or damaged. There is also the cost of the criminal justice system's response (e.g. police, courts) to auto theft (McCaghy et al. 1977). The Insurance Bureau of Canada (2004) estimates that motor vehicle theft costs Canadians close to \$1 billion each year (approximate estimates are \$600 million on insurance claims and \$250 million on police, courts, and healthcare). In 2001, the majority of recovered stolen vehicles in Canada had some form of damage (69% were damaged while 25% had no damage). There were an additional 2% of vehicles in which parts were stripped from the vehicle and another 4% of vehicles were damaged beyond repair (Wallace 2003).

WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT CAR THIEVES AND CAR THEFT?

Youth who steal cars do not solely restrict themselves to car theft and tend to participate in a variety of other crimes (Higgins and Albrecht 1981). Svensson (2002) identified motor vehicle theft as an offence that is often committed by chronic or persistent offenders³. It was found that chronic offenders accounted for almost 80% of all motor vehicle thefts. Svensson also found that if motor vehicle theft was a person's first conviction, this significantly increased the likelihood that this person would become a chronic or repeat offender⁴. Participation in motor vehicle theft and conviction for committing that offence was found to lead to further involvement in significantly more criminal activity.

Joyriding has been linked to the economy where opportunities for car theft present themselves as the economy fluctuates. Paternoster and Bushway (2001) found that increases in youth joyriding were linked to good economic times. As the economy expands, so does the opportunity for joyriding. However, adult car theft did not significantly increase during the same economic expansions. In good economic times, vehicles are less likely to be monitored by their owners. Since adult car thieves are more likely to be involved in theft for profit, it was found that economic expansion did not increase the amount of adult auto theft. Rather, it is argued that an economic recession encourages theft for profit because more illegitimate activities arise in order for people to survive (e.g. the legitimate body shop is transformed into an illegitimate chop shop).

³ In this case a chronic offender was identified as having nine or more criminal convictions.

⁴ Repeat offender is defined as 4-8 criminal convictions.

McCaghy et al. (1977) suggest that joyriding is largely a crime of opportunity. For example, they found that most joyriders had stolen cars with the keys in them. The joyriders were also much younger than other types of car thieves identified and were more likely to steal cars as part of a group. Similarly, carjacking (stealing a vehicle with the owner still in it) is very much a crime of opportunity. There is little time to plan out a strategy of attack due to the mobility of vehicles and spontaneity of criminal opportunities (Jacobs et al. 2003). Alternatively, profit-motivated offenders had much more skill than joyriders and were able to steal cars without requiring a key (McCaghy et al. 1977).

Generally, the preferred location to steal motor vehicles is somewhere that is reasonably anonymous. The young people in Fleming et al.'s (1994) study preferred to steal vehicles from parking lots (especially underground parking lots) and car dealerships (where keys are often carelessly left in cars). Wallace (2003) found that 41% of motor vehicle thefts occurred from parking lots while a further 30% were from streets and 16% were from the driveways and garages of people's homes.

Preventing young people from committing auto theft poses a difficult task for law enforcement officials as well as policy-makers. Fleming et al. (1994) argue that in order to prevent auto theft we need to focus on reducing opportunities for cars to get stolen (target hardening). For example, cars equipped or thought to be equipped with alarms acted as a deterrent to 75% of the youth interviewed in Fleming et al.'s (1994) study. Young people also avoided trying to steal cars with such anti-theft devices as 'The Club'. However, the Combat Auto Theft (CAT)⁵ program had very little deterrent value for these

⁵ CAT is a program that places a sticker on motor vehicles that informs police that this particular vehicle is not typically driven between certain hours overnight. The police can stop and search any car displaying this CAT sticker driving within the prescribed time frame.

young people. Furthermore, Jacobs et al. (2003) found that the prospect of being arrested had little deterrent effect on carjackers.

Most young people involved in car theft show some sort of progression from first participating in auto theft only as a passenger, to stealing cars on their own (Fleming et al. 1994). For example, Slobodian and Browne (1997), examining young offenders aged 10 to 18, found that young people went from riding along as passengers in stolen vehicles, to taking vehicles without the owner's consent, to stealing motor vehicles by themselves. Generally, joyriding is often committed in the early teenage years and then auto theft either persists (taking on a variety of possible forms), escalates into further crime, or stops altogether (Dawes 2002).

MOTIVATIONS FOR MOTOR VEHICLE THEFT

Various typologies have been proposed to help explain the reasons why people steal cars. These typologies use people's motivations as a basis for understanding participation in auto theft. However, there is much debate about how to understand and categorize the complex motivations of car thieves. Let us first discuss some of the typologies proposed by various authors before discussing problems associated with taking such an approach.

McCaghy et al. (1977) propose that there are five different types of auto thieves.

1) The *joyrider* derives status from auto theft. The motor vehicle is stolen to have a good time and to show others that they are powerful and exciting. 2) Some car thieves utilize the vehicle simply for *short-term transportation*. The car is stolen to provide the person with a means to get around town and to other cities. 3) Other car thieves utilize the stolen

car for *long-term transportation*. The car is kept for their personal use for extended periods of time. 4) *Profit* is also a motivation for auto theft. The car or its parts can be sold to make money. This can range from organized crime and professional car theft operations to amateurs stripping a car for its parts (e.g. tires). 5) The final type of car thief identified is the person who steals cars to *use in other crimes* (e.g. robbery).

Fleming et al. (1994) found that, in general, there are three types of car thieves. 1) *Acting Out Joy-Rider* – This type of car thief enjoys showing how ‘crazy’ he can be through extreme driving and stunts. The car is utilized to elicit praise from friends by being recognized as the type of person who will try and do anything. This type of auto theft often ends with cars being damaged or destroyed. Also, offenders in this category often lack empathy regarding the consequences of their actions. 2) *Thrill-seeker* – This type of offender participates in car theft to finance drug habits, to commit other crimes, to cause damage, and for transportation. There is also some participation in selling stolen car parts to close friends. 3) *Instrumental Offender* – These offenders steal cars for profit. Many rationally think through their decisions to steal cars and try to limit their risk of getting caught. Auto theft is treated as if it were a profession or a business.

Herzog (2002) proposes a more extensive typology of eight different types of auto thieves. 1) *Joyriding* – The theft is conducted for both excitement and transportation. This type of car theft can be thought of as an avenue to assert masculinity and to show off for friends and acquaintances. 2) *Self-transportation* – The car is utilized to get the person to the various places that they need to go. 3) *Equipment supplement* – The car is stripped for its parts (e.g. stereo, tires). 4) *Insurance fraud*. 5) *Dismantling for car parts* – This type of car thief has links to organized crime where stolen car parts are ‘recycled’ into the

legitimate car market. 6) *Assignment of a new identity* – The stolen car is given new identification numbers. 7) *Transfer across national borders*. 8) *Commission of another crime*.

Typologies help us to understand what motivates people to steal motor vehicles. However, developing extensive typologies of car thieves might be the wrong approach to take in understanding auto theft. It is problematic for two reasons. First, typologies imply that the categories utilized are mutually exclusive (Copes 2003). For example, a person either steals motor vehicles for joyriding OR transportation OR profit. However, many offenders could end up in multiple categories within a typology and this negates the usefulness of such an approach. For example, a person who steals vehicles for organized crime could also joyride and use stolen vehicles as a means of transportation. Second, typologies are presented as providing a comprehensive understanding of all motivations for car theft. Utilizing typologies to describe the various types of car thieves and their motivations does not capture all the possible reasons that offenders might have for stealing vehicles. For example, Herzog's (2002) typology above is by no means exhaustive. Although not utilizing typologies, Resendiz (2001) further identifies revenge and sheer interest in the crime of auto theft as possible motivations for car theft. An in-depth understanding of auto theft is difficult to obtain based solely on typologies given the above two limiting factors.

Typologies help to define a particular act performed in a particular time and place but this does not necessarily mean that offenders can be neatly categorized by their motivations. Understanding auto theft is more complex than simply slotting car thieves into various categories. In order to comprehend the complex motivations of car thieves,

we must not only understand what motivates people to steal vehicles (the typology approach) but also answer why they are motivated. Thus, if a person's motivation for stealing a vehicle is to joyride, we must delve deeper into this motivation and examine what shapes it. This requires an examination of *why* a person would be motivated to joyride. This could entail exploring what the person does on joyrides, why s/he joyrides and how s/he feels when joyriding. Exploring why people are motivated to participate in car theft in addition to examining what motivates them provides a deeper theoretical understanding of why people participate in auto theft.

After examining the literature surrounding auto theft and typologies, motivations for auto theft can be discussed in relation to two very broad categories; joyriding and/or profit-making. The work done by Tremblay et al. (1994) helps illustrate how motivations for auto theft can be thought of as broadly falling into one of two categories. They divide car thieves into two groups; joyriders and jockeys. Although joyriders do steal cars for the thrill of the theft, it was found that the theft of a car is less about the actual theft and more about what the car can provide for the person (e.g. transportation, thrills). Jockeys steal cars mostly for profit (although they also likely enjoy the process of stealing cars). Their reward is obtained through the profits derived from the sale of the car or its associated parts. Similarly, Resendiz (2001) found that car theft for professional car thieves involves a mix of both making money and having a good time.

The benefit of categorizing motives into either 'joyriding' or 'profit-making' instead of a more extensive typology is that it acknowledges that these two categories are not always mutually exclusive. For example, people who predominantly steal cars to joyride might also occasionally derive profit from their activities and people who steal

predominantly for profit might also joyride. Having recognized this, it is still possible to classify car thieves based on their primary reason for stealing cars (i.e. either joyriding or profit-making). Second, having only two categories allows us to better track car theft across time and space. For example, we can measure the amount of joyriding and theft for profit using the amount of recovered and unrecovered vehicles (Herzog 2002). Finally, this approach, while acknowledging that 'joyriding' and 'profit-making' can take on a variety of forms, also provides a concise framework that allows us to develop an in-depth sociological understanding of why people are motivated to commit auto theft. It is to this framework that I now turn.

JOYRIDING

Joyriding is a very general term that can encompass a wide variety of motivations for why people steal motor vehicles. Joyriding has been described as stealing cars for excitement and thrills, transportation, status, or even to commit other crimes (Copes 2003; Fleming et al. 1994; Herzog 2002; McCaghy et al. 1977). For this thesis, joyriding is broadly defined as people deriving pleasure from the theft of motor vehicles and/or from what can be done with stolen vehicles. This pleasure can take on a variety of forms with the exclusion of pleasure from profit (which will be discussed later in the chapter). We will now examine the literature surrounding joyriding and the various reasons put forth to explain what motivates people to participate in this activity.

EXCITEMENT/THRILLS

For many car thieves, the act of stealing a vehicle is done for the express purpose of gaining excitement or thrills. Often, the greater the risk, the more fun the experience (especially if the person is able to get away without getting caught). Offenders derive satisfaction from their ability to get away with stealing cars and driving recklessly in the process (Copes 2003). Katz (1988:53) describes this as “being seduced to deviance”; the “sneaky thrill” is found in the act of theft rather than in a desire to possess the object. The car itself has also been offered as a possible explanation as to why people steal motor vehicles. Jacobs et al. (2003) suggest that the car acts as a seductive object. The vehicle’s exterior (e.g. colour, curves) and sounds (e.g. the stereo, motor) lures offenders to the vehicle.

In their study on young people and auto theft, Fleming et al. (1994) found that youth primarily participate in auto theft for the excitement and thrill that it elicits. Stealing a car and performing stunts, driving dangerously, and holding contests (e.g. young people each stealing a car to later meet up as a group and smash them) provides these young people with an escape from boredom. If the car is kept for extended periods of time, this allows offenders to extend their excitement over days or even weeks. However, it should be noted that stolen cars are rarely kept for extended periods of time (Copes 2003). Fleming et al. (1994) also found that young people involved in motor vehicle theft were more likely to participate in other high risk or thrill inducing behaviour (e.g. car racing) than young people who were not involved in car theft. Those involved in car theft were also more likely than non-involved youth to party, drink alcohol and use drugs in their spare time.

There is an element of excitement in the actual theft of a motor vehicle but the thrills derived from this activity are often found in what can be done with the vehicle. Copes (2003) describes police pursuits and dangerous driving as avenues in which thrill seekers are able to elicit excitement or a 'rush' for themselves. Sometimes car thieves will purposely taunt the police to engage in a pursuit so that an element of danger and excitement can be added to their car theft. Alternatively, examining carjackers (those who steal cars with the owner still in the vehicle), Jacobs et al. (2003) found that the thrill of the event was in the violence used to take the car from its owner. Excitement was derived through the intimidation and physical abuse of carjacking victims.

STATUS

Joyriding can involve more than simply deriving thrills from stealing cars. For some, joyriding accords an element of status. Copes (2003) found that auto thieves would seek out cars to steal that said something about themselves. Motor vehicles that looked 'sporty' and were in good condition were preferred and sought out by most car thieves. These types of vehicles were desired because the stripped car parts could be used to improve on the look of their own motor vehicle. These car thieves also wanted to portray to people a certain image when they were driving around in stolen vehicles. Driving around town with the 'right' vehicle projects a sense of prestige and importance to onlookers and onto the auto thieves themselves. For example, cars with loud stereos were often sought out so that car thieves could show off their newly acquired car and sound system. Stereos were also removed from stolen vehicles and placed in their own vehicles. Similarly, Jacobs et al. (2003) found that carjackers often enjoyed driving around and

showing off their 'new' automobile to people. This was done to derive an element of status from their carjacking activity.

Many offenders change the types of vehicles that they steal as their skills improve. There is an element of status involved in stealing certain types of vehicles. Fleming et al. (1994) found that young, inexperienced car thieves tended to steal older Japanese made vehicles. It is only the most experienced car thief who can steal relatively new vehicles. Status is derived from being the most skilled among the hierarchy of car thieves. Also, many young people in Fleming et al.'s (1994) study sought out cars for their particular styles and looks. For example, auto thieves disproportionately stole black and red cars that had only two doors. Most of the vehicles targeted for theft were older vehicles (i.e. 6 – 10 years old) because of their many vulnerabilities to theft in comparison to newer makes and models. These auto thieves also knew which particular years of vehicles were easy to steal and which years they should avoid.

TRANSPORTATION

The term joyriding also encompasses motor vehicles stolen as a means of transportation (e.g. to parties, need a ride home) (Copes 2003). Fleming et al. (1994) found that only a small number of young people involved in auto theft cited transportation as a motivation for stealing vehicles. Generally, these young people either needed to get somewhere for a certain time or they wanted to go somewhere that public transportation could not take them. Copes (2003) found that stolen vehicles were often used to meet up with friends/acquaintances. Stealing vehicles for transportation is attributed to car thieves wanting to continue their hedonistic lifestyles of partying, doing

drugs, drinking and having a good time. For example, many car thieves in Copes' (2003) study had either stolen a vehicle to go to a party or return home from one. Stealing vehicles allowed these people to live for the moment and to feel a sense of freedom/independence, which helps them to forget about their often-troubled lives.

PROFIT-MAKING

There are varieties of ways to make money from stolen motor vehicles. For example, profit can be made from insurance fraud, selling stolen car parts, and/or selling the entire vehicle. For this thesis, profit-making will be broadly defined as acquiring money by participating in motor vehicle theft. Offenders falling into the profit-making category will also likely have participated or do participate in some form of joyriding. However, these two categories provide an interesting way of examining the differences and similarities that exist between car thieves who predominantly steal for joyriding and those who predominantly steal for profit.

In comparison to joyriding, motor vehicles are stolen less often as a way to make money (Fleming et al. 1994). However, Copes (2003) found that car theft can be a lucrative business for the profit-making offender. A stolen car can earn a person up to \$5000 (U.S.) if they have the right connections (e.g. chop shops). Car thieves can also make money by 'stripping' motor vehicles and selling their associated parts. Car theft can become so lucrative that the need for employment becomes non-existent. The financial benefits of auto theft can support a much more lavish lifestyle than most jobs that these people would be able to obtain. Further, Resendiz (2001) found that highly skilled car

thieves (all men) considered their theft of cars for organized crime as a form of employment rather than as a crime.

Fleming et al. (1994) found that profit-making offenders account for a disproportionate amount of the total number of motor vehicles stolen. Estimates put the number of vehicles stolen in a week by this type of offender at five or more. Fleming et al. (1994:62) also describe the profit-making offender as “rational [and] intelligent”. They are more likely to take precautions to avoid getting caught which means avoiding stealing cars that present too high of a risk.

COMMITTING OTHER CRIMES

Stealing motor vehicles to commit other crimes is discussed under the profit-making category because of its use in such profit-making crimes as theft and robbery. Stolen motor vehicles provide anonymity to offenders who participate in these crimes (McCaghy et al. 1977). However, stealing motor vehicles to commit other crimes is one of the rarest motivations for auto theft (Copes 2003; McCaghy et al. 1977). It should also be noted that the type of crime committed with the stolen vehicle helps to determine the motivation behind the car theft. Thus, there are a variety of different crimes that can be committed with a stolen vehicle and not all these crimes will be profit-driven. Also, some crimes will have multiple motivations that will require a more in-depth examination of the complexities inherent in people’s participation in auto theft (Copes 2003).

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

'The Automobile of the 21st Century' (or AUTO21) is a research project investigating a range of issues surrounding the automobile and society. This thesis forms part of the 'National Study of Young Offender Involvement in Motor Vehicle Theft' which is part of the AUTO21 research initiative. This chapter provides a detailed description of the research design, the recruitment of participants, the interview process and the questions asked in the interviews that were conducted.

This exploratory research project is the first national scale study of auto theft in Canada. Conducting exploratory research allows us to delve into previously unexplored areas of the social world (Stebbins 2001). Although some research on auto theft has been conducted within the Canadian context (see Fleming et al. 1994; Tremblay et al. 1994; and Wallace 2003), little is known about the complexities inherent in young people's participation in this type of criminal activity.

This research project adds to the literature surrounding auto theft by utilizing Glaser and Strauss' (1967) grounded approach to research. Rather than test an existing theory concerning auto theft, this approach allows the theory to develop out of the data. Berg (2001:249) describes grounded theory as an "attempt to develop explanations grounded in the data". Others (e.g. Dooley 2001) refer to this as inductive research. Essentially, theory is built from the ground up and is gradually developed as data is analyzed and concepts emerge (Berg 2001; Neuman 2003). Put more succinctly, Glaser and Strauss (1967) suggest that we think of theory building as a process. Theory

continuously evolves as we obtain more information and learn more about the social phenomena under study.

This thesis is based on interviews conducted from July 2004 to November 2004 with seventeen young offenders in Eastern Ontario who were convicted of auto theft or a related offence, and who were either incarcerated or on probation. Ethics approval for this research project was received in June 2004 from the Ministry responsible for young offenders in Ontario. A letter was sent out from the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services to all open custody facilities, closed custody facilities and probation offices notifying them of our study's approval. After the letter was sent out, staff at the facilities and probation offices dealing with young offenders were contacted and the study was explained to them in detail. Discussed below are the techniques utilized to identify young people who had participated in motor vehicle theft for each type of criminal justice institution.

In open and closed custody facilities, staff identified young people who had been convicted of motor vehicle theft or a related offence using the following three techniques or a combination of these techniques. First, staff used file histories to determine if young people at their facilities would be suitable candidates to participate in the study. Second, the staff's personal familiarity with a young person's background was used to judge whether s/he had participated in auto theft in the past. Third, young people were asked if they had ever been convicted of motor vehicle theft or a related offence. After it was established that a young person was suitable to interview regarding involvement in auto theft, staff asked the young person if they would like to participate in the study. A time

was then arranged to meet and interview interested young people in the respective institutions about their participation in motor vehicle theft.

Probation officers had a larger caseload than staff in open and closed custody facilities. This required a different approach to identifying young people who had participated in auto theft. A computer search was conducted of all young people currently on probation within Ottawa and the surrounding area. A list of offenders who had committed the offences of theft over and under \$5000, possession over and under \$5000, and joyriding was compiled. These offences were utilized in order to narrow the search of young people who had participated in motor vehicle theft because data is not kept specifically on people who have been convicted of this offence. Once the list was compiled, probation officers identified which of the young people on the list had actually participated in auto theft. Probation officers then helped to set up interviews with the young people that they had identified. Interviews were conducted in probation offices in order to make the process more comfortable for the young people participating in the study. The probation office provided a location that was familiar and conveniently accessible to these young people. An effort was made to meet the young person during their regularly scheduled visit so as not to inconvenience staff at the probation office or add additional trips to the probation office for the young person.

In order to participate in this research project, a young person must have been convicted of auto theft or a related offence while s/he was between the ages of 12 and 17. Participants were asked to sign an informed consent form stating that they understood the depth and scope of the research project and the questions that would be asked. The informed consent form notified participants that their participation was entirely voluntary

and that they could withdraw at any point or could refuse to answer any question(s) that they did not feel comfortable answering. Participants were also assured of confidentiality and were only identified by a study name/pseudonym of their choice (or one was provided for them). The informed consent form and research project was first explained verbally to the young person. The participant was also provided with an opportunity to review the form and to ask questions related to the research before signing. If the young person was under the age of 16, s/he was also required to obtain parental consent to participate. However, no participants in this study were under the age of 16. Please refer to Appendix A for a copy of the informed consent forms. Each interview lasted for approximately one hour and included questions pertaining to the young person's involvement in motor vehicle theft. A copy of the questionnaire can be found in Appendix B.

Participants did not receive any monetary reimbursement for their participation. However, in two open custody residences where several interviews were conducted, young people were offered an incentive to participate. Three young people at one house each received a bag of chips and a pop and five young people at another house received a pizza and pop night for their participation. These incentives were offered in order to increase the likelihood of participation and to help minimize disruption at the open custody residences.

The questionnaire was designed to be administered in a similar format (the national protocol) across Canada. Thus, being part of the larger national study limited what modifications could be made to the design of the questionnaire. However, there were some small alterations made to the questionnaire in order to ensure questionnaire completion and to garner more detailed responses. First, the questionnaire's length was

reduced. Discussions with a colleague working on the national project in another province revealed that young people were having difficulty finishing the approximately one hour and a half long questionnaire. Thus, the questionnaire's length was reduced with the goal of having the participants complete the interview in approximately one hour. Second, the structured interview format of the national protocol with its mostly closed-ended questions was expanded to include more open-ended questions. Closed-ended questions effectively gathered general information regarding the sample while open-ended questions (with probes) were utilized to delve deeper into offender motivations for car theft.

The questions were broken down and organized around several themes including 'Schooling, Employment and Family', 'Other Criminal Activity', 'Getting Involved in Auto Theft', 'Motivations for Motor Vehicle Theft', 'Joyriding', 'Profit-Making', 'The Process of Theft', and 'Preventing Motor Vehicle Theft'. The questions were organized around these themes for two reasons. First, the national protocol helped to structure what areas were covered by the questionnaire. Second, the literature surrounding youth, auto theft and car culture suggested that the above themes were important avenues to explore in understanding youth participation in auto theft. The following discussion describes the questions that were asked under each of the themes identified above.

1) *Schooling, Employment and Family* – To better understand the lifestyles and experiences of the young people interviewed, general questions were asked regarding their schooling, employment and family. Schooling questions asked young people how well they interacted with peers, teachers and principals/vice-principals. Information was

also sought on the last grade of school that the young person had completed and any possible school related problems that they had encountered (e.g. poor attendance, lack of interest in school, expulsions/suspensions). Questions pertaining to employment asked about young people's work history and possible future career paths. Young people were also asked to describe their family life. Questions delved into such topics as their family's financial situation, who they lived with, and the criminal involvement of family members. The questions asked surrounding schooling, employment and family help provide a context to young people's involvement in criminal activity.

2) *Other Criminal Activity* – In order to determine whether these young people limited themselves to only auto theft or were involved in various criminal activities, questions were asked concerning their participation in other criminal activity. Young people were asked to list the crimes that they had been convicted of as well as the number of crimes that they had participated in but were never caught. These questions help provide a context to young people's participation in auto theft by describing the type and amount of crime in which they were involved. In order to determine how serious young people considered their participation in auto theft, questions were also asked about how the crime of auto theft compares to other crimes (e.g. shoplifting, stealing from a parent).

3) *Getting Involved in Auto Theft* – Questions were asked pertaining to events preceding the young person's involvement in motor vehicle theft (e.g. did they steal articles from cars, did they vandalize cars) in order to help determine if there is a progression to auto theft. Young people were also asked to describe their first involvement (in anyway) in

motor vehicle theft as well as their first theft of a motor vehicle. Questions were asked pertaining to their age at first involvement, the type of involvement (e.g. passenger or driver), how they learned to steal cars, and the reasons behind their first theft of a motor vehicle. These questions were asked to determine how these young people became involved in auto theft and how their involvement progressed from not stealing cars to stealing them.

4) *Motivations for Motor Vehicle Theft* – The bulk of this thesis is devoted to understanding why people steal motor vehicles. To this end, young people were asked to describe what they typically did with a vehicle once it was stolen. Questions also asked about young people's main motivation for stealing cars and if their reasons for stealing cars had changed over time (again, if there was a progression to stealing cars). These very general questions help to develop a more nuanced and detailed understanding of the motivations to commit auto theft. This is a topic that is expanded on in the sections that follow.

5) *Joyriding* – This theme encompasses a wide variety of activities that young people participate in with a stolen vehicle. Young people were asked if they had ever stolen a vehicle for a joyride, a thrill, or for transportation. If they had, they were asked to delve more deeply into their feelings at the time of the theft and what they did with the stolen vehicle. Questions were also asked regarding speeding in stolen vehicles, driving ability, drug and alcohol use, vehicle ownership, learning to drive, interest in motor vehicles, bringing cars to school, police pursuits and holding contests. The goal of this type of

questioning was to delve deeply into the wide range of motivations underlying young people's participation in motor vehicle theft. The objective here was to develop a more nuanced and contextualized understanding of participation in this activity.

6) *Profit-Making* – In order to determine if young people were living off the proceeds of their crimes and if this was a primary motivation for their participation in motor vehicle theft, a variety of questions were asked pertaining to making money from the theft of motor vehicles. Young people were asked how they were able to obtain money from stolen vehicles and if they had any links to organized crime. If the young person sold vehicles to organized crime, they were asked to describe in detail the process of obtaining money for their stolen vehicles. These questions were designed to provide insight into these criminal operations. Also, young people were asked if they had ever used stolen vehicles to commit other crimes and if they had, to describe what crimes they had committed.

7) *The Process of Theft* – This theme asked a variety of questions regarding the techniques utilized to steal motor vehicles. Questions were also asked about how long stolen vehicles were kept, where they were kept, and what was done with the vehicles once the young person was finished with them. These questions were asked in the hopes that they would provide possible avenues for the prevention of auto theft by providing insight into how vehicles are stolen.

8) *Preventing Motor Vehicle Theft* – In order to determine possible avenues for the reduction of auto theft, young people were asked questions regarding what made vehicles easy or tough to steal. Young people were asked questions about what types of vehicles they targeted, how they defeated anti-theft devices, and what deterred them from stealing motor vehicles. Questions were also asked surrounding who these young people considered to be victims of their crimes and why.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

Gaining access to interview young offenders in Ontario facilities was a long and arduous process. This project was initially started in the early summer of 2003 and due to the Ontario government's ethics review, took more than a year to get started. Ethics approval for this project was not received until late June 2004. Once access was finally approved, the Ontario government failed to notify many young offender facilities that our research project was being conducted. Thus, the research process was again delayed until young offender facilities could be assured that the project was legitimate and approved by the Ontario government's ethics review board.

One further difficulty complicated the completion of this research project. By the time approval for the research project was received, young offender facilities and probation services were in the process of being transferred to the newly created Ministry of Children and Youth Services. This meant that young offender files were being moved to different locations and young offenders were being assigned new probation officers and new locations to meet their probation officers. Due to the increased workload placed upon the staff at probation services, access to interviewing young offenders was severely limited. This was unfortunate given that most of the young people identified as car thieves were on probation.

Despite the issues encountered with access, interviews were completed with 17 young people aged 16 to 20. Interviews (lasting approximately one hour in length) were conducted in either an open custody facility (53%, n=9), a closed custody facility (24%, n=4) or a probation office (24%, n=4). The sample included twelve young men (71%) and

five young women (29%). The mean age of the sample was 17.4 years. Most of the young people interviewed lived in an urban area (77%, n=13) while three people (18%) lived in a rural area and one young person (6%) stated that he lived in both.

It should be noted that the young people interviewed were all interested in speaking about their experiences with auto theft. All of the young people completed the rather lengthy questionnaire and even when interviews were interrupted because of lock downs at the closed custody facility, the young people were still willing to complete their questionnaires at a later date. This chapter presents the results of interviewing these young people about their experiences with motor vehicle theft.

SCHOOLING, EMPLOYMENT AND FAMILY

All of the young people in this study felt that they either fit in at school all of the time (53%, n=9) or most of the time (41%, n=7). There was only one young person who felt that he only fit in some of the time (6%). However, most of the young people interviewed had trouble with their schooling. Many of these young people seem to have had difficulty making the transition into high school. There were two young women who had finished their high school diploma and one young man who was only three credits short. There were others who were on track to finish their high school diploma but the majority of young people had only finished up to grade eight. The mean for the last grade of school completed was 9.35 (9.0 for young men, 10.2 for young women).

Interestingly, the majority of young people claim that it is important (59%, n=10) or somewhat important (29%, n=5) to them that they get good grades in school. There was only one young woman (6%) who stated that getting good grades was not very

important and one young man (6%) who stated that it was not important at all. Also, young people thought that they were/are doing very well (35%, n=6) or well (47%, n=8) in their schoolwork. Only three young people (18%) stated that they were/are doing poorly.

Despite the importance placed on getting good grades, 75% (n=9) of the young people did not attend classes on a regular basis (only n=3 stated that they attended classes regularly). Eli states that he would “skip class to smoke weed” which he would buy with the money he made from stealing articles from cars. Bobby did not like school and would “cut all the time” because he found school frustrating. As Bobby states “I can’t sit there, I need something to do”. Alternatively, Kyle states that “if I drop out of school, I’ll be a failure to the family”. Further, 88% (n=15) of the young people had been expelled or suspended from school for a variety of offences. George had been expelled and suspended for “beating up someone...having a knife at school...minor fights...[and] skipping class”. Peter had been expelled while Mary and Amy had each been suspended for assaulting another student. Julie was suspended for having drugs in her locker and Sarah was expelled for “using on school property”. Sarah had also been suspended for skipping class and swearing at the principal. Natalie refers to herself as a “bad ass in school” because she had been in “fist fights” with other students and had verbally abused teachers. Similarly, John suggests that he had an “attitude problem” in school because of his “swearing [and] fighting”.

Generally, despite the troubles in school young people stated that their teachers treated them fairly most of the time (81%, n=13) while only three (19%) thought that they were rarely treated fairly. However, principals and vice-principals did not fair as well.

The majority of young people (59%, n=10) thought that they were rarely treated fairly by principals/vice-principals while seven young people (41%) felt that they were treated fairly most of the time. Mark admits that he “mouthed off” to teachers but he believed that they mostly deserved it because they did not trust him. Mark felt that his teachers were holding grudges because of things he had done in the past and suggested that they should just “forgive and forget”. Mathew had a problem with being told what to do by teachers and principals. For example, Mathew could not understand why he was not allowed to wear his walkman in class and regarded anyone who tried to stop him from doing so as being on a “power trip”. He had also told the principal to “fuck off, you’re not my parents”. Similarly, Colin stated that the principal and vice-principal “picked on” him and held a “grudge against” him.

Most of the young people had trouble finishing high school, yet many planned on attending further schooling to obtain jobs in a wide variety of fields (e.g. mechanic, social worker, veterinarian, computer technician). Eight (50%) young people had plans to attend college, while three (19%) wanted to attend university. There were also four (25%) young people who wanted to go to trade school. Many of the young people (82%, n=14) had been employed in the past and had worked an average of 10 hours to 50 hours per week at their previous jobs. However, many young people stated that they had trouble keeping jobs once employed.

The majority of the young people described their family’s financial situation as comfortable (35%, n=6) or well off (24%, n=4). However, there were seven (41%) young people who considered their families to be poor. The young people in this study lived with either their mother (n=4), friends (n=3) or both parents (n=2). Other young people

lived with their aunt (n=1), grandparents (n=1), boyfriend (n=1) or father (n=1). Involvement in crime seemed to be common in most of these young people's families. Many young people's fathers (n=6), brothers (n=5) and extended family (n=9, which includes cousins, aunts and uncles) were involved in crime. One young woman noted that her sister and mother were also involved in crime. Kyle's father had robbed banks, murdered people and was a heroine addict. Bobby states that his father was abusive. Mary's father was a "drug addict and in jail". Natalie's dad was a member of the Hell's Angels and was in jail for "murders [and] robberies". Other young people state that their "whole family [is] involved in crime" (Colin). James remarks that his family's motto is "if you don't have it, go get it [or take it]". The influence of family on young people's lives cannot be underestimated. For example, there were five young people who stated that they considered close family members to be their role models.

OTHER CRIMINAL ACTIVITY

Young people in this study did not limit themselves only to auto theft. They had been convicted of multiple crimes. The young people interviewed had been convicted of several violent offences including assault (n=9), robbery (n=4) and sexual assault (n=1). Several offences were motor vehicle related including possession (n=5), theft (motor vehicle and other property) (n=13), reckless/dangerous driving (n=2), driving without a licence (n=1), driving without insurance (n=1), driving an unsafe vehicle (n=1), and leaving the scene of an accident (n=1). Other serious offences included possession of a dangerous weapon (n=1), break and enter (n=5), possession of break and enter tools (n=2), harbouring a missing person (n=1), drug trafficking (n=2), and drug possession

(n=2). There were several young people (n=10) who had committed breaches and one person was convicted of being unlawfully at large. Some less serious offences included trespass (n=1), obstruction (n=1), impersonating parents (n=1) and mischief (n=2).

These young people had also participated in a number of crimes for which they were never caught. Ten young people (59%) had participated in at least five or more thefts in the past 12 months (or 12 months prior to custody) and one person (6%) had committed one or two thefts. There were ten young people (59%) who had participated in at least one fight/assault without being caught. Eight young people (47%) stated that they had dealt drugs five or more times in the past 12 months and one person (6%) stated that they had dealt drugs once or twice. Break and enter was also committed frequently without the young people being caught. Nine young people (53%) had committed at least one break and enter in the past 12 months without being caught (3 of these young people had committed 5 or more B&E's). There were also several auto thefts committed for which the young people were never caught. Twelve young people (75%) claimed that they had stolen at least one car without getting caught and nine of these young people stated that they had stolen 5 or more cars in the past twelve months.

Young people were also asked to rate how serious they thought auto theft was in comparison to other types of crime. For the majority of young people, auto theft was considered to be a more serious crime than shoplifting, pick pocketing, stealing a bicycle and vandalism. Alternatively, auto theft was considered less serious than break and enter, hitting a stranger and sexual assault. Approximately half of the sample considered stealing money from parents and friends to be less serious than auto theft while the other half considered it to be more serious than auto theft.

GETTING INVOLVED IN AUTO THEFT

Many young people (77%, n=13) stated that they stole articles from cars before they began stealing cars. Items that were stolen included money, CD players/stereos, CD's, subwoofers, portable CD/MP3 players, clothes, cameras, fishing rods, tools and cell phones. Basically, anything of value was taken from vehicles. Some stole articles for their own personal use while others sold the illegally obtained items in order to make money. Interestingly, three young women noted that their thefts were always from unlocked cars. Also, there was only one young person who stated that he vandalized cars before he began stealing cars. Peter took the seats out of a stolen vehicle, broke its windows and burnt his name in the interior.

Fleming et al. (1994) found that young people started to steal cars around the age of 13 with first involvement in car theft being as a passenger. Similarly, this study found that participation in motor vehicle theft began at a young age for most of the young people interviewed. The ages cited for first involvement (in anyway) in auto theft ranged from 5 to 17 with a mean age of 12.8 years. Participants reported ages ranging from 11 to 17, with a mean age of 14.3 years, for when they stole their first vehicle. In this study, 53% (n=9) of the participants reported that they were first involved in auto theft only as a passenger, while 24% (n=4) stated that they were driving. A further 24% (n=4) reported taking turns with others as driver and passenger.

Motor vehicle theft was first introduced to most young people in this study by either friends (59%, n=10) or family (24%, n=4) (i.e. a father, brother, or cousin). Friends were often described as older youth that had stolen a vehicle and had allowed the young person to come along for the ride. Peter describes being picked up in a stolen car at the

age of 10 or 11 by two 15 year olds, one 13 year old, and one 11 or 12 year old. On Mark's very first car theft with his older cousin, he was taught how to avoid getting caught. "we burnt it [the stolen car] when we were done...to get rid of all evidence". Others describe their first involvement in car theft as being their own idea (18%, n=3). However, those who stole a car on their own all had the keys for the motor vehicle. For example, George took his mother's car when she was sleeping and drove it to town a few times.

The majority of young people learned to steal motor vehicles by being shown the process by others (47%, n=8). Instructors (always male) were mainly friends of the young person except for two young people who cited family members as teaching them how to steal a motor vehicle (a father and a cousin). Young people also stated that they taught themselves how to steal motor vehicles (41%, n=7). Generally, they were instructed on the process of stealing a car by friends and then practiced on vehicles until they were successful. For example, after being told how to steal a vehicle, George and Peter stated that they knew how the ignition worked simply by looking at it once it was apart. Further, A.J. describes his learning to steal a car as a process of "trial and error". Sarah learned to steal cars from her boyfriend but "he always did the screwdriver work" while she would "keep six [act as a lookout]...[and would usually ride along as] a passenger". Natalie stated that she had the required skills to steal motor vehicles (without the key) but she often acted as a lookout when stealing with young men. There were an additional two (12%) young women who had only stolen cars with the keys in them.

Participants were asked to explain the reason(s) behind their first motor vehicle theft. Their responses indicated that motivations for auto theft are very complex. Young

people provided a wide variety of responses as to their motivations and some described multiple motivations for stealing their first car. Being bored (n=4), joyriding/having fun (n=3), fitting in (n=3), showing off (n=2), transportation (n=2) and committing other crimes (n=2) were all mentioned by more than one person as reasons for their first theft. However, additional reasons included liking the car (n=1), stripping the car of its parts (n=1), wanting to anger the police (n=1), getting away from a fight (n=1), needing money (n=1), wanting a thrill (n=1), having familiarity with the car being stolen (n=1) and stealing a car because it had already been stolen by someone else and it was just sitting there (n=1).

MOTIVATIONS FOR MOTOR VEHICLE THEFT

To better understand what motivates young people to steal motor vehicles, they were asked what they usually do with a vehicle once it is stolen. Most of the young people (81%, n=13) stated that they “drive around” with the stolen vehicle. Sarah suggests that when it is “cold out it’s nice to drive around” while Tony states that “there’s always a reason to steal and get somewhere”. John recalls the “boredom from not being in school” and driving around in a stolen vehicle allowed him to “do something exciting”. James would “drive around until the gas [was] finished” and sometimes would even fill the car up with gas and continue to drive around. ‘Driving around’ can take on a variety of forms. Some young people would pick up friends and show off for friends. Kyle would “race people [and] do smoke shows [spinning the car’s tires and driving in circles]”. Other young people would use the vehicle as a means of transportation. As Julie states, you can use the car to “go to all the places you can’t walk to”. Tony would use the stolen

vehicle to go to parties. Colin would use the vehicle to run errands and says that “it [the stolen car] feels like yours, you forget it’s stolen”.

There were also many young people (50%, n=8) who stated that they typically used the stolen vehicle to commit other crimes. Eli would use the stolen car to commit robberies and assaults and states that “it [the stolen car] allows you to get away and [you can] dump the car, and not worry about it”. Generally, Mathew used stolen cars for things that he would not want to use his own car for, but more specifically he sometimes would use it to “break into stores”. Mary would usually use the car to do break and enters and steal money from pop machines. Mark would do “pump and runs” which is filling the stolen car with gas and taking off without paying. A.J. and George would steal a vehicle and use it as transportation to break into other cars. They would empty vehicles of valuables (e.g. stereos, tools) and then try and sell the illegally obtained merchandise out of the stolen car. Peter would sometimes use the stolen car to deal drugs. There were also two young people (13%) who would typically try to sell the vehicle once it was stolen.

There were several young people (47%, n=8) who vandalized vehicles once they were stolen. Mark states that he took out his anger by kicking cars, breaking windows and beating the cars with bats. Similarly, A.J. had “popped tires, drilled holes, [and] broke the gas tank” of stolen vehicles. Mathew recalls setting a car on fire at the age of 13 or 14 but claims the car was “a piece of shit”. Others liked to hold demolition derbies with friends (George) and smash the stolen vehicle repeatedly into a wall (Bobby). Sarah (the only young woman) had only once thrown lit cigarette butts into the back seat of a car.

Although many young people have multiple motivations for committing auto theft, participants were asked to give their main reason for stealing cars. The majority of

young people (47%, n=8) stated that they stole vehicles for the excitement (42%, n=5 males; 60%, n=3 females). Mark describes stealing cars “for the thrill...it’s like a drug”. George states that his main reason for stealing cars is for the “rush [and] excitement ...[you] feel powerful behind the wheel”. Peter “likes to drive around...[you] don’t have to pay for it [the vehicle] or gas...[you can] drive until out of gas and then ditch it”. Colin mainly stole cars for fun and a “rush” when he was bored.

Some of the young people (35%, n=6) stated that their main reason for stealing cars was to make money (42%, n=5 males; 20%, n=1 female). Kyle sold motor vehicles to organized crime and described stealing cars as being “like a job”. A.J. would use stolen cars to sell things he obtained from robberies and for transportation to robberies. Mathew would make money by using stolen vehicles to do break and enters and to steal articles (especially tools) from other vehicles. As Mathew states, it is “a nifty trade...you’re stupid to just drive it [the stolen car]”. Mary also made money by using stolen vehicles to do break and enters. James made his money by selling articles obtained from stolen cars and by using stolen vehicles to do break and enters. As James states, “I have no money and I need it”.

There were an additional two young people (12%) who mainly stole vehicles for transportation. As Tony states, “you need to get around”. Also, one young woman (6%) described stealing cars in order to fit in. Julie suggests that stealing cars is “about influences of friends...[you want] to show friends you’re the funnest...it’s fun to be irresponsible”. Julie also describes wanting to be the most spontaneous of all her friends and wanting to make a good impression.

Most of the young people (65%, n=11) stated that their reasons for stealing motor vehicles had changed over time. Generally, young people started out joyriding, having fun and trying to fit in and then moved on to using stolen vehicles for a variety of different things. Mark describes his progression like this “first it was for a ride...then popularity...then to pick people up...now it’s about going places”. Some have progressed to making money by selling stolen cars. For Kyle, stealing cars was first about fitting in and joyriding and as his skills improved, he moved on to selling cars to organized crime, but he still joyrides. Similarly, A.J. started off joyriding, having fun, and getting thrills and “now its more business”, but he also still joyrides. Tony started stealing cars because he “had nothing to do” and then went on to steal cars for transportation. James went from taking money from cars, to using the car to go places, to doing break and enters. Eli started off joyriding and then used stolen vehicles as a means of transportation and then for protection when he was dealing drugs. Mary describes how at first stealing vehicles was about going along with what friends were doing but she eventually learned how to steal vehicles and then enjoyed it.

As we can see from the above findings, motivations for motor vehicle theft are complex. In order to delve more deeply into why young people participate in auto theft, motivations will be discussed below under the categories of ‘joyriding’ and ‘profit-making’. The goal of these two sections is to tease out the differences between how young men and women participate in and experience auto theft.

JOYRIDING

Sixteen (94%) of the young people stated that they had stolen a vehicle in order to joyride (males $n=11$, females $n=5$). As discussed in the literature review, this thesis defines joyriding broadly as people deriving pleasure from stealing motor vehicles (and/or from what can be done with stolen motor vehicles) which can encompass a variety of activities. For example, there were twelve young people (71%) who acknowledged that they stole motor vehicles for the thrill (males $n=8$, females $n=4$). Also, fourteen young people (82%) described stealing vehicles for transportation (males $n=12$, females $n=2$). As young people's motivations were explored more deeply, several themes emerged in their responses. These themes are explored below.

GETTING AROUND

For many young men ($n=9$) and women ($n=4$) joyriding was about "driving around". Kyle describes his joyrides to various cities as being "like a tourist". Similarly, George loved driving around to "see all the sights". Stolen vehicles were also used on joyrides to pick up/visit friends (males $n=3$; females $n=3$) or to party, drink, or use drugs (males $n=4$; females $n=1$). Young people were also asked if they had ever stolen a vehicle for transportation and if so to explain where they went. Many stated that they used stolen vehicles to visit friends ($n=6$), pick up alcohol/drugs or to go to parties ($n=4$), and to go shopping or to the mall ($n=3$). Some ($n=5$) simply stated that they used the stolen vehicle to go "anywhere" and "everywhere", while others had specific destinations such as school ($n=2$), home ($n=2$) and other cities ($n=2$). Bobby describes his trips to other cities with stolen vehicles as being "like a vacation".

DOING IT FOR THE EXCITEMENT

Many young people stated that the reason they steal cars is to gain excitement or a thrill from the process. The feelings that were cited most frequently from those who participated in joyriding was that it was “exciting”, “fun”, “a thrill” and an “adrenaline rush”. All of the young women (n=5) and most of the young men (n=9) stated that this is how they felt when joyriding. However, it is important to note that excitement can take on a variety of forms. Many young people find excitement in stealing cars and avoiding capture (Copes 2003). Peter helps illustrate this by stating that “[you get] an adrenaline rush when you pass by cops”. Similarly, Julie states that it is “fun to do something you’re not supposed to” while Sarah states that “it’s a thrill to steal them [the cars] and get away with it”.

Participants were also asked to describe what they did when they stole a vehicle for the thrill of it and how they felt during the process. Most young people got their thrills from driving around (males n=5; females n=2). For one young woman, the thrill was in utilizing the stolen vehicle to commit break and enters. There were also three young men who derived a thrill from driving erratically. John liked to drink and then “do donuts” with stolen vehicles while Tony liked to speed and race people. Stealing a vehicle for the thrill of it made many of these young people feel good/happy (n=2) and/or provided them with an adrenaline rush (n=6). Kyle compared stealing cars to being “like a hobby”.

SPEEDING

All of the young men interviewed and all but one of the young women stated that they would speed when they were driving a stolen motor vehicle. However, there were

substantial differences between young men and women. For example, participants were asked to estimate the fastest speed they had ever gone in a stolen vehicle. Young men reported a mean speed of 188 km/hr while young women reported a mean speed of 148 km/hr. Generally, young women tended to be less likely to speed at dangerously high speeds. For example, the fastest Amy had ever driven in a stolen vehicle was 90 km/hr while Natalie usually only drove 10 km/hr over the speed limit except for one time when she drove 180 km/hr (highest speed cited for females). This is compared to young men where the lowest speed cited was 150 km/hr and the highest speed being 220 km/hr. When asked if he would speed when driving a stolen vehicle, James replied “hell yeah”. Colin and Eli described driving stolen cars at such high speeds that the motor would automatically shut off.

Participants were asked if they ever worried about getting into an accident or losing control of the vehicle when they were speeding in a stolen car. The majority of young women (60%, n=3) and only a minority of young men (17%, n=2) stated that they worried. There were differences, however, in what each group worried about. Young women tended to worry about getting into an accident or getting hurt while young men worried about being punished. For example, Tony worried when he was driving a stolen vehicle because the driver receives the most punishment but if he was riding along as a passenger he had “no worries”. Kyle worried about the passengers in the stolen vehicle he was driving. He did not want to get a manslaughter charge if someone died while he was driving a stolen vehicle. Therefore, the one rule he had was that everyone riding along in the stolen car (including himself) had to wear their seat-belt.

Most of the men (83%, n=10) stated that they were not worried about getting into an accident while only two women (40%) stated that they were not worried. Generally, respondents stated that they did not worry about accidents or losing control of stolen motor vehicles because they were good drivers. Participants were asked to rate how good of a driver they thought they were. All of the respondents except one young woman (who rated herself as not very good) thought they were exceptional drivers. Nine young people (53%) rated themselves as being an excellent driver while seven (41%) rated themselves as being a very good driver.

Participants were then asked to justify their rating by explaining what their rating was based on. Young men tended to base their exceptional driving ability on breaking the law while for young women exceptional driving ability meant abiding by the law. For example, there were three young men who based their good driving ability on being chased by the police. George helps illustrate this by suggesting that he was able to elude the police after a 40-kilometer chase involving several police cars. Several young men (n=7) and one young woman stated that they were a good driver because they had the skills and experience. For Amy, experience meant driving legally since the age of 16. However, for the young men, experience meant being able to control motor vehicles in a variety of dangerous situations. For example, Mark thinks he is a good driver because he is “good on corners”, “gravel roads”, “[at] braking” and is able to “pull out of spins”. Also, he “almost hit a deer once but kept it on the road”. George also alludes to his ability to “pull out of spins” and that he has “good control of the vehicle”. Other young men stated that they knew they were good drivers because they had confidence in their ability (n=3) or because other people told them they were good drivers (n=4). Being drunk or

high and still being able to drive (n=3) was also mentioned by young men as something that made them a good driver.

These findings are in sharp contrast to the reasons that young women provide for their exceptional driving ability. Generally, the young women (n=3) state that they are good drivers because they obey the traffic laws when driving. For example, Mary bases her rating on “doing the speed limit...staying between the lines...obeying traffic signals...having no accidents...[and] *not* drinking and driving”. Natalie also states that she “[doesn’t] speed...stays in the lines...obeys the rules...[and doesn’t] go through reds”. Similarly, Julie states that she is very attentive and aware of her surroundings, “[you have to] know it’s not just you on the road, [you have to be] responsible for everybody on the road”. It should also be noted that one young woman and two young men cited having no accidents as making them a good driver.

DRUG AND ALCOHOL USAGE

Most young people (71%, n=12) had stolen a motor vehicle in order to obtain drugs and/or alcohol. Some young people used stolen vehicles to sell drugs to people. For example, Kyle used stolen vehicles to “get to clients” and he also traded stolen cars for money to buy drugs. A.J. would also trade stolen cars for drugs and alcohol. Other young people would steal vehicles to go and purchase drugs/alcohol. Mark recalls going to the liquor store in a stolen vehicle when he was underage because “they think you have your licence and [they] will sell you booze...small town, small logic”. George would use stolen vehicles to pick up drugs and alcohol and would trade stolen cars for drugs and alcohol. George also states that his drinking has a large impact on his decision-making.

IMPORTANCE OF THE MOTOR VEHICLE

Most of the young people interviewed did not own their own vehicle (71%, n=12) but there were some who did (29%, n=5). Despite this, many felt that it was very important for them to own their own vehicle (65%, n=11) or at least somewhat important (29%, n=5). There was only one young person (6%) who stated that it was not important at all. Generally, owning a car was important to these young people as a means of transportation or to “get around” (n=9). For example, John thought it was important to own a car to go and visit with friends and to satisfy his love of driving or as John states his “fetish for driving”. James simply stated that he “can’t walk anymore”. Other young people cited having more responsibility such as a job (Eli and Amy) and family obligations (Bobby) as the reason owning a car was important to them. Interestingly, it was only young women (n=3) who cited “freedom to go where you want” (Amy) as the reason owning a car was important to them while only young men (n=3) cited a sense of accomplishment from car ownership. As Kyle states, “if it’s not stolen you feel good, [you] don’t have to worry about cops”. Similarly, Mark states, “I want something of my own” without having to “look over my shoulder”. George describes owning a car as important because he “can work on it and make it look nice [but he’s] not going to put money into a car if it’s stolen”.

Young people were asked to state what type of vehicle they would own if it could be any type of vehicle. As expected, the answers varied widely but some interesting themes did develop. Many of the young people were able to state the exact year of car that they wanted and many of the cars cited were relatively older models (e.g. ’77 Monte Carlo SS, ’62 Impala). Many of the young men (n=6) and women (n=3) described

wanting a particular vehicle because of how it looked. Kyle describes the Cadillac Escalade as “too ill” because of its “leather [interior] and cool rims....it’s a somebody car...[you feel like] king shit”. Julie likes “the shape [and] sporty look” of the Mitsubishi Eclipse. A.J. wanted to own an SUV limousine because of its “leather seats [and] fridge”. Although young men and women both chose cars that they describe as “sporty”, young women’s choices were relatively modest (e.g. Cavalier, Celica) compared to those of young men. Examples of cars that young men chose included the Dodge Viper, Lamborghini, BMW and Mercedes.

In addition to wanting particular vehicles based on their looks, many of the young men ($n=7$) also chose cars because of their power and speed. Only one young woman stated speed as her reason. Natalie stated, after describing herself as a “tomboy”, that she “likes speed” and wanted a “sports car for a sports girl”. Mark described liking “muscle cars” with “lots of power”. Other young men ($n=2$) described choosing their vehicle because it was a reliable vehicle that they could get prolonged use out of.

One additional theme developed amongst the choices and justifications young men provided for their chosen vehicles. Only young men ($n=3$) placed an importance on the ability to fix up and add accessories to their chosen vehicles. For example, Eli wanted to own a ’62 or ’67 Impala so that he “could trick it out”. Similarly, James wanted to buy a Honda Civic so that he “could soup it up [and put in a] body kit”. John enjoyed racing people and wanted to get a “cheap, ugly-assed car and fix it up to look street performance”. Interestingly, Eli and John were the only two young men who stated that they were not knowledgeable about fixing and maintaining motor vehicles (there were also two young women who stated the same thing). The remaining young people rated

themselves as either somewhat knowledgeable (18%, n=3), knowledgeable (35%, n=6), or very knowledgeable (24%, n=4) about fixing and maintaining motor vehicles.

STATUS

Status became an important factor when the young people were asked if there were certain vehicles that they would not steal. Many of the young men (n=7) and one young woman stated that they would not steal 'junky cars' or to use their words "shit boxes" (Peter) or "pieces of crap" (A.J.). Mark explains that "shit boxes...have no speed to them...[you] need something girls and friends are going to like...something to get attention and looks good and fast". Bobby states that he "won't steal pieces of shit [because they're] not worth selling". For Colin, a "rust bucket...if it's not reliable [will] break down and draw attention [of the police]".

Some young people (43%, n=6) specifically targeted vehicles for theft based on the vehicle's appearance. Mark states that he targets "sporty cars". Kyle targets the Lincoln Town Car because they are "gangsta cars [with] all leather [and] power all of it". Both A.J. and George target the Dodge Caravan because it is "nice, comfortable" (A.J.) and "has a compass, [it's] all digital, [and has] power seats" (George). John stole Dodge Neons that were "souped up" with "rims [and] racing stripes". Interestingly, only one young woman (Natalie) targeted vehicles based on how they looked. However, Natalie targeted cars that were "not expensive...[or] fancy", she would get herself a "shit box". Also, Mary had difficulty answering what types of vehicles she targeted for theft because she did not "know the makes [of vehicles] well".

LEARNING TO DRIVE

Approximately half of the young people had a valid driver's license (47%, n=8) while the other half did not (53%, n=9). However, all but one of the young women (80%, n=4) had their driver's license while most of the young men did not (66%, n=8). Differences between young men and women were also apparent in how each learned how to drive. The majority of young women (80%, n=4) learned to drive by being taught by their parents or another adult. However, the majority of young men (83%, n=10) describe their learning to drive as being self-taught. For example, Eli learned to drive by stealing his friend's mother's car. Mark lived in a rural area and his parents would let him practice driving in the fields around his home. Others suggest that they learned by watching other people (A.J.) and by playing video games (Kyle).

INTEREST IN THE MOTOR VEHICLES

Young people were asked to talk generally about their interest in cars and where this interest came from. Many of the young people (n=7) cited their interest in cars as coming from a male family member (either their father or brother). John remembered sitting on his dad's lap and steering a motor vehicle at the age of five. George at ten years old recalls his dad giving him the keys to move the car around in the driveway. Mary learned about cars from her brother who had a "souped up" Honda Civic. Mary states that "cars are great...he [her brother] influenced me...[his] car was his life other than his computer". Other young people express a fascination with motor vehicles. Mark recalls how he "use to sit in the laneway and study them [the cars]". Kyle says he has "loved cars since [he] was little" and refers to playing with "Hot Wheels" and car video games as

being where his interest in cars began. George's interest in motor vehicles was in "working on them [or] anything with motors...my friends all talk about cars and work on them". Similarly, James first got interested in cars by looking at comic books that contained pictures of old cars, but he particularly "like[s] engines and how they work, [with] all their parts, pistons...". Mathew states that cars are "a big piece of [his] life [and that] everyone talks about engines and fixing them up...it makes you feel good".

Since most young people had such an affinity towards motor vehicles, it was interesting to ask them how they would feel if someone stole their vehicle. As would be expected, most of the young people (n=10) stated that they would be upset/mad or feel sad if someone stole their car. There were also some young people (n=5) who suggested that they would injure the person who had stole their car. Others (all young men) hoped that they had insurance to pay for the vehicle (n=5). Peter states "if I had insurance, I wouldn't be that mad...if no insurance, I'd be pissed off". There were two young people who would laugh at the irony of the situation. As John states "what goes around comes around".

FEELING POWERFUL AND SHOWING OFF

Joyriding allows some young people to feel powerful and important. However, it was only young men (18%, n=2) who described feeling "powerful" and "older" (9%, n=1) when joyriding. Mark derived power by showing off and performing "stunts where people hang out" whereas A.J. felt powerful having control over a machine. The same two young men also stated that they felt powerful when they stole a vehicle for the thrill of it. The thrill of stealing a car provided Mark with an escape from his reality. When he was in

possession of a stolen vehicle it was “like [there were] no possible problems”. Also, only young men (n=2) stated that they used joyriding as a way to “show off”. Mark participated in joyriding in order to do stunts and to race people with stolen vehicles. To use his words, he likes to “do crazy shit that no one else will do”. Alternatively, only young women (40%, n=2) described joyriding as “freedom”.

It was only young men (n=8) who had brought stolen vehicles to school. The majority of these young people (n=7) brought the car to school to “show off”. Eli wanted to “show others the car” while A.J used the car to “impress girls”. The same goes for George who wanted “to look cool [and] show off to people”. Others go beyond simply showing off the stolen car to others. Mark was drunk and with his girlfriend and friends who challenged him to run into the principal’s car with the stolen SUV that he was driving. Mark’s friends said, “it would be funny to hit the car of the principal” so Mark purposely “drove it into a wall”. Kyle “did donuts at the school [and] tore up the football fields”. Stolen cars were also used as a means of transportation to school (n=2). As Kyle states “I’m not walking”. There was also one young man who used a stolen car to drop someone off at school and another young man who used a stolen car to pick someone up.

POLICE PURSUITS

Getting into police pursuits on purpose with a stolen vehicle provides young men (there were no young women who had done this) with a sense of excitement and a means of showing off but it is also about challenging authority. Four young people (24%) stated that they had tried to get into a police pursuit on purpose. Two themes emerged from these young people’s responses. First, most of the young people were using drugs or

consuming alcohol at the time they challenged police and second, they were able to elude the police. Mark got into a police pursuit because he was “coked out” and he had “just got in a fight with [his] girlfriend”. He got the attention of the police by “pulling donuts” in a police parking lot. The police proceeded to chase him but he was able to escape because he “zigzagged continuously” through the city. Bobby got the police’s attention by smashing into the side of a car and taking off. He managed to get away despite being drunk and high on drugs. A.J. was drunk and thought it was a “good night for a pursuit”. He “did burns [squealed the tires]” to get the attention of the police. The police were looking for him but he was able to get away. Mathew had taken a stolen vehicle to his house to pick up some beer. He had just gotten back into the stolen vehicle when the police showed up and Mathew decided to take off with the stolen vehicle. He remembers “zipping in and out of traffic” and getting away after two police cars hit each other.

There were also four young people (24%, all young men) who had been in police chases but claim that it was not on purpose. Kyle describes being in a police chase as “like something you’d see on Cops” because of the “sirens...road blocks...strips...[and] dogs”. Peter had been in three car chases but none were on purpose. John claims that he had never gotten into a police chase on purpose but he remembers “one time [his] friend gave the finger to the cops and they chased [them]”. Similarly, Tony once got into a police chase with a stolen vehicle because he was playing loud music and the police tried to pull him over.

HOLDING CONTESTS

Five young people had been involved in contests to see who could bring the nicest car to school. Two young men and one young woman were in contests with stolen cars. Kyle remembers waiting “till two in the morning and bring[ing] cars and rac[ing] them” with ten other people. Mary would also use the school as a meeting place at night for ‘a bring the nicest car to school contest’. She and three of her male friends would divide an area around the school into zones. Each person had a specific zone that they could steal from and then they would meet up at the school with their stolen vehicle. There were also two young people (one male and one female) who were involved in this type of contest but not with stolen vehicles. Natalie brought her sister’s “souped up” Neon to one of these contests but she had her sister’s permission to use the car. James had participated in contests to see who could bring the nicest car, but not with stolen vehicles. James would meet up someplace with other people and then “do some drag racing”.

There were seven young men and one young woman who had been in a contest to see who could steal the most vehicles in one night. Mark boasts that he “once got 17 cars in one night” while Kyle “once filled up a church parking lot with [15] cars”. For A.J., some acquaintances of his challenged him to see who could steal the most vehicles in one night and he decided to do it. James describes getting thirty cars in one night and emptying them of the property inside as being “like Santa Claus”. In addition to the above, Mathew having not participated in any such a contest did describe stealing cars to hold demolition derbies with them, which he describes as “lots of fun [and] very exciting”.

PROFIT-MAKING

The first thing we noticed about people who steal cars for profit is that there are a disproportionate number of young men involved in this activity in comparison to young women. We also noticed that a person can make large amounts of money by selling stolen vehicles and by using stolen vehicles to commit other crimes.

MAKING MONEY AND WHO'S BUYING

Six young people (35%, all young men) in this study had sold stolen vehicles in exchange for money. Five of these young men claim that they had stolen vehicles for a criminal operation and three refer to this criminal operation as being 'organized crime'. Mark once sold a Dodge Challenger for \$5000 to a junkyard who wanted the car for its parts. He received \$3000 upon delivery of the stolen vehicle and the remaining money in installments over a brief period of time. George sold stolen cars to what he referred to as a "crooked car dealership" or "chop shop in Montreal". He recalls selling a Mustang for \$500 and a Chrysler Intrepid for \$400-\$500. Mathew once sold a 1999 Chevy Silverado for \$5000 but he had also sold other trucks for between \$800 and \$3500 US. Bobby claims to have sold BMW's, Mercedes, and says he once got \$100,000 for a Dodge Viper. Bobby refused to elaborate on who the vehicles were sold to but he did state that the vehicles he stole were used in Ottawa. It should be noted that Bobby provided few details to back up his claims therefore caution should be used when considering his experiences.

The most money Kyle ever received for a stolen vehicle was \$12,000 for a Dodge Durango, however he had also sold Honda's (brand new - \$4000), Intrepids (\$2000 to

\$3000), other Dodges (<\$1000), Neons (\$500), and New Yorkers (\$100). The vehicles were sold to organized crime (the Hell's Angels). Kyle thinks the vehicles ended up being shipped out of the docks of Montreal and Toronto for worldwide distribution. A.J. had also sold vehicles to the Hell's Angels. For example, he once sold a Dodge van for \$2000. A.J. notes that, generally, for something like a '98 Dodge Durango that was older, rusty and had a lot of kilometers, the payment would be in the hundreds of dollars but if it was brand new it could be worth thousands of dollars.

FIRST GETTING MONEY AND ARRANGING PAYMENT

The process of obtaining money for stolen vehicles was similar for many of the young people in this study. Mark went with his friend to a 'guy's' garage/junkyard. While there, Mark saw a car that he knew was stolen. Mark then proceeded to ask this 'guy' if he could steal cars for him. The 'guy' stated that "he might be interested". This 'guy' then later called Mark and asked him if he could steal a vehicle with specific parts because he had an order to fill which required a "mint exhaust, hemi...race engine, [and] Nozz".

George sold his first car to what he refers to as a "crooked car dealership" or "chop shop". George was first introduced to the people at the chop shop when he went there with a friend who was selling a Dodge Duster (which his friend received several hundred dollars for). The people at this chop shop knew and trusted George's friend and eventually bought stolen cars from George. However, George only knew these people on a first name basis. The process went like this; George would first call the chop shop and ask them if they wanted the stolen car that he had in his possession. If they did, he would be paid when he delivered it. The people at this chop shop also gave ideas about what to

steal, “they wanted Hondas”. This chop shop was located in Montreal and sold stolen car parts and used the parts from stolen cars to fix up other cars for sale.

Mathew was asked by a person he knew through friends to steal a ‘99 Chevy Silverado. As Mathew states, this person “knew I was good at stealing” and he trusted Mathew to get the job done. Mathew does not refer to his selling of stolen cars as being done for a criminal operation or for organized crime and unfortunately failed to elaborate on how he obtains money from stolen vehicles. However, Mathew does add that they “always try to rip you off”. He told them [his contact] to pay enough or he would drive the vehicle into the river.

Kyle was first given money for a stolen vehicle by his friend’s father. His friend’s father was a member of the Hell’s Angels and told Kyle “to get nice cars and he’d pay in cash”. These people would give him specific instructions about what to steal. For example, they would say to get a “Honda, if you’re not there we’ll look for you”. Kyle also adds that it is “scary...[you’re] part of the family, once committed you must stay” (however, Kyle does note that he is not a member of the Hell’s Angels). A pager was used to contact Kyle who would then proceed to use a pay phone to contact them (he does not trust cell phones). Someone would meet him at a park or mall and exchange a bag of money for the car. There was no discussion of names, it was simply “I’ll be wearing this and you’ll know...meet here and when”. However, Kyle did know some of the “higher ups” and some of his friends were also stealing for the same organization. Kyle used the money he obtained from selling stolen vehicles to “pay rent, party, rent hotel rooms, drink, get high, [and to go to] strip clubs”. As Kyle states “it’s like ‘yo I got a lot of money...it’s like Christmas everyday...I can buy new clothes, new shoes”.

A.J. had a friend who was stealing cars for a chop shop and A.J. would frequently go with his friend there. Once the people at the chop shop got to know him and he had built up a trust with them, A.J. was able to sell stolen cars to them. Thus, A.J. knew the other people who were involved in this chop shop and he knew their real names. A.J. would call them and say “hey, do you need cars” and the people at this chop shop would put in an order for certain cars and he would go and steal them. Payment for the stolen vehicles took place when the car was delivered. The criminal organization that A.J. was working for was the Hell’s Angels and A.J. believes that the cars were fixed up and sold.

Bobby provided few details about his selling of vehicles but he did state that he stole cars for a criminal operation. He claimed that this criminal operation (which he did not elaborate on) would phone him and give him instructions about what to steal (e.g. specific year, model). He would call them after he had stolen the car and would arrange to meet somewhere private. Everyone used fake names and he would receive half of the payment before he stole the car and half of the payment after. Again, caution is recommended in using Bobby’s statements due to his inability to substantiate his claims.

COMMITTING OTHER CRIMES

Twelve (71%, n=11 males and n=1 female) young people stated that they had used stolen vehicles to commit other crimes. Interestingly, obtaining money was the motivation for the majority of these crimes with the exception of Mark who stole a vehicle when he was unlawfully at large and trying to get away. Also, Eli noted that he had stolen a vehicle to use in an assault but he had also stolen vehicles to make money. It is to this topic that we now turn.

Most of the young people made money through thefts (n=6), break and enters (n=5) and robberies (n=5). Other young people (n=3) used stolen vehicles to sell electronics, tools, drugs and alcohol. For example, Eli used stolen cars to “sell weed” to his customers. George would steal work vans full of tools (e.g. a plumbing van) and then sell the tools from the van. There was also one young person who stole a vehicle to commit insurance fraud.

Stolen vehicles provide a means of transportation to and from crimes as well as a degree of anonymity and protection. As Eli states in reference to selling “weed...you don’t want to get jacked...I have it [the car] close by”. Kyle had stolen a motor vehicle for the express purpose of robbing a store (a gas station) and to get away after the robbery. John would use stolen vehicles to rob people (or as John states “do missions”). John would also steal anything valuable that was in the vehicle so that he could sell it. Similarly, Tony would see people walking and he would “jump out and rob them” using the stolen vehicle as a means of travel. However, none of the young people in this study stole a vehicle with the owner still in it (carjacking).

Other young people mostly made money by avoiding direct contact with people. For example, Mary would break into people’s houses to steal the keys to vehicles and then proceed to use these stolen vehicles to do more break and enters. She would also use stolen vehicles as transportation to make money from breaking into pop machines. A.J. and George would make money by stealing work trucks/vans and by selling what was in them while James and Mathew would use stolen work trucks/vans to steal sellable articles from houses or other vehicles. Mathew would steal a truck/van and load it up with “generators, air compressors, tools, and dirt bikes” from people’s houses after they had

left for work. Mathew stated that he had supported himself since he was fourteen (he is now 17) by selling stolen goods and refers to what he does as employment or “work”. Similarly, James states that he was in an organized group that stole vehicles to do break and enters, but they had “no name for the gang or nothin’...”. James and his cousin would steal a van and load it up with materials out of garages in rich neighbourhoods. They would then proceed to sell the stolen goods to pawn shops. Peter had only done one break and enter because he did not like going into people’s houses but he did make money by selling articles he obtained from stolen cars. As Peter states, “cars are different...they have insurance...[but you can] get home invasion if caught...[or they] might have a gun”.

THE PROCESS OF THEFT

Not only do young men and women differ in their motivations for auto theft, but they also differ in how they participate in motor vehicle theft. For example, men participate in a greater number of auto thefts than women do (Fleming et al. 1994; Higgins and Albrecht 1981). Nine of the young men in this study estimated that they had stolen one hundred or more cars in their lifetime (mostly on a daily basis when actively stealing). Two young men estimated that the total number of cars they had stolen was between 25 and 50 while one young man had stolen five or less cars. The total number of vehicles stolen by young women was far fewer. Three young women had stolen approximately five vehicles, one had stolen six or seven vehicles, while one had only stolen one motor vehicle. Also, young men involved in auto theft mostly steal from strangers while young women are more likely to know the person that they stole the vehicle from (Fleming et al. 1994). All of the young men (n=12) in this study and two

young women had stolen motor vehicles from strangers. The other three young women always had the keys to the motor vehicles that they stole. Two of these young women only took their parent's car or rode along as a passenger in a vehicle someone else had stolen. The other young woman had only participated in one motor vehicle theft and took her mother's work vehicle using the keys.

The theft of some motor vehicles appears to be relatively easy for many of the young people interviewed. Young people were asked to think of the last time they stole a motor vehicle and to describe how they went about stealing that motor vehicle. Basically, the only equipment required is a flathead screwdriver and a pair of vice grips. Generally, the car is unlocked by prying back the window and pulling up the lock or by inserting a screwdriver into the lock on the door and turning. Once in the vehicle it is relatively easy to start. The young people described breaking the glow ring on the ignition, inserting a screwdriver and turning the screwdriver with a pair of vice grips. This process takes young people very little time. Ten young people (67%) stated that it took them less than one minute to steal a car while three young people (20%) stated it took about one to five minutes. There was one young person (7%) who stated that it took six to ten minutes to steal a car and another (7%) stated it took several hours.

Most young people like to steal vehicles in the evening or at night (56%, n=9). For example Colin states that he will steal cars anytime "as long as it's dark". Other young people (13%, n=2) prefer to steal in the morning. Kyle steals cars from "any Park and Ride". For some (31%, n=5) the time of day did not make a difference. A.J. steals from any "place where [the cars are] stealable". Peter stole vehicles "whenever" but said there

is “more heat score at night [more likelihood of getting caught by the police]”. George used to only steal vehicles at night but as “[he] got better it didn’t matter”.

Young people mostly stole vehicles from parking lots (e.g. malls, apartment buildings, Park and Rides). There were also some young people who stole vehicles from the driveways of people’s houses but to a lesser extent. Generally, the location chosen to steal vehicles from had to provide anonymity to the young person and have a low risk of getting caught. As George states, at an apartment building “[you can go] between cars [and] no one can see you”. Peter notes that the cars in parking lots “block people’s view”. Eli states that he would steal from “parking lots with lots of cars because there’s less heat...no one sees you...it could be your car...no one would know”. Other young people preferred driveways because there was less risk of the police noticing them.

Two young people had interesting techniques to stealing cars that are worth mentioning. Natalie would steal cars from parking lots but would always return the vehicle to the same parking lot that she stole it from hoping that no one would miss it. Mark would usually steal from parking lots because there are “usually not many windows” and he did not like houses because “motion lights...can be a real piss off”. However, Mark had stolen from the driveways of people’s houses. Mark recalls one time when he had obtained a lot of chocolate bars from a friend and he was trying to sell them to people at their houses by claiming that it was for charity. He was telling people that his friend’s house had burnt down. Generally, Mark was using the money he obtained from people to buy gas but one time he saw a truck that he liked in a driveway. After talking to the person about the chocolate bars, Mark unscrewed the light bulb at the door and took the truck from the driveway.

Stolen vehicles are usually kept for a very short period of time. Most of the young people (35%, n=6) stated that they kept a stolen vehicle for only a few hours. For example, Kyle only kept a stolen car for a maximum of two to three hours because the police have an auto theft unit. Typically, A.J. kept vehicles for only a few hours unless he liked the vehicle, then he would keep it for a day. Other young people (24%, n=4) had kept a stolen vehicle for approximately one day or night. John states that it depends on when you get the stolen vehicle, if it's "at night, [you can keep it] til' the next day". James only keeps a stolen vehicle for the night and states that at "first light, I'm out". There were also some young people who typically kept stolen vehicles for a few days (12%, n=2) or a week or more (n=1). The time a vehicle was kept for also varied for some young people (24%, n=4). Peter states that he would keep a stolen vehicle for anywhere between six hours and a week, "it depends on the gas".

Despite the tendency to keep vehicles for a short period of time, most of the young people (77%, n=13) stated that they had kept vehicles for an extended period of time. Eli states that when he first stole vehicles he would keep them for weeks. However, as he got older he would "switch all the time" unless he knew the person he stole the car from would not be looking for the vehicle (e.g. the vehicle was stolen from an old age home or from people who were on vacation). Generally, when vehicles were kept for an extended period of time they were parked some place that was anonymous (e.g. a parking lot or on the street) (n=10). As George states, "if they [the police] find it they find it", it cannot be linked to him. Eli would park the stolen car on the street "with lots of other cars...so that it blends in". Kyle had parked stolen cars in a church parking lot near his house and covered the broken steering column with a bandanna so that it did not appear stolen. A.J.

kept stolen vehicles at his apartment building's parking lot so that it would blend in with the other cars. Other young people had parked a stolen car in the forest near their home (Mark), a friend's driveway (Bobby) and a friend's garage (Natalie). Interestingly, the stolen vehicle was often parked near the young person's home so that it was available to them.

Most of the young people (75%, n=12) "ditch" the stolen vehicle once they are done with it. It is usually left in a parking lot or on the street. Peter parks the stolen car beside another car he is going to steal. Mark leaves the stolen vehicle on the street and suggests that no harm is done because the police will find the car and return it to its owner. John states that he leaves the car "away from [his] house but close enough to walk home". Two young people (13%) stated that they typically sold the vehicle to a chop shop and one person (6%) would give the stolen vehicle to "a friend who doesn't know how to steal". One young woman (6%) would steal only her parent's car and would return the vehicle to her home.

Stealing a motor vehicle is made easy if the keys are in the vehicle. Thirteen young people (76%) stated that they had stolen a vehicle with the keys in it. For example, Mark had stolen vehicles with the keys in them from people's driveways. George would steal vehicles from a company who would always "leave keys in the ignition...so you'd grab a car when you're cold". Other young people had stolen cars while the vehicle was left running. Kyle states that "many times [people] left cars running at the store" and he would take them. A.J. would steal from parking lots and the library when "people run in quick, [he would] take it [the car]". There were four young men (24%) who claim to have never stolen a car with the keys in it.

Rarely do young people work alone when they are stealing a car. Four young people (25%, n=2 young men and n=2 young women) stated that they never work alone. There were seven young people (44%, n=5 young men and n=2 young women) who only sometimes stole alone. George stated that if he was drinking he would steal a car by himself but the remaining times he would steal with friends. John only once stole a vehicle by himself when he was “desperate for a car...[because his] friend was getting beaten up”. Mary and Natalie had only stolen one car by themselves. Mary took a car once when she was in a “weird mood” but the rest of the thefts occurred when she was with her male friends. Natalie stole a car once by herself for twenty minutes and describes herself as being “really scared”. There were five young men who either usually (19%, n=3) or always (13%, n=2) worked alone. Mark used to usually steal cars with friends but not “since [he was] ratted on”.

The techniques used to steal vehicles with others varied but there were some general themes that evolved out of the responses. Mostly, one person breaks in and starts the vehicle while the others act as “lookouts”. However, sometimes it takes more than one person to steal the vehicle. As James states, sometimes you need a few people to help “break the wheel” [which is turning the wheel until the steering lock breaks]. People acting as lookouts keep watch or “keep six” down the street from where the car is being stolen. If these people see trouble, they are supposed to whistle or yell “six or five o” (Natalie). Everyone then takes off running from the scene. Peter notes that he would “always wear gloves” while stealing cars and his girlfriend would “keep six”.

Sometimes young people switch off between who steals and who acts as the lookout. However, generally the more highly skilled car thief steals the car while the

others act as lookouts. The young men often referred to themselves as always having to steal the vehicles. As Bobby states “they [his friends] take off and let me do it, [they’re] scared they’ll get caught”. Mark states that his “friends know how but [are] too chicken to steal them”. Similarly, Peter states that “others are scared to steal cars”. George states “I always steal [and] friends just come along”.

The young women tended to be less involved in breaking into a vehicle and starting it. Two young women shared amongst male friends who would steal. For example, Mary would break into houses and steal the keys to vehicles but would then often let her male friends drive. Similarly, Natalie would usually only act as a lookout while her male friends stole a vehicle. One young woman (Sarah) would always steal cars with her male friend who would start the car while she acted mostly as a lookout. Another young woman (Julie) would switch off with her friend on whose parent’s car they would take for the night.

PREVENTING MOTOR VEHICLE THEFT

In an attempt to explore avenues for the reduction of auto theft, young people were asked a variety of questions concerning what made vehicles susceptible to theft. Young people were also asked to talk about what deterred them from stealing vehicles. Presented below are the young people’s responses.

TARGETING SPECIFIC VEHICLES

Young people were asked if there were certain vehicles that they would not steal. Some young people explained that they would not steal vehicles that they were unfamiliar

with (n=2). There were also others (n=9) who would not steal cars if the risks were too high. For example, Kyle and George would not steal cars that were thought to contain a GPS tracking device. Vehicles such as Cadillac, SAAB, BMW, Mercedes, and Chevrolet were avoided because “you can be tracked” (Kyle) and “they can lock you in. they know where you are” (George). George further adds that if the vehicle is “too new, you stand out”. Tony avoided luxury cars because he did not know how to disable their alarms. Similarly, Sarah avoided “anything with an alarm system”. Natalie avoided stealing trucks partly because she did not like them and partly because she felt that she would draw attention to herself. John also avoided stealing trucks because they “tip easy if a [police] chase develops”. Finally, George and Mary stated that they would not steal police cars.

Of the young people (n=14) who targeted specific types of vehicles, many (86%, n=12) stated that they targeted Dodges/Chryslers. Types of vehicles mentioned included the Neon, Intrepid, Jeep Cherokee, Caravan, Dakota, Plymouth Acclaim and Sundance. The next most popular vehicle to target was Fords (36%, n=5) such as the Tempo, Mustang, and Lincoln Town Car. Other young people targeted Hondas (21%, n=3), Chevrolets/GM's (21%, n=3), Nissans (7%, n=1) and Mazdas (7%, n=1). The reason given by most of the young people (64%, n=9) as to why they targeted these specific types of vehicles was that they were easy to steal. Generally, young people preferred to steal older models of vehicles. For example, Eli targeted late '90's models and stayed away from newer models because “they're a bit trickier”. George targeted the '95 Caravan while John targeted vehicles that were made in the '80's and '90's.

Young people were also asked to explain what makes of vehicles were easy and tough to steal. Most stated that Dodges/Chryslers (n=11) and Hondas (n=6) were the easiest to steal. There were also some young people who stated that Fords (n=3), Chevrolet/GM's (n=2), and Mazdas (n=1) were easy to steal. The primary reason given for why these vehicles were easy to steal was that it was easy to break into the vehicle and easy to start the vehicle. Vehicles that were considered tough to steal included Chevrolets/GM's (n=5), Mazdas (n=2), Toyotas (n=1), Volvos (n=1), and Fords (n=1). Young people also stated that high end or luxury vehicles (n=5) as well as new vehicles (n=3) were difficult to steal. Generally, these vehicles were considered difficult to steal because of their security features (e.g. anti-theft devices, steel casing protecting the ignition).

There were eleven (65%, n=10 young men; n=1 young woman) young people who claimed to have defeated anti-theft devices. Generally, 'The Club' was defeated by breaking it and one person suggested that he replaced the steering wheel. One young person stated that he bypassed immobilizers but most suggested that they broke the immobilizer. Most young people did not know what CAT decals were or did not worry about them. However, one young person claimed to have cut off a CAT decal. Bypassing alarms required more knowledge and skill. Interestingly, young people suggested that touching booster cables to the hood of the vehicle or kicking in the grill of the car could easily short out alarms. Disconnecting the battery also disables the vehicle's alarm system. Some young people were taught by others (some while in custody) about how to defeat anti-theft devices while a few claim to be self-taught.

DETERRENCE

Young people were asked if a special event, holiday or the time of year would increase or decrease the likelihood of them stealing a motor vehicle. The only thing that seemed to decrease the likelihood of stealing a vehicle was the winter. Only James and Julie suggested that they were less likely to steal a car in the winter because the roads were slippery (James) and the weather made it too risky (Julie). Most young people suggested that certain times of year increased the likelihood of them stealing a car (60%, $n=9$). Winter increased the likelihood of theft for some young people because driving was more “fun” (Natalie) and they could “skid around...[and] spin on ice...[as well as] go to cottages and steal stuff” (Mary). George and Mark were more likely to steal in the winter to get out of the cold and more likely to steal in the summer because they would “go to beaches” (George) and would “want to go swimming” (Mark). Eli stole more frequently in the summer because people were on vacation. There were only a few young people who stated that a special event (33%, $n=5$) or a holiday (36%, $n=5$) would increase the likelihood of them stealing a car. Eli states that if you have somewhere special to go you should “show up in a car, it looks better than showing up walking”. Mathew used to steal cars on Boxing Day because people were inside shopping but put the items they bought in the car. Julie notes that holidays increased the likelihood of her stealing a car because “everyone is out partying [and] you want to do stuff”. Natalie needed a car to get to parties on Canada Day, Halloween, and New Year’s Eve.

Young people were asked to state what types of things would deter them from stealing motor vehicles. A vehicle that was parked in a garage that was protected by a home alarm deterred most young people ($n=11$). Also, seven young people stated that

security guards would deter them from stealing a car. Some young people were deterred by parking lot attendants (n=6), surveillance cameras (n=6) and bright lighting (n=4). Young people were also provided with an opportunity to describe any other things that might deter them from stealing a motor vehicle. Some of the things that deterred them included the police being nearby (n=5), an alarm on the vehicle (n=2), people nearby (n=6), motion detectors (n=1) and Neighbourhood Watch (n=1).

Threat of punishment did not seem to have much of a deterrent effect for most of the young people but it did for some. Five young people (29%) stated that they worried about being punished by the court when they were stealing cars and seven (41%) stated that they worried about getting caught. However, most young people thought that their chances of getting caught when stealing a motor vehicle were very low (n=7) or low (n=6) while only one person thought their chances of getting caught was high. When it comes to their chances of being convicted in court, most young people thought their chances were high (n=7) or very high (n=2) compared to very low (n=1) and low (n=4). Interestingly, the majority of the young people (81%, n=13) stated that they were done with stealing cars while three young people stated that they would likely continue to steal vehicles.

Young people were also asked what the criminal justice system could do differently to prevent people from stealing cars. Most did not have a response but there were some interesting suggestions. Three young people suggested that there needed to be tougher punishment for stealing cars while one young person suggested that no jail time would help prevent auto theft. There were also three young people who thought that car

prices should be lowered, two people thought that the driving age should be lowered, and two people suggested that vehicles needed better security systems.

VICTIMS

Most of the young people (94%, n=16) interviewed believed that auto theft did have victims. Many (82%, n=14) believed that the victim was the owner of the vehicle that was stolen. However, not *all* owners were considered to be victims equally. For example, A.J. states that “if they had no insurance [they’re a victim]...not a victim if they have insurance”. Similarly, Colin states that the owner is a victim “if they needed the car that day” but “in general, no, they have insurance...I’m doing them a favour”. Also, Colin considered people who had customized vehicles stolen to be victims. Mark’s one rule was that he “never take[s] a car with a car seat in it”. Two young people (12%) considered insurance companies to be victims. Alternatively, Tony did not think auto theft had any victims because “people have insurance” and Bobby believed that insurance companies were not victims because they “make money off thefts”. There were three young people (18%) who stated that society was a victim of car theft. As Mary states “everybody is a victim”. George also suggests that society is a victim because “insurance rates go up”. There were also two young people (12%) who stated that their family was a victim of their auto theft and one person (6%) suggested that they themselves were a victim.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION/CONCLUSION

As the literature review suggests, auto thieves can be discussed as either those who predominantly steal to joyride or those who predominantly steal for profit. The findings chapter mimics this understanding and organizes itself around these two themes as well as others. However, as the interviews progressed it became apparent that understanding young people's motivations for auto theft would require a more in-depth exploration. Due to the grounded approach of the research design it was possible to explore two additional themes that emerged out of the initial interviews with young people. Subsequent interviews attempted to explore the role that 'the car' (or car culture) and gender (in particular, masculinity and femininity) played in how these young people understood their participation in motor vehicle theft.

It is important to stress that this discussion is based on how the young women and men *spoke* about their experiences with auto theft. This does not necessarily mean that this is how their activities played out in practice. I recognize that everything that the young people expressed will not necessarily be 'true' but it is interesting to explore how young people discuss their experiences and how this relates to gender and car culture. This chapter presents an in-depth theoretical understanding/interpretation of how young people viewed their participation in auto theft. To help better understand the gendered nature of motor vehicle theft, this chapter attempts to tease out some of the multiple layers inherent in referring to auto theft as a gendered crime. This entails examining how the actors are gendered in addition to how the act of car theft is gendered. It also entails exploring the context/social situation in which young people find themselves. This

discussion then leads into a brief examination of the pleasures of crime. The chapter then concludes by discussing avenues for auto theft prevention, the limitations of the research project and possible avenues for future research.

AUTO THEFT AS A GENDERED CRIME

Several authors have recognized that auto theft is a crime primarily participated in by men (Copes and Hochstetler 2003; Cunneen and White 1995; Dawes 2002; Fleming et al. 1994; Higgins and Albrecht 1981; Wallace 2003). However, much of the literature surrounding auto theft fails to explore gender differences to any great extent. When auto theft and gender are explored, there is a focus on men and masculinity (e.g. Copes and Hochstetler 2003; Dawes 2002; Walker 1998) without much consideration for what auto theft means for women. This is understandable given that men and women often express very similar motivations for stealing motor vehicles. At first glance, motivations do not appear to be gendered. For example, both young men and women in this study stated that they stole motor vehicles for excitement, transportation, and money. As discussed in the literature review, several authors (e.g. Fleming et al. 1994; Herzog 2002; McCaghy et al. 1977) have even developed typologies of car thieves based on these motivations (and on a variety of others). However, upon closer examination we see that these motivations are complex. Men and women might commit the same act for the same reason(s) but this act plays out in very different ways for young men and women. Let us first explore the literature surrounding masculinity and femininity before discussing auto theft as a gendered crime more extensively.

MASCULINITY AND FEMININITY AS GENDERED PRACTICE

Much of the theoretical work done in criminology has failed to account for the role of gender in crime. Although criminological research until recently has mainly focused on men, it has failed to explain men's disproportionate involvement in crime (Collier 1998; Messerschmidt 1993). There is an assumption in the literature that men *should* commit crime. Men's criminal behaviour is too often explained as being normal and justified on account of them being male (Messerschmidt 1993). Instead, Messerschmidt (1993) suggests that we think of gender as being performed (or asserted). In public men try to perform masculinity while women try to perform femininity based on what they believe the ideals of masculinity and femininity to be. For example, as men interact with others in society, they must show others that they are indeed masculine. If social situations preclude other ways of proving manliness, men may turn to crime in order to prove to others and to themselves that they are masculine (Messerschmidt 1993).

The theoretical understandings of gender have been enhanced in recent years by the work of Connell (1995) and his book '*Masculinities*'. Connell (1995) moves the debate away from thinking of gender as being a dichotomous variable (male – female). Instead, gender is thought of as having multiple dimensions and relationships. Essentially, what Connell (1995) and others (Collinson and Hearn 1996; Copes and Hochstetler 2003; Gibbs and Merighi 1994; Messerschmidt 1993) have attempted to do is challenge the idea that gendered behaviour is biologically innate. Their basic premise is that gender is a social construction. Thus, men's involvement in crime should not be viewed as expected or biological, but as a response to their gender, class, race/ethnicity, and society's social structure (Messerschmidt 1993).

Gender is socially constructed through social interaction in particular social situations and within societal structures. Therefore, there are a wide variety of possible genders that can be constructed within society and these genders differ by where a person is situated within the power relations of society (Messerschmidt 1999; 1997). In essence, people “do” (Messerschmidt 1993:94) gender (or perform gender) through social action and interaction. People also create societal structures and help to maintain them through their actions. Societal institutions (e.g. families, media, and schools) help to shape people’s actions and thus future possibilities, but they do not predetermine a person’s life course or cause certain behaviours (Connell 2002; Messerschmidt 1993).

It is also important to recognize that there is not one masculinity or one femininity in society but that there are multiple masculinities and femininities in society interacting with each other. For example, there are a variety of white, black, working class, and middle class masculinities and femininities (Connell 1995). In addition to this, Connell (2000) suggests that there is a hegemonic masculinity in society that subordinates other masculinities. Subordinated masculinities act as potential challengers to the hegemonic form (Connell 1993; Haywood and Mac an Ghaill 1996). Connell (1995:77) describes hegemonic masculinity as a situation in which “one form of masculinity rather than others is culturally exalted”. Connell (1993) suggests that the current state of hegemonic masculinity is one based on technological expertise and economic success. In addition to this, Haywood and Mac an Ghaill (1996) found that manliness in the workplace is often associated with control, power, and authority. The ability to portray these hegemonic masculine features connotes manliness while anything less is interpreted as weakness or as feminine. Further, Kinsman (1993) suggests that the hegemonic masculinity that we

are currently experiencing is a middle-class, white, heterosexual masculinity. Any male who deviates too far from this masculine 'norm' is considered to be something less than a man.

Much like hegemonic masculinity can be thought of as the ideal of manhood, hegemonic femininity can be thought of as the ideal of womanhood. However, hegemonic femininity and other femininities play a subordinate role to that of hegemonic masculinity (Connell 1995). Hegemonic femininity also subordinates other femininities. In Western society, women are expected to be nurturing, beautiful, weak, submissive, and virtuous (Steffensmeier and Allan 1996). Further, Laidler and Hunt (2001: 639) describe the hegemonic ideals of femininity as "passiveness, obedience, dependency, innocence, chastity, and maturity". Hegemonic femininity (which is a middle-class, white, heterosexual femininity) is used as a reference point for measuring women's femininity (Connell 1995; Laidler and Hunt 2001; Krane et al. 2004; Steffensmeier and Allan 1996; Walker et al. 2000). Because subordinated femininities act as potential challengers to the hegemonic form, women are expected to reproduce hegemonic feminine ideals if they are to be considered feminine or be accepted into a community of feminine practice (Paechter 2003a; 2003b). Refusal or an inability to portray these hegemonic ideals leads others, and possibly the women themselves, to question their femininity.

IN DIALOGUE WITH HEGEMONIC MASCULINITY AND FEMININITY

Connell (1995:71) refers to masculinity (and by extension femininity) as being "simultaneously a place in gender relations, the practices through which men and women

engage that place in gender, and the effects of these practices in bodily experience, personality and culture". This suggests that gender can be viewed as relational (Walker 1998) or as constructed through a series of dialogues. Paechter (2003a:69-70) further advances our ideas on gender by suggesting that we think of masculinities and femininities as being "localized communities of practice" which is broadly defined as "a group engaging in a shared practice"⁶. More specifically, Wenger (1998:45) defines a community of practice as "a kind of community created over time by the sustained pursuit of a shared enterprise". The benefit of conceptualizing masculinities and femininities in this manner is that it provides us with a more abstract conceptualization of gender that better allows us to explain different masculinities and femininities being performed in different times, places, and contexts (Paechter 2003a; 2003b). Paechter (2003a) argues that the activities a person participates in and the people that s/he associates with within certain communities of practice help to construct localized masculinities and femininities (the actors and their activities are gendered). Therefore, how a person's masculinity or femininity is performed is shaped by his/her "lived social reality" (Thornton 1993:127) and by the various dialogues in which s/he partakes.

Given the above literature, young men who participate in auto theft should exhibit a dialogue with hegemonic masculinity and this should be expressed in their gender performances. For example, the theft of motor vehicles should be utilized as an avenue to perform masculinity. Alternatively, young women who participate in auto theft should

⁶ Paechter (2003a;2003b) draws on the work of Lave and Wenger (1991) and Wenger (1998) who examine how people learn through their participation in localized communities of practice. Their work focuses on how apprentices move from being peripheral members of their desired community of practice to becoming full members through the process of learning. Paechter utilizes their work to explore how gender is learned and how people become members of localized communities of masculine and feminine practice.

exhibit a dialogue with hegemonic femininity. Since auto theft is not considered an avenue to meet hegemonic feminine ideals, young women should ascribe different motives and report different behaviours for their participation in auto theft than the young men. Presented below is an examination of how young men and women performed masculinity and femininity in dialogue with car culture, hegemonic masculinity and hegemonic femininity.

IN DIALOGUE WITH CAR CULTURE

The common theme that links all of the young people in this study is the theft of motor vehicles. However, motor vehicles do not hold the same meaning for everyone. In addition, motor vehicles are gendered in the sense that cars are considered to be a masculine domain. Motor vehicles act as a symbol of men's success and power in Western society (Cunneen and White 1995; Dawes 2002; Holden 1998; Walker et al. 2000; White 1990) while women are excluded from the cultural image of the car as powerful, fast, and dangerous (White 1990). This highly masculine car culture has been described as "competitiveness, freedom, mateship, display, technical skill and agility, speed and performance" (Walker et al. 2000). Essentially, car culture can be thought of as a type of hegemonic masculinity that subordinates other forms of masculinity (Walker et al. 2000) as well as femininity.

Mellstrom (2004) examined a group of male motor mechanics in Malaysia and a group of male engineers in Sweden to determine how their masculinities formed in relation to technology. Mellstrom found that both groups elicited pleasure from their interaction with machines and that this pleasure was described as 'manly'. The group of

mechanics based their masculinity on their ability to fix machines (in this case motorcycles and cars) and on physical toughness. The engineer group's masculinity was based on their technological and scientific expertise. Members of both groups grew up learning about machines and were exposed to technology by a close male acquaintance. The ability to control and master technology made up a large part of what these men considered to be masculine. It is evident that participation in car culture provides men with a sense of pride and accomplishment. I would also suggest that car culture could be thought of as a community of masculine practice whose membership is desired by men.

Participating in car culture allows men to perform masculinity (Walker et al. 2000). However, when men are marginalized by society, they are often denied access to car culture as well as other avenues to perform masculinity. For example, Gilroy (2001) argues that minorities end up buying into the very consumer culture that has left them on the margins of society. The consumption of goods (e.g. owning a car) and being wealthy are set as ideals to accomplish. The media also play a role in presenting the car to people as an essential ingredient in living a full and exciting life (e.g. travel, freedom) (Dawes 2002). The theft of motor vehicles allows marginalized young men an opportunity to participate in car culture and thus obtain the rewards and benefits that it offers (e.g. status, power, excitement) as a type of hegemonic masculinity (Dawes 2002; Stephen and Squires 2003; Walker et al. 2000). The question that still remains is whether car culture offers the same benefits to marginalized young women.

All of the young people in this study could be considered marginalized by society in some manner. For example, several young people were marginalized economically and had close family members extensively involved in crime. Others had difficulty keeping a

job and some were likely unemployable. The majority of young people also had trouble with their schooling. Despite this, the young people in this study still stated that getting good grades was important to them and many wanted to attend further schooling to obtain a variety of different jobs. This suggests that these young people still wanted to be valued and successful.

Although all of the young men and women in this study could be considered marginalized by society, they did not engage in the same dialogue with car culture. Young men reported that they stole vehicles that accorded them a level of status while this was not the case for young women. Thoms (1998) argues that motor vehicles represent, or at a minimum say something about, the person driving them. There is an element of status involved in driving motor vehicles (or perhaps lack thereof depending on the type of vehicle being driven). The influence of car culture on the young men in this study was apparent in the types of vehicles that they targeted for theft. Young men would avoid 'junky cars' and only steal cars that were fast, looked good, and could draw the positive attention of onlookers. Examining the types of vehicles that young men would like to own, we see that they chose vehicles that were high performance (e.g. Dodge Viper, Lamborghini) and unaffordable for most people. These cars were desired because of their power and speed. Generally, young men chose cars that made them feel important and that could project a sense of status to others. Thus, for these young people, part of being a man was found in the type of vehicle that they drove and in being included in car culture.

Often, men's prowess with motor vehicles helps to define their masculinity. What many men consider masculine is connected to their ability to manipulate and control technology. Men's ability to control technology is often expressed in their mechanical

skills with motor vehicles (White 1990). In this study, it was only young men who wanted to fix up older cars and add accessories to their vehicles. The desire to do this was even felt by two young men despite a lack of mechanical skills to accomplish the job.

We can see that the young men in this study were in dialogue with a hegemonic (highly masculine) car culture but little evidence exists of any such a dialogue between the young women and car culture. Generally, it did not matter to young women that the vehicle being stolen had a certain look to it or that it could project a sense of status onto them. Also, having the most powerful and best motor vehicle was not something that women based their feminine identities upon. For most of the young women, the car was envisioned as freedom and as a means of excitement (although a somewhat reserved excitement when compared to young men). Young women typically targeted vehicles because they were easy to steal. Examining the types of vehicles that young women would like to own, we see that they chose vehicles that they describe as 'sporty' but their choices were more realistic and attainable (e.g. the Cavalier) than young men's. This suggests that the returns from auto theft are very different for young men and women.

PERFORMATIVE EXPRESSIONS OF MASCULINITY AND FEMININITY

Hegemonic masculinity and femininity can be thought of as cultural 'norms' or stereotypes that establish criteria for what men and women ought to be. While men are in dialogue with hegemonic masculinity (or with what it means to be a man), women are in dialogue with hegemonic femininity (or with what it means to be a woman). A person's gender can be expressed/performed through a variety of avenues (e.g. sports, academics, employment). However, problems can arise when young men are marginalized by society

and denied the benefits of hegemonic masculinity. When young men are denied legitimate opportunities to perform masculinity, they explore other avenues to demonstrate that they are indeed men. Often, these marginalized young men turn to crime as a way of 'doing' masculinity (Gibbs and Merighi 1994). As Messerschmidt (1993:85) states, "crime is a resource that may be summoned when men lack other resources to accomplish gender".

The theft of motor vehicles is but one avenue to perform gender and it is linked to the specific social situation that young people find themselves. However, participating in the theft of motor vehicles is an activity that carries with it certain gendered meanings. For example, women who steal motor vehicles run the risk of being considered unfeminine but for men, participation in this activity is considered an affirmation of masculinity. The reverse would be true for men entering a primarily feminine domain. For example, men who work with children (e.g. a daycare worker) are considered to not meet societal definitions of masculinity; however, women who work in this area do not have their femininity called into question. How then do women who participate in auto theft navigate this masculine domain?

How various masculinities and femininities are performed tell us something about how a person views themselves (their identity) (Paechter 2003a). Although both young men and women in this study built identities based partially on the theft of motor vehicles, they participated in auto theft differently and obtained different returns from their participation in auto theft. For example, young men used stolen vehicles to show others that they were powerful and strong. It was only young men who mentioned getting into police pursuits on purpose and bringing stolen vehicles to school to 'show off'. Getting into police pursuits, holding competitions, showing fearlessness, speeding and

showing off motor vehicles allowed the young men in this study an opportunity to reaffirm their masculinity. As recognized by Walker (1998), competition amongst men is a defining feature of hegemonic masculinity. Young men were able to feel powerful and important through their activities with stolen motor vehicles. Thus, they were able to obtain many of the benefits of hegemonic masculinity, albeit through illegitimate means. Essentially, these young men were able to show others and prove to themselves that they were real men. Young men's participation in these activities (especially police pursuits) can also be regarded as a form of social protest/resistance to their marginalization by society (Dawes 2002; Gibbs and Merighi 1994; White 1990). Interestingly, the young women in this study were excluded from localized communities of practice based on power. Membership in these localized communities of practice was reserved for young men. This coincides with the cultural image of men as powerful and women as subordinate (Connell 2002) which might help to explain women's relative absence from participation in motor vehicle theft.

The young men in this study tended to steal motor vehicles as part of a group; however, when young men stole cars as part of a group they emphasized their skills and ability. Generally, this was not the case for young women. Overall, the young men showed a much greater skill level than the young women despite both having been taught by men how to steal cars. For young men, skill level was a measure of masculinity. For example, it was not enough for young men to stay riding along as a passenger in a stolen vehicle; these young men had to accomplish a theft on their own. The theft of motor vehicles allowed the young men to show off their skills to other men and garner admiration from the other people involved (thus helping to reaffirm their masculine

identities). Once successful, having the skills to steal motor vehicles became a source of pride to these marginalized young men.

Some of the young men in this study had even progressed to selling motor vehicles to make themselves money. Of the young people interviewed, these young men were the most highly skilled at stealing cars. There were no young women involved in selling stolen vehicles. Young women lack access to communities of practice based on selling stolen vehicles. Young men, however, by virtue of “legitimate peripheral participation” (Paechter 2003a)⁷ in these communities of practice eventually developed a trust with buyers (e.g. chop shops and organized crime) and were able to support themselves by selling the vehicles that they had stolen. Some of these young men treated their theft of cars as a form of employment (e.g. some had pagers and took orders for cars in return for money). These young people’s masculine identities were reaffirmed by their ability to provide for themselves which is an integral part of hegemonic masculinity.

Evidence of risk-taking by young men was apparent in how fast they drove in stolen vehicles. There was a general disregard by young men for the consequences of driving at high speeds. Generally, for the young women interviewed, auto theft was not about risk-taking, feeling powerful, showing off or their ability to drive. However, young women did state that they would speed in stolen vehicles but their responses were considerably different than those of young men. Interestingly, young women discussed

⁷ Masculinities and femininities are learned by young people through “legitimate peripheral participation” (Paechter 2003a:70) in adult communities of practice. For example, young men learn what it means to be a ‘man’ through a loose association with adult masculinities and femininities. While interacting with various adult communities of practice from the periphery, young people are also participating as full members in their own localized communities of practice. In essence, what it means to be male and female is learned by young people through their interactions with the variety of communities of practice that they encounter (Paechter 2003a; 2003b).

their activities in terms of an ethos of care. For example, the young women stressed that they took precautions while driving in stolen vehicles so that they would not cause harm to others (e.g. they stated they were aware of others when driving and that they would rarely speed). Also, while young men regarded breaking the law (e.g. eluding the police after a chase) as something that made them good drivers, young women believed that obeying the law while driving made them exceptional drivers. This suggests a continued dialogue with hegemonic femininity despite their participation in the masculine domain of auto theft.

Krane et al. (2004) help illustrate the influence of hegemonic femininity on women by examining how they navigate the primarily masculine domain of sports. They found that female athletes remained in dialogue with hegemonic femininity despite participating in what is considered a masculine domain. Generally, the athletes described femininity as being “soft, girly, dainty, and clean” (Krane et al. 2004:320) while masculinity meant being “aggressive, outgoing, and sweaty” (Krane et al. 2004:320). Also, the women considered building muscle as opposing hegemonic feminine ideals. For example, it was acceptable for women to be “muscular but not too muscular” (Krane et al. 2004:320). The female athletes in Krane et al.’s (2004) study had to reconcile the appearance of being masculine (e.g. sweating, having muscles, being aggressive) with remaining feminine. Thus, the women had to balance their athletic identity (with its masculine connotations) with their feminine identity. When the young women were not participating in athletics they sought out avenues to perform femininity that were in line with hegemonic feminine ideals. For example, when dating it was important to show men that they were feminine which included not being aggressive and dressing in clothes that

made them appear feminine. These athletic women recognized that they were different from 'normal' girls and sought out avenues to reaffirm their femininity in an attempt to meet hegemonic feminine ideals. They also recognized that meeting these hegemonic ideals could accord them a level of status as a woman.

Similarly, Laidler and Hunt (2001), investigating gang girls, found that women still remained in dialogue with normative femininity (or hegemonic feminine ideals) despite their participation in violent crimes. Interestingly, it was found that gang girls ensure members of their group are being 'respectable' females (which emphasizes upholding one's sexual reputation). It was also important to these women that they demonstrate normative femininity for themselves and for the men that they associate with. For example, the men that they associated with often demanded that they be 'respectable' (or in other words, meet hegemonic feminine ideals).

The young women's returns from auto theft show a dialogue with hegemonic femininity. For example, they stated that they limited risk-taking (e.g. not driving erratically) and did not derive an element of power or status from stealing motor vehicles. This suggests that although the young women were participating in a predominantly male activity (the theft of motor vehicles); they still found avenues to reaffirm femininity and thus, remained in dialogue with hegemonic femininity. Evidence of young women remaining in dialogue with hegemonic femininity is most apparent in how motor vehicle theft was performed. For example, young women almost always had the keys to the vehicles that they stole. They also tended to steal vehicles from people that they knew (e.g. parents) while men tended to steal vehicles from strangers. Also, young women almost never stole motor vehicles by themselves and tended to participate in thefts with

young men. However, young women often had a subordinate role in the theft. For example, young women were less involved in breaking into vehicles and starting them. It was not about showing how skilled they were at stealing motor vehicles (as it was for the young men). These young women remained in dialogue with hegemonic femininity by allowing men to take the dominant role in the theft.

Interestingly, when young women did steal vehicles on their own, they did so only once and cited a reluctance to do so again. For example, Mary took a car by herself once when she was in a “weird mood” while Natalie stole a car once for twenty minutes and describes herself as being “really scared”. There were no such justifications or fears expressed by young men. I suggest that this is because when young women steal cars they run the risk of having their femininity questioned by others and possibly themselves. Natalie also suggested that she was a “tomboy” and that she wanted a “sports car for a sports girl”. I would suggest that Natalie described herself as a “tomboy” as a means of justifying her participation in a predominantly male activity. The use of the term “tomboy” and “sports girl” allowed her to remain feminine and excuse her participation in what has traditionally been considered masculine behaviour. However, considering oneself a tomboy is time-limited and only acceptable in childhood and possibly early adolescence. After this, the pressure to conform to hegemonic feminine ideals can be immense (Carr 1998). Therefore, because Natalie is entering late adolescence and early adulthood, if she were to continue stealing cars her use of the term tomboy to explain her behaviour would likely become problematic. Thus, it would be interesting to examine the justifications provided by adult women car thieves for their behaviour. To sum up, these

justifications and fears allowed these young women to reaffirm their femininity after having participated by themselves, in a predominantly male crime.

Acceptance into a masculine or feminine community of practice is only obtained after a person has demonstrated that they legitimately belong to this group. For example, in order to obtain full membership in a local community of masculine practice, individuals must be able to convincingly perform local definitions of masculinity (Paechter 2003a). Interestingly, none of the young women we spoke to had stolen cars with groups of other women. These young women learned how to steal cars from men. Thus, in order to participate in localized communities of masculine practice built around stealing motor vehicles, did these young women take on a masculine identity? Did these young women perform masculinity?

Agreeing with Messerschmidt (1997) when he asked this question in regards to violent females, I would argue that these young women did not take on a masculine identity. This is because participation in motor vehicle theft carries with it very different connotations for men and women. Given men's relationship with cars and car culture, the theft of motor vehicles is a way for men to meet the hegemonic ideals of masculinity (or what it means to be a man). Alternatively, women's participation in motor vehicle theft goes against the hegemonic ideals of femininity (or what it means to be a woman). These young women might have had to perform certain qualities (e.g. being adventurous, taking risks, showing strength) that have traditionally been defined as 'masculine' in order to gain access to localized communities of masculine practice but as we have seen, their experiences are very different than young men's. Men's gender identities formed in dialogue with hegemonic masculinity while women's gender identities formed in relation

to hegemonic femininity. To suggest that these young women in some way took on a masculine identity is to attribute human qualities such as power, strength, and toughness innately to men.

To illustrate this idea let us utilize as an example one young woman (Mary) who had slightly different experiences (and more comparable to the young men) with motor vehicle theft than the other young women in this study. First, Mary was the only young woman to state that she stole vehicles to commit other crimes (break and enters). Second, she would steal cars by breaking into people's houses and stealing the keys to their motor vehicles. However, despite having a lead role in the theft, she would often let the young men she was with drive the stolen vehicle. This suggests that Mary was still in dialogue with hegemonic femininity because in "gendered car culture the mere fact of being the driver...is a way of doing masculinity" (Walker et al. 2000). Further evidence of a dialogue with hegemonic femininity is seen in Mary's future career choice. She had plans to be a social worker which has traditionally been viewed as a feminine domain. Finally, Mary was the only young woman to have participated in a competition with stolen motor vehicles. I suggest that Mary's participation in this competition be viewed as resisting an overly constraining hegemonic femininity rather than Mary being in dialogue with hegemonic masculinity. There is little evidence to suggest that Mary abandoned her femininity in exchange for a masculine identity. What Mary's participation in this competition helps illustrate is that there are varying degrees to which women resist hegemonic femininity. Thus Mary, like the other young women, was still in dialogue with hegemonic femininity while at the same time resisting it.

The femininity that is performed will depend on the context/social situation that women find themselves. This often entails women having to navigate a variety of different femininities in order to meet their own, and others, definitions of femininity (Denner and Dunbar 2004). For example, Atkinson (2002) found that women who got tattoos, which is considered a traditionally masculine domain, did so within the boundaries of hegemonic femininity. The women in Atkinson's study actively resisted hegemonic feminine ideals (they got a tattoo) while at the same time remained in dialogue with these ideals (they would cover up their tattoos when going out in public). Similar results were found in this study where women involved in auto theft actively resisted hegemonic feminine ideals but at the same time remained in dialogue with them.

A NEXUS OF MASCULINITIES, FEMININITIES AND CAR CULTURE

The most salient point to understand about young people's participation in auto theft is that it involves an intersection of masculinities, femininities and car culture. Because participation in car culture is considered a masculine domain, the theft of motor vehicles carries with it certain gendered meanings. For young men engaged in the theft of motor vehicles, this activity can be used to reaffirm masculinity and to show others that they are masculine. As Walker et al. (2000:157) state...

“motor vehicles and their use offer boys and youth engaged in the construction of masculinity a number of experiences that many of them very much want: a sense of technical mastery, a realm that is symbolically masculine, a forum for friendship and peer recognition, thrills, laughter, and a certain amount of danger.

Conceptually, we may argue that motor vehicle use has become an arena of domination—both of hegemonic masculinity over other masculinities, and of men over women—in which many young men are able to assert (at least until the police catch up) a degree of power and authority that is denied them in most other realms”.

Thus, because car culture is considered a masculine domain, it has different implications for young women engaged in the theft of motor vehicles. When young women steal motor vehicles it raises questions about their femininity. As we have seen in this study, the young women understood the gendered nature of their activities and sought out suitable avenues to perform femininity that were in line with hegemonic feminine ideals. Young women were involved in auto theft differently than young men in the way that they performed auto theft and in how they discussed their activities. Overall, their discussions of their experiences reflect an understanding of what is expected of them as young women (they remained in dialogue with hegemonic femininity).

THE PLEASURES OF CRIME

The young men in this study based their masculine identities partially on risk-taking (e.g. speeding, performing stunts, driving erratically) while the young women tended to be more cautious in their activities (e.g. they worried about getting into accidents, they were less likely to speed). Young men would also often use alcohol and drugs when stealing motor vehicles, as evidenced in the young men who got into police pursuits on purpose. I agree with Walker et al. (2000) that the use of drugs and alcohol

enhanced the pleasures of car theft for these young men, however, I would also argue that these substances were used as a means of suppressing their fear in highly dangerous situations.

This suggests that the excitement derived from stealing cars is also gendered. The young men exaggerated their gender performances in order to prove to others and to themselves that they belonged to localized communities of masculine practice (Paechter 2003a). The young women, however, mostly derived their excitement from not getting caught and from participating in an activity that challenged the limits of hegemonic femininity. This suggests that this reserved excitement (in comparison to young men) was used to prove to others and to themselves that they could still be regarded as feminine or that they belonged to localized communities of feminine practice (Paechter 2003a) despite having participated in a predominantly male crime.

CONCLUSION

This thesis presented the results obtained from interviewing young offenders in Eastern Ontario about their involvement in motor vehicle theft as part of the 'National Study of Young Offender Involvement in Motor Vehicle Theft'. On the surface, the motivations (e.g. transportation, excitement, commit other crimes) for motor vehicle theft appear utilitarian but as has been illustrated, understanding car theft is much more complicated than it appears. Stating that car theft is a gendered crime requires that we explore much deeper than simply recognizing that the act of car theft is gendered. Inherent in a gendered approach to understanding auto theft is recognizing that it is gendered in multiple ways, several of which are much beyond the scope of this thesis. For

example, there is also a need to consider who gets punished for crime and how severely, what types of crime people participate in, as well as the effects of patriarchal society, class, and race/ethnicity. However, the focus of this thesis was on trying to develop an in-depth sociological/criminological understanding of how young people understand their experiences with auto theft. Focusing on how the actors, their activities and the social situations that they inhabit are gendered helped to develop this in-depth understanding.

Although motor vehicle theft is a crime that is participated in by both marginalized young men and women, each group experienced auto theft very differently. For young men, auto theft was used as an avenue to reaffirm masculinity. Their participation in car theft allowed them to demonstrate that they had met certain hegemonic masculine ideals that had been denied to them through other avenues (e.g. academics, employment). Alternatively, women's participation in motor vehicle theft raises questions about their femininity. The young women in this study sought out avenues to demonstrate that they were still women/feminine despite their participation in what is considered a male crime. This dialogue with hegemonic femininity was evident in the young women's returns from auto theft and how they performed motor vehicle theft (e.g. they limited risk-taking and had a subordinate role in thefts). For young women, participation in auto theft was not about reaffirming their femininity; it was about being able to commit a masculine act and still be regarded by others and by themselves as feminine (or as a woman).

It is important to note that behaviours associated with localized communities of masculine practice (e.g. wanting to feel powerful) do not inevitably lead to crime. Criminal behaviour manifests itself in certain contexts and situations (Copes and

Hochstetler 2003). For example, a taste for risk does not inevitably lead to criminal activity and could lead to a variety of non-criminal behaviours (e.g. bungee jumping, stockbroker). It is important to remember that a certain aspect of a person's life (e.g. attending raves) does not exclusively define who this person is. Young people have many interests and activities that help to form their identities (Carrabine and Longhurst 2002). Identity is fluid, especially in adolescence (Paechter 2003a), and this identity is constantly evolving and changing as people move through time and space (Collier 1998; Dawes 2002; Petersen 2003). Therefore, stealing motor vehicles does not completely define who a person is but it does provide us with insight into how they view themselves and their localized communities of practice.

Thinking of genders as communities of practice and as being performative allows us to conceptualize various masculinities and femininities as being performed across time and space. It also moves the discourse on gender away from the biological realm and places it firmly in the social. Of course, this does not mean that behaviour is entirely devoid of the influence of biology but it does mean that men's participation in crime should not be thought of as expected simply because they are male. Masculinities and femininities are learned and evolve through time and space (Paechter 2003a). Therefore, if communities of practice can be created, they can also be broken down and reconfigured. This suggests that if auto theft is to be understood and prevented, an important area to explore is young people's localized communities of practice.

PREVENTION

After exploring auto theft with a gendered lens, we see that preventing auto theft is not a simple matter. This is partially because auto theft is a particularly enticing criminal activity for young marginalized men to participate in because motor vehicles are linked to hegemonic masculinity and expressing oneself as a man. Motor vehicles act as a symbol of masculine status and project to others, as well as to themselves, that they are important and powerful (Copes 2003; Dawes 2002; Holden 1998; Walker et al. 2000; White 1990). Therefore, little progress will be made in preventing auto theft without first addressing the influence of car culture on many of these young men's lives. As long as motor vehicles are valued as a symbol of masculine status in society, the theft of motor vehicles will offer young men an avenue to escape social marginalization (Dawes 2002; Gibbs and Merighi 1994; White 1990). The young women in this study did not have the same dialogue with car culture as the young men. However, women are increasingly being viewed as motor vehicle consumers. We see this in television commercials where motor vehicles are increasingly being marketed to women. It will be interesting to see if women's dialogue with car culture changes as a result and to what degree, if any, this affects women's participation in auto theft.

Some authors suggest that auto theft can be prevented by reducing opportunities for cars to get stolen (target hardening) (e.g. Fleming et al. 1994; Wallace 2003). For example, Fleming et al. (1994) suggest that significant gains can be made in the reduction of auto theft by people being more responsible for their vehicles (e.g. not leaving the keys in the ignition) and by making vehicles less attractive to steal (e.g. installing security devices). I would agree that this is a fruitful avenue to explore as part of any auto theft

reduction strategy. Working with automakers and developing strategies to make vehicles more difficult to start would help deter young people from stealing motor vehicles.

Security devices also hold some deterrent value. GPS tracking seems to hold the most deterrent value for the future.

Unfortunately, target hardening is unlikely to have a significant impact on reducing the theft of motor vehicles. Car thieves will change their modes of operation as the technology changes. For the more experienced auto thief, many of these security devices (e.g. alarms) can be easily circumvented. Young men will also likely take pride in their ability to defeat any new security devices. Even if security devices made vehicles virtually unstealable, people would find ways around these devices. As we have seen in this study, for the highly determined thief, breaking into a person's house and stealing the keys to the motor vehicle is not out of the realm of possibility. Also, improved anti-theft devices could lead to an increase in carjacking (stealing motor vehicles with the person still in it) (Jacobs et al. 2003).

The findings suggest that auto theft will remain difficult to prevent as long as people remain on the margins of society. Unfortunately, there is always likely to be marginalized people in society given that people can be marginalized in a variety of ways. For young men, marginality can occur when there are limits placed on access to hegemonic masculinity. This suggests that even if society could address the economic marginalization that these young people face, they could still be marginalized because of their academic performance, weight, appearance, family upbringing, and/or intelligence. Thus, without an avenue to address all forms of marginalization, marginalized young men

will continue to seek out other avenues to demonstrate hegemonic masculine ideals such as power, strength and toughness.

As a long-term goal of reducing crime more generally, we need to challenge the identities that young people have created (especially young men) and redirect young people's energies towards more pro-social communities of practice. Providing non-criminal avenues for young men to feel powerful, important and included in society holds potential for preventing not only auto theft but possibly other crimes as well. Young people also need to be engaged/included in decisions that affect them. Many of the young people in this study sought excitement in the form of stealing motor vehicles. Therefore, providing young people with an avenue to provide input into 'exciting' things they would like to do within their communities might prevent some young people from looking for excitement elsewhere (e.g. joyriding). Society could also benefit by moving away from its dependency on, and fascination with, the motor vehicle. Placing more money into improved public transportation would be a good first step.

One of the biggest concerns is young people's lack of education. Finishing high school seems to be a major difficulty. For example, many of the young people had trouble attending classes regularly and many had been suspended/expelled from school for this reason and for others (e.g. having drugs, committing violence). This seems like an effective solution to ridding a school of a nuisance student but as for the long-term effects on society, this approach seems ineffective.

A better approach to dealing with these young people might be to provide them with alternative schooling that provides a less formal setting than the classroom. This might involve direct links with the business community and a variety of apprenticeship

programs. The young people in this study expressed a desire to do well in school yet had trouble dealing with authority figures and what they considered arbitrary rules (e.g. no wearing headphones in class) imposed on them by teachers and principals/vice-principals. Also, many of the young people in this study had the motivation and desire to enter the legitimate workforce but were unable to finish the required educational component. A type of schooling that is more conducive towards these young people's learning styles might help them to obtain legitimate employment in the future. Of course, any alternative type of schooling must be able to address the issues that many of these young people face at home. For example, many of the young people in this study had close family members who were involved extensively in crime (e.g. fathers, brothers).

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Although this research project was able to explore several of the gendered layers of auto theft, it should be regarded as a preliminary understanding of young people's participation in auto theft due to the small number of young people interviewed. It is possible that the findings are a product of the small sample. Therefore, more work needs to be done in understanding auto theft as a gendered crime.

The size of the sample (n=17) prevents us from generalizing the findings to all auto thieves. The sample of young people interviewed was by no means representative of all auto thieves. First, the sample was an institutional population (those who got caught). There are likely many people who steal cars and are never caught and processed by the criminal justice system. Without speaking to these people, it is difficult to know how they differ in their experiences with auto theft. However, valuable insights into auto theft have

been made using only institutional samples (see Copes 2003; Copes and Hochstetler 2003). Second, it is difficult to determine if a saturation point was reached with the interviews. There could have been other car thieves in Eastern Ontario with different experiences.

The main reason for the small sample has to do with the difficulties encountered with doing research on young offenders in the province of Ontario. If research with young offenders remains this difficult to conduct in the future, it could severely limit the ability of researchers to track young people's offending on an ongoing basis. Auto theft is an important aspect of youth crime and youth culture yet no data is kept specifically on who has committed motor vehicle theft in Ontario. Due to the large costs associated with motor vehicle theft, it might be useful to collect data specifically on those who are participating in auto theft.

One of the major limitations of this research project was that it did not specifically ask young people about masculinity and femininity. Future studies on auto theft should explore how young women and men construct their feminine and masculine identities and how these identities relate to their criminal activity. For example, questions need to be asked about how young men and women understand their own masculine and feminine identities. Also, how do young people who participate in auto theft view masculinity and femininity more generally? What do young women and men consider feminine and masculine qualities? What does it mean to them to be 'a man' or 'a woman'? Although this research project was able to address some of these questions by obtaining qualitative data on young people's motivations for auto theft, I believe asking these young people specifically about masculinity and femininity would shed light on how young people view

themselves and their criminal activities. In general, more qualitative work on masculinities and femininities is needed within criminological research.

Another limitation of this research project was that it only concentrated on young people who had stolen cars and did not interview other groups of young people for comparison purposes. Research needs to be conducted on how young men and women who are not involved in auto theft relate to car culture. Specifically, what role does car culture play in the lives of contemporary young males? To what extent do other young men buy into car culture? Do other young men simply express their interest in cars through legal means? Do they watch NASCAR and other car racing on television? Do they buy car magazines or fix up vehicles of their own? Do they participate in street racing? The basic questions that need to be addressed about the impact of car culture and masculinity were beyond the scope of this research project. I think that finding the answers to these questions will help to establish the utility of thinking of gender as performative and as communities of masculine and feminine practice.

Finally, there is a need to explore the peer groups that these young people participate in and how they view masculinity, femininity, auto theft and car culture. For example, do young people gain status among their peers by stealing cars? Due to the group nature of auto theft, this could prove to be a fruitful avenue to explore in understanding the gendered nature of auto theft as well as the social situations that young people find themselves in preceding participation in a criminal event. For example, is a young man's masculinity challenged by others before he steals a car? Is he challenged directly or indirectly? What is his level of drug/alcohol usage and how does this factor into auto theft? Although this was briefly addressed in this research project, it was not

fully explored. Also, what do these young men's girlfriends think of their participation in motor vehicle theft? Or as Walklate (1995) asks, are women attracted to men who are 'wimps'? Finding answers to the above questions will further enhance our theoretical understandings of young people's participation in auto theft.

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APPENDIX B: QUESTIONNAIRE

NATIONAL STUDY OF YOUNG OFFENDER INVOLVEMENT IN MOTOR VEHICLE THEFT INTERVIEW GUIDE

Study Name:

Gender:

WE'RE GOING TO BEGIN WITH SOME BASIC BACKGROUND INFORMATION – AGE, SCHOOL, INCOME, THOSE KINDS OF THINGS.

1. How old are you? (Age in years) _____
2. When you are not in custody, do you live in an/a: ?
 - 1 Urban area
 - 2 Rural area
 - 3 Don't know
3. How would you describe your family's financial situation?
 - 1 Poor
 - 2 Comfortable
 - 3 Well off
 - 4 Don't know
4. What was the last grade of school that you completed? _____
5. How important to you is it to get good grades in school?
 - 1 Not important at all
 - 2 Not very important
 - 3 Somewhat important
 - 4 Important
 - 5 Don't know
 - 6 No response

6. How well do you think you are/were doing in your schoolwork?

- 1 Very well
- 2 Well
- 3 Poorly
- 4 Very Poorly

7. The next statements are about experiences at school

	All of the time	Most of the time	Some of the time	Rarely	Never
--	--------------------	---------------------	---------------------	--------	-------

a) In general, my teachers treat me fairly

b) In general, the principal / vice-principals treat me fairly

c) In general, I feel that I fit in at school

8. Do you plan on attending any further schooling after high school?

- 1 College
- 2 University
- 3 Trade school
- 4 No Post-secondary
- 5 Don't know
- 6 No response

9. What job would you like to have? _____

10. How do you think that you will get that job? _____

11. Prior to your current incarceration (if in custody) were you employed?
Are you currently employed?

- 1 Yes (If yes, what were you doing – go to question 13)
- 2 No (If no, go to question 12)
- 3 Don't know
- 4 No response

12. Have you ever been employed?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 3 Don't know
- 4 No response

13. How many hours a week did you work in your last job?

CRIMINAL HISTORY

Now we want to ask you about your convictions and then we'll move into questions concerning auto theft.

14. What other crime(s) have you been convicted of?

15. In the past 12 months / 12months prior to being in custody, excluding crimes that you have been convicted of, what other criminal activity have you been involved in and approximately how many times have you:

	Never	Once or twice	3 or 4 times	5 or more times
a) Theft?	.	.	.	.
b) Fights?	.	.	.	.
c) Assaults?	.	.	.	.
d) B & Es ?	.	.	.	.
e) Dealing Drugs?	.	.	.	.
f) Auto Thefts?	.	.	.	.

INVOLVEMENT IN AUTO THEFT

16. How old were you when you were **FIRST INVOLVED IN ANY WAY** in the theft of a motor vehicle (e.g. being a passenger in a car stolen by someone else)? Age _____

17. How were you involved? (e.g. lookout, passenger only, shown how to steal cars, etc.)

18. How did you become involved in your first car theft? (e.g. friends got you involved)

19. How old were you when you **stole** your first vehicle? Age _____

20. What was/were the reason(s) you stole your first car?

21. How did you learn to steal a vehicle? (e.g. who taught you how to break-into/start a car?, did you learn by trying to steal a car?, etc.)

22. Approximately how many automobiles have you stolen?

Total number stolen _____

23. How frequently did/do you steal automobiles?

- 1 Less than once a year
- 2 Two or three times a year
- 3 Once a month
- 4 Once a week or more, if yes then ask: How many vehicles would you normally steal in an average week? Number stolen in a week_____
- 5 Don't know
- 6 No response

24. Think of the last time that you stole a car. Would you please describe what happened beginning with your first thought of stealing a particular vehicle and describe the entire process through to the return/abandonment/or sale of the stolen vehicle (e.g. By-pass locks and ignition, getting in and scouting the location).

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

25. How long does it usually take you to steal a vehicle?

NOW WE WANT TO GET A SENSE OF WHAT YOU DO WITH THE CAR WHILE YOU HAVE IT IN YOUR POSSESSION.

26. What do you usually do with the vehicle once you've stolen it? (Probes - Just Drive Around; Go and Pick up Friends; Do whatever business you have and that's it; Other)

27. Have you ever brought a stolen vehicle to a school?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 3 Don't know
- 4 No response

28. If YES, why did you bring it to school?

29. Have you ever been in a contest to see who could bring the 'nicest' car to school?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 3 Don't know
- 4 No response

30. If YES, what type of vehicle did you bring to school?

31. Have you ever been in a contest to see who could steal the most vehicles in one night?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 3 Don't know
- 4 No response

32. How long do you usually keep the stolen vehicle for?

Time vehicle kept _____

33. Have you ever kept a stolen vehicle for an extended period of time?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 3 Don't know
- 4 No response

34. If YES, where do you store/park the stolen vehicle when using it for an extended period?

35. What would you typically do with the vehicle after you were done with it?

36. Have you ever deliberately vandalized a stolen vehicle (i.e. vandalism other than what was required to get into/steal the vehicle)?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 3 Don't know
- 4 No response

37. Did you steal articles from cars before you began stealing cars?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 3 Don't know
- 4 No response

38. If YES, can you tell me what you stole from the vehicles and why?

39. Did you vandalize cars before you began stealing cars?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 3 Don't know
- 4 No response

40. If YES, can you tell me what you did to the cars and why?

41. Have you ever stolen a vehicle with the keys in it?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 3 Don't know
- 4 No response

42. Have you ever stolen a vehicle with the owner still in it?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 3 Don't know
- 4 No response

43. If YES, explain how this happened.

44. When you steal a vehicle, how often do you work alone?

- 1 Never
- 2 Sometimes
- 3 Usually
- 4 Always
- 5 No Response

45. If you sometimes, usually, or always steal vehicles with others is there a pattern such as taking turns on who steals the car and who rides as a passenger?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 3 Don't know
- 4 No response

46. If YES, explain how this works. If NO, do you have set 'roles' and why?

47. When you drive a stolen vehicle do you ever speed?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 3 Don't know
- 4 No Response

48. If YES, what is the fastest speed you've ever driven a stolen car at?(km)?

49. When you're speeding in a stolen care, are you ever worried that you might get into an accident or lose control of the car? Why/Why not?

50. Have you ever tried to get in a police pursuit on purpose with a stolen vehicle?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 3 Don't know
- 4 No response

51. If YES, can you tell me why and what happened?

NOW WE WANT TO ASK SOME QUESTIONS ABOUT SOME OF THE REASONS WHY YOU STEAL VEHICLES:

52. Have you ever stolen a vehicle for a joy-ride?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 3 Don't know
- 4 No response

53. If YES, where did you go, what did you do?

54. If YES, how did this make you feel?

55. Have you ever stolen a vehicle for use in other crimes?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 3 Don't know
- 4 No response

56. If YES, what crime(s) did you commit?

57. Have you ever stolen a vehicle for transportation?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 3 Don't know
- 4 No response

58. If YES, where did you go?

59. Have you ever stolen a vehicle for the thrill?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 3 Don't know
- 4 No response

60. If YES, where did you go, what did you do?

61. If YES, how did you feel?

62. Have you ever stolen a car in order to buy drugs or alcohol? (as a pick-up car to get the drugs or to sell/trade for drugs)

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 3 Don't know
- 4 No response

63. Generally, what is your main reason for stealing vehicles?

[illegible]

64. Have your reasons for stealing cars changed over time?

- 1 Yes
2 No
3 Don't know
4 No response

65. If YES, in what ways have your reasons changed?

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins or other markings on the paper.

66. Have you ever stolen a vehicle for money?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 3 Don't know
- 4 No response

67. If YES, what type of vehicle was it (make, model, year)?

68. If YES, how much were you paid?

69. If YES, can you explain how you first got money for a stolen car? (probes - who approached you or told you about it, how did you know them, how well?)

70. Have you ever stolen a vehicle for some criminal operation?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No (Go to question 74)
- 3 Don't know
- 4 No response

71. If the cars were stolen for a criminal operation would you refer to these people who the cars went to as being 'organized criminals'?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 3 Don't know
- 4 No response

76. If YES, did you know their real names?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 3 Don't know
- 4 No response

77. Do any of the following change the likelihood (increase or decrease it) of stealing a vehicle?

	Increase	Decrease	No Impact	Don't know	No response
a. Special events	1	2	3	4	5
b. Holidays	1	2	3	4	5
c. Time of the year	1	2	3	4	5

78. Why does this increase or decrease the likelihood?

79. What time of day do you usually steal vehicles? Time _____ am / pm

80. Where do you normally steal vehicles from? Why?

81. Do you target specific models of vehicles [MAKES (E.G. TOYOTAS), MODELS (E.G. ECHOS) AND YEAR BUILT]?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No, go to question 83
- 3 Don't know
- 4 No response

82. If YES, what models of vehicles do you target (PROBE: Different models for personal use versus for organized crime activities where applicable) and why (probe: location, ease of theft, lack of security devices, are the cars cool, desirable, high status)?

83. Are there certain years of vehicles that you prefer?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 3 Don't know
- 4 No response

84. Explain why you prefer these years.

85. Are some makes of cars easier to steal than others?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 3 Don't know
- 4 No response

86. If YES, which cars are easy to steal? Why?

87. If YES, which cars are tough to steal? Why?

Cars and Culture:

88. Do you own your own car?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 3 Don't know
- 4 No response

89. How important is it to you to own your own vehicle?

- 1 Very Important
- 2 Important

- 3 Somewhat Important
- 4 Not Important

90. Why (or why not) is it important?

91. How would you describe your ability to fix and maintain cars? Would you describe yourself as...

- 1 Very knowledgeable
- 2 Knowledgeable
- 3 Somewhat knowledgeable
- 4 Not knowledgeable

92. If you could own any vehicle, what type of vehicle would it be?

93. Why this vehicle? (e.g. speed, looks 'cool'?)

94. How would you feel if someone stole your car (probe: what would you do, etc.)?

95. Do you have a valid driver's license?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 3 Don't know
- 4 No response

96. How did you learn to drive?

- 1 Driving Lessons
- 2 Self-taught
- 3 Parents/other adult taught
- 4 Friend/sibling taught
- 5 Other (specify)

97. How would you rate your skill level as a driver?

- 1 Excellent
- 2 Very Good
- 3 Good
- 4 Not Very Good
- 5 Poor

98. What do you base your rating of your skill on?

DETERRENTS: Now I want to consider what, if anything, might deter you from stealing vehicles:

99. Are there certain vehicles that you will not steal?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 3 Don't know
- 4 No response

100. If YES, which vehicles will you not steal?

101. If YES, why would you not steal these vehicles?

102. Have you ever defeated any anti-theft devices?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 3 Don't know
- 4 No response

103. If YES, which ones have you defeated?

- 1 Club
- 2 Alarms
- 3 Immobilizers
- 4 CAT decals

104. For each one you have defeated tell me how you defeated them:

- 1 Club
- 2 Alarms
- 3 Immobilizers
- 4 CAT decals

105. How did you learn to do defeat these devices?

106. If you were to consider stealing a vehicle, would any of the following change your mind?

	Yes	No	Don't know	No Response
a. Security guards.....	1	2	3	4
b. Parking lot attendants.....	1	2	3	4
c. Surveillance cameras.....	1	2	3	4
d. Bright lighting.....	1	2	3	4
e. Vehicles kept in a garage protected with a home alarm.....	1	2	3	4

107. Are there any other things that might change your mind about stealing a vehicle?

108. Do you find out if any of these measures are in place before you steal a car?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 3 Don't know
- 4 No response

109. If YES, how do you find out about these measures?

110. Did you ever worry about being punished by the court when you were stealing cars?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 3 Don't know
- 4 No response

111. Did you ever worry about getting caught when stealing cars?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 3 Don't know
- 4 No response

a. **[IF YES]** If you were worried about getting caught, why did you still do it?

b. **[IF NO]** Why didn't you worry about it? _____

112. What could the criminal justice system do differently to prevent people from stealing cars?

113. Do you believe that auto theft has any victims?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 3 Don't know
- 4 No response

114. Why/why not? Who?

115. In order to judge the seriousness of vehicle theft, how do you think car theft compares to other types of acts (For example, Auto theft is _____ than shoplifting. (Much more serious = 5)

		Much less serious	Less serious	About the same	More Serious	Much more serious	Don't know
a.	Shoplifting.....	1	2	3	4	5	8
b.	Pickpocket.....	1	2	3	4	5	8
c.	Stealing money from a friend	1	2	3	4	5	8
d.	Stealing money from parents	1	2	3	4	5	8
e.	Stealing a bicycle ...	1	2	3	4	5	8
f.	Vandalism	1	2	3	4	5	8
g.	Breaking into a house	1	2	3	4	5	8
h.	Striking a complete stranger ...	1	2	3	4	5	8
i.	Sexual assault.....	1	2	3	4	5	8

116. When you consider stealing a vehicle, what do you believe your chances are of:

	Very Low	Low	High	Very High
a. Getting caught	1	2	3	4
b. Being convicted in court	1	2	3	4

117. How long do you plan on continuing to steal cars? Time _____

118. Why?

119. How many brothers and sisters do you have? Involvement in Crime?

120. Are any other family members involved in crime? Who?

121. Who do you live with?

122. Have you ever been suspended/expelled from school? Please explain (Probe: reasons, do you attend classes regularly).

123. Do you have anyone in your life that you would consider a role model? Who is this person to you?

124. Where does your interest in cars come from? (Probe: Always interested? Are people you know interested in cars?).