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An Investigation into Joyriding as an Addictive Behaviour

by

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© by Susan K Kellett (2000)
I dedicate this thesis to
my husband Tony
and to my daughters
Emily and Amy
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Abstract

This thesis describes an investigation into the type of car crime often referred to as 'joyriding'. Stealing a car for the fun of driving can be carried out quite excessively, and this has led to a number of anecdotal comments that joyriding may be 'addictive'. This has particularly been the case in Northern Ireland, where many joyriders have continued in the behaviour despite the threat or experience of serious paramilitary punishment. However, whilst several studies of car crime have alluded to the suggestion that some joyriders appear to be addicted to the behaviour, research conducted to specifically investigate this phenomenon has been scant. The present study therefore explores this notion further by exploring joyriding within the context of an addiction model.

Following 10 pilot interviews with a total of 33 young offenders, the main study consisted of 76 semi-structured interviews conducted with 54 convicted joyriders (aged between 15-21 years), 12 professionals with care and control of joyriders, plus 11 non-joyriding young offenders; the sample being drawn from both the Midlands and Northern Ireland. The interviews were transcribed verbatim and a qualitative thematic analysis was undertaken using QSR NU*DI software.

The career of the joyrider is presented in terms of how it maps on to the career pattern of (other) potentially addictive behaviours from initiation through to cessation of the behaviour. Discussion considers how the activity can be understood within the context of a deviant subculture, as well as an investigation of possible dependency to joyriding by some individuals as defined using DSM IV-type criteria. This analysis is followed by a consideration of how notions of 'addiction', and 'addiction to joyriding', are perceived by the respondents, and how these notions compare with the 'diagnostic' criteria. Finally, the process of stopping joyriding is discussed within Prochaska and DiClemente's (1984) stages of change model, and related intervention strategies are suggested for the rehabilitation of joyriders at each of the hypothesised stages of change.

Key words: Joyriding, car crime, young offenders, subculture, addiction, dependency, interventions
Transcription Conventions

The notation used in extracts of discourse was partly derived from that used by Potter and Wetherell (1987) in their analytic research. However, the analysis in the present study is not of the discourse per se, and therefore an abbreviated form has been used to facilitate a more generic reading of the material.

(...) Rounded brackets containing three full stops represent transcript that has been omitted because the material was inaudible, considered too lengthy and/or not relevant to the report.

( ) Rounded brackets may also contain words that are a ‘best guess’ of what was said, when the dialogue was audible but unclear.

[ ] Square brackets contain contextual or explanatory material: e.g. [laughs]

[ ] Square brackets may also include classificatory words when the original words represent identifiable material: e.g. [city]

, Commas are used either to denote either an audible intake of breath, or to help make the transcript readable.

.. Two full stops refer to ‘a pause’ in the dialogue (not timed).

- A dash refers to a sharp cut off to the prior word
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1. Introduction

Joyride boy, 14, is fifth to die: A 14-year-old boy has become the fifth victim of a weekend of joyriding madness. [Name] was killed outright when the car he was a passenger in crashed near Glasgow. His death came just 24 hours after three 19-year-olds died when the stolen car they were in ploughed into flats in Coatbridge, Lanarkshire, at 70mph.

(McLean and Griffiths, The Daily Record, p1. April 19th 1999)

Sadly, it is all too often that news items such as the above example bear witness to the tragic consequences of the behaviour ironically labelled as 'joyriding'. Yet, despite the widespread reporting of injuries and fatalities caused by joyriding, many young people engage in this pastime, sometimes excessively. For example, The Mirror recently carried the following story:

Thief [name] has been banned from every Birmingham car park after 12 arrests in the last year for vehicle crime.

(The Mirror, p7, August 25th 2000)

Car theft is a nation-wide problem, with thousands of cars being stolen annually. For instance, according to the Leicestershire Constabulary Annual Report (1999/2000), there were 5,967 recorded cases of theft and unauthorised taking of motor vehicles between 1999 and 2000 in Leicestershire alone, with a further 85 aggravated vehicle thefts. Although these figures represent all vehicles reported stolen (i.e. including those stolen for lucrative purposes) the unauthorised taking of vehicles in this area for the purposes of joyriding is not insignificant.

In Northern Ireland, and particularly West Belfast, joyriding is also a serious problem, despite many joyriders having been subjected to informal punishments
under previous paramilitary regimes. These youngsters have then been further 'punished' by being represented in a very derogatory light by the media. For example, Kevin Myers (1995), writing for *The Spectator* described joyriders as 'the pits, the dregs of a society which has been examining the bottom of the behavioural sink for some time now' (p 16). In an attempt to explain the roots of their activities, Myers added that joyriders were also 'West Belfast's equivalent to the smack and crack addicts of Harlem or Watts' (p 16), implying a certain addictive quality to the behaviour.

On a similar (but lighter) note, a paper by McBride recently appeared in the academic journal *Addiction Research* entitled 'Toad's Syndrome: Addiction to Joyriding', which not only suggested that joyriding could be addictive, but also traced the activity back to the early 1900s. In the article, McBride considered how the character Toad, in the popular Edwardian children's novel *The Wind in the Willows*, engaged in 'compulsive reckless driving and car theft' (McBride, 2000, p130), describing how elements of Toad's behaviour were consistent with a diagnosis of dependency.

So, what is it about the activity of joyriding that compels young people to regularly risk public shame, prison, serious injury or even death? As Laura Spinney (1998), writing for *The Guardian*, asked: 'Are joyriders just criminals or are they addicts who need help?' (p 14). To consider this notion further, joyriding activities will be investigated within the context of an addiction model. This first chapter will begin by outlining the nature of joyriding and considering the research that has been conducted to understand this activity, and following on from this there will be a summary of the nature of addiction, placing the research in context, before leading to the overall aims of the study.

### 1.1 Joyriding: What is it?

This section will first consider how joyriding is defined and what the activity involves. Next some of the research that has been conducted in order to investigate joyriding will be evaluated in terms of suggestions that it may have an addictive potential.
1. Introduction

1.1.1 Terminology

Light et al (1993) described how the term 'joyriding' first emerged at the turn of the century to describe 'a pleasure trip in a car or plane' (p30). From a description of a most genial and socially-acceptable leisure pursuit, the term has since come to be associated with the activities surrounding a particular type of car crime.

There are several types of car crime, including:

- Vehicle interference (e.g. tampering with brakes)
- Theft from a motor vehicle (e.g. car radio)
- Theft of a motor vehicle, with the intention of permanently depriving the owner (e.g. to sell the car or parts)
- Taking of a motor vehicle without the consent of the owner (Britain), or taking and driving away a motor vehicle (Northern Ireland)

In Britain, the taking of a motor vehicle without the consent of the owner is often abbreviated to 'TWOC', whereas in Northern Ireland the synonymous crime 'taking and driving away', is abbreviated as 'TADA'. It is the crimes of TWOC or TADA that are often referred to as 'joyriding', although the popularity of the term joyriding varies considerably.

In England it is the popular press that tends to use the term joyriding, with 'twocking' (a derivative of TWOC) being more common street terminology. However, in Northern Ireland where the synonymous crime TADA does not lend itself to being made into a similar verb, many offenders do refer to themselves as joyriders (McCullough et al, 1990).

Professionals on both sides of the water are very reluctant to use the term 'joyrider'. As Assistant Chief Constable Mellish of the Northumbria Police stated, 'it is not "joyriding" when a stolen car is 200 times more likely to be involved in accidents which can and have resulted in serious injury and death' (Mellish, 1992, P 20). When discussing the behaviour as it occurs in both Northern Ireland and England, finding common legal terminology is difficult. For instance, as noted
above, the term 'car theft' may include the stealing of cars for purely lucrative purposes, and is therefore not specific enough to define TWOC and/or TADA.

As the research for this study took place in both Northern Ireland and the Midlands, it has been decided that for clarity, the term 'joyrider' will be used throughout. This does not mean that the author is insensitive to those who find the term offensive, or unaware of the negative aspects to the behaviour, but as will be seen, 'joy - riding' does capture the essence of this activity for many young men. In addition, 'joyriding' is recognised by most individuals as a reference to TWOC or TADA, even if it is not the preferred term.

1.1.2 Describing the behaviour

Scott and Paxton (1999), in a review of some of the behavioural and legal aspects of joyriding, found that there were no specific ethnographical, motivational, or personality differences between joyriders and those involved in other crimes of theft. However, there does appear to be something qualitatively different between joyriding and other types of car theft. For instance, Light et al (1993) described how a distinctive feature of car theft was that although many acquisitive crimes had an element of psychological pay-off, this could not compare with the thrills that could be gained from driving a stolen 'performance' car at speed.

Joyriding implies stealing a vehicle (usually a car) purely for the joy, or fun, of driving it, and in reality this often involves 'performance driving', in which joyriders drive stolen cars to their limits in terms of speed, together with demonstrating their ability to perform technical manoeuvres (such as hand-brake turns). This often takes place in front of an audience of other youngsters, and it is through the acquisition and display of these skills that joyriders may gain status amongst their peers.

There are a number of elements to the behaviour that increase its potential for danger. Loud music whilst driving usually adds to the excitement, encouraging the joyriders to drive faster, and the drivers are frequently under the influence of varying amounts of alcohol and/or other drugs. In terms of location, 'showing
1. Introduction

off' usually takes place on the streets of the estates where the joyriders live, placing residents in danger; further driving at speed can occur in residential areas, motorways, country lanes or city centres with accidents being a common occurrence. Finally, the (mainly male) drivers are often too young to drive legally, and even those who are over 17 years of age are unlikely to have had any formal driving instruction.

It is difficult to estimate the cost in terms of injuries and death caused by car crime, but a study conducted in 1996 by Marshall et al (at the Department of Trauma and Orthopaedics, Newcastle General Hospital, Newcastle-upon-Tyne) showed that over a 9 month period 152 patients were admitted to the unit as the result of road traffic accidents, of which 20 were related to car crime (8 joyriders, and 12 innocent members of the public). This study, which did not take account of those found dead at the scene of an accident, found that of the 20 injuries related to car crime, 3 people died (1 joyrider and 2 bystanders). The cost, in terms of acute admission only, was estimated at £5,200 per patient.

1.1.3 Cultural differences between Great Britain and Northern Ireland

Car crime tends to be more prevalent in deprived inner city estates, when there are often high levels of unemployment and poverty. Specific studies have been conducted in several areas of England and Wales, including Newcastle-upon-Tyne (Briggs, 1991), Mid-Glamorgan (McGillivray et al, 1993), Greater Manchester (Smyth, 1990) and Northumbria (Gulliver, 1991). However, in Northern Ireland, approximately 50% of all the cars stolen are recovered in one area, West Belfast (Chapman, 1992), making this a particular area of concern and the focus of a number of studies (e.g. McCullough et al, 1990; Chapman, 1992; and Kilpatrick, 1997).

Particular differences exist between England and Northern Ireland in terms of legal sanctions. In both locations the offence of TWOC / TADA usually results in a period of custodial detention, with the added possibility of disqualification and/or the imposition of penalty points. However, for many years the situation in Northern Ireland has been a little different, due to the informal policing system
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that has operated in addition to the regular police force. Whilst it is unclear whether paramilitary activities have continued in the wake of the Northern Ireland peace talks, previous 'punishments' for joyriding have included: warnings, curfews, placarding, banishments, beatings, and shootings such as 'knee-capping'. Despite this regime, joyriders in Northern Ireland have continued to engage in the behaviour, with some researchers observing that the punishments tended to have the effect of elevating the status of the joyriders amongst their peers (e.g. McCullough et al, 1990).

Thompson, and Mulholland (1995) conducted a study to consider the effects of punishments by paramilitary groups on young people in West Belfast. They found that there was a sub-culture known as 'hoods' (which would include joyriders) who engaged in continuous anti-social behaviour, and which had brought them into conflict with both the community and the Provisional IRA. The effects of punishments served to form and confirm their identity as a 'hood', thus leading to further marginalisation within their community. These young men also appeared to have developed a fatalistic attitude to life, reporting that they did not think that they would live very long and therefore had nothing to lose. As such, paramilitary punishments did not tend to have the effect of reducing their activities. In fact, Thompson and Mulholland argued that the experience of being treated with contempt during punishment shootings 'feeds their negative identity and this in turn leads to anti-social behaviours which at least makes the community take notice of them' (p119).

It is clear then that there are a number of possible explanations for the continuance of joyriding in the face of such serious consequences. However, the observation that many young people in Northern Ireland have engaged in this behaviour despite the threat, or experience, of paramilitary punishments has led to a number of anecdotal suggestions that 'they must be addicted to it'.

1.1.4 The notion of addiction in studies of joyriding

A number of studies have been conducted to investigate joyriding, mainly to assess the behaviour in order to direct preventative strategies or to assess the
effectiveness of car-crime projects. Whilst few studies have directly considered the possibility of the behaviour having an addictive potential, there have been some interesting findings amongst the published literature to suggest that further research in this area is indicated. Of particular interest is the recurrent theme of joyriders talking about the 'buzz' or 'excitement' that they derived from the act; and how this appeared to outweigh any detrimental consequences of their behaviour - a characteristic often present in other addictive behaviours. For instance, in a Home Office Research Study conducted by Light et al (1993), the researchers suggested that the psychological pay-offs in terms of the excitement, status and self-esteem associated with car theft appeared to override the threat of being caught and punished.

A similar observation was made by McCullough et al (1990), working for the Extern Organisation, when they conducted research into the problem of car theft in Northern Ireland. They noted that the most important motivation for joyriding was the excitement of risk, which sometimes needed to be supplemented by the stealing of bigger and faster cars and deliberate provoking of the security forces into car chases. This activity, they said, could become 'obsessional' or 'compulsive' in a similar way to drug addiction. A profile of the car thief was also provided by McCullough et al, based on previous studies, in which it was suggested that joyriding had a 'strangely addictive quality to it'.

Briggs (1991) conducted research at a crisis centre for adolescents in Newcastle-upon-Tyne, and found that the most consistent factors amongst joyriders were the need to impress others, to feel important, and excitement. As with the previous researchers, he also stated that the principal factors discussed by the car thieves in his study were the 'highs' associated with taking cars, and the excitement of a high speed police chase. There was also a suggestion by Briggs that the degree of danger and law-breaking needed to generate the desired level of thrill increased with time and experience, which could be considered to be synonymous with 'tolerance', a feature often present in dependent behaviour.
Some researchers have made reference to the addictive-like quality of the behaviour in some individuals when considering interventions. For instance, McGillivray et al (1993) conducted a local study of auto-related crime among young people in Mid-Glamorgan, to examine the nature and extent of car crime amongst juveniles (those under 17 years) in this area, in order to provide suggestions on ways of reducing the incidence of car crime. The authors pointed out that initiatives targeting those who had already offended should take account of the finding that it was often 'the buzz' that motivated joyriders, and that this had been described by some of the social workers as an addiction. Whitehead, who similarly studied joyriding in the context of policy, law and probation practice, concluded that there must be a 'wider recognition of the addictive quality of joyriding' (Whitehead, 1992, p 30).

1.1.5 Who says it is addictive and why?

It can be seen then, that a number of researchers and workers in the field have alluded to the suggestion that joyriding may be addictive. However, the notion of joyriding as a potentially addictive behaviour was perhaps first addressed at a conference held in 1992 entitled 'Car Crime: An Accelerating Problem' (Menhennet, 1992). Hodge (1992), speaking at this conference, presented a paper entitled 'Joyriding as Addictive Behaviour'. He argued that characteristics of addiction could be applied to joyriding (i.e. tolerance, withdrawal, craving, salience, conflict and relapse). He also discussed joyriding within the context of the stages of change generally associated with addictive behaviour (i.e. pre-contemplation, contemplation, determination, action, maintenance and relapse).

However, at the same conference, Chapman (1992), drawing on his experience as Manager of the Turas Project in West Belfast, pointed out that joyriders often used the image of addiction as an excuse to bolster their glamorous image of themselves and to excuse them from the responsibility of thinking. Nonetheless, commenting three years later, Chapman (1995) stated the project had subsequently adapted some of the techniques that had proved effective in reducing addictive behaviour. In fact he stated that their programme of change
was influenced by Miller's (1983) and Miller & Rollnick's (1991) work in the field of stages of change in addictive behaviours and motivational interviewing.

Although the notion of joyriding being potentially addictive for some individuals began to be addressed as an issue for debate, there still did not appear to be any specific research had been conducted with joyriders to investigate this more thoroughly. Then, in 1997, Kilpatrick reported on an unpublished MSc dissertation by McCorry (1992) looking at the addictive nature of joyriding. McCorry had conducted an analysis of structured questionnaires based on the common characteristics of addiction, as identified by Hodge (1991), these being:

- **Tolerance** - the need for more to produce the same effect
- **Withdrawal** - distress after a period of non-engagement
- **Craving** - distress associated with the desire to re-engage
- **Salience** - increasing importance of addiction in lifestyle
- **Conflict** - increasing awareness of negative consequences
- **Relapse** - reinstatement after decision to stop or reduce

Kilpatrick reported that whilst McCorry's study concluded that joyriding could become addictive, it did not fully assess the nature of the addictive characteristics due to its quantitative methodological approach. This therefore provided an opening for some in-depth qualitative research into the relationship between joyriding and addiction (see Kilpatrick, 1997). Following on from this, Kilpatrick conducted what was probably the first in-depth study to consider the notion of addiction to joyriding (reviewed in Hodge et al., 1997). Although this was a relatively small-scale study, conducted in Belfast on a sample of just 15 young offenders, aged between 14 and 17 years, a number of interesting findings emerged.

Using the six common characteristics of addiction mentioned by Hodge (op cit), Kilpatrick noted that all 15 of the joyriders interviewed showed signs of tolerance, salience and conflict, and nine also showed signs of relapse. Unfortunately, due to problems identifying the difference between withdrawal and craving, it was impossible to say whether any of the participants showed all six of the
characteristics, but seven of the participants appeared to show at least five. Then, using the guidelines used in the American Psychiatric Association’s *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual* (DSM-III-R) and the World Health Organisation’s *International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems* (ICD-10) for diagnosing addictive behaviours, Kilpatrick looked to see whether at least three of the six characteristics were present in order to make a 'diagnosis' of dependency. She concluded that at least 12 of the 15 boys in the sample could be diagnosed as being psychologically dependent on joyriding, with some suggestion that the other three were very close to such dependence.

Kilpatrick (1997) also considered the model of change in addictive behaviour described by Prochaska and DiClemente, and found that there were examples of joyriders at each their hypothesised stages of precontemplation, contemplation, action and maintenance (discussed in more detail in section 1.2.4). Further more, several of the boys had referred to the notion of 'growing out' of joyriding, which Kilpatrick paralleled with the concept of 'spontaneous remission' in the field of addiction.

In summary, the research to date contains numerous suggestions that joyriding has addictive qualities. However, in order to consider how this may be investigated further it is first necessary to be clear about what is meant by the term 'addiction'.

### 1.2 Addiction: What is it?

As well as substances, a number of behaviours have been viewed as having the potential for addiction. This section will consider the substances and behaviours that have been described as 'addictive' within a social/cultural context, before looking at some of the models of addiction and the ways in which addiction has been defined.

#### 1.2.1 Terminology

Firstly, as with the term 'joyriding', is important to clarify the proposed use of 'addiction' terminology. Goodman (1997) commented that 'whether a pattern of behaviour qualifies as an addiction is determined not by the type of behaviour, its
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object, its frequency, or its social acceptability, but how this behaviour pattern relates to and affects an individual’s life…” adding that ‘the concept of addiction functions most effectively, not as a noun (e.g., “this behaviour pattern is an addiction” or “he has an addiction”) or even as an adjective (e.g., “this behaviour is addictive” or “he engages in addictive behaviour”) but as an adverb (“he engages in this behaviour addictively”)’ (Goodman, 1997, e-mail correspondence, emphasis added). McMurran (1994) has similarly pointed out that it is not the behaviour that defines an addiction, as many behaviours could be addictive under certain circumstances. She therefore emphasised that when stating that a behaviour was addictive, this did not mean that everyone indulging in that behaviour was addicted to it; differentiating between “addictive behaviours” (that hold the potential for addiction) and ‘addiction’ (referring to the style of involvement in that behaviour).

Taking these comments into consideration, it appears sensible to clarify that, in the following chapters, when joyriding is referred to as a (potentially) addictive behaviour, this should be taken to imply that joyriding is being engaged in addictively, rather than the activity of joyriding per se being addictive, or that the actual joyriders are being labelled as ‘addicts’.

1.2.2 Social and cultural aspects to addictive behaviours

It is important to take account of the social and cultural aspects of addiction as applied to various substances and behaviours. For instance, the legal sanctions and social stigmas attached to the use of alcohol and other drugs, together with the degree to which they are considered to be problematic, has varied considerably - both within and between societies, and over time.

Perhaps the earliest substance to be recognised as having an addictive potential was alcohol. Alcohol has been widely used and socially accepted as a recreational drug in many cultures and for hundreds of years, whilst in other cultures it has been the target of strict prohibition. Even within cultures where alcohol is socially accepted, legal sanctions regarding its use have existed, and continue to exist, ranging from the legal age of consumption to the places licensed
to purchase alcohol. Regardless of legal sanctions, there exist within individual societies, diverse views on alcohol consumption as a result of, for example, religious doctrine, health declarations and the temperance movements. The degree to which alcohol is seen as problematic, and the importance placed upon its potential for addiction varies considerably according to such sanctions and movements. In fact the actual point at which regular alcohol use is considered to be safe, excessive, or problematic, and the subsequent definition of the point of 'addiction', has been, and continues to be, the subject of debate amongst government bodies, clinicians and academics.

A similar case can be made for heroin. Fears regarding the use of this drug exist despite the fact that in terms of deaths from overdose, general physical harm, addiction and damage to society at large, the two most socially accepted legal drugs (alcohol and tobacco) cause far more harm than heroin. The notion of being addicted to a substance, and the consequences of addiction, must then be studied with regard to the context within which addiction it is being debated and the cultural views held of the behaviour itself.

Cannabis, which also has the potential for physical dependence (Madden, 1992), probably best demonstrates the need for notions of substance misuse to be placed within a cultural context. Whilst being classified as a class B substance, and carrying (in theory) a maximum penalty of five years imprisonment for possession and 14 years for supply, cannabis also enjoys a certain amount of social acceptability in today's society. Relaxed attitudes towards its use and the increased numbers of regular users have generated many proponents for legalisation and/or decriminalisation of cannabis use.

Another substance that apparently has the potential for addiction in some individuals, but the use of which can cause controversy, is food. Interestingly, compulsive eating is similar to excessive alcohol use, in that it falls into the dichotomy of being both 'diagnosable' as a psychiatric illness (i.e. 'alcoholism' and 'bulimia nervosa'), whilst concurrently being viewed by many in society as being
the result of moral weakness or lack of willpower (as in 'drunkenness' and 'gluttony').

Moving on from substance addiction, a number of behaviours have been cited as having addictive qualities. The most widely recognised behaviour with a potential for addiction is probably gambling. As with recreational substance use, gambling is also subject to legal sanctions suggesting that there is recognition of its harmful potential. And like substance use, there are varying degrees of social acceptance depending upon the type of gambling involved. Other non-substance behaviours that have been researched within an addictive framework are the use of computers (Shotton, 1989), the playing of electronic games (Griffiths, 1992), running (Thornton & Scott, 1995), and excessive sexual behaviour (e.g. Ornstein, 1995; Myers, 1995; and Goodman, 1997); and again, differences in social acceptability exist within all these behaviours.

Some of the behaviours mentioned above are legal in all circumstances (e.g. eating food, drinking coffee, smoking cigarettes and sniffing solvents), although certain places may prohibit the behaviour (e.g. smoke-free zones), and there may be legal restrictions on sales (e.g. with tobacco and solvents). Other behaviours are legal, but subject to certain legal sanctions (e.g. age restrictions on drinking alcohol and gambling). However, there are some behaviours thought to have a potential for addiction, which are considered to be illegal under any circumstances, and as such would be punishable by law at any level of indulgence.

Research regarding the notion of addictive crimes is comparatively scant, although there are some criminal activities that have been described as having this potential, such as 'irrational' shoplifting (McGuire, 1997), violence (Hodge, 1997), repetitive sexual offences (McGregor & Howells, 1997) and multiple murder (Gresswell & Hollin, 1997). As has been stated, a quite recent inclusion in the crimes that are considered to have an addictive element is joyriding (Kilpatrick, 1997).
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However, there are a number of potential problems associated with the labelling of behaviours (and particularly socially-unacceptable behaviours) as addictive. One of the main issues is the variation in models of addiction, which in turn affect the way the 'addict' may be regarded.

1.2.3 Models of addiction

Various models have been proposed to explain addictive behaviours, and these models have had an impact on how individuals have been treated, both in terms of the attitudes of others, and in the level and type of help that they have received. The three most popular models have been the 'moral' model, the 'disease' model and, more recently, models based on learning theories.

Moral model: Many addictive behaviours have at some stage been labelled as deviant, using a 'moral' model. That is, there has been an assumption that addicts are wilfully refusing to conform to some code of conduct, and instead continue to engage in the behaviour, knowing that the behaviour is wrong, or that to continue in the behaviour will bring harm to themselves and/or others. It is not surprising then, that such individuals have been both despised and punished for their behaviours. Historically tobacco, alcohol, certain drugs and gambling have all been considered to be 'sins' and subject to social control.

According to Thombs (1994), the main advantage of the moral model is that it is a simple concept providing a simple remedy to the 'problem'. That is, if people know the difference between right and wrong and yet still continue to indulge in the behaviour, then they must be challenged and punished. As there is already a system in operation to deal with offenders (such as joyriders) in society, the model would dictate that there is therefore no need for further research or debate on the subject.

However, there are also a number of disadvantages to this approach, not least the fact that legal sanctions are not always popular (e.g. alcohol prohibition). In addition, it follows that if individuals are merely punished for their behaviour, then they will not receive any help to overcome the problem. Another drawback
with the model is the underlying assumption that the addicted individual has free choice, whereas many 'addicts' have stated that they feel a certain 'loss of control' when engaging in their behaviour. Finally, research has shown that addictive behaviours tend to have many contributory factors that can be social, psychological or biological in origin.

Disease model: Another approach is to view addiction as a disease or illness. This, as with most of the models of addiction was first applied to drinking and drunkenness, which, up until the 1800s, had been considered to be under the control of the will. The temperance movements of the early 19th century began to view alcoholism as a disease, believing that alcohol had properties that caused the drinker to become 'addicted'. The logical response to this view was that the only cure would be to remove the cause, and as such total abstinence was promoted. This view continues in the temperance movements today, as well as in self-help groups such as Alcoholics Anonymous (AA). The main advantage of the disease model is that the addicted individual is given sympathy and offered help, rather than being shunned by society, with addicts often being 'diagnosed' and 'treated' in clinical settings.

However, this model also has its disadvantages, with Krivanek (1988) describing how all the main assumptions of the model have been challenged. In brief, Krivanek argued that there had been no identifiable physical or psychological factor found that would distinguish an addict from a non-addict; that some addicts are able to gain control over their behaviour; and that some addicts have recovered from their addiction without treatment. From a practical point of view, although the disease model no longer punishing addicts, it can have the reverse affect of providing them with an excuse for their behaviour, and thus reducing their motivation for change. Furthermore, Orford (1985) argued that the model overemphasised physical addiction and the associated role of the medical expert, thus excluding the potential for understanding a whole range of behavioural excesses that do not involve substance use.
However, given the popularity of the disease model, one needs to consider some of the broader effects of labelling a behaviour as ‘addictive’, such as the assumption that if the behaviour is a disease, or an illness, this removes responsibility and accountability, from the individual. This is perhaps particularly salient when considering criminal behaviours - such as joyriding.

Models based on Learning Theory: This leads on to the series of models that have considered a cognitive-behavioural approach both to the explanation and the treatment of addictive behaviours. These approaches emphasise that behaviours are learned, and therefore addictions to behaviours are the result of faulty learning. This approach typically explains addiction in terms of the addict learning to use the behaviour as a coping mechanism for his/her other problems. The advantage of this approach is that it does accept that addicts are in some ways ‘victims’ (i.e. of faulty learning), who often have underlying problems that need addressing, whilst at the same time acknowledging that they are able to exert a degree of control over their behaviour; thus the model brings hope for change. In addition, the principles derived from learning theory approaches can be used to inform therapy.

However, as McMurran (1994) has pointed out, addictive behaviours are probably determined by a combination of biological, psychological, cultural and social factors. It appears that no single model can explain all addictive behaviour, and that there are perhaps helpful elements in all the models. Furthermore, as the causes of addiction are often multifactorial, and as the factors that contribute to the development of addictive behaviours are not always specific to addictive behaviours per se, a consideration of causation is perhaps not particularly helpful in assessing whether a behaviour can be described as having the potential for addiction. Nonetheless, the models of addiction do give an insight into how the behaviour and the person engaging in the behaviour may be viewed by others, dependent upon the model held by the observer.
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A further way to consider the notion of addiction, but this time to specifically determine whether a behaviour can be considered to have an addictive potential, is to attempt to find an all-encompassing definition of addiction.

1.2.4 Attempts to define addiction

The word 'addict' has its roots in Roman law, referring to the act of handing over a person or thing to another in order to discharge a debt. Seeburger (1993) made the observation that, as Roman law used the term to describe someone who had been legally obligated to a master, there is a suggestion that addicts have been 'claimed' by the objects of their additions, are no longer 'free', and that addiction can be seen as a form of enslavement. However, Krivanek (1988), in discussing the roots of the term, outlined how by the 1600s the meaning of addiction had been generalised to a volitional act towards a thing, person or practice. For example, he described how one could be 'sincerely addicted to Almighty God', and how letters were signed 'your addicted servant'.

This wider definition of the term suggested that the addict may not necessarily be a slave to their master, but that they may also serve of their own free will. It appears then, that the term addiction had been used, somewhat paradoxically, to describe both a form of enslavement, as well as an act involving wilful choice. This controversy continues in the field of addiction research today, particularly as various models of addiction describe addictive behaviours as being either 'sins' (implying free will); 'illnesses' (implying helplessness); or 'faulty learning' (implying that whilst blame cannot be attached, there is an opportunity to change the maladaptive behaviour).

Whilst most people have a general idea about what it means to be addicted to something, contemporary definitions of addiction vary considerably in terms of the characteristics that they emphasise. Dictionary definitions of addiction often tend to focus on substance use, and do not consider addictions towards non-substance behaviours. For instance, Campbell's (1996) Psychiatric Dictionary describes (drug) addiction as being 'a chronic disorder characterised by the compulsive use of a substance resulting in physical, psychological or social harm
to the user and continued use despite that harm' (p220). However, *The Encyclopedia of Psychology* (edited by Hatterer, 1984) points out that the term addiction is often used to describe many behaviours defining it as 'an overpowering need for a substance, object, action or interaction, fantasy, and/or milieu that produces a psychophysiologic "high"', adding that 'the desire or need is repetitive, impulsive and compulsive in nature' (p14). Hatterer also makes the point that over time as the high diminishes, tolerance and withdrawal symptoms increase.

A number of academics have attempted to explain the paradox of the 'push' and the 'pull' of addiction. Marks (1990) has focused on the distinction between 'addiction' and 'compulsion', stating that *addiction* refers to the 'pull' for a good feeling, whereas *compulsion* is more of a 'push' from an unmet desire and / or quest from relief from withdrawal symptoms, and argues that these feelings can occur either sequentially or concurrently. Craving, he says, provides an example of how the 'pull' and the 'push' occur together, as when smokers or drinkers both like and dislike their behaviour. However, other writers have argued that addictions needed to be distinguished from obsessions and compulsions. For instance, Brown (1997) pointed out that whereas addictions were goal-directed with expectancies of pleasure, obsessions and compulsions were inflexible, involuntary and anxiety-laden.

The notion of addiction is also linked to excess, perhaps most notably by Orford (1985) who, when considering a psychological view of addictions, described them as 'excessive appetites'. He included in his book of the same title, the behaviours: drinking, gambling, drug-taking, eating and sexuality; with other candidates for inclusion being power, work, love and the playing of electronic games. He took the position that, whilst these behaviours were generally considered to be acceptable in moderation, they had the potential for excess, and that excess can be problematic for some people.

However, whilst accepting Orford's acknowledgement that *moderation* and *excess* are often personally and socially defined, one draw-back to the 'excessive
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The 'excessive appetite' approach is that it is perhaps not sufficiently able to encompass those potentially addictive behaviours which, by their very nature, are not, and often never have been, tolerated within society (even in moderation); that is, the overtly criminal behaviours - such as joyriding. For instance, it is interesting to note that Orford considered pyromania (failure to resist impulses to set fires) and kleptomania (inability to resist impulses to steal) as candidates for inclusion in his book. It is difficult to envisage at which point these behaviours could be described as being 'in moderation', and at which point they would become an 'excessive appetite'. The same applies to joyriding.

As with the models, there is no all-embracing 'definition of addiction'. Indeed, Goodman commented on how the concept of addiction has been criticised both within and outside the mental health disciplines, arguing:

'...often it is used without an attempt to define it; many proposed definitions are vague and imprecise, some being so all-inclusive as to leave the term devoid of pragmatic value; it has moralistic connotations which are inappropriate to scientific enquiry; it represents a way of understanding people, behaviour and the mind that is incompatible with a scientific approach; [and] it adds no information that is not already conveyed by a term or concept already accepted in the field.' (Goodman, 1990, p1403)

In reality, behaviours tend to be defined, diagnosed, or labelled as addictive if they meet the criteria for dependency. In fact, due to distinctions being unclear, and as 'addiction' is often loosely used to refer to a multitude of behaviours, the World Health Organisation recommended that the term 'dependency' be used in preference to addiction. However, it can be argued that dependency is just one stage in the career path of a behaviour becoming excessive or problematic; it is not inevitable, and it need not be permanent.

1.2.5 Stage model of addiction

In this thesis the notion of addiction will be considered by following the stages in the career path of potentially addictive behaviours. The stages in this process can be described under the labels of 'initiation', 'maintenance', 'dependency' and 'change'. Whilst these stages are usually sequential, and may all be present in the development of any given potentially addictive behaviour, the actual pattern of behaviour may vary from person to person.
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*Initiation:* The initiation phase, which refers to the first few times an individual has contact with a behaviour, can serve a variety of personal functions, ranging from satisfying curiosity to enhancing self-esteem and credibility amongst his/her peers. In terms of psychological and physiological effects, when first indulging in the behaviour the functions served may be more tied up with perceived expectancies, such as expecting to feel a 'buzz' or to feel relaxed.

*Maintenance:* For some individuals, the given behaviour may become fairly regular, with the maintenance stage referring to a regular indulgence in the behaviour, which need not be quantity specific. The functions served by the behaviour at this stage can vary between behaviours, from person to person, from culture to culture, between men and women, according to age, and may also change over time; with expectancy again playing an important role.

*Dependency:* Dependency is usually defined by the presence of certain criteria, the nature of which can vary according to the type of behaviour being described. Common criteria include:

- Tolerance (either increased amounts of the behaviour being needed to achieve the same effect, or a diminished effect with the same amount)
- Withdrawal symptoms on ceasing the behaviour
- Persistence despite knowledge of having physiological or psychological problems caused or exacerbated by the behaviour
- Important (other) activities being given up or reduced because of the behaviour
- Persistent desire, or unsuccessful attempts, to cut down or control behaviour
- A great deal of time being spent on activities related to the behaviour
- Engaging in more of the behaviour, more often, or over a longer period than was intended
- Subjective awareness of compulsion, craving or loss of control

However, not all people become dependent upon potentially addictive behaviours, and after a period of time, some decide to cease the behaviour. Others may indulge in the behaviours quite heavily for a period of time without becoming physically or psychologically dependent upon them, and then either cut down or give up the activity.
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*Change:* For those that do become dependent, there may over time be a recognition that the behaviour is problematic, and active steps may be taken to change (reduce or give up the behaviour). Individuals may do this themselves (sometimes referred to as 'spontaneous remission'), or they may seek help and support to achieve this.

In 1984 Prochaska and DiClemente described what has become a very popular model of behaviour change, developed from many theories of intervention. Over the years this 'transtheoretical' model has been applied to a number of health-related behaviours such as dietary change, as well as addictive behaviours such as smoking. Rather than considering behaviour change as an 'event', Prochaska and DiClemente (1984) and, more recently, Prochaska and Velicer (1997) have emphasised its temporal nature, describing a sequence of stages, which typically include: *precontemplation* (not thinking about changing); *contemplation* (a serious intention to change); *preparation* (planning the change); *action* (implementing a change in lifestyle); *maintenance* (continuing actions to avoid relapse); and *termination* (no further temptation to relapse).

They also emphasised the likelihood of relapse, which often occurs in either the action or maintenance stage, representing regression to either the contemplation or precontemplation stage. These stages of change are therefore not linear, as people can move smoothly through the stages, become stuck at one particular stage, or regress to previous stages. As such, Prochaska and DiClemente (1984) developed a 'revolving door schema' based on these stages, as can be seen below in Figure 1.

Applying the process of change to addictions, Orford (1985) has similarly described how change in appetitive behaviour is a multi-stage process that begins with an initial (sudden or slow) decision, which may lead to later maintenance or commitment; also pointing out that in particularly strong attachments relapses are to be expected.
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Figure 1. The revolving door model of the stages of change, as described by Prochaska and DiClemente (1984, p30)

1.3 Aims of the research

In summary, joyriding, whilst having certain social and psychological payoffs, also has the potential for very serious consequences. As has been reported, there are thousands of car thefts annually, as well as numerous serious injuries including fatalities as a result of accidents involving joyriders. Furthermore, the excessiveness of the behaviour in some individuals in spite of these negative consequences has led to suggestions that joyriding may be 'addictive'.

One way of considering the potentially addictive nature of joyriding is to look at the development of the joyriders' 'career', and compare it with the career pattern of other known addictive behaviours, using theoretical models derived from the addiction literature. If joyriding can be considered to be a potentially addictive behaviour, then, like other addictive behaviours, one would expect to find individuals at a variety of stages from initiation to change in behaviour, with some also showing signs of dependency.
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The career of the joyrider has been documented by a number of researchers (e.g. Light et al, 1993; McCorry & Morrisey, 1989; and Chapman, 1992) and there has been some discussion of it having an addictive potential for some individuals (see sections 1.1.4 and 1.1.5, above). However, to date there has not been an attempt to compare the career of the joyrider with the career path of other potentially addictive behaviours. Whilst Kilpatrick's (1997) study considered some of the dependency criteria, further research is needed to explore the whole career in more depth, including a larger sample with a wider age range, and from a broader geographical background.

The present study will consider the development of the joyriding career from initiation through to cessation of the behaviour, using a 'biopsychosocial' model thus integrating a number of theoretical perspectives. This will be accomplished by referring to models of addiction and theories derived from biological, psychological and sociological perspectives. For instance, from the biological perspective, theories of arousal, mood modification and the maintenance of hedonic tone (general feeling of well-being) will be drawn upon to help explain the maintenance of joyriding behaviour, as well as to describe aspects of dependency.

Several psychological theories will also be referred to. For example, social learning theory will be used to describe the influence of positive and negative expectancy in the early phases of the career; issues of reinforcement and the principles of operant conditioning will drawn upon to explain the maintenance of motivation; the principles of classical conditioning will be described with reference to the development of cues to the behaviour; and cognitive-behaviour explanations of behaviour change will be given.

In addition, a discussion of sociological perspectives will take place, with particular reference to theories pertaining to the development of deviant subcultures. Related to these theories, issues of status and identity will be highlighted in terms of the functions they serve in the development and persistence of the behaviour.
The aims of the research are therefore as follows:

- To describe the career of the joyrider, both in the Midlands and in Northern Ireland, and to consider how this maps on to the career pattern of addictive behaviours
- To consider whether joyriding is being engaged in addictively by some individuals
- To consider some of the social and cultural aspects of joyriding
- To consider how the notions of 'addiction', and 'addiction to joyriding', are perceived, in order to compare these notions with academic criteria of dependency
- To consider the usefulness of applying an addiction model to joyriding in terms of intervention strategies

These various aims are addressed in the body of the thesis, through a description of the joyriders' career path. A comparison of joyriding with (other) addictive behaviours is investigated through a series of chapters describing phases of initiation, maintenance, dependency and change in behaviour (i.e. Chapters 5, 6, 7 and 9 respectively), with Chapter 7 particularly considering whether some individuals are engaging in joyriding addictively. Social and cultural aspects, which appear throughout the thesis, are specifically addressed in Chapter 4 when joyriding is considered within the context of a deviant subculture. Some of the consequences of the addiction label, perceptions of the notion of 'addiction', and more specifically the idea of being 'addicted to joyriding' are explored in Chapter 8; followed by a consideration of possible therapeutic implications in Chapter 10. The overall aims are then returned to in Chapter 11 for consideration during the final summary and conclusions of the study. However, before beginning to consider the career of the joyrider in more detail (in Chapter 3), the study itself will be described.
Chapter 2: Methodology

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2. Methodology
The overall aim of this research was to investigate the feasibility of the notion of joyriding as an addictive behaviour. It was not, however, an attempt to pathologise the activity by looking for causes or predispositions to 'joyriding addiction', such as the identification of certain personality types. The more specific methodological aims were to describe the process of the joyriding career (including possible dependency), and the meanings attached to the activity by joyriders and their associates.

As such, and in order to organise the data-collecting and analytical processes, the aims of the research were broken down into the following specific research questions, reflecting a transition through possible stages in the joyriding career:

1. How do individuals first get involved in joyriding, and how does it become a regular behaviour?
2. Can the process be understood in terms of the formation of a deviant subculture?
3. If young people continue to engage in joyriding to 'excess', can they become dependent upon the behaviour?
4. What do joyriders and others understand by the term 'addiction', and how do they view the notion of being addicted to joyriding?
5. What happens when individuals decide to stop joyriding, and can the process of change be described within an addiction model?
6. How might the addiction literature inform the therapeutic intervention and rehabilitation of joyriders?
2. Methodology

This chapter will describe how and why these research questions were addressed in a qualitative study of a sample of young offenders and their associates. The procedure used to interview these respondents, together with related considerations and constraints, plus the methods used to analyse the subsequent data, will also be detailed.

2.1 Design

2.1.1 Methods used in other studies and the use of a qualitative approach

Studies conducted to investigate car theft (with an emphasis on joyriding) are relatively uncommon, with most of these studies having multiple aims and methods. However, a review of the studies revealed that there appeared to be three broad categories of topics covered in relation to this type of car crime. Firstly there were studies that described the extent or incidence of the car crime problem; secondly were those describing or evaluating initiatives, policies and practices related to car crime; and thirdly was the research which attempted to describe various aspects related to the nature of joyriding behaviour.

The first category, describing the extent or incidence of car crime, have mainly been based on analyses of car crime statistics (e.g. Tremblay et al, 1994; McCullough, 1990a; McCullough, 1990b) and more occasionally used questionnaires (e.g. Reeves, 1993) or reviews of other studies (Webb & Laycock, 1992). Studies considering policy and practice initiatives have used descriptive approaches (e.g. Chapman, 1995; Chapman & Pinkerton, 1987), questionnaires (e.g. Briggs, 1991), or reviews of other studies/literature (e.g. Whitehead, 1993; Lockhart, 1990).

In contrast, those studies that look in more detail at the nature of car crime and joyriding have tended to take a more qualitative approach. For example Kilpatrick (1997) wanted to investigate the personal functions served by joyriding, the social context within which it occurred, and evidence for characteristics of addiction. She decided to conduct semi-structured interviews because she was interested in the process of the behaviour and this method allowed ‘probing’; and because previous research had pointed to the limitations of
structured questionnaires. Another example is that of Bengry-Howell (1999), who wanted to look at the concept of masculinity within the joyriding culture. He did this by undertaking semi-structured interviews with joyriders and comparing the resulting data with a textual analysis of a selection of car magazines.

It was decided that for the present study a qualitative approach would also be the most appropriate method to answer the research questions posed, as this would allow an in-depth exploration of the processes and meanings associated with joyriding. Furthermore, in order to obtain a wider perspective on the issues involved it was decided that although most of the data would be collected from the joyriders themselves, information would also be elicited from professionals with care and control of young offenders, and (unlike previous studies) data would also be collected from non-joyriding young offenders.

2.1.2 The use of semi-structured interviews

From a review of the literature it appeared that the most popular method, when using a qualitative approach to the study of joyriding, had been to conduct semi-structured interviews with young car crime offenders (e.g. Light et al., 1993; Bengry-Howell, 1999; and Kilpatrick, 1997), with some studies additionally interviewing professionals with direct experience of dealing with young offenders (e.g. McCullough & Schmidt, 1990; and McGillivray, 1993). One further study additionally employed the method of overt and covert observation (e.g. Briggs, 1991).

The semi-structured interview was also chosen as the most appropriate method for obtaining data in the present study. There were a number of reasons for this. It was envisaged that the majority of the respondents would be young offenders, some (if not most) of whom might have literacy problems, thus making self-administered questionnaires problematic. Although questionnaires could have been researcher-administered, this would have restricted the option to explore complex, or non-anticipated issues as they emerged. Interviews also allowed the questions to be tailored to the interviewee, so that the interviewer could probe for
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further information and explore the subjective meanings contained within accounts.

Mason (1996) described how, in qualitative research, interviews were characterised by a thematic, topic-centred approach and a relatively informal conversational style. In the present study the interviews were semi-structured, and followed the general principles outlined by Mason. They were structured in that there were a number of set topics for discussion. There was also a loose ordering of these topics, firstly to encourage recall, and secondly to capture any early ‘spontaneous’ references to the behaviour being perceived as addictive prior to the topic of addiction being raised by the interviewer. The interviews were unstructured in that the actual questions were not fixed, and there were opportunities for respondents to discuss novel issues as they emerged. Finally, the interviews were ‘conversational’ in that topics were raised and then the interviewees were asked for their accounts and opinions.

Byrne and Trew (1998) described how, as well as containing insights into their experiences, the accounts of offenders were likely to contain both deliberate and unconscious inaccuracies. These inaccuracies, they argued, could be due to: attempts by the offenders to justify their actions; reluctance to divulge certain information; exaggeration; and, in the case of retrospective accounts, poor recall. They suggested the following strategies to reduce these inaccuracies:

- Capitalising on the subjective nature of the accounts to gain insights into how informants choose to portray themselves
- Designing the data collection procedures to create situations in which participants feel able to be open and honest
- Structuring interviews to assist the accurate recall of events

Indeed in the present study attempts by the offenders to justify their actions were viewed as an added insight into how joyriders understood their behaviour (see section 2.4.5); and certain procedural elements were included to help to reduce the joyriders’ reluctance to divulge information and their tendency to exaggerate (see section 2.3). Furthermore, it was not assumed that accounts provided by the non-
joyriding respondents (including the professionals) would be immune from inaccuracies and distortions. Indeed the possible functional nature of all accounts is discussed in section 2.4.5.

In order to enhance accurate recall, Byrne and Trew (1998) suggested using salient landmarks to help tie down when things happened. In the present study the interview topics included such landmarks. For instance, there were age-related markers, such as during and after school years; plus event-related markers, such as the stages of observation and participation in the behaviour, times of apprehension and imprisonment for the behaviour, and experiences of stopping or reducing the behaviour. Efforts were also made wherever possible to encourage the respondents to describe particular (rather than general) events in order to elicit more specific information.

2.1.3 The interview themes
The six research questions dictated the essence of the interview themes, with topics identified in other research having some influence (notably that of Kilpatrick 1997). The main topics for inclusion were:

- Biographical details
- Definitions of joyriding
- Experiences of joyriding or knowledge of joyriding
- Descriptions of joyriding behaviour
- Gender issues
- Views on the causes and prevention of joyriding
- Perceived consequences of the behaviour
- Excessiveness of joyriding
- Salience of the behaviour
- Stopping joyriding
- Views of the notion of ‘addiction to joyriding’
- Perceptions of the notion of addiction

A number of outlines for interviews were drafted to explore a range of themes, which varied according to the type of respondents being interviewed. The main
themes for the initial pilot interviews were: (i) joyriding stories and experiences; (ii) the career of the joyrider; and (iii) views on addiction to joyriding. These themes were explored in various combinations, using interview topic guidelines for use with individual and focus group interviews. It was particularly important in the planning of the interviews with joyriders that their car crime careers were explored sequentially. Furthermore, and for all respondents, care was taken not to introduce the notion of addiction until towards the end of the interview, and space was allowed during the interview process for novel issues to emerge.

The pilot interviews were conducted with a sample of young offenders from the Midlands, who were not re-interviewed in the main study. Due to the relative paucity of professionals able to give interviews, interviews for ‘those with care and control’ were piloted on post-graduate students. At the end of the pilot interviews respondents were asked if there were any topics raised that they found difficult to discuss, or if there were any issues that they did not want to talk about. Although the respondents raised no specific issues, the interview experience led to some adjustments being made to the ordering of topics in interviews, before being re-piloted. From the piloting and re-piloting, four types of topic lists were finally decided upon for the main study (two for use with joyriders, one for non-joyriding young offenders, and one for professionals).

Two sets of topic lists were used with joyriders: one for individuals, and one for focus groups. The themes of the interviews included explorations of (i) dependency criteria (where appropriate), (ii) the social and cultural aspects of joyriding activities, and (iii) perceptions of the notions of addiction, both to joyriding and other activities. The individual interviews were additionally designed to elicit (iv) a sequential account of the joyriding career. These interviews explored the following general topics (with more detailed versions being found in appendices 1 and 2):

**Topics for individual interviews with joyriders**

- Biographical details
- Definitions of joyriding
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- Maintenance behaviour
- Describing driving the cars
- Importance of the behaviour
- Consequences of the behaviour
- Stopping joyriding
- Other activities
- Joyriding as an addiction
- Other behaviours and addiction
- Any other issues

*Topics for focus group interviews with joyriders*
- Biographical details
- Definitions of joyriding
- Experiences of joyriding
- Stopping joyriding
- Excessiveness of, and addiction to, joyriding
- Other behaviours and addiction
- Gender issues
- Causes and prevention of joyriding
- Any other issues

The other two types of interviews were for use with *non-joyriding* young offenders, and the professionals charged with the care and control of young offenders. The themes for these interviews (which could be individual or focus group) were (i) to consider how respondents represented the behaviour of joyriding, particularly with regard to 'excessive' joyriding, plus (ii) an exploration of perceptions of the notions of addiction to joyriding and other activities. The general topics explored in these interviews were as follows (and again more detailed versions can be found in the appendices 3 and 4):

*Topics for focus group or individual interviews with (non-joyriding) young offenders*
- Biographical details
- Definitions of joyriding
2. Methodology

- Knowledge of joyriding / joyriders
- Causes and prevention of joyriding
- Excessiveness of, and addiction to, joyriding
- Other behaviours and addiction
- Any other issues

Topics for focus group or individual interviews with professionals
- Biographical details
- Definitions of joyriding
- Knowledge of, and experiences with, joyriders
- Causes and prevention of joyriding
- Excessiveness of, and addiction to, joyriding
- Other behaviours and addiction
- Any other issues

2.2 Sample

2.2.1 The joyriders

Studies using interviews with joyriders have generally obtained their samples from convicted offenders in custodial care or from car crime projects (often run by the Probation service). There are limitations to this type of sampling method, in that these (convicted) offenders may not be representative of the joyriding population as a whole, although, due to the nature of the research questions being asked, this has not usually been considered to be problematic. For instance, Bennett (1994), in a review of the study by Light et al (1993), pointed out whilst their non-probability sampling was not so useful for describing the social characteristics and careers of car crime offenders in general, it was however suited to identifying the offenders' perceptions of their behaviour.

It was neither safe, practical, nor appropriate to interview a truly representative sample of joyriders for the present study. Firstly, this would have involved spending considerable amounts of time in the places that joyriders either obtained or drove stolen cars, at the times of day (and night) when these activities usually took place. In addition to the obvious risks to the interviewer, this interest may have been interpreted as condoning, or even encouraging an illegal activity.
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Secondly, and on a more practical point, it was considered unlikely that many joyriders would have ceased their 'activities' in order to provide the researcher with a lengthy interview. Finally, the aims of the research were not to make generalisations from this sample to the total population of joyriders, but rather to investigate particular assumptions regarding the potentially addictive nature of the behaviour. The sample of joyriders therefore consisted mainly of convicted car thieves in custodial care.

However, as the research aimed to consider notions of addiction alongside social and cultural aspects to the behaviour, attempts were made, notwithstanding the limitations identified, to interview as representative a sample as possible, by targeting joyriders of various ages, from a variety of institutional sources, as well as different geographical locations.

The sample of joyriders was drawn from two locations: the Midlands and Northern Ireland. The Midlands was largely an opportunistic location, being both geographically convenient, and because the researcher had had previous voluntary experience (and therefore contacts) at a Midlands young offender institution. Northern Ireland was chosen, partly to add cultural diversity to the study, but mainly because of West Belfast's notoriety for joyriders who persisted in the face of paramilitary threats and/or punishments (see previous chapter, section 1.1.3). There was also a young offender institution in Northern Ireland, plus several training schools (training schools are custodial detention centres in Northern Ireland for juveniles aged 10-16 years).

Even so, it is acknowledged that the sample, in terms of age, did not contain joyriders from the youngest and oldest extremes due to the institutions targeted. Unfortunately, obtaining permission to gain access to younger joyriders in the Midlands proved to be unrealisable, due to an untimely restructuring within the Social Services. Furthermore, in order to increase the probability that the sample of joyriders would contain those most likely to be engaging in the behaviour addictively, it was also skewed in favour of the more serious car crime offenders. Overall, the sample, whilst not truly representative, was highly relevant, thereby
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allowing the theoretical propositions outlined in the research aims to be investigated (Mason, 1996).

A breakdown of the joyriders interviewed by geographical location and age can be found in Tables 1 and 2 (below).

Table 1: Numbers of joyriders interviewed, by age and geographical location

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Northern Ireland</th>
<th>Midlands</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Mean ages of joyriders interviewed, by geographical location

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mean age in years (range)</th>
<th>Northern Ireland (n = 27)</th>
<th>Midlands (n = 27)</th>
<th>Totals (n = 54)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18 (15 - 21)</td>
<td>19 (16 - 21)</td>
<td>18 (15 - 21)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The numbers of joyriders interviewed according to type of institution can be seen in Table 3 (below).

Table 3: Numbers of joyriders interviewed, by institution and geographical location

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institutions</th>
<th>Northern Ireland</th>
<th>Midlands</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Training Schools</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young Offender Institutions</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Car Projects</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.2.2 Professionals and non-joyriding young offenders

In order to consider how some of the issues outlined in the research questions were perceived and represented by individuals who had direct contact with joyriders, but who did not actually engage in joyriding activities themselves, a number of non-joyriders were interviewed. These respondents included those professionals who had care and control of joyriders (such as Probation Officers,
Prison Officers and Youth Workers), as well as young offenders who claimed never to have been involved in joyriding. As has been described in section 2.1.3, the aims of these interviews were slightly different from those with joyriders.

In order to ensure that the different types of respondents were culturally comparable, the professionals and non-joyriding young offenders were drawn from the same geographical locations as the joyriders (i.e. the Midlands and Northern Ireland). However, there were differences in the characteristics between the respondents, and these are discussed in relation to their effect upon the interview dynamics in section 2.3.5. The sample of 11 non-joyriding young offenders came from either young offender institutions or training schools; and a breakdown of their mean ages by geographical location can be found in Table 4 (below).

Table 4: Mean ages of non-joyriding young offenders interviewed, by geographical location

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Northern Ireland (n = 5)</th>
<th>Midlands (n = 6)</th>
<th>Totals (n = 11)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean age in years</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(range)</td>
<td>(16 - 18)</td>
<td>(16 - 19)</td>
<td>(16 - 19)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Details of the 22 professionals interviewed can be seen in Table 5 (below), broken down by type of profession and geographical location.

Table 5: Types of professionals interviewed, by geographical location

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Profession</th>
<th>Northern Ireland</th>
<th>Midlands</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prison Officers</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Workers</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police Officers</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers (in Training School)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Probation Officers</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth Workers</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Car Project Workers</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
<td><strong>11</strong></td>
<td><strong>11</strong></td>
<td><strong>22</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In terms of the professionals, it is regrettable that only three Police Officers could be interviewed. Unfortunately permission to interview members of the Royal Ulster Constabulary was a complex process that could not be obtained in time for
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the Northern Ireland visit. Obtaining permission to interview Police Officers in the Midlands proved to be easier, but cancellations on the part of the Officers due to unforeseen circumstances hindered the procedure on a number of occasions, thus limiting the sample size. Indeed a consideration of the transcripts from those that were interviewed, and the interesting data that was obtained, suggested that the study would have been enhanced by a greater number of interviews with police personnel.

2.3 Procedure

2.3.1 Contacts and access to institutions

The development of the sample was opportunistic rather than systematic, with the respondents being recruited from a variety of institutions and organisations in both Northern Ireland and the Midlands. Contact was made with police constabularies, probation services, social services, motor projects, young offender institutions and training schools; with permission being sought to interview professionals as well as inmates/users of the services, as appropriate. Contacts were made using the 'snowball' method in that, as well as having many positive responses to requests for interviews, these contacts often led to suggestions for other institutions/people to approach. In terms of making contact with the individual young offenders in the larger institutions, those with a history of car crime (as well as those with no history of car crime) were identified either by staff that knew them or by database records of their offences.

To obtain a 'feel' for the situation in Northern Ireland, and how this may impact on the joyriders, time was also set aside to visit some of the relevant sites and organisations in West Belfast without the tape-recorder. Professionals from the Prison Service, Probation Service and Royal Ulster Constabulary were most accommodating in assisting with this cultural diversion, enabling the researcher to tour West Belfast in (relative) safety, observing such things as the murals depicting political ideology in both the Protestant and Catholic areas, the scenes of previous violence and troubles, and the fortressed police barracks containing armour-plated police vehicles. Furthermore it was possible to spend two very interesting Friday evenings (from 10pm to 2am) with the Probation Team, as they...
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engaged joyriders in activities such as abseiling and orienteering in a forest, during what would normally be a prime time for joyriding.

2.3.2 Ethics

A number of measures were taken to ensure that appropriate ethical procedures were followed at each stage of the research. It is policy within the Department of Human Sciences at Loughborough University to complete the Checklist of Ethical Principles to be Applied in Psychological and Sociological Investigations, based on the ethical guidelines of the British Psychological Society and the British Sociological Association. Completion of this checklist revealed that the research was being appropriately supervised, that there was to be no deception or distress involved in gathering the data, that the information obtained would be treated as confidential, and that informed consent would be obtained from all participants including their right to withdraw. As such it was not necessary to seek approval from the University’s Ethical Advisory Committee.

Ethical approval was not required from either of the Young Offender Institutions, although due to the political situation in Northern Ireland, special permission was obtained from the Northern Ireland Office to interview those younger offenders who were in Training Schools. In terms of the various professionals interviewed, permission was sought form the appropriate Heads of Department, with special permission being needed from Police Headquarters to interview Police Officers in the Midlands.

Finally, consent was obtained from all respondents by signing a consent form confirming that the tape-recorded interviews were confidential, would be anonymised during transcription, and would only be used for the purposes of research. It also confirmed voluntary participation and the right to withdraw. The form was read out loud to all young offenders prior to signing as it was envisaged that some would have literacy problems.
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2.3.3 Audio-taping

There was a balance to be had between gaining the relaxed co-operation of the respondents and obtaining accurate information. Video-taping of the interviews, had it been feasible, would have given visual as well as verbal data, but would probably have been perceived as too intrusive, particularly given the sensitive nature of the material. On the other hand, scribbling down notes during the interviews, would have distracted from spontaneous conversation and led to important omissions. Breakwell (1995) has argued that ‘there is no good evidence to show that audio-taping constrains what respondents are willing to say’ (p240), and therefore the balance decided upon was that of audiotaping. It was fortuitous that in the present study permission was obtained from all participants (and participating institutions) to audiotape the interviews.

The interviews were audiotaped using a small battery-operated tape-recorder with microphone. Participants were asked to try to ignore the tape recorder, and most participants appeared to be talking comfortably during the interview. The tape-recorder was switched on after consent had been obtained and switched off at the end of the interview. However, as the tapes were 45 minutes long (each side) there were often occasions when tapes had to be turned during the interview and occasionally this temporarily disrupted the thread of conversation.

2.3.4 Interview considerations and procedure

The main consideration during the interview procedure was to encourage openness, honesty and the ability to talk freely. Encouraging this self-disclosure was a particularly sensitive issue when interviewing the young offenders, as the majority were in custody at the time of the interviews. Breakwell et al (1995) described how people were more likely to engage in self-disclosure if the interviewer was viewed as being similar to themselves. In terms of interviewing the professionals this certainly appeared to be the case. However, as the interviewer in the present study was female and middle-aged it was not feasible to present oneself as being similar to the young offenders (!), although a number of procedures were undertaken in order to increase the likelihood that they would feel able to talk openly about their offences.
The young offenders were approached by the researcher in person and asked if they would mind participating in a study investigating car crime. The interviewer dressed smartly but casually, stated that she was from Loughborough University (and in the Northern Ireland sample 'in England') and that she did not work for the prison. She also wore a prominent 'visitor' badge as reinforcement to these statements. Although the interviews themselves always took place in a room with only the interviewer and the respondent(s) present, there were occasions in the prisons when staff were in the next room, or could be observed to be nearby through glass partitions, and it is acknowledged that this may have had some effect on disclosure.

Several measures were taken to confirm confidentiality, and to guarantee anonymity. Most importantly, in the case of the young offenders, it was made clear that nothing that they said would be put in their official documents. Then all respondents were told that although the interviews were being tape-recorded, all names (including specific locations) would be changed during transcription, and that the names of the institutions or organisations that they were affiliated with would not be disclosed. It was explained that all participation was voluntary, that they did not have to answer any questions, or discuss any issues that they did not wish to, and that the interview could be terminated at any point. Again, young offenders were assured that there would be no reprisals of any sort if they did not wish to participate, or if they wished to terminate the interview prematurely.

To further encourage disclosure initial topics were made deliberately non-threatening, and the interviewer established a non-judgemental and accepting attitude to all responses from the start of the interview. Then as the interview progressed and more sensitive issues were covered, care was taken not to doubt or criticise the respondents' responses. The possibility of exaggeration was noted, but it was felt that as the majority of interviews were individual (rather than focus group) this may have reduced the tendency to 'show off'. In addition, the interviewer tried to remain neutral when respondents were describing their exploits.
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A further consideration was that of enabling the best possible recall, particularly from the joyriding respondents giving details of their joyriding careers, which in some cases involved the respondents recalling information relating to incidents that occurred seven or eight years prior to the interview. As well as providing salient landmarks in the interview plan, the respondents were allowed time to search their memory without pressure (Byrne and Trew, 1998).

Given all these precautions, there were probably occasions when the respondents felt unable to be completely honest, were trying to impress, or could not recall information requested, and as such it was accepted that there may have been exaggerations and/or distortions in the accounts.

Whilst the individual interviews were not timed, from analysis of the number of interviews and audiotapes used, it was deduced that the average interview lasted approximately one hour.

2.3.5 Order and types of interviews

Ten pilot interviews with young offenders in the Midlands were conducted during August 1997 on a sample from the same population as the main study. Most of the interviews were with joyriders, and there was a mix between focus group and individual interviews, as can be seen in Table 6 (below), with the numbers of respondents in the focus groups varying from three to six. A total of 30 joyriding, and three non-joyriding young offenders were represented in the ten pilot interviews.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of interview</th>
<th>Focus Group</th>
<th>Individual</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>With joyriders</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With non-joyriding young offenders</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
<td><strong>7</strong></td>
<td><strong>3</strong></td>
<td><strong>10</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The pilot interviews were audiotaped, and notes taken in order to help with the structure of the final interviews, but they were not transcribed (although during analysis of the main interviews a small amount of data from the pilot interviews was transcribed for inclusion in the results).
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The main study began with 32 interviews being conducted in Northern Ireland, during September 1997, again including both individual interviews and focus groups. The focus group interviews, included to generate interesting interactions between the respondents regarding the notions of joyriding and addiction, did not allow for the in-depth study of individual joyriders' career histories, and therefore the majority of interviews with joyriders were individual. Most of the professional interviews were individual as it was not possible to organise group discussions. A breakdown of the numbers and types of interviews conducted in Northern Ireland can be found in Table 7 (below). The numbers of respondents in the focus groups varied from two to five, and a total of 27 joyriders, five non-joyriding young offenders, and 11 professionals with care and control of joyriders were represented in the 32 interviews.

Table 7: Breakdown of types interviews conducted in Northern Ireland

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of interview</th>
<th>Focus Groups</th>
<th>Individual</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>With joyriders</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With non-joyriding young offenders</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With professionals</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
<td><strong>5</strong></td>
<td><strong>27</strong></td>
<td><strong>32</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Whilst the focus groups conducted in Northern Ireland provided some interesting discourse, distinguishing between the interviewees during transcription was problematic, making it very difficult to subsequently place discourse within its appropriate context (i.e. in terms of the contributions made by other group members). For this reason it was decided that only individual interviews would be conducted in the Midlands. Forty-four individual interviews took place in the Midlands between January and June 1998, with 27 joyriders, six non-joyriding young offenders, and 11 professionals with care and control of joyriders being represented. The breakdown of these interviews can be seen in Table 8 (below).

Table 8: Breakdown of types interviews conducted in the Midlands

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of interview</th>
<th>Number of interviews</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>With joyriders</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With non-joyriding young offenders</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With professionals</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
<td><strong>44</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2. Methodology

2.3.6 Further considerations, constraints and difficulties

There are a number of considerations that relate to the responses given by different types of respondents. For example, the non-joyriding young offenders were very similar in age and cultural background to the joyriders, and in most cases both types of respondents were in custody. However, the non-joyriders were not being asked to discuss their particular offending behaviour, and as such this will have made for a very different, and possibly more relaxed, interview experience.

The professionals differed from young offenders in many aspects (but most notably in terms age, educational background and social status) which would also have created different dynamics across the interview situations. For instance, as has already been mentioned, the interviewer would probably have been perceived to have had more in common with the professionals than with the young offenders, this possibly influencing levels of disclosure (see section 2.3.3). Furthermore, the amount and quality of information varied considerably according to the type of respondents, presumably as a consequence of their educational background. It was noticed, for example, that less interviewing skills were needed to elicit elaborations on the themes with the professionals than was the case with the young offenders.

There were also some subtle differences between the professionals. A particular contrast was that the Police Officers differed from other professionals by way of their relationship with the joyriders. For example, some of the accounts given by Police Officers suggested that they were struggling to differentiate certain aspects of their behaviour from the activities of the joyriders (see for instance the account by Charlie in Chapter 4, section 4.3.2). Furthermore, whilst there was an unequal power relationship between the young offenders and any of the professionals, most of the professionals were employed to watch over, care for, or rehabilitate (with the offenders' role generally being to be willing or unwilling recipients of this 'care'). The role of the Police Officers, on the other hand, was to apprehend young offenders, including car thieves for their activities (with the joyrider's reciprocal role being to 'escape'). As such, there was sometimes a sense of
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competitiveness between the police and the joyriders (as in the account by Liam in Chapter 4, section 4.4.2).

In addition to these considerations, some difficulties occurred whilst conducting the interviews that require mention. To begin with, due to the context of the interviews (i.e. mostly in prisons and training schools) some discussions had to be curtailed prematurely due to various institutional constraints, and therefore not all topics were covered in these interviews. Furthermore, some joyriders were particularly uncommunicative (probably due to tiredness and/or lack of social skills) leading to occasions when little information was obtained.

Breakwell et al (1995) have discussed how, when people are interviewed in institutions there is a possibility that inmates will discuss the interview with those who have not yet been interviewed, and that this may lead to rumours and expectations of what the interview entails. In the present study this was reduced by, whenever possible, interviewing all the joyriders from one particular unit in the same day, thereby leaving less time for prior discussions between inmates to take place. In addition the inmates were chosen from as many units as possible, thus reducing the numbers of interviewees on any particular unit. Even so, it was occasionally apparent that respondents had been aware of the nature of the interview prior to being approached for participation in the study.

2.4 Analysis

2.4.1 Use of software

Richards and Richards (1995) described how qualitative data analysis usually involved the exploring of classificatory categories, and that this task was made easier by the use of the coding and retrieval functions provided by programmes for computer-aided qualitative data analysis. They described how hierarchical categories were a powerful and universal technique for organising and relating data, as well as other aspects such as ideas and textual references. Some researchers have pointed to the benefits of using computer software packages to aid in the analysis of qualitative data, whilst also being aware of possible limitations of these methods. Silverman (2000), for instance, highlighted the
advantage of being able to process large volumes of text, although commented that some people felt that computer analysis had a 'dehumanising' effect on their work, stating: 'many qualitative researchers remain distanced from this technique because of feelings that it may impose an alien logic on their analytic procedures' (p 155). However, as will be described, this was not felt to be the case in the present study.

It was decided that, given the number of interviews, analysis of the data would be aided considerably by computer software in terms of coding and retrieving the data, whilst accepting that computer-aided packages could not undertake the more important interpretative processes. The software package chosen was *QSR NUD*IST (Non-numerical Unstructured Data Indexing Searching and Theory-building), developed by Richards and Richards (see above). This software package was designed to assist with the development, support and management of qualitative data analysis, by allowing plain text data (i.e. from interviews) to be imported as documents, enabling that data to be coded, and for the codes and documents to be explored interactively. The most current version of *QSR NUD*IST available at the time was used, this being *QRS NUD*IST 4. One limitation of the package was its employment of only plain text (ASCII or Text Only) files. A consequence was that, when transcribing, the use of italics and bold could not be used to demonstrate inflections and/or emphasis in discourse.

In the present study *QSR NUD*IST was mobilised to analyse the data in a dynamic manner. The following stages outline the research process undertaken:

1. Conducting interviews and writing memos
2. Transcribing interviews verbatim and writing further memos
3. Importing transcriptions and memos into *QSR NUD*IST as 'documents'
4. Building two 'index trees' with 'branches' and 'nodes' using *QSR NUD*IST: one index tree to contain demographic characteristics, the other to contain thematically coded data based on theory-driven themes
5. Initial coding of the data contained in the documents according to theory-driven themes, into nodes of the thematically coded index tree
6. Adaptation of thematically coded index tree to contain further branches and nodes as data-driven themes emerge
2. Methodology

7. Secondary coding of data according to the emergent data-driven themes
8. Inspection of thematically coded data in nodes: expansion / collapsing of branches and nodes to facilitate thematic analysis
9. Retrieval of data pertaining to each theme for detailed analysis

This process will now be described in detail.

2.4.2 Interviews, transcription, memos and the creation of documents

By conducting the interviews in person, listening to the resultant audio-tapes, and transcribing each interview in full, the researcher became very familiar with the data. This process generated many ideas and interesting examples of discourse, which were noted as 'memos'. Memos were initially made as soon after each interview as possible, particularly noting any non-verbal information and/or themes that had emerged. These initial memos acted as the first level of analysis, as well as serving to personalise the data. All the interviews were then transcribed verbatim, this closer inspection of the data enabling more memos to be made, such as that of interesting discourse.

During transcription, although pauses in conversation were not timed, and voice inflections were not noted, certain conventions were used, as outlined at the beginning of the thesis (see page vi). To preserve anonymity, the respondents were given pseudonyms, and the names of any people, places, or institutions disclosed during the interviews were either changed or omitted. Furthermore, any possible identifying information (such as specific details of offences) was omitted from the transcription.

In order for the interview data to be imported into QSR NUD*IST in a manner that would allow meaningful manipulation of the data, it needed to be correctly formatted in terms of the headers for individual interviews, as well as within the interviews. In essence, considerable thought had to be given to the structure of the documents at the point of transcription in order that, on retrieval, it would be possible to identify individual respondents from extracts of discourse. Once transcribed, the individual interviews were imported as documents into a QSR NUD*IST 'project' ready for coding into hierarchical categories.
2. Methodology

2.4.3 Building of index trees

Two pre-structured 'index trees' were devised to contain the transcribed data from the documents. These index trees comprised of various 'branches', from which there were 'nodes' to contain data. One index tree was for the base data, where whole documents were coded according to demographic characteristics (see table 9, below), the other for text from documents to be thematically coded according to the interview topics (see table 10, below). The structure of these index trees allowed for cross-indexing between the thematic data and particular demographic variables.

Table 9: Index tree showing branches and nodes for base data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Base Data</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Geographical location</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Ireland</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midlands</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of interview</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus group</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Status</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joyriders</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
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<td>17</td>
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<td>19</td>
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<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed ages</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institution</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young Offender Institution</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training School</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motor Project</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professionals with care and control of joyriders</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police Officer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Probation Officer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Worker</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prison Officer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth Leader</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project worker</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-joyriding young offenders</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institution</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young Offender Institution</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training School</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motor Project</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2. Methodology

Table 10: Index tree showing branches and nodes for thematically coded text

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Thematicallly coded text</th>
<th>Definitions of / names for joyriding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Career of the joyrider</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initiation phase</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passenger</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Driver</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stealing the car</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintenance phase</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pattern of behaviour</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who with</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How often</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How many</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feelings when joyriding</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cues to joyriding</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive dissonance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Driving behaviour</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activities and manoeuvres</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police chases</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Driving skills</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dependency phase</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salience</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tolerance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Withdrawal</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Craving</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relief behaviour</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relapse</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indulging more then intended</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stopping joyriding</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Precontemplation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contemplation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintenance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relapse</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Termination</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other activities enjoyed by joyriders</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender issues</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussions about addiction and cars</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spontaneous</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Probed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other joyriding issues</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Models of addiction</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2. Methodology

2.4.4 Initial coding, adaptation of the index tree, and secondary coding

The process of initially coding the data involved reading through the transcripts, identifying text pertaining to a particular theme, highlighting this text, and then ascribing a code to the text that would enable it to be retrieved within one of the nodes of the index tree. The same extract of text could thus be coded within multiple nodes. For example, as can be seen in the thematically coded index tree (table 10, above), there was a branch Career of the joyrider → Dependency phase, and from this came several nodes pertaining to the various dependency criteria (Tolerance, Withdrawal etc.). Any text identified as pertaining to a dependency criterion was therefore highlighted and coded at the appropriate node.

However, Richards and Richards (1995) describe two methods of constructing hierarchical categories: the bottom-up (data-driven) method, and the top-down (theory-driven) method; both of which being described as legitimate and appropriate. Millward (1995) similarly described how the emphasis of qualitative content analysis was on meaning rather than quantification, and stated that an initial classification system may be derived from the topics embedded in the research questions, but that additional codes may arise during a closer examination of the data. In the present study, although the data was initially coded according to theory-driven themes related to the research questions to be studied as described above, data-driven themes also emerged.

The data-driven themes generally took the form of information that either did not support the theory, or added to the understanding of the behaviour. As these themes emerged, the thematically coded index tree was adapted to accommodate the novel branches and nodes. For instance, examples of disconfirmation of the theory included (within the branch of Career of the joyrider → Dependency, and the node Tolerance), text relating to increases in the level or intensity of joyriding that were not necessary in order to maintain the 'buzz'. As such, a further node labelled Not tolerance was added to that branch. Then (within the branch of Career of the joyrider, and the node Stopping joyriding), text emerged relating to joyriders who had stopped joyriding, but were stealing cars for lucrative purposes, and therefore a further node labelled Stealing cars for other purposes was added.
Data that added to the understanding of joyriding activities was found, for instance (within the branch of *Career of the joyrider → Maintenance phase → Pattern of behaviour branch*, and the node *Who with*) where text relating to peer influence/pressure, and status/identity issues was identified and these were thus added as further nodes. Indeed much of the discussion in Chapter 4 (‘Joyriding as a Deviant Subculture’) was based on such emergent data.

Having completed the initial coding of the data and having identified several emergent data-driven themes it was apparent that some of the earlier documents to be coded had not been coded with regard to these emergent themes. To ensure that information relating to the emergent themes had been elicited from the earlier coded documents a secondary analysis was therefore necessary. This was conducted mainly by undertaking key words searches, followed by the re-reading and coding of sections of documents.

**2.4.5 Thematic analysis**

As described above the data had been coded into thematic ‘nodes’, some of which were enforced in ordered to answer the research questions, and some of which emerged from the data. Using the data within these nodes a thematic analysis of the discourse was undertaken. To begin the thematic analysis the nodes relating to each theme were further scrutinised for thematic content. At this point some of the nodes, identified as containing qualitatively different information, were broken down to form further branches and nodes, whilst other groups of nodes, identified as relating to the same themes, were collapsed.

Millward (1995) describes how content analysis is a cyclical exercise involving both mechanical and interpretative processes: the mechanical part to sort the data into categories; and the interpretative part to analyse these categories in terms of their relevance to the research questions, which may then lead to the development of more categories. In the present study, the next, more interpretative, stage involved retrieving the thematic data contained within each of the nodes and inspecting it in more detail in order to answer the specific research questions.
This overall process was greatly aided by the nature of the QSR NUD*IST indexing system, as it was possible to undertake index searches within and between different nodes and index trees. For instance, it was possible to compare perceptions of the causes of excessive joyriding by the non-joyriding young offenders with the professionals who had care and control of joyriders (see section 8.1). This was undertaken by retrieving data from the relevant nodes in the thematically coded index tree that also appeared in the base data index tree node Non-joyriding young offenders and repeating this process using the base data index tree node Professionals with care and control of joyriders. The responses from the two types of respondents with regard to perceptions of excessiveness were then compared.

2.4.6 Use of quotations

It was decided that quotations from the interviews would be provided throughout the analytical chapters in order to make the data as visible as possible. However, due to the amount of data and for reasons of brevity, only the most appropriate illustrations of the theme being discussed were to be selected for inclusion. Millward (1995) argued that the aim of content analysis was to ‘find quotations to illustrate particular themes or strands of meaning within the transcript’ (p288). Furthermore, McKeganey (1995) argues that in order for qualitative work to be made more rigorous deviant case analysis should be considered. That is, explaining those instances that contradict the theoretical model being investigated. Sherrard (1997) similarly describes how qualitative studies should attempt to support and test interpretations by seeking counter-instances and checking all considerations. Taking the above points into account, during the re-reading of the thematic data in order to answer the research questions, those quotations that best illustrated the consistencies and inconsistencies in the themes being examined were identified and marked.

2.4.7 Accounting for possible ‘distortions’ in the accounts

Whilst a number of measures were taken to try to enhance recall and encourage honest disclosure, (see section 2.3.3), in the present study it was accepted that there may have been some distortions, particularly (but not only) in the accounts
2. Methodology

given by the young offenders. For instance, Gresswell and Kruppa (1994) pointed out that, when interviewing in secure settings, offenders may have repeated the accounts of their offences many times which may 'provide the opportunity for the offender to consolidate an account of the offence that includes distortions' (p36). Then on the other hand, McMurran and Hodge (1994) have pointed out that 'there is a prevalent assumption that offenders will always give distorted accounts for their behaviour in order to minimise the seriousness of their actions and their degree of responsibility for them' (p3).

Taking yet another perspective, Davies (1997a) described how respondents try to 'make sense' of their lives when responding to interview questions, arguing that there is a need to take account of the motivational nature of people's answers. He argued for instance that, to drug users, the notion of 'addiction' may represent a functional explanation for their behaviour, particularly if faced with an interviewer who may not hold a shared acceptance of their drug use. In terms of validity, he described how it would be a mistake to interpret the causal attributions of responses as representing deficient reflections of the truth, or even lies. Indeed he emphasised how the aim of some (attributional) research was not to reveal 'truth or lies', but rather to consider what function the responses might be serving in that particular social interaction.

Whilst this research was not an analysis of the discourse used by joyriders when explaining their behaviour, the possible functional nature of the responses could not be ignored. For instance, whilst joyriding is an acceptable behaviour amongst other joyriding peers, joyriders would probably not have expected the interviewer to share their enthusiasm for the activity. The notion of addiction may therefore have provided a way for them to be able to make sense of the 'buzz' that they got from joyriding when asked to explain their motivation to an 'outsider'. On the other hand, the professionals, and to some extent the non-joyriding peers, may have felt the need for a shared explanation as to why they did not condone, or engage in, the behaviour, and as such the notion of addiction may not have sat easily with their preferred explanations. In addition, notice was taken of the
possible functional nature of accounts given by some of the *professionals*, who may also have felt the need to justify their activities.

In order to elicit the most accurate version of the respondents’ explanations, and to avoid ‘providing’ addiction as a functional explanation, the interviews were designed so as to avoid any reference to addiction until the end of the interview, when addiction-related topics were explored explicitly. Furthermore, it was understood by the researcher that any spontaneous or probed references to addiction made by the respondents were to be considered in terms of the function that they may have been serving within the context of the interview.

2.4.8 *Time taken for transcription, coding and analysis*

Potter and Wetherell (1987) suggested that ten hours of basic transcription was needed for every one hour of recorded speech, and in the current study there were 46½ hours of recorded interviews. However transcription of the Northern Ireland interviews was particularly difficult due to the researcher’s unfamiliarity with the accents of many the respondents and this added to the overall time. The initial coding of the material in the current study took an average of one day per interview (dependent upon the length of interview), and there were a total of 44 interviews. It is estimated that the transcription and initial coding of the interviews probably took six months to complete in all, although in real time this was longer as some of it took place between conducting the Midlands interviews. After initial coding including a surface analysis, the analysis proper with concurrent writing of the analytical chapters took approximately a year to complete.

2.5 *Summary*

A qualitative study was designed in order to investigate joyriding as an addictive behaviour. The main study consisted of 76 semi-structured interviews conducted with 54 convicted joyriders (aged between 15-21 years), 12 professionals with care and control of joyriders, plus 11 non-joyriding young offenders, the sample being drawn from both the Midlands and Northern Ireland. The interviews were
2. Methodology

transcribed verbatim and a thematic analysis was undertaken using QSR NUD*IST software.

In the following analytical chapters (i.e. Chapters 3 to 9 inclusive) interview data is presented, alongside other literature and research, to consider the research questions identified at the beginning of this chapter. Beginning with the following chapter, the accounts of three of the joyriders interviewed in the present study are presented as short case illustrations as of the typical career path of a joyrider. Following on from this, the joyriding career is explored sequentially, using quotations from the interviews to illustrate and make visible the findings.
Chapter 3: The Career of the Joyrider

Summary of contents:
3. The career of the joyrider
3.1 Case studies
3.2 Joyriding careers described in research literature
3.3 Career of joyriders in the present study
3.4 Conclusions

3. The career of the joyrider

Prior to a more detailed analysis of the interview material, this chapter will attempt to give an overview of the general career pattern as portrayed by the joyriders in the present study, with particular reference to how this ‘career’ may be mapped on to the phases of initiation, maintenance, dependency and change, that encompass the continuum of addicted behaviour (see Chapter 1, section 1.2.5). To begin with three case examples of joyriders will be presented, in order to give an indication of why joyriding might be perceived as having the potential for addiction, and to provide a flavour of the experiences that will be described in more detail in following chapters. Leading on from this, the typical career paths of joyriders as proposed by other researchers will be discussed in terms of how, and why, the addiction analogy has not been addressed previously in descriptions of this kind. Finally, the career path of the joyriders interviewed in the present study will be outlined, to demonstrate how the behavioural changes that tend to occur as the activity develops can be viewed within an addiction continuum.

Before presenting the case studies, it is important to note that due to the sample in the present study being biased towards offenders who had a significant involvement in car crime (most of whom having been incarcerated for their activities) it may not be representative of the joyriding population as a whole. However, the sample is probably similar to that used by the other researchers who have considered the joyriding career, and from which generalisations regarding this career have been made.
3.1 Case studies

In order to provide an initial feel for how joyriders represent their behaviour, three case examples of young men interviewed in the present study will be presented. As can be seen, although each case portrays a different career path and tells a different story, the accounts combine to provide a flavour of the 'typical' career of the joyrider on whom this study is based. It must, however, be pointed out that this is not an analysis of how truthful the accounts are, and, as for all those interviewed, these cases are entirely based on the first-hand accounts by the young men interviewed, with no verification by official documents. As will be seen there are indications of possible exaggeration in some accounts regarding, for instance, the speeds travelled, the use of drugs and alcohol, and the numbers of cars stolen.

The first account is that of Darren, who was brought up in West Belfast. Approximately one year prior to interview he moved to live in North Belfast with his father, two older sisters and younger brother, while his mother stayed in West Belfast. Darren was just 16 years old when he was interviewed in a training school in Northern Ireland.

Darren described how he began joyriding (apparently his first ever crime) at the age of thirteen, learning by watching other people breaking into cars. However, like many joyriders, his first ride in a stolen car was as a passenger. Having ridden as a passenger for about six months, watching other people driving, he then decided that he wanted to do it himself because it looked fun. At fourteen, being too young to have official driving lessons, it was Darren's friend who taught him to drive. He said that it felt good on that first occasion, and he drove again the following night.

Darren soon developed a regular pattern of behaviour, going out joyriding with a group of about seven friends at 10 - 11pm at night and staying out until the early hours. He stated that they only went out on Friday and Saturday nights, and always took just two cars. When driving he enjoyed doing 'hand-brakes' and 'wheel-spins', often giving displays to spectators, including girls (who he said would watch, but never drive). He stated that he would also drive on the motorway, at speeds of about 90 miles an hour. Darren, who had never read the highway code, considered himself to be a 'just alright' kind of driver - not as good as people with a licence, and probably worse than his other joyriding peers.
Darren liked to use drugs and alcohol at weekends. Unlike many of the young joyriders in Northern Ireland Darren had never used solvents, but he did like taking ecstasy, LSD and cannabis. Whilst he claimed that he would not drive if he had taken ecstasy, he thought that any other drugs taken during the day would not affect his late night driving. Darren also said that he would drink as much as his money allowed, which was usually about twelve tins of beer or lager, and he believed that he drove better after he had been drinking. Darren also described how he had often been involved in police pursuits, enjoying the feeling of being ‘all hyped up an all’, although he said he did not deliberately provoke chases with the police. He said that he usually got caught, resulting in him having spent approximately eleven spells in various training schools, each lasting about a month.

Being caught by the police was not the only negative side of the activity that Darren had experienced. There was also the effect that his behaviour had had on his family. Darren claimed that he had been ‘put out’ of West Belfast, where he lived with his parents, two sisters and younger brother, by ‘the provos’ who told him to move about a year ago—all because of his joyriding activities. Darren also described how the vigilantes had beaten him up on two occasions, the first time with a hammer and the other occasion with punches and kicks. Although stating that he had feared at the time he may be shot dead or ‘knee-capped’, the experience of being beaten up by the vigilantes had not put Darren off joyriding, and he believed that he would be too ‘fly’ (sneaky) for them ‘next time’. In fact the only thing that appeared to worry Darren about joyriding was getting caught by the police.

At the time of the interview, although Darren’s father had suggested that he should stop joyriding, he himself had never thought about stopping, had never attempted to stop, and did not think that he would be stopping in the near future. Darren stated that the only thing that might make him stop joyriding would be injuries incurred from a bad accident, although he didn’t think that was likely to happen. With prompting he did agree that he might stop one day if he was to settle down with his girlfriend and get married; and spending a night with his girlfriend was the only thing that he could think of that gave him the same amount of pleasure as joyriding.

In terms of his reasons for car theft, at the time of interview, Darren had only ever stolen cars to have fun in. He said that he had never sold cars on, although he had stolen them on occasions for transportation, particularly if he was stuck to get home.

In contrast to Darren the second case is that of Matthew. He was from the Midlands and therefore did not experience the above threats of paramilitary punishments. At 19 years old, he was also older than Darren, and had begun to see
that stolen cars could be used for more lucrative purposes. At the time of
interview Matthew had been in young offender centre for about a year, with six
months left to serve. Having had several spells in children's homes as an
adolescent, he had been living alone in Coventry prior to his most recent prison
sentence. His parents, two older sisters and two younger brothers also lived in
Coventry.

Matthew had been interested in cars since he was about 12 years
old, although he had never had driving lessons or read the
Highway Code. He had a background of other criminal activities,
stating that he had been involved in shoplifting and burglaries prior
to joyriding. Unusually, he claimed never to have observed other
adolescents joyriding prior to engaging in the behaviour himself.

Matthew described how his first involvement in stealing and
driving a stolen car occurred whilst he was living in a children's
home at around 13 years of age. There had been an organised go-
karting session earlier in the day, and that evening, whilst talking
about it with friends, it was decided that they would steal a car.
Some more experienced boys actually stole the car and then they
all had a go at driving it, both along country lanes and on a
motorway. He described the buzz from driving on that occasion
being such that they all repeated the exercise the following
evening, resulting in a police pursuit and apprehension. Matthew
stated that following this incident, it was about two years before he
got involved in car theft again.

Then, whilst in another children's home, and now aged about 15
years, Matthew decided he wanted to learn how to actually steal a
car, and so enlisted the help of friends to teach him the skills. He
then spent about a year stealing cars on and off before becoming
regularly involved in the activity. Matthew said that eventually he
was stealing cars almost every day of the week and at any time of
the day, although his favourite time was between 11pm and 4am
because that was when most people were in bed.

As well as enjoying the driving per se, he described getting a buzz
from being involved in a police pursuit, stating that when he was
younger he would deliberately try and get chased by the police.

Matthew said that the sorts of cars that he stole changed over time,
beginning with Metros, and then moving on to Montegos,
Belmonts and finally BMWs. It was when he began to steal the
better cars that he also started to sell them on, with his main reason
for stealing cars immediately prior to his present prison sentence
being to sell them. Even so, at the time of interview Matthew
stated that he would still steal some cars purely for 'joyriding'
purposes.
3. The Career of the Joyrider

In terms of how many / how often, he said that in the early days he was going out every single day, stating that he had stolen as many as 34 in one night, the more usual number being about six. Then once he began selling some of the cars, the numbers he stole would depend upon how much he was able to sell them for, plus he would use other cars for joyriding.

Matthew said that he drank quite a bit at weekends with his friends, but claimed that he wouldn’t get into a car if he’d had a drink. Matthew felt that his driving was ‘average’, ‘same as everyone else’ and that he was generally a safe driver, unless he was being chased, when he ‘got a bit reckless’.

Matthew had been in prison for TWOC about nine times, and at the time of interview was serving a three-year sentence (which included a burglary). However, he could not see any downsides to joyriding, stating that he was not bothered about coming into prison. He also claimed that he had had about 10 accidents whilst joyriding, although none serious.

When asked if anyone had ever suggested that he should stop or cut down joyriding, he stated that his family and mates had ‘been doing that all the time’, although he had never thought about it himself. It appeared that Matthew had no intention of stopping stealing cars for more lucrative purposes, although he did not envisage that he would always be a joyrider, stating that he would have no choice but to stop eventually: ‘I’ve got to grow up sometime really ain’t I ... I’ve always said that as soon as I get a kid then that’s it everything’s stopping’. However, Matthew said that he could not think of much that would give him the same buzz as joyriding (except perhaps parachuting).

As can be seen, the above account contained an element of excessiveness and recklessness in the behaviour, associated with what was described by many joyriders as ‘the buzz’. In the following case, Brett, who was almost 20 years old, appeared to have interpreted these feelings as indicative of the behaviour having become ‘addictive’. Brett was brought up in a relatively deprived area of Leicestershire with his four brothers and two sisters. Prior to his more recent stay in a young offender institution he was living on his own in an area of North Leicestershire not unknown for its association with high levels of crime.

Brett had been in prison in the Midlands for 8 ½ months at the time of interview, and he stated that he had only spent about 2 weeks in the last 2 years out of prison. Prior to joyriding he had engaged in a variety of criminal activities including theft of motorbikes, house burglaries, commercial burglaries and street robberies. He had never had any driving lessons or read the Highway Code.
Brett’s older brother was also heavily involved in joyriding and his first involvement in joyriding was riding as a passenger in his brother’s stolen cars when he was about 13 years old. He described getting a buzz out of riding as a passenger in a stolen car, and said that from then on he was travelling in stolen cars every day. When he was 15 years old his brother was sent to prison and he taught himself to drive.

In common with many joyriders, Brett’s first attempt at driving was undertaken on his own, albeit that in this instance he was following a friend in another stolen car. Being quite small in stature, he described only barely being able to see over the steering wheel at the time, and stated that although he enjoyed it, he was also scared. Like many joyriders, on his first attempt to drive Brett crashed the car. In fact he hit the car in front that was being driven by a friend causing this friend to be injured. Brett said that the crash put him off driving – but only for about two weeks.

It appeared that right from the start Brett was aware that joyriding could become a problem for him as he described trying his hardest ‘not to make a habit of it’. Even so, it was not long before Brett started stealing cars everyday of the week, often staying up for several nights to pursue this new activity, stating: ‘I’ve just got addicted to nicking the cars now, even on my first days out now I have to nick a car’.

Brett claimed that when he was driving he would also drink (one or two litres of rum per day) and that he also used drugs daily (amphetamines, ecstasy, LSD or cannabis). The amount of alcohol use claimed by Brett does appear to be (probably lethally) high, suggesting that he may not have been clear about how much he was actually drinking, although he also stated that he thought he had a problem with his drinking. When asked how the drink affected his driving he replied that he was always too drunk to know. He also suggested that the drink may be contributing to the joyriding, stating by stating: ‘I’m kind of addicted to nicking cars when I’m sober, you know what I mean, so when I’ve had a drink, its all just worse’. Nonetheless, Brett stated that he preferred to drive sober as this gave him a better buzz, and that the feeling he got from driving stolen cars was very similar to that of using drugs or alcohol.

Brett described his driving as being: ‘not proper up to standards, but, it is good’, and was confident that he could pass a driving test. He also stated that, compared to the police, his driving: ‘out-beats them, out-beats them every time near enough, except this time’. Brett said that he had been engaged in about 10 - 13 police chases, some of which he had deliberately provoked.

Brett described thinking about joyriding all the time and, at the time of interview, did not believe that he and his brother would ever stop stealing cars. Indeed Brett stated that they wouldn’t even
stop joyriding if somebody was killed in an accident, except perhaps if he 'killed a kid or something'.

Brett voluntarily suggested that he was addicted to stealing cars, stating that there were times when he had wanted to stop but had continued even though it had sometimes resulted in him having severe beatings necessitating hospital treatment. He thought that he was addicted to joyriding because (when he was 'on the out') there was not a day went by when he didn't steal a car, as it made him 'feel good inside'.

Brett also said that he often thought about stopping or cutting down when in prison, but when he got out he found himself in a car park with a screwdriver 'before he knew it' and 'nicking somebody's car, just for the fun of it'. He said that whilst he seriously hoped that he would grow out of joyriding one day, he did not believe that he actually would.

He stated that his main reason for stealing cars had always been to 'just drive around, joyride', and that he stole cars because he got a buzz out of driving. However, sometimes he had sold the cars to make money and used them to assist with burglaries.

Hopefully, the above cases give a snap-shot of some of the variations found in the accounts of joyriders interviewed in the present study, provide a very brief outline of the behaviour as it progressed for some of the individuals, and illustrate why the issue of addiction has been raised as worthy of further investigation. There have been several attempts in recent years, by other researchers and professionals working in the field, to document the typical 'career' of the joyrider, some of which will be discussed next.

3.2 Joyriding careers described in research literature

Although the qualitative changes that take place during the career of the joyrider have often been documented, few accounts have described quantitative changes that might suggest an addictive potential to the behaviour. For instance, in the following description of the Archetypal Car Thief, based on in-depth interviews with known car thieves in West Belfast, Kilpatrick (1988) noted the qualitative move from expressive to instrumental car crime:

- Young person is carried in a stolen car
- Young person drives stolen car left by someone else
- Young person steals car for joyriding
3. The Career of the Joyrider

- Sells items / parts from car stolen for joyriding
- Move from expressive to instrumental delinquency
- Makes choice of criminal career
- Steals car to sell items / parts from car

McCorry and Morrissey (1989), in developing a project to tackle car crime in Northern Ireland similarly described a continuum of joyriding which progressed from psychological satisfaction to economic gain, also termed as ‘expressive’ and ‘instrumental’ delinquency. The stages of the continuum were:

1. (age 12-14) a young person is a passenger in a stolen car
2. (age 14-15) they drive a stolen car abandoned by someone else
3. (age 14-16) they steal a car by themselves
4. (age 15-18) they steal something from a car taken for a joyride
5. (age 15-18) they start to take cars to sell what might be found in them
6. (age 18+) after experiencing the justice system they decide on a criminal career

As can be seen, whilst the above continua provide a clear picture of what the car thieves did and when during stages of their career, they do not describe how often and to what degree they were involved in the behaviour - a factor which may be indicative of possible dependency. These accounts also seem to suggest that the stealing of cars for fun almost inevitably developed into a more lucrative career structure, with no mention of car thieves remaining exclusively joyriders.

However, Marks and Cross (1992), in their interim evaluation of The Turas Project (a community-based strategy for preventing car theft), described a slightly different career path. As can be seen, the following seven stage model begins to address issues of how often / what degree the young people were engaging in the behaviour by stipulating ‘occasionally’ or ‘regularly’:

1. Street corner observers
2. Occasional passengers
3. Drives previously stolen cars
3. The Career of the Joyrider

4. Steals cars for fun occasionally
5. Steals cars for fun regularly
6. Steals cars for profit
7. Stealing cars as one of a range of criminal activities

Marks and Cross’ model is very similar to that of Chapman (1992), which was also developed during the Turas Project, although in Chapman’s version stages pertaining to cessation of the behaviour have also been addressed. Chapman describes how joyriders progressed through the following ‘reasonably predictable stages’:

1. Street corner spectators
2. Occasional passengers
3. Drive previously stolen cars
4. Occasionally steal a car for fun
5. Regularly steals cars for fun
6. Regularly steal cars for money
7. Steal cars as one of a variety of criminal offences
8. Wanting to give up joyriding
9. Ex-joyrider

When applied to a continuum of addictive behaviour (as described in Chapter 1, section 1.2.4), stages 1 to 3, of Chapmans’ model could be considered as an 'initiation' phase; stages 4 to 6 as a ‘maintenance phase’; and stages 7 to 9 as part of a ‘cycle of change’. However, as with other continua, Chapman’s model did not accommodate the notion of excessive joyriding, nor did it include anything that could be perceived as a phase of 'dependency' upon the behaviour. Furthermore, the smooth transition between stages 7 and 9, does not allow for relapse - a recognised feature of attempting to reduce or abstain from behaviours with an addictive potential.

3.3 Career of joyriders in the present study

The descriptions given by joyriders in the present study have tended to indicate that they progressed through a series of phases, although it must be stressed that none of these phases (including dependency) were inevitable; and that some
3. The Career of the Joyrider

aspects (such as engagement in the more lucrative car-related offences) could occur at any point along the path. The phase of change could also occur at any point, not just after a phase of dependency, with many joyriders stopping the activity shortly after initiation or during the maintenance phase. However, the usual progression was as follows:

Initiation
- Involvement in (other) petty crime
- Observer / spectator of other joyriders
- Occasional passenger
- Occasional driver

Maintenance
- Regularly riding as a passenger, or regularly driving stolen cars
- Selling parts / selling cars / using cars for other 'jobs'

Dependency
- Excessive joyriding and joyriding related activities
- Continuation in the behaviour despite harmful consequences
- Subjective feelings of addiction to the behaviour

Change
- Contemplating stopping in the future
- Cutting down / stopping
- Relapse
- Possible continued involvement in other (car) crimes

As can be seen, the stages of the joyriding career have been mapped onto phases encompassing a continuum of addictive behaviours (i.e. initiation, maintenance, dependency and change), as described in Chapter 1 (section 1.2.4).

3.4 Conclusions

Previous descriptions of the joyriders’ career have not addressed notions of excessiveness or dependency upon the activity. However, descriptions derived from the interview data in the present study suggest that these aspects may be particularly relevant. Given this possibility, the present study goes on to examine
how joyriding might be represented as 'addictive' for some individuals, and it will consider the possible consequences of doing so. In order to achieve this, the focus of the analysis will be to look at the behaviour as it develops within phases representing a continuum of addictive behaviours (i.e. initiation, maintenance, dependency and change). There will also be discussions of the notion of excessive joyriding and addiction as perceived by the joyriders, their peers and those charged with their care and control, together with a consideration of therapeutic interventions derived from the addiction literature.

However, while the career path of the joyrider could be seen as being analogous to that of other addictive behaviours, an alternative explanation might be that joyriding is just one (amongst many) behaviours that are commonly engaged in by young people, some of which may be 'deviant'. As such, before considering joyriding within an addiction model, there will be a discussion of the behaviour as it comprises a deviant subculture.
Chapter 4: Joyriding as a Deviant Subculture

Summary of contents:
4. Joyriding as a deviant subculture
4.1 The formation of a subcultural group
4.2 Culturally induced beliefs and aspirations regarding cars
4.3 Joining the joyriding subculture
4.4 Functions of the joyriding subculture
4.5 Summary and conclusions

4. Joyriding as a deviant subculture
Before considering whether or not joyriding can be understood using a model of addiction, this chapter will look at the way in which the behaviour is represented by considering the activity as it constitutes the formation of a deviant subcultural group.

4.1 The formation of a subcultural group
Widdicombe & Wooffitt (1995) have described how a number of sociological theories view delinquency as being a response to the problems imposed upon some young people as they grow up in a class-structured society. Early theories focused on delinquent activities as being part of a culture of delinquency, with various explanations as to how core values (such as toughness and defiance of authority) within these cultures were derived.

One such explanation was proposed by Cloward and Ohlin (1960) who described how societal pressures persuade people of their need to achieve certain goals. Realising their failure to reach these goals in socially approved ways, Cloward and Ohlin argue that some individuals meet their perceived needs by illegitimate means, often with other like-minded individuals. These subcultural groups then each develop their own distinctive content. In considering illegitimate means and delinquent subcultures they formed the following hypothesis:

Adolescents who form delinquent subcultures, we suggest, have internalised an emphasis upon conventional goals. Faced with limitations on legitimate avenues of access to these goals, and
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unable to revise their aspirations downward, they experience intense frustrations; the exploration of nonconformist alternatives may be the result. (Cloward & Ohlin, 1960, p86)

Widdicombe and Wooffitt (1995) pointed to this explanation as an example demonstrating the importance of understanding youth subcultures in relation to both working class and middle class values.

There are also more recent developments in the studies of subcultural groups, which have come to be known as New Subcultural theories. Whilst these explanations still consider inequality as the driving force in the formation of subcultures, they also take more account of the historical and geographical context within which subcultures develop as a solution to these structural problems. In particular, Widdicombe and Wooffitt (op cit) suggest that while earlier theorists argued that working class youth subcultures inverted the dominant middle class values of society (thus emphasising their own working class values), later New Subculture theories argue that they negotiated space for their own subculture, but within the class culture of their parents. In the process they are providing a solution to their problems of disadvantages – albeit that the solutions were often symbolic (such as the adoption of a particular 'style').

However, Widdicombe and Wooffitt also emphasise the need to take account of the relationship between the individuals and the subcultural group to which they belong. They argue that many sociological explanations (including those with the framework of New Subcultural theories) contain assumptions, but that there was an absence of the member’s accounts to support these assumptions. Such assumptions included (i) that culture symbolised a resistance to oppressive social order, and (ii) that the individual members of the subcultural groups recognised this.

When considering car theft, it is therefore important to see if evidence exists in the accounts of the joyriders themselves to suggest that their behaviour is a response to socially-induced beliefs and aspirations and all that is encompassed within the media-portrayed images of cars, car ownership and driving. The
4. Joyriding as a Deviant Subculture

following sections will consider the media-portrayed images of cars before considering how a subculture of joyriding may develop, and what function it may serve for the joyriders.

4.2 Culturally induced beliefs and aspirations regarding cars

As discussed, Cloward and Ohlin (op cit) argued that a disparity arose between what lower class youths were led to want, and what they perceived they were able to acquire; and that the formation of delinquent subcultures was linked to the internalisation of these culturally induced aspirations. It is important then to consider what it is that young people are ‘led to want’, and what their beliefs are about the car, that might lead them towards car crime.

4.2.1 Sexuality and power

Cars have been typically identified as conveying a sense of power and, perhaps linked to this, sexuality. Bayley (1986) argued that cars produce feelings of power and control - with power having a strong erotic content, and he described how the advertising media have found a number of ways of using that image to sell cars. He pointed to the importance of symbolism, speed, culture, styling, design and marketing in explaining why cars tend to be ‘sold as costumes and worn for sexual display’ (p8). He suggested, for example, that people need symbols and that cars were loaded with sexual symbolism, giving examples of films and literature that have treated the car as a symbol of sexuality. Marsh & Collett (1987) similarly talked about how ‘from the time that Model T Fords first emerged from the production line, cars have been cloaked in sexual symbolism’ (p22), arguing that ‘for both men and women, the car gives both the stimulus and the opportunity for thrills’ (p24). This image is perhaps succinctly captured in the title of a book by the car enthusiast Jeremy Clarkson - “Hot 100: Cars that make you go PHWOAR!!” (Clarkson 1997).

There is also an element within the commercial market that verges on the border of glamorising car crime. For example, there have been a number of video games dedicated to the driving of powerful cars at high speeds, some of which have had a distinctively ‘anti-authority’ theme. One of the more recent media portrayals of
car crime being glamorised is the film *Gone in 60 Seconds*, which tells the story of an ex-car thief returning to ‘what he does best’ in order to save his younger brother from execution at the hands of the mob. According to promotional literature, the film features the theft of 50 of the ‘hottest, most high performance, turbo-charged cars in the world’ - all in one evening. Sexuality and power are pervasive themes in the film both in terms of the erotic qualities ascribed to the cars, and the presence of the hero’s blonde girlfriend ‘Sway’ (also a professional car thief). Angelina Jolie (the actress playing Sway’s character) apparently commented:

“I designed Sway’s look so that it would compliment the cars. I thought she would wear tight-fitting pants and bright colours, so that she blended in with the Ferrari she was working with. I saw her like some wild creature.”

(Millar, 2000, p 17)

The film’s inclusions of sexuality, car theft and car chases are certainly appealing, and one can’t help imagining that most joyriders, having watched the film, would be leaving the cinema with their desire for faster and more powerful cars having been well stimulated, even though John Millar (2000) quotes the film’s Producer Jerry Bruckheimer as saying:

“There is a scene in the picture when Nic explains to his brother that if he keeps on stealing cars he will either get shot or go to prison. When you are young, you might not realise that there is a consequence for everything you do. So that speech is directed both to his brother and also to the audience.”

(Millar, 2000, p 11)

Given that many of the joyriders in West Belfast have risked both shootings and imprisonment (see Chapter 1, section 1.1.3; and Chapter 7, section 7.4.1), and all for considerably less powerful cars, this perhaps questions the likely effectiveness of one line in the film.

It appears that a car not only attempts to advertise the sexual prowess of the car owner/driver, but that there is also a sense of the car being the ‘vehicle’ for sexual passion, both literally and symbolically. A number of authors have documented the history of vehicles being used by courting couples for love-making (e.g. Marsh & Collett, 1987); and some have also described the *experience* of driving
4. Joyriding as a Deviant Subculture

in sexual terms. For instance, Bayley (1986) stated in biological terms how severe acceleration could lead to a feeling of 'high' (apparently a feeling partly brought about by the increase in heart rate under the positive g, combined with blood pooling in the legs causing a fall in cardiac output). Then, returning to the theme of sexuality he claimed that driving a Porsche 911 was a sensuous act at any speed; 'like making love' he states, 'there are some theorists who argue that it's more fun if you do it slowly' (p42). Finally, he argued that in Western culture 'a persistent element in erotic fantasy is making love with a stranger', with driving being similar, claiming 'the release into a fantasy world promised by a fast car is like the promised release integral with active sex' (p110).

When asked what they 'looked for' in a car, the desire to experience the power and speed of a car was a common response by joyriders in the present study, as the following extract shows:

*Terry*
its like gives you a buzz when you're driving a big fast car like (...) and you put your foot down on the accelerator and you can like feel the power come in like, and that's the buzz of it really

**21 years, Midlands**

Many also stated that as they became more experienced at stealing cars, the type of cars that they stole changed in line with this image of power and high-performance:

*Trevor*
When I first started out just Vauxhalls and Astras and Montego-Austins 'cos they're easier to do .. and Metros

*Interviewer*
Yes, and then as time went on how did it change

*Trevor*
got into better cars like, fast performance cars, GTs, (SGSis) XR3is, Calibras, stuff like that

**21 years, Midlands**

It was interesting to note that none of the joyriders used overt sexual symbolism to describe their preferred cars, which may have been due to their relative age and lack of sexual maturity/sophistication. Furthermore, although some of the respondents were sexually active, none expressed the desire to use a car for lovemaking. However, the rhetoric used by joyriders to describe cars did appear
in some instances to reflect the 'human' image of the car as portrayed by the media. Marsh & Collett (1987) for instance, described what they call the 'pet-like' characteristics of the car, an object of affection, which provided the owner with opportunity for control, mastery and a sense of domination. As can be seen, talk of a vehicle's 'performance' or 'handling' had been employed in the following examples to give the car these almost personal qualities:

*Joe*
its no good driving them because they're just crap, they don't handle or nothing

20 years, Midlands

*Trevor*
I used to get them and give them a quick thrash about, see what they'd do

21 years, Midlands

In the main their associations between cars and members of the opposite sex were generally limited to the less subtle belief that they would be more likely to 'pull' a girl if they were driving the right car:

*Joe*
I like cars a lot, I'd rather have a car than- a good car than any- any girl I could ever have or any- 'cos you could get any girl you want in a car anyway, 'cos birds love cars

20 years, Midlands

Other researchers have also noticed this tendency. For instance, Bengry-Howell (1999), in a study of the social construction of masculinity, found in interviews with car crime offenders that 'respondents all referred to the apparent power of the cars they twocked to make them more attractive to girls' and that 'they suggested that if they could be seen by girls in a particular model of car, then those girls would come to view them in a particular way' (p17).

This belief in a car's ability to have the desired effect on women is very much tied up with the macho image that tends to be associated with cars, as will be considered later (see section 4.4.4).
4. Joyriding as a Deviant Subculture

4.2.2 Status and identity

Perhaps some of the most easily recognised culturally induced aspirations are those that reflect to the wider society the social standing of an individual. For many people the image that they feel able to display to others also constitutes the source of their identity, and it is widely accepted that cars are designed and marketed as symbols of social status. Bayley (1986) for instance, in considering the creation and consumption of images, claimed that a fast car 'demonstrates professional success' (p.31).

A number of researchers have considered the notion of status being an important feature of joyriding. For instance, Parker (1984) argued that car crime was particularly linked to the political economy, claiming that the car was 'the most conspicuous symbol of wealth and, for the male, style, skill status, power and all that' (p.12). Briggs (1991) also stated that 'for many youngsters wishing emphatically to convey to peers and public what kind of persons they are, there is no more effective means than the cars they drive' (p.26).

Confirmation of the effect of these influences can be inferred from Wood and Marplan's (1987) survey of 1000 young drivers, which found that 62% of respondents believed that one was judged by the car that one drove. These attitudes also appear to be more popular amongst young men than young women. Rolls et al (1991) found, in their study of accident risk and behaviour patterns of younger drivers that males placed a higher importance on the type of car that they drove than females, particularly in relation to speed, acceleration and engine size.

As most of the young joyriders in the present study had few, if any, educational qualifications and were generally unemployed, it seemed unlikely that they were seeking to drive a stolen car in order to persuade the wider society of their professional success. The interviews in the present study did however indicate that many of the young men were searching for status amongst their own peers through being seen in a stolen car. In the following extracts, for instance, Carl describes the feelings he got when he anticipated being picked up from school by his joyriding friends in a stolen car.
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Carl

it was quite important when I was at school because I’d think, are they coming for me, are they going to pick me up, I don’t know why but for some reason I though it was sort of big, like, yeh I’m going in a stolen car

(...) like we’d be walking up like, there’s a bunch of us like, boys and girls, we’d all be walking up and I’d hear it, and I’d say- I’d think to myself; yes, and I’d walk through the gates and they’d be there in a- in a nice car, just a standard car but, kind of nice car and like music playing very loud and I’d think, yeh, and I’d get in it and, it was kind of a buzz, sort of showing off in a way 18 years, Midlands

There is further support for this in a study by Bengry-Howell (1999), who found that the perceived need to prove themselves to their peers was the main reason offered to explain joyriders’ first involvement in car crime. Jackson (1993) similarly stated that the young people felt that they were at the bottom of a status orientated society in which they had no place. This then caused them to turn to their own groups for that status, often finding it in illegal activities – such as joyriding. She further claimed that this was ‘particularly true when considering Northern Ireland’ (p39).

In the present study a number of young men had expressed the notion that they were not just interested in seeking approval from their peers, but that they were particularly attempting to emulate those peers with a higher social standing within the peer group, often referred to as the ‘older ones’:

David

Ah, I just felt- well I looked up to them ones anyway, because they were older ones, you know, and they were still going about an all like, but once I seen them doing it like, I wanted to do it myself, that’s’ how I got started then, just running about with the older ones you know 20 years, Northern Ireland

This tendency was also commented on by a Social Worker when talking about some who appeared to be on the ‘periphery’ of the joyriding culture:
Tom
I feel that a lot of people on the periphery have actually got aspirations, and have got desires, usually want to follow maybe a friend or a brother who’s well known in the area for it

Social Worker, Northern Ireland

It appeared that one way of achieving status amongst peers was through the types of cars that they stole:

Leon
people’s coming along in BMWs and stuff, and you want to steal a BMW and you go out and try and steal a BMW and then you go up in the world stealing BMWs

(…)

there was other people stealing cars ands they were coming into the estate and they were coming in flashy cars and everyone was going, look at them ones they’re brilliant- they’re good an all, and I went out- I wanted to be better, then we’d go out and steal a better car than them ones and so on and so on, it just happened like that, stole a faster car or whatever, so more people would say, aye that’s- that’s a good car an all

17 years, Northern Ireland

Parker (1984) had noticed how, since the early ‘70s, a sense of snobbery had existed amongst joyriders in terms of a move towards stealing faster, smarter, and more sophisticated cars. It appeared from the findings of the present study that this trend has continued. It was also interesting to observe that the types of cars stolen in order to impress peers were chosen by the same criteria that a professional person might use to make a statement about his/her position in society. In other words, it appeared from the joyriders’ accounts that they were acutely aware of, and influenced by, the same features of a car that have come to be recognised by the wider society as prestigious. This can be seen in the following extracts:

Interviewer
what sorts of things do you tend to go for in a car

James
good cars like, nothing like scrappy, either a middle class or a top class one

18 years, Northern Ireland
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Interviewer
give me examples of what good cars are
Roger
erm, Renault, erm Peugeot 205, I like that .. the new Escorts, I like
them as well
Interviewer
and what aren’t good cars then, what are the ones that you don’t
like
Roger
Skodas, Ladas, Metros
(…)
Interviewer
why do you think erm, you wouldn’t enjoy driving Skodas and
Ladas and Metros as much as the others
Roger
‘cos they’re too slow .. and they don’t look good do they [laughs]
16 years, Midlands

The element of prestige was something that had also been noticed by Briggs
(1991), who commented that ‘joyriders tend to take vehicles which otherwise
represent the status and prestige of wider society’ (p59). The joyriders in the
present study were similarly impressed by the design features and image
portrayed by the cars they stole. This is reflected in some of the responses to
being asked what sort of things that they would look for in a car that they were
going to steal:

Matthew
things like what the wheels looked like and how good the
bodywork is and things like that, and the interiors all right
19 years, Midlands

Their comments also suggested that they were well versed, and keen to ‘keep up’
with, the latest models on the market:

Interviewer
did the type of car that you stole change over the last four years
Anthony
yes, it was changing every years, you know, it was bringing a new
model out, faster version, a new sports version
20 years, Midlands

This was further illustrated by a some of those who were involved in the care and
control of joyriders, who emphasised the part played by the joyriders’ knowledge
of cars:
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Harry
and its no good saying that they just took the Sierra and the Fiesta, it's the Fiesta SRI sixteen valve, XY duck banana, they have to have all the letters on it like

(…)
I've heard them arguing if we drive past a car someone will say, oh it's a sixteen valve blah blah blah, no its not, its not a sixteen, it's a one point four SRI, they know this off by heart

Social Worker, Northern Ireland

The discourse from some joyriders also suggested that it was not simply status that they sought from their peers, but also a sense of wanting to establish an identity for themselves as legitimate members of their peer group, as the following extract shows:

Colin
if you're young you want to prove to the older ones that you can drive, and you can handle the car and you ain't a little kid no more, you can do what they can do

19 years, Midlands

Having considered some of the culturally induced beliefs and aspirations of young men as they relate to the motorcar, the following section will consider some of ways of realising these perceived desires.

4.3 Joining the joyriding subculture

As has been argued, some of the car-related aspirations expressed by joyriders were similar to those in the wider society, such as the desire to experience the power associated with driving a fast car, together the need for status and identity amongst their peers. In terms of investigating ways of achieving the thrills of driving, there will be a consideration of what the activity of 'joyriding' (in its illegitimate form) involves, as the joyriders themselves perceive it. Following on from this, and based on these definitions, ways in which these activities can be undertaken will be discussed.

4.3.1 Defining joyriding

It needs to be pointed out that a number of joyriders did not use the actual term 'joyriding' (as will be discussed further in section 4.4.3). Notwithstanding this, when joyriders were asked to define the behaviour of joyriding, it appeared that it
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consisted of a number of possible activities. Whilst different joyriders (or groups of joyriders) tended to ‘specialise’ in particular types of activities, their responses suggested that ‘joyriding’ primarily involved stealing a car without permission, plus one or more of the following categories of activities:

- Driving around for pleasure / driving for fun, e.g.
  
  Dan
  riding for pleasure, just for the fun of it
  18 years, Midlands

- Driving fast / racing / taking the car to its limits, e.g.
  
  Peter
  just thrashing cars about, that’s what joyriding is, just high speeds
  18 years, Midlands

- Doing technical manoeuvres (e.g. handbrake turns, ‘wheelies’) / showing off,
  e.g.
  
  Robert
  flying around the streets as fast as you can, hand-braking it everywhere
  18 years, Midlands

- Smashing the car up / crashing / wrecking the car, e.g.
  
  James
  you’re flying about in the car like and you’re taking the car to its limits, you know, you just trying to wreck a car, that’s the name of the game like, its just try and wreck the car, and you’re flying about an all
  18 years, Northern Ireland

However, it will now be argued that most of the categories of activities involved in joyriding (as defined above) can be pursued legitimately. Whilst joyriders steal their cars and therefore may constitute a deviant subcultural group, there are also a number of other car cultures engaged in similar activities that do not involve first stealing a car, and are therefore (usually) considered to be socially acceptable pursuits.

4.3.2 Joyriding by legitimate means

Kandel & Maloff (1983) make an interesting point in relation to drug use, when they describe illicit drugs as a subcategory of many disapproved or delinquent behaviours, including joyriding, that predominate amongst young people. They
argued that some of these behaviours, such as drinking, might be considered delinquent when engaged in by youth, but not when pursued by adults. This leads one to wonder whether there may be certain circumstances when 'joyriding', although a delinquent activity engaged in predominately by young people, might be considered legitimate under some circumstances when pursued by adults.

Having developed a desire to indulge in exciting driving activities, there are probably two main legitimate avenues through which these perceived needs can be met: that is through employment and/or through leisure. The most obvious careers for those with the necessary skills (and usually financial backing) are professional rally driving and Grand Prix racing. These potential aspirations can be gleaned from the following extract from a (non-joyriding) young offender. Although Barry appeared to have difficulty expressing himself at times, it appeared that he was also trying to articulate the notion of legitimate and illegitimate means to achieving these aspirations (probed by the interviewer - who hopes she was not leading the respondent):

**Barry**

if you like something- like if you- if you did it professionally or if you’re doing it against the law, still the same really at the end of the day, if you’re doing it professionally nicking- if you’re doing it professionally like driving cars for a living, yeh, ‘cos you like it isn’t it, you like flipping, nicking it just the same thing as you’re doing it legally I think

**Interviewer**

what sort of people do you think are doing it professionally, what do you mean by doing it-

**Barry**

proper rally drivers, things like that, perhaps that’s something what they wanted to do, perhaps that’s a dream, I don’t know

**Interview**

right .. and you’re saying that some people do it legally, by being rally drivers, and some people are doing it illegally by joyriding, but it- are they doing it for the same reasons, is that what you’re saying

**Barry**

yeh, it is for the same reasons, you think of when a rally driver’s doing it, he’s doing it because he likes it, and because he’s probably good at it, and he likes to buzz at going round corners, probably ninety-five miles an hour, and the same with a joyrider, he’s doing it for the same reason, but he’s doing it on the roads and rally driver’s doing it on a track .. ‘cos they like flipping .. a circuit- you know what a circuit is don’t you
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Interviewer
yes
Barry
like- like flipping the joyrider’s on a circuit like roads the town when they fly around that, you know what I mean, just same with the rally drivers round the track, they do it for the same reasons, it’s the same reasons but one’s doing it against the law and one’s doing it legally, one can afford it, one can’t

18 years, Midlands

There may also be other professions that are perceived as providing opportunities for exciting driving experiences. It was interesting, for instance, that a number of the joyriders in the study commented on the similarity between their driving activities and those of the police:

Craig
they [the police] say that they drive for safety but, people that have seen them chasing joyriders about and that, you know what I mean, but they’re just driving like joyriders drive at the end of the day, you know what I mean, a joyrider takes a roundabout at seventy and so are the police going to, you know what I mean, do at the end of the day they’re driving like joyriders anyway so, really we’re all in a big circle really

17 years, Midlands

With others expressing the belief that the police enjoyed ‘the chase’ as much as they did:

Trevor
like when I’ve been caught the police say, oh, thank you for the chase, you know What I mean, enjoyed it yeh, ‘cos its normally just boring for them

21 years, Midlands

One joyrider was even keen to point out the illegality of police driving behaviour (and clearly failed to see the irony in doing so!):

Robert
some of them- some of them though they don’t care because, they’re- they go to the limit, they’re not even allowed to go over ninety, mile an hour, if a car- if they’re in pursuit of a car they’re not supposed to go over ninety mile an hour, but er, say if we’re going at one twenty- ‘cos we nicked an (...) Scorpio once and we was going at about one thirty down [name] road, and we went
round the island at ninety and it was following us, so he was doing about the same speed as us man, and he weren't allowed

18 years, Midlands

It was also suggested by some of those who had care and control of the joyriders that there are some occasions when the police enjoyed high-speed pursuits. The following extract is from an interview with a Probation Officer who was discussing a television documentary that he had watched about how police catch joyriders:

*Timothy*
I was just appalled by it, there was one, they were- the two Police Officers were chasing joyriders around Manchester, Greater Manchester, they had this like-

*Interviewer*
the Springer

*Timothy*
the Springer, its that one, and somebody says, why do they do joyriding, what is it, I said well, look at the coppers, why are the coppers, it's the buzz, same buzz the Police Officers are getting, you can clearly see it, you can clearly see the buzz, and this is on camera

*Interviewer*
I did see that one

*Timothy*
yeh, this is on camera, erm, but- well off camera, just imagine what its like off camera, they're trying to be responsible on camera, and I think they're being appalling, they're the same reason, d- just look at the coppers and see how- the way they go about catching these individuals, it's the same buzz that the kids get from being chased

*Probation Officer, Midlands*

And the following account (edited for length) is the experience of a Social Worker who, whilst returning from an escort in a police car, was involved in a pursuit:

*Harry*
and on the way back they got it over the radio that there was a car in their vicinity, so they said do you mind if we just got involved in this-

(…)

I was sitting in the back listening to what was going on because they were relaying messages to each other in jeeps and the army were involved as well, and a couple of mobiles, and I was thinking to myself, these two here sitting in front of me are just older than the two that are sitting in the stolen car, 'cos they were saying go
on, go on, go on, and they were giving each other instructions about what side street to take and, I was thinking its obviously just the same

(...) I was thinking at the time that they are probably just as excited as the two boys that stole the car

*Social Worker, Northern Ireland*

Indeed there were accounts from the police themselves suggesting that a police pursuit can sometimes be exciting, as in the following extracts:

*Charlie*

> ‘erm, scary really to be honest with you

(...) you hold on for dear life sometimes [laughs]

(...) your adrenaline’s going like you know, sort of the chase like, and you think to yourself well this is why I joined the job you know, as opposed to (...) you know I’ve got to say its good fun, er like for your ego or whatever

(...) *Interviewer*

> do you think that the sort of feelings that the police feel and the sort of feeling that the joyriders feel might be very similar, in terms of feeling scared and yet the adrenaline’s going

*Charlie*

> yeh, I do really, ‘cos at the end of the day, even though we’re the pursuer as opposed to the one being chased, er, we’re still getting the same thrill as they are, except we’re getting paid for it and they aren’t, yeh

*Police Officer, Midlands*

Of related interest was the following account by one of the joyriders recalling one of his best ever joyriding experiences:

*Joe*

another time we were in a Fiat Uno (...) turbo, my mate was in a, erm, Belmont SRI or something like that- Cavalier, no (...) Astra (Belmont), we were driving around going down- me- me and this other geezer, we were pretending to- we were like pretending we- we were police and that and we were chasing him, it was dead good

20 years, *Midlands*

Of course these references to police pursuits need to be balanced with the knowledge that the police, whilst possibly enjoying their work on occasions, are also placed in many frustratingly difficult ‘no-win’ situations. As law
enforcement officers they have to attempt to apprehend car thieves, but at the same time protect the car thieves, as well as protecting the public and themselves. Police pursuits, can only be engaged in by advanced drivers (of which there are relatively few), and they are carefully monitored by a central control who may decide to abort the pursuit at any time on the basis of such factors as dangerous weather conditions, geographical location, or the driving behaviour of the car thief. If the police fail to engage in a ‘chase’ or ‘back off’ then they are laughed at by the joyriders who see themselves as therefore ‘obviously’ the better drivers; whereas if they risk causing an accident by an unwise pursuit they may be criticised by the public. There are perhaps less frustrating ways to enjoy the thrills of driving.

For many car enthusiasts, cars and driving are leisure activities. These may include building kit cars, reading car magazines, buying and selling cars, maintaining them, customising them, and of course - driving around in them. Many people join motor clubs to engage in pursuits such as rally driving (including night rallies) through closed roads, forestry or tarmac; grass track racing; production car trials; auto test (a game of speed and skills over grass or tarmac which may include such manoeuvres as hand-brake turns); banger racing; stock car racing; and go-karting (indoor or outdoor). Although these pastimes are designed to include aspects of road skills, such as driving and navigation, they often include features of ‘joyriding’, such as:

- Driving around for pleasure / driving for fun
- Driving fast / racing / taking the car to its limits
- Doing technical manoeuvres (e.g. handbrake turns, ‘wheelies’) / showing off

And even on occasions:

- Smashing the car up / crashing / wrecking the car

The above motoring activities can be engaged in through official organisations overseen by the Motor Sports Association. However, it appears that there are also casual road users who like to enjoy these types of activities and who, on occasions, drive in an illegal, and possibly dangerous manner. It is interesting for instance, that McDonald et al (1992), in a study of 56 ‘safe’ and ‘unsafe’ young
drivers (aged 17 to 25 years), found that the ‘unsafe’ drivers tended to be more enthusiastic about cars, car maintenance and driving, more involved in car talk amongst friends, and more likely to be involved in ‘car cultures’ than the ‘safe’ drivers. In this instance ‘safe’ and ‘unsafe’ was assessed by observing driving techniques and surveying attitudes influencing the respondents’ approach to driving and level of accident risk.

It appears that the media, as well as creating the desire for faster and more powerful cars, also encourages deviant driving behaviour. Buckley (1992), when describing the relationship between men and cars, claimed that ‘certain types of behaviour such as driving fast, drinking heavily, achieving results by unorthodox or often deviant methods are presented in police series as legitimate aspects of being a man, and therefore goals to be aspired to’ (p29).

In support of this, Bengry-Howell (1999), in a textual analysis of three car enthusiast magazines (Max Power, Fast Car, and Red Line), found an implicit assumption that the readers would come into conflict with the law. Some articles gave carefully worded ‘advice’ on how to avoid detection, as well as warnings on the likely penalties that could be incurred for various motoring offences (notably speeding). Whilst not overtly condoning these offences, a counter-authoritative position was generally adopted with regard to the police, with references and adverts directing readers towards further literature that would enable them to avoid police detection. Although these magazines were not representative of car enthusiasts’ magazines per se (in fact Bengry-Howell chose them as they had been specifically identified as being read by the joyriders in his study), they nevertheless represented a certain population of ostensibly legitimate car drivers.

Buckley (1992) has argued that motoring behaviour is in an arena that largely belongs to men. She also pointed out that there was a fine line between legal and illegal driving behaviour, with motorists and car offenders being ‘driven’ by the same aspirations and motivations. Buckley, like others, recognised that an obvious problem existed as to how some young men could legitimately achieve goals of masculinity, with joyriders differing from others with the same
aspirations only in terms of their illegal access to vehicles. Parker (1984) similarly argued that the marketing of cars creates a desire shared by the whole of society, but which for some could only be met by breaking the law.

4.3.3 Joyriding by illegitimate means

Cloward and Ohlin (1960) have argued that delinquent subcultures evolve due to a process of alienation, brought about by failure (or the anticipation of failure) to achieve goals in socially approved ways. Initial acts of deviance, they suggested, may cause guilt, and to defend against this the young people gather the collective support of others in the same situation, thus forming a subculture. The actual development of the subculture then depends upon the relative availability of illegitimate means - in other words the young people’s access to a ‘learning environment’ and the opportunity to practice the role.

In support of this theory, it was true that many of the young people in the present study were not able to experience the thrills of driving in the legitimate ways referred to previously (see section 4.3.2). Due to low educational achievement arising from a number of causes, it would be unlikely that they would have the financial capability to pursue a glamorous car-related career, nor would they be able to afford a powerful car of their own to drive as a leisure pursuit. However, evidence to support the notion that the joyriders reacted to this with an experience of ‘alienation’, that then led to crime, was equivocal. The accounts of some of those with care and control of the joyriders suggested that this was the case, as seen in the following extract by a youth worker:

*Jamie*

I think there is er an increasing deterioration, erm in the lives of young men, er increasing levels of social exclusion, er and increasing levels of school failure for young men, and I think they’re all inter-linked

(...) a young man needs a job, as a rights of passage, right, its something that gives them a sense of responsibility and a place within their society, without that place, they will look at ways of re-defining their man-hood, and what you develop then is- is a complex youth subculture based around something like car crime

*Youth Worker, Midlands*
4. Joyriding as a Deviant Subculture

However, it is unclear from the above account whether the youth worker was speaking from a sociological knowledge base or from conclusions reached following conversations with, and observations of, young people. Whilst it may be the case that the joyriders were (perhaps subconsciously) attempting to achieve socially induced aspirations via a deviant route due to their educational and social disadvantages, the discourse of the joyriders themselves led one to believe that they had limited cognitive awareness of such an agenda when they were involved in the activity. In fact, as the following extract suggests, sometimes they seemed to be almost ‘mindlessly’ going along with the crowd:

*Interviewer*

why do you do it then

*Andy*

[laughs] why do I do it .. just, like, my mates do it, an .. I don’t know why I do it like, why do I do it for, eh

19 years, Northern Ireland

And as the following account suggests, some seemed to be doing it less as a reaction to their social disadvantages, and more because their situation just meant that they were simply *able* to do it:

*Interviewer*

do you think it was important at one time

*Noel*

it weren’t important it was just that I was doing it because everyone else was doing it, and that I either weren’t at school or I weren’t at work, that’s one of the reasons I suppose that I did it

20 years, Midlands

Furthermore, it did not appear (as Cloward and Ohlin’s 1960 theory implied) that joyriders tended to steal and drive cars alone at first, and only joined with others later through a sense of guilt and/or need for collective support. Joyriding appeared to be very much a group activity from the start for most of the individuals in the present study. Street corner observers gathered in groups, riding as a passenger obviously necessitated the co-operation of at least one other to drive, and the driving itself was usually done with passengers. The only exception to this group activity was when joyriders practised driving for the first time so as not to ‘lose face’ (as will be discussed in Chapter 5, section 5.3.2).
4. Joyriding as a Deviant Subculture

In support of Cloward and Ohlin's (1960) theory, the present study found that there was often considerable availability of illegitimate means to achieve goals, both in terms of a learning environment and opportunities to practice. However, it was uncertain whether joyriders had specific goals, and were therefore making a cognitive decision to taking advantage of these opportunities as a 'means to an end'. A more probable suggestion is that they were engaging in joyriding as a leisure activity, which also served as a means to status and identity.

McCarney (1981) pointed out that for many members of society, including young people, it was leisure that gave them meaning in life. He also argued that some of those, who had been unable to gain status and identity at school, turned to joyriding as a leisure activity or 'sport' that could provide experiences and identity. McCarney (1981) then suggested that there was nothing 'pathological' about what these joyriders were doing, as their activities merely reflected those of society at large. He stated that driving around in a car per se was not a wrongful activity - only the driving of a car without tax, insurance, a driving licence, or the owner's permission.

Indeed, for many of the joyriders in the present study joyriding appeared to be an important leisure activity - which also provided them with a valuable source of identity. As the following extracts from an interview with a Project Worker suggests, this activity constituted 'what they did' and 'who they were':

*Bill*
I think that some of these people it becomes their culture, their way of life and that it is erm when you say to them, why don't you do something else, it hasn't occurred to them to do anything else, because that is now what they do, its their er, its their recreational activity
(...)
your culture is then set, that is what you do, that is- you know you are a j- joyrider, a twocker

*Project Worker, Midlands Motor Project*

4.3.4 Peer influence

Whatever the reasons for engaging in joyriding, it still remained an activity that was engaged in with others who may, or may not, have shared the same motivations. Just as it has been argued that those who pursue legitimate car
related leisure activities are influenced by the wider society, so it seems likely that those who do not have legitimate means may be influenced (and sometimes pressurised) by their peers into taking part in joyriding activities. A number of those with responsibilities of care and control for joyriders felt that peer groups played a significant part in persuading young men to join or remain involved in the joyriding culture, as can be seen in the following extract:

*Harry*
its also I think something that's a feature of groups, it happens in clusters, you know, you'll tend to get a group of twockers who know one another, who work together by and large, and so, without any one person taking control there's a group pressure that- that, you know feeds the behaviour and fuels it

_Probation Officer, Midlands_

However, Widdicombe and Wooffitt (1995) have demonstrated the importance of listening to how the group members themselves feel about ideas of conformity. By focussing on the accounts, stories and anecdotes produced by members of youth subcultures, they considered how personal and social identity and group affiliations were constructed, maintained and negotiated in ordinary, everyday language. They conducted interviews with members of various youth subcultures (such as 'punk') and, using a discourse analytic approach, demonstrated that the young people used a range of linguistic devices to resist 'conventional knowledge' that suggested ideas such as group conformity, but instead emphasised their *personal* motives for involvement in the subcultural group. Widdicombe and Wooffitt (1995) suggested that this resistance was partly due to a feeling that being seen to be influenced by social pressures was a threat to their individuality.

The present study differs in that youth subcultures such as the 'punk' that Widdicombe and Wooffitt (1995) interviewed appeared to have good reason to resist the notion that they were conforming to group influence, whereas delinquent subcultures (such as joyriders) may have good reason to use notions of peer pressure to abdicate responsibility for their behaviour, specifically because of the illegality of their activities. Nevertheless, Widdicombe & Wooffitt's (1995) findings are of relevance to the present study in that they emphasised the need to consider the functional nature of the accounts given by group members when
attempting to gain insight into the part played by conformity in the formation of subcultures.

In the present study the joyriders made a number of comments regarding their self-perceptions about being influenced by their peers. Some were quite willing to state that no one had forced them to do it:

*Brett*
I would blame it on my mates but at the end of the day, as well, we've all got our own minds at the end of the day, so if I didn't really want to do it I wouldn't have done it anyway, so I can't blame it on nobody really except myself, it was just me and my stupidity really, that's all I can blame it on to

19 years, Midlands

*James*
well I was running about with, you know people I stopped running about- I run about with someone else, that's when it all started, in like the end like .. they didn't force me into it, I done everything myself like

18 years, Northern Ireland

However, even assuming that the above individuals had made personal decisions to indulge in the behaviour, their references to friends suggested that their peers were still influencing them. There were others who did admit to being influenced, although they did not appear to be making an excuse for their behaviour, such as Joe, below:

*Joe*
aye, there was other people who was joyriding on the estate and the crowd that I was running around with was just really copying the other ones, they started stealing cars as well

(...)

*Interviewer*
what made you want to drive yourself do you think

*Joe*
just seeing everyone else doing it

*Interviewer*
how did you think it would feel if you were driving yourself

*Joe*
good like, I wanted to- I wanted to learn how to drive like, when I was seeing- when I was seeing everyone else driving like

20 years, Midlands
And then there were some who described getting involved in the behaviour in a manner that did suggest ‘reduced responsibility’:

Simon
I’m easily led you see, people just like say something and I’ll do it, ‘cos I’m easily led like, if I see someone else do something then, I think, well that’s wicked I’ll do it

basically I just follow other people, do you know what I mean, I just look at them and see what they’re doing and then if I find that interesting then I’ll just do what they’re doing, I just thought I’d try and pick up what they’re doing, you know what I mean, like I can’t- I can’t- I can’t suss out things on my own- my own way, do you know what I mean, I’ve always like followed my mates steps

19 years, Midlands

It is likely that some of the young men felt that without the status and identity accrued from activities undertaken within the subculture they would be rejected by their peers. Gordon suggests this, for instance, in the account below:

Gordon
I think that after- after a few of my mates had found out what I’d done .. I suppose in a way it felt like I’d- I’d got in with the gang sort of thing ‘cos everyone else was doing it and I’d gone out and done it so I thought, yeh, that’s alright I’m- I’m with them now sort of thing, yeh, that’s how it felt

20 years, Midlands

Theoretical support for this has been found by Eiser (1990), who, in reviewing research into social influence and how others could influence beliefs and behaviours, stated that conformity could sometimes be a strategy for avoiding rejection by one’s reference group.

It was also true that peer influence could work both ways. The following extract by a Social Worker suggests that sometimes the young men were persuaded not to engage in joyriding by their friends:

Tom
I’ve actually had a young man one time that said to me, he was actually going to steal a car or there are occasions when he has gone to steal a car but he’s had second thoughts about it and he’s just said no, I said well what made you think again about it, was it the (…) was it the police, police in the area, is it what your ma and pa might think about it, he’s said no my friend talked me out of it,
and I suppose the spin off was that there were cases when his friend wanted to go and take a car but he talked him out of it

Social Worker, Northern Ireland

Indeed there were a number of non-joyriding young offenders in custody who had been brought up on the same estates as the joyriders, and who appeared to have had the same social, cultural and educational disadvantages. Some of these young offenders had friends that were involved in car theft, yet stated that they had never themselves been involved in the joyriding subculture (although that is not to imply that they were not involved in other deviant activities). In many cases it was not that joyriding did not appeal to them; rather they appeared to resist the influence of peers because to them the disadvantages such as getting caught or causing an accident (to themselves or others) outweighed the advantages of driving:

Interviewer
what did they have to say about it

Dean
they just used to say that it was fun, that it was a buzz getting chased by the police and that, they used to try and ask me to come with them, no I had enough problems on my own without starting doing things like that

(...)

Dean
I just didn’t want to get dragged down with it, ‘cos I thought people seen associating with them, the way I look at it the police’d just like soup the lot of you, all in one go, and if I’m there associating with them I’d get dragged into it

19 years, Midlands

Bob
the way they was going on about it, and the way they was doing it, they could’ve have a crash any time, and they was only kids really ain’t they, crash into the wall they’re dead

16 years, Midlands

Robbie
stupid .. they going such a speed like, if somebody walks out in the middle of the road, its like they’re not going to be able to slow down quick enough before they hit them

17 years, Midlands

Overall the various accounts by joyriders and their non-joyriding peers suggested that there was probably an element of peer influence in determining the likelihood
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and level of involvement in the joyriding subculture. Indeed Kilpatrick (1997), in a study of 15 young car thieves, also pointed to the importance played by peer influence in joyriding. Her interviews revealed (as did those in the present study) that joyriding was rarely undertaken alone, and that image and status could be gained from fellow joyriders, as well as on-lookers and by-standers.

4.4 Functions of the joyriding subculture

It appears from the findings of the present study that the decision to join, or the gradual involvement in, a joyriding subculture depended to a large extent upon the functions that group membership could perform for the individual. This section will consider how engagement in illegitimate joyriding meets some of the culturally-induced desires that have been discussed, and it will do this by considering the functions provided by the joyriding subculture.

4.4.1 A means to status

It has previously been argued (see section 4.2.2) that joyriders particularly attempt to seek status from their peers, including those that were ‘older’, through the stealing and driving certain cars. Some joyriding subcultures appeared to have a hierarchical structure, with the older and more experienced joyriders holding a higher position of status, as the following account suggests:

*Simon*

well, half the time its not even me that sets fire to it, I just like, come on its time to get out the car, yeh, jump out the car, leave the car, everybody else walk off, ‘cos I know for a fact like, that I’m not- you know, not the main one, you know what I mean, not the main one that just goes to it (...) torch it (phss) goes up like, weren’t the main one- twocker, I’m not the main twocker

19 years, Midlands

One of the functions of the joyriding subculture appears to be that it allows the young men to gain status from their peers by demonstrating their mastery of specific skills. McCarney (1981) described how all children feel the need to be held in high esteem, and that the skills associated with joyriding (such as opening cars without keys and crossing the wires to start the ignition) can bring them the high status within their (deviant) peer group that they have been unable to achieve
legitimately elsewhere. A number of those who had care and control of the joyriders commented on this:

**Jenny**
I suppose it’s a way of being good at something, I suppose its not a very positive thing, but for somebody to be good at breaking into cars gains them respect, and if they’ve never been good at stuff at school, they’ve never had any sort of respect from their parents, so to get respect from amongst their peers is very important

*Probation Officer, Midlands*

**Timothy**
everybody has to be good at something, and the only thing he could excel at was stealing cars

*Probation Officer, Midlands*

There were a number of areas in which the joyriders could demonstrate mastery to others through ‘joyriding’. Firstly the accounts by the joyriders themselves suggested that they gained peer acceptance and status from the performance of technical manoeuvres being in the stolen cars:

**Alan**
it makes you feel good or something, you know happy or something, that everybody’s watching you and you’re like showing off an all that but I mean, I- showing off everything that you can do, you know ‘cos there’s more- there’s things that some people can’t do and you can do and things like that

*18 years, Northern Ireland*

Secondly, they gained peer recognition through demonstrating their skills at breaking into and stealing the cars, particularly as new models / alarms / immobilisers were introduced onto the market:

**Leon**
well you’d try to go for the ones, the easy one- the hard one, you know where you get more kick out of it and if you steal a hard one and you come back on the estate and go look, he stole that there they’re hard, and then it makes you macho

*17 years, Northern Ireland*

And thirdly they felt that their status was enhanced amongst their peers when they were able to ‘survive’ a police chase without being caught – the more dramatic the better:

**William**
mm, that’s were- that’s were you got- that’s were you get most of your buzz out, getting chased by the police .. everybody would
say- everybody would say, oh you got away from the police now they’d think you’re up there, it used to give me a buzz but not any more

19 years, Northern Ireland

Furthermore, it appeared that the attainment of these skills, and the subsequent reputation gained, offered opportunities for some to move on to a more lucrative car crime career:

*Terry*

it was the best ever chase I’ve ever had, ‘cos I’m- really I got away, that’s when- that’s when people started coming for me for the ram-raids

(...) it felt good because all my mates were saying, yeh you’re the best driver and everything, you’re the best driver, I’ll come and check you out for the ram-raids and everything, it felt good because I knew there was money there for me just for being a driver

21 years, Midlands

Unsurprisingly, comments by a number of professionals interviewed indicated that they suspected a lot of the ‘talk’ by the joyriders could be exaggeration or lies told to impress their peers:

*Liam*

they’ll always make their crime more serious, more interesting than anybody else’s, because they want to gain that street cred

(...) I think to prove the point you’ve got to look at statistics, you’ve got to, you’ve got to because er, we used to- when I worked at central we used to have to take the kids from court to [prison] and invariably you’d be sitting in the back of the van with half a dozen kids, they’ll be four or five of those were in for stealing cars, and they’d always talk amongst each other ‘cos the first time they met each other, and they’re always trying to out-do each other and assert their position, and you’d just listen to them and they’d say er, oh I nicked a Ferrari last Tuesday, or I’m in for stealing a Bentley or whatever, and you’d think, there hasn’t been one stolen, and you know, the crimes they’re talking about haven’t happened, and erm, I think once they’ve started that they’ve got to keep it up, and they’ll always erm, they’ll boost their crimes to give themselves that position in the pecking order, you know when they get into [prison], so I don’t think they’re totally reliable to be honest

*Police Officer, Midlands*

However, in terms of the present study, the enhancing, exaggerating, or even ‘making-up’ of war stories by the joyriders served to illustrate the importance
placed upon being seen to be proficient in these areas amongst their peers. In many of the joyriders’ accounts, it was clear that they were not only sharing their stories to demonstrate their expertise, but that they were emphasising the enhanced status that they felt they had achieved in the process - as seen in this extract:

Gordon
when they were coming round to ask me how I got away from the police car .. I suppose- I suppose in a way it made me feel like. probably the leader of the pack sort of thing, them coming round and asking me, well asking me exactly what went on, and I used to tell them, and they used to like, phew I can’t believe you got away, and’that sort of thing

20 years, Midlands

Linked to the reputation and enhanced status that may be derived from joining the subculture is development of the individual’s identity as a ‘joyrider’.

4.4.2 A means to identity

It appeared that joyriding gave the young men an identity that was sometimes positive and sometimes negative; sometimes an identity that existed only within their peer group, and sometimes one they wished to project to the wider society. It was also interesting to observe that, in many of the accounts, the young men seemed to be establishing their identity during the interviews as they re-told their stories. The previous section included the suggestion that joyriders may have exaggerated and invented stories in order to enhance their status to others. It is also likely that the more they shared these stories (whatever the accuracy of their contents) with others, the more the identity that they aspired to was reinforced for the joyriders themselves. This section considers the various types of identity that the young men appeared to be aspiring to, and for which joyriding provided the means.

McCarney (1981) argued that joyriding represented a quest for identity, pointing out that ‘D stream’ children who have also been deprived of status and recognition at school ‘search for identity along a trail of kicks’ (p16). The present study has described how joyriders appeared to be searching for status mainly from amongst other joyriders, and how they were also seeking identity as legitimate
members of their peer group. Briggs (1991), in his study of 30 joyriders from Newcastle-upon-Tyne, noticed that a typical scenario developed when joyriders came together in an informal setting, which included the exchange of anecdotes, jockeying for status and the use of aggressive language. He also described how the conversation was invariably anti-authority, vilifying the police’s attempts to apprehend joyriders, whilst grossly exaggerating their own driving abilities. In addition, the particular jargon used by the joyriders served to reinforce their mutual bonding.

The present study highlighted some of the aspects to this ‘search for identity’ that appeared to be directed towards society. For instance, a number of the joyriders seemed to develop a sense of pride and self-esteem from being known to the police as ‘notorious’ joyriders:

Anthony
I was known, I was the known car thief throughout the whole West Midlands, you know, police have got me new nick-name [name] by the [place] police, they nick-named me [name], its hard to explain [laughs] I’m a proper professional car thief, ram-raider, do you know ram-raider, that’s what I am, you know scanners, and everything, so we know where the police are and everything, we try and avoid the police, if we can’t they chase us, we go for it and then we loose them, its really weird

20 years, Midlands

And the following police account suggests that some did appear to have succeeded in achieving some notoriety:

Liam
we had one chap who- lad who only stole vehicles that would outrun police cars, erm he specialised in that field, he was stealing Lotus’ and things like that, er Cosworths, and erm, it was harder work, and invariably he used to get away or the chase was aborted because he was so dangerous, but er, because he got to be known we’d identify him as the driver then abort the chase and pick him up later

Police Officer, Midlands

It was also interesting to note in the above account the suggestion of the police feeling the need to establishing an identity – that is, as being able to have the final victory.
Most, if not all, joyriders took anti-authoritarian positions towards the police. For some this was represented by the ways in which they deliberately attempted to provoke and torment the police, as illustrated in the following account from Northern Ireland:

**Leon**
I was driving about in a big white car, flashy car and getting chased by the police all night long and they couldn’t catch me and I was drinking and smoking dope and laughing at them, it was good, and then I parked the car outside a house and went into a party, sat in the house drinking and listening to music, and then back out into the car again, driving about getting chased more by the police, we were laughing about it for weeks me and mates ‘cos the police couldn’t catch us, ‘cos sometimes the police knew who you were in the car, they’d say, right we’re chasing such and such in a car, well we can’t catch him, they know who you are but they still can’t catch you, and there’s nothing they can do about it and you laugh about it, and they see you walking the streets a couple of days later and they chase you for it on foot and you just get away and laugh at them again

17 years, Northern Ireland

And for one or two this ‘teasing’ was occasionally directed towards ordinary car owners:

**Harry**
I’ve known them to steal cars (...) and phone the police and tell them where they are, to come and get them, one of them told the owner of the car, and the owner phoned her own mobile (she’d) got out of the car (...) and left the keys in it, it was just an opportunist thing (...) she’d phoned her own number begging them to give her the car back and there’d be nothing done and they kept the phone line open, let her hear what they were doing to the car as they were doing it, they were letting it up and doing hand-brakers, squealing the tyres, so (she wasn’t too happy about it)

Social Worker, Northern Ireland

And then, whilst some seemed to want to retaliate against car owners, others appeared to wish to mimic them.

**Brian**
it was alright, I mean I drive around in the car as if it was my car, and like, I used to drive past the police, and they used to- they never even used to look at me or nothing like that, and I’d think, oh yeh, you know there’s nothing wrong with this, I’ll just do it all the time

19 years, Midlands
With the following joyrider, demonstrating an attempt to explore a different identity when he articulated the pleasure he got from driving around ‘like an adult’:

*Brian*

I don’t know, we just had the best times, all my friends come round and we just drive for miles, park up somewhere, have a smoke, and then drive about and its just smooth, tunes kicking out, its good, just makes me feel like old enough to drive and that, just makes me feel like I’m an adult, you know what I mean

17 years, Midlands

These stances could all be interpreted as being a reaction to the joyriders’ feeling that they held a disadvantaged position within society. As introduced previously, Cloward and Ohlin (1960) argued that the evolution of a delinquent subculture was brought about by failure (or the anticipation of failure) to achieve goals in socially approved ways. They further suggested that criminal deviance usually arose when a young person attributed this failure externally (i.e. the fault lying with the prevailing social order) rather than internally (i.e. personal inferiority). The ways in which the joyriders in the present study flaunted their activities to emphasise their personal skills and abilities (and therefore lack of person inferiority) tend support this hypothesis. The following account provides an example of this:

*Dennis*

we had this guy who was killed there a few years back in an accident down in [place] and for want of a better word he was one of the better- he was a great car thief if you could explain it like that, but he actually had heard us talking one night when he was in custody that there had never been a Saab stolen because they lock in reverse and the ignition’s down at the- at the (tunnel) and there’s never been a car gone taken from the [place] parked it outside the station and phoned us, just to let us know that he could do it, you know, and when you heard who it was you heard, its [name] here, God Almighty

Police Officer, Northern Ireland

It was also interesting to note how the Police Officer in the above extract, discussed the (now deceased) joyrider as a ‘great car thief’, conjuring up the cult hero image sometimes associated with joyriding. Bayley (1986) described James Dean’s 1955 fatal car crash in his Porsche 550 as the birth of a myth, the
components of which included 'the glamour of speed mixed with a romantic fatalism' (p52). It appears that this image is one that is ideal for adoption by joyriders, perhaps particularly for those of Northern Ireland, where the 'dangers' associated with the behaviour have included the risk of incurring paramilitary punishments. It is interesting for instance to note that McCarney (1981), when discussing some of the dangerous feats undertaken by the boys of West Belfast, states that the greatest esteem is reserved 'not for those who have no fear but for those who act in spite of their fear' (p17).

4.4.3 Use of the labels 'joyriding' and 'joyriders'

On the whole the activity of joyriding was not glamorised by those who had care and control of young offenders, and in the Midlands the actual word 'joyriding' attracted almost unanimous condemnation. The reluctance to condone the term 'joyriding' appeared to stem from the offence that it may cause victims, as can be seen in the following accounts:

*Emma*

to use the term joyriding, you know makes it sound positive and fun, when I actually think there's so many risks to other people and the public, you know the other road users, other pedestrians, people whizz through built up urban areas at high speed, you know

_Probation Officer, Midlands_

*Timothy*

it means to me, er personally it means its an unfortunate term used to describe an activity that's potentially dangerous, erm, has victims, and I suppose it's a gloss over an activity, and a topical or trendy term for stealing somebody's car

_Probation Officer, Midlands_

However, there were occasions when the term seemed to be being criticised 'in principle' rather than because of its accuracy in describing the activity. For instance, a clear tension can be seen in the extract by Paul (below) when attempting to justify not using the term on the basis of it 'not being fun', when it was obvious that the activity often was fun.

*Paul*

its an old expression that's come to be regarded as er .. I think, not- not reflecting society's view of what its about, 'cos although actually, from the young person's point of view, I think there's a lot of- there's a lot of merit in using it, because one of the
motivations is that its exciting and joyous if you like, hence its exciting and we like it and it gets us- its thrilling, its, you know our response is joyful [telephone interuption] so yeh, the name’s probably erm become regarded as inappropriate in a lot of circles because of the misery

Social Worker, Midlands

As Briggs (1991) commented:

For many, particularly the victims, ‘there is no joy in joyriding’. Whether this statement holds true for the young people concerned remains an issue for contentious debate.

(Briggs, 1991, p7)

Furthermore, comments by Police Officer Liam (see extract below) that there was ‘no- no joy in chasing someone round the country’ and that ‘when it comes to a police pursuit that’s when the joy stops and serious business starts’ were in direct contradiction to earlier statements (see section 4.3.2) regarding police pursuits, such as ‘I used to get a buzz from a pursuit’ and ‘at that point you’d be excited because you know you’ve got a pursuit coming’.

Liam

as far as I’m concerned there’s no such thing as joyriding ‘cos there’s no- no joy in, erm .. chasing someone round the country, erm, I suppose from the thief’s point of view, it’ll be a joy because I think- the ones I’ve spoken to they get a buzz from the pursuit, you know, the buzz starts when they steal the car, and they then go riding round, which I think’s what first stared the joyriding thing, ‘cos they take the car for their pleasure, erm, obviously when it comes to a police pursuit that’s when the joy stops and, serious business starts

Police Officer, Midlands

In the Midlands a number of alternative words were used by the professionals in preference to ‘joyriding’, one of the most common terms being ‘twocking’, a word derived from the legal term ‘TWOC’ (Taking Without Owner’s Consent), ‘stealing cars’ and ‘motor offending’. However, there were other phrases:

Charlie

we call them twockers but we have our own words for them as well which [laughs] really-

Police Officer, Midlands
Despite the debate and 'alternative word searching' amongst the Midlands professionals, what was perhaps even more interesting was the fact that most joyriders in the Midlands did not tend to use the term 'joyrider' either. Furthermore, the terms they did choose to use were very similar to those of the professionals. In the present study approximately half referred to the activity as 'twocking', a quarter as 'joyriding' and the remainder used other phrases such as 'stealing a car' or 'nicking a car':

Twocking or just theft isn't it

So, in the Midlands the term joyriding was favoured neither by the offenders nor the professionals, with some suggesting that the term was invented, and used predominantly, by the media:

Joyriding is- is the only people that use that is the media really

Briggs (1991) also pointed out that the term 'joyriding' was not one that was officially recognised, and that the offenders themselves rarely used it, suggesting that it originated from the media responding to 'society's need for a specific descriptive term' (p6). This being the case, there is a certain irony to the comments of a columnist for the Irish Times who, in writing an article for The Spectator, described joyriders as being 'the most misnamed species in the history of euphemism' (Myers, 1995, p16).
In Northern Ireland, where the comparable crime is known as TADA (Taking and Driving Away), it was interesting that there was very little professional opposition to the term ‘joyriding’. In the present study those committing the offence of TADA were generally referred to in interviews as joyriders, the term being unchallenged, with the following minor exceptions:

_Harry_

talking to the boys I would call it joyriding, talking to other professionals I would call it car-related crime

_Social Worker, Northern Ireland_

_Dennis_

they’re known as JR’s, that is what they’re, a-hu, there’s nothing else really, I mean you say, oh car thieves, but if you were just talking in normal conversation you’d just say, the JR’s

_Police Officer, Northern Ireland_

This was also the case in terms of the car thieves themselves, with most of the car thieves referring to themselves as ‘joyriders’ and only a few using other phrases such as ‘stealing/robbing cars’ or ‘hoods’:

_Interviewer_

and what do people tend to call the people that do the joyriding, do they call them joyriders or do they have other names for them

_Adrian_

hoods or joyriders

20 years, Northern Ireland

The use of various labels, and the reactions to those labels served to highlight the potential that joyriding had in being able to provide an identity for the young men, whether this was within the subculture itself or as projected to the wider society. One further perspective that many of the young men appeared to share with those of the wider society, and which was typically represented in their activities, was that of the ‘macho image’ of car driving, as discussed in the following section.

4.4.4 Reaffirming the macho image

The extracts that follow need to be read with the understanding that the interviewer was a woman. This may in some instances have led the respondents to be more reserved than they might otherwise may have been, or on the other hand to have exaggerated. There are, for example, some noticeable instances when respondents appear aware that they have overstepped the mark and tried to
‘redeem’ themselves. In most cases there was an attempt by the interviewer to respond to overtly sexist comments with humour, rather than a direct challenge, in order to maintain the flow of the interview.

Buckley (1992), bringing a gender perspective to a car crime conference, pointed to the many connections that are made in advertising between male sexuality and motor vehicles, stating that this had led to motor-related behaviour being seen as an important way in which male status and masculinity had come to be defined. Leading on from this she also argued that the tendency for car crime offenders to be male could not be ignored. Young men, she said, were particularly vulnerable to gender stereotypes, including the influence of the media, in sustaining the images of masculinity associated with cars.

Buckley further described how the media legitimised the idea that ‘performing well in big, high-speed cars’ was a male activity, whilst women were depicted as either ‘decorative nuances, or needing to be rescued from their car maintenance problems by men’ (p28). This stereotypical view of women could also be clearly observed in the following first two sentences of an advertisement for a car maintenance course in a Midlands college:

**Beginners Car Maintenance**
For those with no knowledge whatsoever of the car. Women are positively encouraged to come along.

*(Longslade Community College, 1999, p10)*

Certainly the stereotypical view of women as having limited knowledge of cars and/or driving was affirmed in the accounts given by joyriders in the present study. When asked whether girls ever got involved in joyriding, or whether they had ever been in a stolen car with a girl driving, the majority of the joyriders in the present study responded negatively, reasoning that girls could not drive:

*James*
aye you have them as passengers, but you’d not let them drive a car, no chance
*Interviewer*
why is that
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James
women drivers these days like, I hear it on the news and everything, talk- talk radio and that there, talking about them all out there, no chance

18 years, Northern Ireland

Christian
like you’ve got your little slags from down by the shops and that (...) but wouldn’t drive ‘cos like- half of them couldn’t drive, you know what I mean

17 years, Midlands

It was also interesting to notice a number of these young men had not taken account of their own driving experiences when making these judgements about women, as the following examples show:

Brett
.. I’ve had one girlfriend what has tried to drive, but, I’ve never let another one drive again though
Interviewer
why what happened
Brett
‘cos she crashed [laughs] then she wanted to drive my car after
Interviewer
but you’d crashed before hadn’t you
Brett
yeh
Interviewer
what’s the difference
Brett
.. it might sound sexist but I don’t think that women can drive as good as blokes

19 years, Midlands

Trevor
they couldn’t drive or anything, know what I mean, they didn’t have a licence or nothing, so they would just have been a danger to themselves really
Interviewer
but then you didn’t have a licence at the time did you
Trevor
no [laughs]

21 years, Midlands

Those that admitted to having known ‘good’ women drivers were often keen to point out that they were the exception rather than the rule:
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Adrian
once I was in a car with a girl, but see- the car was already stolen
and she drove it, she was a good wee driver aye for a women
20 years, Northern Ireland

This is supported by Bengry-Howell (1999), who found from his interviews that
the joyriders appeared to consider themselves to be better drivers than women,
who were also generally said to ‘belong’ in the passenger seat (p15). Also in
support of this, Buckley (1992) has argued that women’s relationship with cars is
controlled by male behaviour, being taught from an early age how to behave as
‘proper women’ (p28). It was often stated or implied by joyriders in the present
study that joyriding was ‘not the done thing’ for women:

Terry
I wouldn’t let a girl drive in the car
Interviewer
why’s that
Terry
just wouldn’t, I don’t think its right for ‘em
21 years, Midlands

James
usually they’re away at home anyway, sleeping in their beds
18 years, Northern Ireland

A view that was also shared by one of the non-joyriding young offenders:

Interviewer
what do the girls do- sort of-
Raymond
its not in their nature
16 years, Northern Ireland

It was particularly interesting to note how some joyriders went as far as to suggest
that girls who did joyride were somehow not ‘real’ women:

Carl
oh there’s one girl that I know but she’s- you can’t really class her
as a girl, she’s sort of like a lad .. she goes in stolen cars, that’s the
only girl I know
Interviewer
why do you say you class her as a lad
Carl
like the way she acts, she’s like, she’s always round like- she’s
always round lads, like she takes drugs, like she’s into cars, she’s
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like she’s a tomboy .. she thinks like- she must wish like she was a lad or something

18 years, Midlands

A view also held by one of the Police Officers –suggesting that this image may be one held by the wider society:

Liam
she was predominantly with a group of other lads, she was the only girl- say girl, use the term loosely, she was er always hanging about with these four or five lads, and they always- that’s what they did, they stole cars, that was their main crime

Interviewer
when you say you use the term loosely, was she older than a girl or not acting like a girl [laughs]

Liam
she was late teens but she was erm, for want of a better word she was a tom-boy, erm, she wasn’t the sort of girl that you’d want to take home to mum, but er, she was definitely female, but she enjoyed it just as much as the lads and she did it just as much

Police Officer, Midlands

Some young men (and this appeared to be particularly common in the Irish sample) took a more chivalrous attitude in stating that they did not allow girls in the cars with them in order to ‘protect’ them from the dangers:

Adrian
no, I wouldn’t go out with a girl like in the car

Interviewer
no, ‘cos some lads do don’t they, they take girls out for a – for a ride

Adrian
I’d be too scared of crashing or something, hurting them

20 years, Midlands

Shaun
I wouldn’t let a wee girl into a car with me like, my mates do but I wouldn’t

Interviewer
you wouldn’t let her in even as a passenger .. why’s that

Shaun
just in case crash or something

15 years, Northern Ireland

The view that women needed protecting has also been suggested in studies of ‘ordinary’ car drivers, reinforcing the notion of this being a general stereotype. For example, in an observational study of younger drivers (aged17 to 20 years)
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McKenna et al (1998) found that male drivers drove more dangerously than female drivers in the absence of passengers, and that the presence of male passengers was associated with more dangerous driving in both males and females. Interestingly however, young male drivers drove more safely in the presence of young female passengers.

Similarly, macho tendencies in general are not restricted to joyriders, as several studies have shown how young male drivers per se differ from those of female drivers in terms of their car preferences, driving styles and likelihood to have accidents. For instance, Rolls et al (1991) in a study of accident risk and behavioural patterns of younger drivers, found that males in general placed higher importance on the type of car that they drove than did females, particularly in terms of speed, acceleration and engine size; with increased speed and acceleration becoming less important with age. In fact the 17-20 year old males rated car appearance as just as important as safety when choosing a car.

In another study, this time of gender differences in patterns of road accident involvement and driving style, McKenna et al (1998) found a number of interesting differences between men and women, many of which were particularly significant in the younger male driver. For instance, they noticed that between 1979 and 1994 males have been consistently more likely than females to be involved in fatal accidents, accidents on bends, and accidents while overtaking in the hours of darkness, with these gender differences diminishing as age increased.

The study by McKenna et al (op cit) also revealed that the men of all ages were generally more inclined to speed, choosing significantly faster speeds than women in video measures and self-reported measures of speed choice. In addition young male drivers (estimated at under 25 years) drove significantly faster than females in an observational study using a radar speed gun. In an attempt to find reasons for the sex differences, a variety of measures were taken. Males of all ages were found to be more likely than the females to score higher in sensation seeking generally, thrill seeking when driving, plus to be less likely to worry about accidents. Men had a greater experience of thrill and competitiveness whilst
driving than women, though this generally decreased with age. When asked how many times the police had stopped them, males reported being stopped more often than females, and younger drivers more often than older drivers.

Most, if not all, of the above findings can arguably be linked to the tendency for young men to absorb, and attempt to live up to, the media-portrayed macho image of the male car driver. Joyriding, it appears, provides a way for young men ‘without means’ to similarly be able to live out this macho image.

Finally, it is interesting to note the finding of Bengry-Howell (1999) who, researched the links between joyriding and the social construction of masculinity. He conducted semi-structured interviews with car crime offenders, and studied these alongside a textual analysis of three car enthusiast magazines identified by the joyriders in his study as being ones that they regularly purchased. The magazines, he argued, portrayed the world of cars as ‘unequivocally male, where the only visible roles for women (were) as passengers of male drivers, or as “decorative” but incongruous sexual objects defined and contextualised in a manner to ostensibly titillate men’ (p19). His findings suggested that joyriders and the contemporary car enthusiast were ‘part of the same discursive world of masculinity’ but ‘pathologised purely on the basis of their social and cultural disadvantage’ (p2).

4.5 Summary and conclusions
This chapter has considered the culturally-induced beliefs and aspirations that might lead young people towards car crime, such as the symbolism of sexuality and power associated with cars and the desire for status and identity that cars can provide. Indeed the desire to experience the power of driving was a common response by the joyriders, although its links with sexuality were limited. The joyriders in the present study also appeared to be searching for status and identity amongst their peers through being seen in a stolen car, the types of cars that they preferred to steal being influenced by those things that the wider society regard as prestigious.
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It has been argued that culturally induced desires could be met either legitimately or illegitimately, and that many of the types of activities engaged in by joyriders are pursued through employment and/or leisure by legitimate road users. The deviant joyriding subculture was then described as being a leisure activity that developed because the situation afforded opportunities and a learning environment, contrary to the view that it developed as a frustrated response to perceived failure to achieve goals legitimately.

Some professionals felt that the young men were being influenced by their peers in the joyriding culture, whereas the joyriders views varied. Some stated that no one had forced them to do it, some admitted to being influenced, and others implied a resultant 'reduced responsibility'. Still others feared peer rejection. However, peer influence worked both ways, and a number of non-joyriding offenders interviewed stated that they had resisted because to them the disadvantages outweighed the advantages.

The functions of the joyriding subculture have also been discussed. One of the functions appeared to be that it allowed the young men to gain status from their peers by demonstrating their mastery of specific skills, such as the performance of (often dangerous) technical manoeuvres, demonstrating their skills at breaking into and stealing the cars, and being able to escape from the police pursuit. Although there were indications that some of these accounts were exaggerated, this only served to illustrate the importance placed maintaining a certain status amongst their peers. It also appeared that joyriding gave the young men a sense of identity which, as well as existing within their peer group, could be projected to the wider society. For example, most joyriders had anti-authoritarian position towards the police and others, with some also appeared to be attempting to explore the identity of adult driving experiences.

A final function of joyriding was the reaffirmation of the young men's macho image that was similar to that of the wider society. Stereotypical views of women having limited knowledge of cars and/or driving were noted, as were views that 'proper' women did not get involved in joyriding - except as passengers. It was
4. Joyriding as a Deviant Subculture

argued that most of the findings could be linked to the media-portrayed macho images of male car drivers

Widdicombe and Wooffitt (1995) pointed to the argument by New Subculture theorists that young people negotiated space for their own subculture within the class culture of their parents. There was support for this in the present study, as the joyriders did not attempt to ‘own’ desirable cars, nor did they attempt to drive them in order to make a statement about their socio-economic position, in the way legitimate car owners often do. Instead joyriders, remaining within their class culture (where a criminal career was often considered to be ‘normal’), used the stolen cars to demonstrate subtle subcultural achievements such as bravado and mastery. However there were also many aspirations and beliefs evident in the accounts that were influenced by the wider society. For instance, they held the same media images and portrayals of cars as other young men, with same gender stereotypes, gaining the same satisfaction from controlling the car and mastering the techniques of driving.

Cloward & Ohlin (1960) stated that delinquent subcultures were ‘typically found amongst adolescent males in lower class areas of large urban centres’ (p1), arguing that one type of deviant subculture, the ‘criminal subculture’, was devoted to material gain by illegal means. It is interesting that in support of these claims, the present study had already referred to the tendency for joyriding to predominate in areas of social deprivation and poverty (see section 4.1.1). However, whilst some car thieves could be classed within the above description of a criminal subculture, it appeared that joyriders were motivated more by experiences than by financial incentive. As this chapter has attempted to demonstrate, the experiences sought may associated with the desire to feel the power of driving a fast car, in addition to the feelings of self-esteem gained by status and recognition from their peers. It is therefore possible that joyriders form a deviant criminal subculture that it is devoted to ‘a particular experience by illegal means’.
4. Joyriding as a Deviant Subculture

Thinking of how the behaviour develops within cultural terms does not in itself suggest that the 'particular' experience provided by joyriding is necessarily an 'addictive' experience. Nevertheless, as has been alluded to in the introduction, there may be instances when joyriding goes beyond being one of many deviant behaviours engaged in by some young people, to becoming a behaviour that is engaged in addictively by some individuals. The following chapter will begin to look at this notion by considering how experiences related to the initial encounters with joyriding compare to the initial experiences of (other) behaviours with an addictive potential.
Chapter 5: Initiation

Summary of contents:
5. Initiation
5.1 Pre-initiation
5.2 Initial joyriding behaviour
5.3 Progression of initial behaviour
5.4 Summary and conclusions

5. Initiation
Having considered how joyriding may exist as a deviant subculture, this chapter will now begin the process of exploring how these activities may also be described within the continuum model of addiction as described in Chapter 3 (section 3.3). Within this general model, 'initiation' represents the first phase in the development of a potentially addictive behaviour, and specifically refers to the initial contact with the behaviour in question. In terms of joyriding, initiation usually includes the observation of other joyriders, followed by occasionally riding as a passenger in and/or driving a stolen car. The aim of this chapter is to describe this initial phase of the joyriders’ career giving consideration, where appropriate, to how it compares to the development of behaviours known to have an addictive potential.

However, before actual engagement in a behaviour, there are a number of factors that may influence the likelihood of a potentially addictive behaviour being taken up, that take place prior to initiation.

5.1 Pre-initiation
There are two related pre-initiation issues that are of particular interest when comparing joyriding to other behaviours said to have an addictive potential. First, there is the prior cultural background of the individual dictating exposure to the activity; and second is the perceived expectancies regarding indulgence in that activity.
5. Initiation

5.1.1 Culture of deprivation, cars and crime

Whilst joyriding and other activities can develop as a deviant subculture (see previous chapter), the roots of these subcultures can also be described as contributing to the development of addictive behaviours. For instance, Brown (1997) described how the vulnerabilities influencing the development of an addiction included a person's social, economic and cultural lifestyle, arguing that absence of economic opportunity could lead to a narrower range of accessible rewarding activities.

It is understandable, in instances of severe deprivation, that many youngsters are drawn towards involvement in stolen cars. West Belfast, where the population is classified as mainly working-class, is noted for high levels of unemployment, social deprivation and poverty, with McCorry and Morrissey (1989) describing the levels of deprivation in West Belfast as 'exceptional'. Similar patterns have emerged in other areas that have been researched with regards to joyriding, such as Northumbria (Briggs, 1991). Indeed McCullough et al (1990), when describing initiation into the joyriding culture, stated that 'this kind of activity is many levels of interest and excitement above 'hanging around the streets'' (p8).

Many behaviours which have the potential to become addictive, such as drinking alcohol or taking exercise, begin as harmless, or even healthy, activities. While joyriding does not fit into the category of a harmless or healthy activity, if the behaviour follows a similar course, then one might expect to find an initial enthusiasm amongst joyriders for cars and driving per se. In the present study there were many examples of a prior interest in cars and driving:

*Interviewer*  
how long have you been interested in cars then  
*Craig*  
since I was about eight or nine (...) I just- well my dad used to go stock car racing and, I used to just watch dad just (...) to go and watch him like and I just- I just started to like cars from there  
17 years, Midlands

This observation is supported by other studies, such as that by Light *et al* (1993) who, in a semi-structured interview study of 100 car thieves, found that two thirds reported having had a keen interest in cars from an early age (although most of...
these did not feel that this was related to their subsequent involvement in car crime).

However, research has demonstrated that many young males who drive legally show a healthy enthusiasm for cars. For instance, Wood and Marplan (1987), in a survey of 1000 young drivers (under 24 years of age) found that 31% of the youngest respondents in their sample (aged 17-18 years) agreed that they spent a lot of time talking about cars; with males from all age groups being more likely to state this than females (51% as opposed to 16%). Nevertheless, whilst these young men-who are interested in cars may be driving legally, there does appear to be a relationship between generally unsafe driving practices in young people and their enthusiasm for cars. In a comparative study of 17-25 year old ‘safe’ and ‘unsafe’ drivers, McDonald et al (1992) found that more of the ‘unsafe’ drivers were enthusiastic about driving and cars (makes, models and car maintenance) and talked about such things more with their friends than the ‘safe’ drivers; and that more of the ‘unsafe’ drivers were involved in car cultures.

McMurran and Whitman (1997) have argued that initial involvement in any addictive behaviour is often ‘culturally normal’ (p197), and in the present study it was clear that many of the young men, both in Northern Ireland and the Midlands, had been brought up in an environment where crime (including joyriding) was very much part of their culture.

Of those joyriders in the present sample who were asked, and provided information on this topic, most had been involved with other criminal activities prior to joyriding. Table 11 (below) shows almost three quarters of the sample admitted to having been involved in some form of criminal activity prior to joyriding, the figure being slightly higher in the Midlands than in Northern Ireland.
5. Initiation

Table 11: Breakdown by geographical location those who claimed that joyriding was their first ever involvement in criminal activity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Midlands (n=23)</th>
<th>Northern Ireland (n=20)</th>
<th>Total (n=43)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First crime was joyriding</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Had committed other crime(s) before joyriding</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of those that had been involved in other criminal activity prior to first joyriding, the most popular crimes were burglaries and theft, as can be seen in Table 12 (below).

Table 12: The types of crimes that had been committed prior to joyriding by those whose first crime was not joyriding (N.B. some respondents had committed multiple crimes)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Midlands (n=23)</th>
<th>Northern Ireland (n=20)</th>
<th>Total (n=43)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Burglary</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theft</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criminal damage</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assault</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous / non-specified</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Then, within this general culture of crime, joyriding was also commonplace, with 'displays' (consisting of demonstrations of hand-brake turns, wheel-spins and racing) typically taking place on estates, fields and wasteland:

Gordon
yeh, the area where I lived its renowned for that sort of thing, but they come flying down the road, or speeding down the road should I say, and just rip up the handbrake and the car would skid all down the road

20 years, Midlands

Jo
it was all- the way I learnt it was always going off, and then you just got brought up around it, and then you just got more curious

Focus group respondent, Northern Ireland

However it was not always the case that the respondents had witnessed such ‘displays’ in their younger days, and not all of the young men had experienced a joyriding culture where they grew up:
5. Initiation

Interviewer
before you were involved in car crime, did people used to drive into the estate where you lived in stolen cars and drive around in them
Roger
no, not really, not that I know to
Interviewer
so before you got involved with stealing cars yourself, or driving as a passenger perhaps in a stolen car, you’d not watched other people doing it then
Roger
no, no

16 years, Midlands

There is evidence that prior exposure to potentially addictive behaviours can influence possible initiation of that behaviour. For instance, Wilson (1987) discussed how vicarious learning (modelling) is influential in the development of many social behaviours, including drinking - particularly the initiation and maintenance of drinking. In addition to the more general environment, prior exposure to a behaviour directly from family members can also be a predisposing factor in initiation of a number of behaviours. For instance, there are indications that prior exposure to gambling during childhood by family members may predispose a person towards a gambling career (Griffiths 1995). Goodman (1997), in outlining the nature of sexual addiction, has described how the addiction may begin by initial exposure to sexual stimulation through identification with another person who engages in the behaviour, such as the mother.

In terms of the influence of the family upon joyriding activities, in the present study a number of respondents reported having had prior exposure to car crime through family members:

Interviewer
and the first time you drove on the road, was that in a stolen car
Noel
no, erm, I drove my dad’s car on the road with him beside me, ‘cos my dad used to be a twocker, I’m not sure why he let me but he did
20 years, Midlands

Anthony
er my brother yeh, my brother used to be a car thief yeh, and erm, when my brother died (...) he left a little book, how to steal cars,
you know, and I- I had this book left for me, isn’t it, and since then
I just went out and tried it for myself you know
Interviewer
what do you mean little book
Anthony
yeh, every car he took- knew how to take, you know what I mean,
‘cos like, he was like, really good car thief

20 years, Midlands

It is also interesting to note that in the study of car thieves conducted by Light et al (1993), 33% of the sample said that other family members (such as brothers or cousins) had also stolen cars at some time, with only a third saying that their family would be upset about their own involvement in car crime.

5.1.2 Positive and negative expectancies

As with the social and cultural aspects described in the section above, many of the expectancies associated with joyriding (such as sexuality, power, status and identity) contribute to a deviant subculture (see previous chapter). However, certain positive and negative expectancies have also been identified as important predictors of engagement in the development of addictive behaviours. For instance, Marlatt et al (1988), in a review, described how people often expected alcohol to ‘enhance social and physical pleasure, enhance sexual performance and responsiveness, increase power and aggression, increase social assertiveness, and reduce tension’ (p234). They also point out that these beliefs can be acquired before an individual begins to drink. Wilson (1987) takes this a stage further by describing how beliefs about the effects of drinking are better predictors of behaviour than the actual consequences of drinking.

In the present study, prior expectations appeared to play an interesting part in the pre-initiation process of the car crime career, with a number of respondents describing how, prior to having indulged in the behaviour, they anticipated the excitement of driving stolen cars:

Carl
started off- I can remember, like when school had finished I’d walk out the gates and there’d always be someone going round the school- like grounds in a stolen car, and it used to excite me and I used to think, yeh, I can’t wait ‘till I can get a car

18 years, Midlands
5. Initiation

There is some support for this in Light et al's (1993) study where, although potential excitement was only rated by 18% of the car thieves as being the main reason for getting involved in car crime, 71% responded that potential excitement was an important or very important reason.

There were also clear social expectations. For instance, some young men described how they expected positive responses from women if they could be seen driving a powerful car:

*Simon*

'cos seen all the young people like driving a car- like big posh cars like, SRIs, new Astras and all that like nice sporty cars, you know like, just pick up women like that [snaps fingers], I thought, well if they can do it then I could do

*(19 years, Midlands)*

In terms of broader social rewards, it has been noted that within social groups drug users may encourage initiates to use drugs by promising that certain benefits will follow. Kandel and Maloff (1983) described how these benefits may be related to the effects of the drug itself, but may also include the promise of peer approval. There were a number of examples in the present study that suggested an expectation of such social rewards from driving a ‘nice’ stolen car:

*Adrian*

at the time it was like .. all the older people, like the people that when you’re younger you look up to people don’t you, like the people you looked up to they was always driving, they always had nice cars and that, just to keep up with them weren’t it really

*(20 years, Midlands)*

*Interviewer*

what did you think of the older lads that did that

*Joel*

fact that everyone- everyone looked up to ‘em, look at him, and if he had a nice car

*(21 years, Midlands)*

Then, some of the joyriders also reported an awareness of negative expectancies, which did appear to discourage them from wanting to get involved – at least for a time:
5. Initiation

Gordon
well to start with ‘cos I was so young I thought that it was quite
dangerous, so I tried- I tried staying away, but because (…) there
was nothing to do, when I used to hear a brake- a tyre screech on
the road I used to go to the window, looking out of the window
watching them coming up the road

20 years, Midlands

And for some young offenders the negative expectancies appeared to have
persuaded them not to get involved at all, as these non-joyriding young offenders
stated:

Interviewer
did you ever think, that looks fun, I wouldn’t mind having a go in
that
Robbie
no .. ‘cos I like- I wouldn’t risk my own life and somebody else’s
life by just getting in a stolen car, its not worth it

17 years, Midlands

Carlton
there’s no point in joyriding ‘cos you don’t get no money out of it
(just only get caught for a buzz ain’t it)

18 years, Midlands

5.2 Initial joyriding behaviour

5.2.1 Age of initiation

In the present study the average age of first getting involved in joyriding was
reported as being 14 years (ranging from 5 to 17 years), bearing in mind that the
average age at interview was 18 years (ranging from 15 to 21 years). Other
studies have similarly demonstrated that although the age at which joyriders first
became involved in car crime can vary considerably, like many criminal
behaviours, it is generally an adolescent activity. Reeves (1993), for instance,
found, in a study of incarcerated car thieves, that peak age of onset for car theft
was 13 years, with ranging from 9 to 20 years. Whilst similar trends may also
been seen in age of first using cigarettes, drugs and alcohol, early age of onset is
not of course indicative of the behaviours necessarily having an addictive
potential.

However, in an interesting study, Davies & Stacey (1972) asked teenagers to
report how old they were when they had their first drink, and analysis of their
5. Initiation

responses revealed that their answers were correlated with their age at interview. That is, the older the teenagers were when asked the question, the older they said they were when they first drank alcohol. As other studies have also found similar results, Davies (1997) suggests that the question may be a better predictor of the age of the respondent than the age of onset of drinking.

Interestingly, as with Davies and Stacey’s study, a closer look at the responses in the present study showed a significant relationship between age at interview and reported age of first getting involved in joyriding ($r = 0.32, N = 47, p = 0.025$, one-tailed test). However, the responses in the present study still suggested that some of the young men were very immature, at least in stature, if not in years, when they first attempted to drive:

Philip
(you know years ago) when I used to go pinching ‘em I used to have to take a cushion with me to sit on so I could see

17 years, Midlands

Brett
yeh I was scared, ‘cos I could barely see over the thingy- steering wheel, I had to see through the gap (...) I was only about .. fifteen,
and when I was fifteen I was well short

19 years, Midlands

Whilst some recalled feeling a sense of pride at being able to drive at a young age,

William
aye, I liked it, did like it, gave me a buzz so it did, just gave me butterflies in my stomach if you know what I mean, ‘cos there wasn’t- there’s not too many people can drive round about that age

Interviewer
how old were you then

William
oh I was, my first stolen car was about eleven, eleven or twelve

19 years, Northern Ireland

others simply looked back at their first driving experiences with amusement:

Leon
yep. I was at school at the time

Interviewer
‘cos you were only thirteen weren’t you
5. Initiation

Leon
I was in school uniform an all (…) school bag an all with me
[laughs]

17 years, Northern Ireland

5.2.2 Functions served by the initial behaviour

When potentially addictive behaviours are first indulged in they may serve a variety of personal functions including satisfying curiosity, enhancing self-esteem, and being an adaptive response to conflict. In the present study, it was found that the functions served by joyriding in the initiation phase were similarly diverse. However, as the previous section has described, one of the main positive expectations of joyriding as an activity was that of anticipated social rewards, and it is therefore unsurprising that one of the most common functional motivations for initial indulgence in joyriding was the enhancement of credibility amongst peers, as was discussed when considering joyriding as a deviant subculture (see Chapter 4, section 4.2.2).

However, it is also worth mentioning that for some of the respondents, initial involvement in joyriding appeared to have been triggered by other underlying conflicts:

Brian
I was a bit of a good boy you see when I was young, I was- got up proper and that, but then, things started happening with my family and all and the other, and then I started going off with my mates and then .. we started hanging round with people that started nicking cars, then I got into it

19 years, Midland

Indeed initial involvement with many potentially addictive behaviours can be as a response to a stressful or conflicting life event. For instance, Sacks (1981) pointed to the ease with which running offers itself as an adaptive response, as it requires very little skill. He described, for example, one ‘running addict’ who began to run as an adaptive response to his father’s illness. Griffiths (1995) similarly stated that problem gambling usually began in adolescence, often triggered by a major life stress such as the death of a parent.
Furthermore, there were also quite a few young men in the present study who stated that the first time they stole a car it was purely for convenience, such as to get home when stranded somewhere, or when on the run:

*Trevor*

I was stranded one time in [place], back from seeing my mates and it was late so I just got a lift back in it, just (...) instead of walking

21 years, Midlands

These examples demonstrate that, whilst belonging to a deviant subculture may serve certain social/cultural functions, there are sometimes other (personal or functional) motivations for first indulging in joyriding. This is important because the functions served by the behaviour as it progresses, and the ability of the individual to manipulate the activity in order that those functions continue to be served, will influence the degree of salience that the behaviour has for that individual.

### 5.3 Progression of initial behaviour

Initial engagement in joyriding included the respondents' first experiences of riding as a passenger and/or driving a stolen car, together with learning to actually steal a car (i.e. breaking into a car and getting it started). Although these experiences varied as to the order in which they initially occurred, generally the behaviour progressed from casual observer (pre-initiation) to riding as a passenger, driving the cars, and then learning how to steal cars. However, not all of those who described themselves as joyriders had engaged in all these behaviours. Some had just ridden as passengers, some only drove, and not all had been involved in the actual stealing of vehicles.

#### 5.3.1 Riding as a passenger

As has been discussed, the observation of 'displays' given by other joyriders is a very common introduction to the behaviour. This often led to the observers asking (or occasionally being invited) to ride as a passenger in a stolen car by one of the more experienced joyriders.

*Leon*

it was a big boy that was driving the stolen car (...) he pulled up at the shops and says, he was talking to someone, and we just walked over and jumped into it, and he went- he went, get out, and we
5. Initiation

went no we’re staying in, and then he just started flying about and skidding it

17 years, Northern Ireland

The joyriders generally expected that riding as a passenger would be a positive experience and for most their expectations were confirmed, although some admitted to being scared:

*Interviewer*
how did you think it was going to feel as a passenger for the first time
*Nick*
don’t know what it would feel like, fun
*Interviewer*
what did it feel like in fact
*Nick*
Scared so I was

16 years, Northern Ireland

It is interesting to note that when asked what it felt like to ride as a passenger in a stolen car for the first time, many of the respondents talked about similar feelings to those one might expect a drug-user to use. Whilst the use of this ‘drug-like’ terminology is more pronounced when describing later involvement in joyriding activities, it is worth noting that discourse of this type was being used to describe the initial phase of the joyriding career:

*Interviewer*
what did it feel like
*Leon*
good .. the buzz was good

17 years, Northern Ireland

*Steve*
it was an adrenaline rush, it was a good buzz like

19 years, Northern Ireland

Although most described their first experiences of riding as a passenger in a stolen car in a positive way, for some the experiences carried an element of fear, which also appeared to add to the ‘buzz’:

*Interviewer*
what did it feel like when you were a passenger for the first time
*Noel*
[laughs] bob meself
(...)

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For most, riding as a passenger was the precursor to actually driving the stolen cars. However, some only ever rode as passengers. For instance, anecdotal evidence from those who have care and control of joyriders, plus accounts by the joyriders themselves suggest that the experience of joyriding for young girls is almost exclusively confined to passenger status. Furthermore there were a minority of young men in this study who identified themselves as being joyriders, yet exclusively rode as passengers. There a number of possible reasons why some of the young men chose to ride as passengers rather than to drive. Some, for instance, felt that their driving skills were not 'good enough':

Peter
it was always my mates that were driving ‘cos they were better drivers than me

18 years, Midlands

Whereas others wanted the buzz without risking a more serious charge if they were to get caught ('allowing to be carried' usually carries a lesser penalty then 'twock'):

Interviewer
how did that make you feel, riding as a passenger

Mike
great, ‘cos they couldn’t fucking do me for it, but they’d do them for it you know

20 years, Northern Ireland

The following statement given by a joyrider who did drive the cars supported this:

Colin
I was paranoid to start off with, when I was driving it, ‘cos er, the driver, gets punished more then everyone else doesn’t he (...) ‘cos if you’re driving the car, you’re driving the car with no tax, MOT, or whatever it ain't got, so you just get done with that, and the passenger’d just get done for aiding and abetting

19 years, Midlands
There was also the suggestion by a Police Officer that some, who would not want to \textit{drive} a stolen car, allowed themselves to be carried as passengers in order to gain favour with their peers:

\textit{Liam}

you find that the regular lads that are passengers in these stolen cars, although they don’t drive they get just as much a buzz out of it (...) secretly I wonder if they’re doing it just to save face in front of their friends, don’t want to be called a chicken, coward, and so they go along with them, without actually driving

\textit{Police Officer, Midlands}

Whilst, despite media suggestions, it is not likely that any drugs are ‘instantly addictive’, it does appear that some people can develop a drug habit very quickly. Similarly, there were examples in this study of instances where the feelings experienced when riding as a passenger in a stolen car led the young men to increase their joyriding behaviour very quickly:

\textit{Interviewer}

you went for a ride in a stolen for the first time as a passenger, how long after that was it before you went in again

\textit{Joel}

it was a couple of months, then it turned into a couple of weeks, then it just- getting on to about most days

\textit{21 years, Midlands}

Conversely, there were a minority of joyriders who stated that they had \textit{never} been a passengers, only ever drivers:

\textit{Interviewer}

can you remember the first time you rode as a passenger in a stolen car

\textit{Chris}

[laughs] I’ve never been a passenger

\textit{20 years, Midlands}

\textit{Anthony}

I’ve never ever in my life been a passenger in a stolen vehicle

\textit{20 years, Midlands}

\textbf{5.3.2 First attempts at driving}

For a number of the respondents in the present study, the first car that they attempted to drive was one that had been abandoned by other joyriders:
5. Initiation

Leon
a couple of nights later there was another car and I says, if it gets abandoned, if it gets left I'm going to drive it and take it for a drive, and it got left down the street and I got into it and started driving about in it

17 years, Northern Ireland

Many stated that they were on their own when they drove for the first time, and there was often a sense that some chose to go alone due to a fear of 'showing themselves up' in front of their mates,

Simon
I'd just be on my own, 'cos no-one would get in the car, 'cos they couldn't- they knew the fact that I couldn't drive, so I thought I might as well teach myself

19 years, Midlands

with others feeling that their peers would not want to risk being with them anyway:

Darren
I think- I don't think no one else would have got in the car with me

18 years, Midlands

However some admitted to needing someone else in the car with them the first time they drove to help them to operate the controls:

Philip
what happened yeh, it was like I could drive, but I had to keep two hands on the steering wheel, you know so I couldn't- I was scared to do the gears, so he done gears, I done steering and clutch and all that

17 years, Midlands

Then some of those who chose to learn to drive on their own gave reasons of safety:

Jeremy
and I wanted that feeling of going out in a car, and a car of my own, just learning to drive, or if it had- if I had- went to fast and crashed and killed someone, then I was only killing myself

18 years, Midlands

In terms of (other) potentially addictive behaviours, Kandel and Maloff (1983) described how other more experienced drug users, who were usually friends of the initiate, taught initial drug use. In the present study, many of the car thieves
suggested by their comments that they had learnt how to drive a stolen car from friends although, as their first attempts at driving were usually on their own, it appeared that learning was more through observation than direct instruction:

*Adrian*
when my friends were driving I was, you know always in the passenger seat watching them, how they used the gears an .. use the, indicators and stuff, and picked it all up one day and just, started the car and tries to drive it myself an, after a couple of hours I got the hang of it

20 years, Northern Ireland

*McGillivray et al* (1993) similarly found that of 17 young people in their study involved in car crime, most had learned to drive by watching either their peers or family members. By contrast, *Light et al* (1993), who found in their study of car thieves that the actual driving of a stolen car was usually self-taught. In the present study, only a few of the young men claimed that they were completely self-taught, such as *Simon* (below):

*Simon*
I thought well I might as well teach myself, I don’t know whether it’ll come in handy like, I’ll teach myself, that’s were its been, I’ve learned the hard way all the time, all my life I’ve learned the hard way, so

19 years, Midlands

Initial involvement in an activity may be influenced by the ease and accessibility of the particular behaviour. For example, *Young* (1996) described a case study of a woman who eventually became ‘addicted’ to using the Internet. She said that despite being computer phobic and illiterate she initially began scanning social chat rooms because she found the menu-driven applications allowed her to navigate easily through the on-line system of her new PC.

Applied to joyriding, the initial involvement in the activity would be dictated partly by the ease with which the young people were able to drive the cars. Indeed, analysis of the interviews with joyriders demonstrated that although most had not had formal driving lessons, many described how easy it was to learn to drive a stolen car:
5. Initiation

Anthony
Generally just sitting in the car you know, and watching someone else, its so easy to pick up, you know what I mean, its knowledge isn’t it really

20 years, Midlands

This finding is supported by McGillivray et al (1993) who found that all but one of 17 young car crime offenders interviewed stated that driving was quite easy.

However, it is often a paradox that, although some behaviours are clearly known to be potentially harmful prior to initial indulgence, this does not prevent ‘experimentation’. In the case of drug use amongst young people, Eiser (1989) explained that this might be because users rely on other people’s information to inform them of the harmful (often long-term) effects, but personal experience to confirm the (short-term) benefits.

As with experiences of using drugs that may later become addictive, the initial personal experiences of driving a stolen car were often associated with short-term positive feelings, despite knowledge of the potential short and long-term dangers:

Christian
At first I was shitting myself bricks and I thought, say like I’m driving on the path or something like a little kid walks out or something, so like when I was on the paths I was going a bit- like I weren’t going so fast, do you know what I mean, but on the fields I was loving it

(…)

just happened, started going out all the time, thought, fair enough I can do it without getting caught, you know what I mean, so I might as well carry on, carry on doing it for a little while

17 years, Midlands

As with riding as a passenger, for some the ‘buzz’ seemed to have been inextricably linked with the potential for danger:

Joel
A big buzz, you know, knowing you’re doing wrong and (…) kind of thing

(…)

I suppose I was scared a bit .. that was outweighed by everything else ‘cos I had an adrenaline kind of thing

21 years, Midlands
5. Initiation

However, as the extracts above suggest, the dangers that can be associated with joyriding, as well as drug use, are not always long term. Davis (1996) pointed out that substances can be used experimentally, recreationally or dependently, but problem use can occur at any level, adding that many glue-sniffing deaths occurred in first-time users. It was interesting to observe in the present study that many young men described having crashed and/or being arrested on the first occasion that they attempted to drive:

Dave
I didn’t know how to drive properly and that, I went to pull over to work out how to put the lights on and I hit another car, put my foot back on the accelerator instead of the brake

21 years, Midlands

Leon
I went for a big drive, I went all round West Belfast up the mountains and stuff and I was coming back down, police chased after me and I got arrested for it, I got cautioned

Interviewer
on the first time .. how did it feel

Leon
felt good but it didn’t feel good when I was in the police station

17 years, Northern Ireland

Although some incidents were minor, one would have thought that these experiences would act as negative reinforcement. However, this was clearly not the case, as most of the young men continued in their joyriding careers. In the following example, for instance, Brett described how he was not deterred after he had crashed when following a fellow joyrider:

Brett
my steering lock’s come back on and I’ve panicked and that, I’ve thought I’ve hit my brakes but I ain’t, I’ve hit the accelerator and gone straight into the back of him and its done something to his car, well its wrote all the back end off his car, he’s broke his legs somehow, then his car’s swerved out- well his car’s span out the way, I’ve gone straight over and knocked a lamp post down

Interviewer
So your mate broke his leg (...) you wrote two cars off and knocked a lamp post down

Brett
yeh [laughs]

Interviewer
did that put you off
5. Initiation

Brett
yeh it did for about two weeks

One possible explanation is linked to how the feelings associated with these experiences are interpreted. Kandel and Maloff (1983) described, how teaching of initial drug use includes, not only the correct method using of the drug, but also the correct interpretation of the drugs effects. Initiates, they argued, are taught by their peers how to perceive the effects of a drug as pleasurable and non-threatening. As with drug-using initiates, the tendency to continue joyriding after an initial negative experience could similarly be because the novice joyrider has learnt from peers to interpret these experiences as being all part of the 'buzz'. In fact there were some instances where an initial negative feeling certainly appeared to have been re-structured following discussions with peers:

Adrian
on the night I just thought it was silly 'cos like, if I got chased or .. 'cos I didn't even know my way back or nothing, just like anything could have happened, and like that night I started thinking like I shouldn't have done it and that but, when I was with my mates and that, and they was all like, oh I seen you driving that car and that, like I just forgot about it

Marlatt et al (1988) suggest that feelings need not necessarily be euphoric in order to encourage drug use, as it is only necessary that the feeling shortly after taking the drug is better than that immediately prior to use. It is interesting that for some novice joyriders, although the initial experience was something of an anti-climax, a short time afterwards they were excited enough to want to repeat the experience:

Interviewer
was it as good as you thought it was going to be
Craig
no not really
(...)
Interviewer
OK, how did you feel afterwards (...) when you were thinking about it, how did you feel then
Craig
excited [laughs] I just wanted to have another go

17 years, Midlands
Furthermore the positive feelings that they experienced shortly after driving often appeared to be more from the responses that they received from their peers than the driving experiences themselves:

*Gordon*
I didn’t think I was part of the group, but as soon as they’d found out what I’d actually done, it was like, took me under their arms sort of thing, that I was in their group now, I’d managed to drive a car and pinch one of my own

*20 years, Midlands*

Linked to the effect of peer responses was the finding that, although many chose to go alone for their first few attempts, there was a sense that to fully enjoy the experience it needed to be a peer activity:

*Alan*
it felt good you know, ‘cos all my mates an all were asking about it, an all things like that there and just you felt good you know

*18 years, Northern Ireland*

However, just as the feelings associated with riding as a passenger led some to become increasingly involved in the activity; so the driving of stolen cars became for some a regular activity, often leading to wanting to learn how to actually steal the cars:

*Trevor*
‘cos I liked it I got that I was getting used to it, I started to do it every night more or less

(...)

*Interviewer*
how soon after that was it before you started stealing them yourself

*Trevor*
(...)
I used to just watch out at first, but then I got fascinated how someone could just go in like a couple of minutes, and like take the car away and sort of like, I just got shown how to do it, and then I just had a go myself and then after that it just come natural kind of thing

*21 years, Midlands*

5. Initiation

5.3.3 Learning to steal a car

Stealing a car involves learning first how to break into the vehicle, and then how to start it. Stealing a car may also involve learning how to overcome anti-theft devices such as car alarms and immobilisers, although these would probably not be tackled on the first few attempts.
Many of the car thieves in this study appeared to have learnt how to steal a car by being shown by their friends:

*Chris*
I'd never actually nicked a car without the keys so I was like, well, you know, how, and they said, well I'll show you, so they showed me

20 years, Midlands

Light *et al* (1983) similarly found that although driving a car was often self-taught, the skills of breaking into and stealing a car were generally taught by the more experienced car thieves. However, it was interesting that, in the present study, as with learning to drive, some had watched and listened to the ‘older boys’ before practising on their own with abandoned cars or ‘scrap yard’ cars:

*Leon*
just heard through standing with the older ones on the street, and saying, I know how to steal this car you do this and you do that, and I was- just overheard, then try it and succeed

17 years, Northern Ireland

*Joe*
it was in a scrap yard .. sneak into the scrap yard, climbed over the fence, erm and like, snapping steering locks and that in the scrap yard and learning how to nick ‘em and that

20 years, Midlands

Sometimes the first experience of stealing a car was to also steal the car keys, as in the case of Matthew (below) who recalled stealing his first car whilst in a children’s home:

*Matthew*
somehow we were talking about the cars out in the car park, then we goes, well they leave the key cabinet open in the office, so we’ve all climbed out of the window and that, got into the office, then we’ve took the car

19 years, Midlands

On the other hand, some young men already knew how break into a car because they had previous done this in order to steal property *from* a car (usually car radios):
5. Initiation

Joe
before I nicked ‘em I was putting screw-drivers in the doors and opening them and things and taking the stereos out
20 years, Midlands

Whilst the pattern of initiation into joyriding usually began with riding as a passenger; the stealing and driving of cars could occur in any order. Not all of the young men have driven a stolen car prior to learning how to steal one:

Brett
I’d have been about thirteen when I first started nicking cars but I couldn’t drive at that stage, but I still knew how to nick ‘em
19 years, Midlands

Furthermore, there was one respondent who stated that he began by stealing cars, but claimed not to ride in them, or drive them:

Anthony
when I was younger I just used to steal ‘em you know, and other people used to drive ‘em away ‘cos I couldn’t drive, you know what I mean, so I just used to steal ‘em, and they used to drive them away, but I would never get in it, no way [laughs]
20 years, Midlands

However, as with riding as a passenger and driving, stealing a car was for some an activity that they soon learned to enjoy on a regular basis:

Philip
we started pinching Metros and- they’re easiest to pinch, but, pinched a couple- couple of Metros each- every night then, we was- was like pinching five Metros a night (...) it started off like we were just taking one you know, and then like, I liked it [laughs] so we just started taking loads
17 years, Midlands

5.4 Summary and conclusions
The pre-initiation phase of joyriding was found to be similar in many ways to that of a number of potentially addictive behaviours. For instance, just as alcohol and drug use is often part of the surrounding culture of young people, so many of the joyriders in this study had been brought up in an environment where crime (including car crime) was an accepted part of their culture. In addition, prior observation, which often plays a part in the learning of addictive behaviours (such as excessive drug use, gambling and sexual addictions), was found to be a key
5. Initiation

feature in joyriding behaviour. For instance, many joyriders had received prior knowledge of car crime from family members, direct observation of ‘displays’ in the neighbourhood, and talk with peers.

Further pre-initiation similarities were noted in terms of positive and negative expectancies. People often have positive expectancies from drugs such as alcohol, which can be acquired prior to initial use, and which may predict subsequent behaviour. Such expectancies typically include such things as social rewards and enhanced pleasure. Joyriders had similar positive expectancies from joyriding, which included being able to impress girls, enhanced status amongst peers, and the anticipation of excitement. Negative expectancies, which had less of an effect in this sample (as might be expected as they were all convicted car thieves) included knowledge of the dangers. This knowledge sometimes delayed the onset of initial behaviour, and in the case of some of the non-joyriding young offenders had prevented them from indulging at all.

One difference that was noted between joyriding and many (other) potentially addictive behaviours in this phase, was that joyriding could not be said to be harmless, or even healthy, in a non-excessive form. However, it was found that many joyriders had had a prior harmless interest in cars generally, with a number aspiring to future car-related careers.

In terms of their initial engagement in joyriding activities, the respondents in this study claimed that they began the activity at an average age of 14 years. Similar trends are found in initial onset of certain drugs, including alcohol and tobacco. The functions served by the behaviour were also similar to those noted in initial drug use, such as trying to emulate peers, to escape from stress or conflict, and as a response to socio-economic deprivation. However, just as many behaviours which may later become addictive are initially engaged in for innocuous reasons, so some joyriders initially stole cars for pure convenience.

The joyriding ‘career’ tended to begin with riding as a passenger, and it was interesting to note that right from these initial encounters with the activity ‘drug-
5. Initiation

type’ terminology, such as ‘the buzz’ and ‘adrenaline rush’ was being used to describe the feelings experienced. Following driving as a passenger, the joyriders often (but not always) progressed to the driving and / or stealing of a vehicle. As with initial drug use, the teaching of these skills was often by peers, who also appeared to have ‘taught’ some novices how to interpret associated feelings.

One apparent difference to this pattern was noticed in the first attempts at driving. Although vicarious learning had often taken place when joyriders had observed family members’ and friends’ driving, their first attempts at driving themselves were often undertaken alone. It appeared that this was probably to ‘save face’ should they make mistakes or have an accident (as was often happened during the first few attempts). Nevertheless, many described the initial driving and stealing of cars as being easy, with ease and accessibility also being a key factor influencing the initiation of many behaviours that can later become addictive.

In all potentially addictive behaviours, some individuals cease the behaviour after an initial experimental period. Sachs (1981), for instance, describes how a fair percentage of runners decide that running is not for them and revert to a state of inactivity – or try other sports. Likewise, some young men never progressed beyond the initial phase of joyriding. However, as would be predicted by Brown’s (1997) addiction theory, some appeared to have discovered an activity which provided for them a powerful and effective manipulation of ‘hedonic tone’, or general feeling of well-being, providing periods of euphoria and / or relief from dysphoria. As has already been suggested in dialogue with many of those who either rode as passengers, attempted to drive the stolen cars, or learnt how to actually steal them, the initial behaviour then began to develop into a regular activity - or a ‘maintenance’ phase.
Chapter 6: Maintenance

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6.2 Influences upon the behaviour
6.3 Summary and conclusions

6. Maintenance

It is difficult to pinpoint the crossover between the initiation and maintenance phases of any potentially addictive behaviour, other than to say that over time, the particular activity may become fairly regular. However, it must be pointed out that the notion of ‘regular’ need not be quantity specific in terms of time or amount. For instance, many people ‘regularly’ drink alcohol on a daily, weekly or even monthly basis; and they may ‘regularly’ have one drink or many drinks on each occasion.

In terms of drug use, Bozarth (1990 p113) describes how, after initial (experimental or circumstantial) drug use, a period of casual drug use may develop if the drug is taken repeatedly. This, he says, may be associated with more frequent drug use, higher doses of the drug or more effective methods of administering the drug, and may lead to the drug having strong motivational properties that appear to govern the user's behaviour. Significantly, Bozarth argues that all this occurs before the extreme case of addiction to the drug.

It appears that a similar process occurs in non-substance behaviours. Sachs (1981), for instance, reported that in order for addiction to running to occur, it first has to be participated in on a regular basis, which can last for anything from 1 month to 2 years. In this chapter the functions of, and influences on, joyriding as it becomes a regular activity are discussed. As with the description of the initial phase of the joyriders’ career, the emphasis will be on whether this maintenance phase may be considered analogous to regular indulgences in other activities known to have an addictive potential.
6. Maintenance

6.1 Functions of the behaviour

As with the initial indulgence in a potentially addictive behaviour, the functions served as the activity becomes regular may vary considerably. Orford (1985) for instance, stated that there can be a number of personal functions served by what he describes as ‘excessive appetites’, the problem being that the functions can vary between behaviours, between people, between cultures, between genders, and within people over time and in different situations. Furthermore, as time goes by the behaviour may serve an increasing number of functions for any one individual.

Joyriding also appears to be a multi-functional activity, with the present study finding a variety of motivations for joyriding, which were well summarised by the following Social Worker:

Paul
there’s some kids get their kicks out of it, some kids get their money out of it, some kids get status out of it and some do get caught up because they’re bored or whatever and they’ve got nothing else to do

Social Worker, Northern Ireland

As reflected in the above example, the main motivations associated with stealing cars that emerged from the present study were social/cultural, practical and mood modification. Social and cultural issues have already been discussed at length in the previous chapter and therefore will not be repeated. As such, discussion in this section will focus on joyriders’ practical reasons for stealing cars, and issues relating to mood modification.

6.1.1 Practical issues

Arguably, the stealing of cars for practical or financial reasons, rather than purely for the fun of driving, would no longer be defined as ‘joyriding’, as the following joyrider explained:

Matthew
the people that steal it for the money, they ain’t joyriders, they’re just you know twockers, they do it, get the car, take it to one place, sell it and then that’s the end of the story, but joyriders get the car and then drive it about

19 years, Midlands
6. Maintenance

However, there were many instances in the present study that suggested that the boundaries between driving for fun and stealing a car for more practical purposes were blurred:

*Trevor*
I used to give them a quick thrash about, see what they’d do and then just like deliver them to where they are and just get out of them

*Craig*
oh I’d do a burglary in them and that, and I’d get rid of the stuff and that, and just have some- have a laugh and a bit of fun in the car isn’t it, and then get rid of the car after

*Indeed McCullough et al (1990) also pointed out that the categories of ‘expressive’ and ‘instrumental’ motivations were not always discrete, as offenders often continued to steal cars for either or both reasons. As such, whilst many of the following issues are not directly related to joyriding an outline of the more functional motivations for stealing cars will be presented.*

In the present study there were accounts of cars being stolen for transport—particularly when ‘stranded’ somewhere:

*Philip*
then every time we wanted to go somewhere an all, just pinched a car, and dumped it when we got to where we wanted to go, and get another one to come back

*Noel*
I’ve been stranded a lot, and that’s one of the reasons why I’ve stole cars

*Christian*
I was like, getting- say I’d go out and get two cars yeh, park one up the road, go and do a ram-raid on the other one, just drive off- oh chuck all the stuff in the other car and fuck off

As well as for use in other crimes:
Many of the joyriders in the present study had also found that, having had fun in the car, there was money to be made from selling the vehicle or stripping it for parts:

*Adrian*

I started making a lot of money, stripping them, ringing them, and selling them on, things like that

20 years, Midlands

Then, having realised that easy money could be made from the stolen cars some began to *alter* their car-crime behaviour. This represented the shift in primary motivation from ‘expressive’ to ‘instrumental’ car crime, as described in Chapter 3. This eventually led to some joyriders to *replace* their regular joyriding activities with more lucrative forms of car crime:

*Thomas*

after a while you know what I mean, you can go out and steal the best cars, top of the range Calibras an all, all that type of car, know what I mean, and then just after a while people start coming to you, I mean they offer you money for parts and that and, you know what I mean, stopped the fun, it goes to the money

18 years, Northern Ireland

Interestingly, not all joyriders moved from expressive to instrumental car crime, and for one young man it appeared to happen the other way round:

*Terry*

it used to be like that we were just nicking cars to do ram-raids in, then I- I got on er bad drugs like and I was just nicking cars for the fun of it, just to like get from A to B like, and just for joyriding in like

(…)

*Interviewer*

why do you think that is

*Terry*

I don’t know really, I just got hooked on it

21 years, Midlands

It is interesting in this final example, that the shift from instrumental to expressive car crime occurred concurrently with an interest in drug use, suggesting that the respondent may have been searching for some form of altered mood state. Support for this is perhaps found in his explanation for this shift to ‘nicking cars for the fun of it’ as being because he ‘got hooked on it’. Indeed many joyriders appeared to be engaging in the activity to experience ‘the buzz’, and this issue of mood modification will be discussed next.
6. Maintenance

6.1.2 Mood modification

Peele (1985) argued that people become addicted to experiences that are ‘potent modifiers of mood and sensation’ (p98); and Donovan (1988) similarly suggested that a feature common to a wide range of addictive behaviours was the mood changing experiences that resulted from the direct effects of the behaviour. In the present study it was clear that joyriding also provided this potential to positively affect mood:

*Darrell*
used to make me feel all happy for some reason

*Shaun*
when it goes- when you’re doing a hand-braker and it goes round

Interviewer
yes

*Shaun*
its so brilliant so it is, its just, don’t- you just- you can’t think nothing you just, just going round, its brilliant

*18 years, Midlands*

 Indeed, it became clear that certain aspects of joyriding provided a distinctly pleasurable experience - colloquially described as ‘the buzz’:

*Terry*
the buzz is unbelievable, its like hard to explain really, its just really hard to explain the buzz

*21 years, Midlands*

And that the desire to experience ‘the buzz’ was in many cases the main motivation for joyriding:

*Interviewer*
what would be your main reasons for stealing a car

*James*
up for the crack just, for the buzz an all, just for the buzz, flying about an all

*18 years, Northern Ireland*

Many drugs are taken on regular basis because of the experiences that result from their direct effect on the central nervous system, often raising or lowering arousal, and / or manipulating mood. Whilst there are overlapping effects, some drugs (e.g. amphetamines, cocaine, caffeine, and tobacco) have stimulant properties; some (e.g. alcohol, opiates, solvents and tranquillisers) are depressants; and others (e.g. LSD, ketamine, cannabis and liberty cap mushrooms) are hallucinogenic.
Recreational users of these substances may find that they are able to manipulate their mood by regularly re-producing one or more of the above desired feelings or experiences.

It is also easy to see how some non-substance behaviours (such as gambling, sexual activity, and exercise) can give rise to feelings and experiences that have the potential to raise levels of arousal. Brown (1997), in describing the development of addictive behaviours, argued that everyday maintenance of hedonic tone, or general feeling of well-being, is achieved by manipulating arousal, and that a common technique for raising arousal is to engage in risk-taking activities such as gambling, watching or playing dangerous sports - and fast driving.

In terms of driving behaviour, Marsh & Collett (1987) suggested drivers attempt to regulate their internal state in order to keep their arousal levels constant by driving faster on safe roads and slower on dangerous ones. 'In this way' they say, 'a car is like alcohol or nicotine; just as smoking a cigarette can cool ones nerves or increase one's arousal, so too can driving a car' (pp20-21).

The powerful nature of the joyriding experience, and its potential to raise levels of arousal, was particularly evident in the following extract from a joyrider describing his physical response to the excitement of joyriding:

Robert
and then when I was getting ready, if I had a screw-driver in me hand and that yeh, it were that weird yeh, I used to have to feel like I used to have to go to the toilet, you know with the rush and that, and if I was going to take a car and that, I had to go for- I had to go for like a piss and that after- I used to get really excited and that (...) I used to get dead excited, then- and as we were getting close to it man (phew) you know what I mean, and then we'd see a car and that, and that's it (...) put some screw drivers in the door, sweating and that, you know what I mean, and used to get that much of an adrenaline rush, when I'd be sitting at traffic lights, when I'd just took a car and be sat at lights. Me foot was like that [demonstrates] shaking on the clutch, you know what I mean

21 years, pilot interview, Midlands
Brown (1997) also argued that people learn to manipulate their arousal and mood as part of normal, everyday attempts to maintain an optimum level of hedonic tone. Some regularly reproducible feelings may then become secondary goals or drives, sometimes sought through one particular activity. Indeed the following extract suggests that the respondent had compared various experiences in terms of their potential for mood manipulation, with joyriding being found to provide the best ‘buzz’:

*Terry*

like you get the buzz- get the buzz out of drinking, oh I mean its like ten times- ten times better than the buzz of drinking, you get a buzz out of drugs yeh, well its ten times better than that, you get a buzz out of everything yeh what you take yeh, but like the buzz of nicking a car and getting chased by the old bill, and like you know- you know for definite that you’re going to lose them- the old bill, you get an adrenaline rush, and its like a lot better than anything, that’s the best way you can explain it

21 years, Midlands

The findings of a number of other studies have also suggested that the behaviour of joyriding is specifically being used to manipulate hedonic tone. For instance, Reeves (1993) when asking incarcerated joyriders for their main reasons for stealing cars, almost half said that it was for the ‘buzz’ or ‘excitement’, and 44% indicated that they wanted to improve their mood in some way (i.e. ‘to cheer themselves up’ or ‘for a laugh’).

Kilpatrick (1997) similarly reported that in a study of 15 juvenile offenders there was remarkable consistency in responses to questions regarding the personal functions served by joyriding, in that the most frequent words used were ‘the buzz’ and ‘the excitement’. Kilpatrick argued that there was clear evidence for joyriding providing an ‘intense emotional experience which could also be used to manipulate arousal’, suggesting that this supported Brown’s (1997) theory of such behaviour being used to manipulate hedonic tone.

Brown (1997) also described how certain factors increased the likelihood of a particular behaviour being chosen as a mood-modifier. In addition to the inherent properties of that activity to affect the individual’s hedonic tone (e.g. through changes in arousal), he also pointed to the acquired skills in using that activity to
manipulate hedonic tone. In the present study there appeared to be two ways in which the respondents used the activity of joyriding to further manipulate their arousal levels: (i) by combining the activity with drugs, alcohol and/or music; and (ii) by deliberately engaging in police pursuits.

The young men in this present study claimed that they had taken some dangerously high levels of drugs and alcohol whilst driving. In this respect, cannabis and alcohol were the most popular drugs of choice, although other drugs such as ecstasy and amphetamines were used, with glue sniffing being particularly popular in Northern Ireland.

Adrian
well its like .. when you’re out without stealing cars when you’re on E you’re full of energy and feeling good, and then when you’re not on any drugs and you’re driving you’re feeling something like the same, when you’ve got the two mixed it just gives you, better buzz, so it does

20 years, Northern Ireland

Simon
you have more concentration on- when you’re whizzling, but, but you- you just you just feel like killing the car, you just feel like killing it, blowing it up or something, just booting to see how much you can get max power out of it you can (...) on this whizz stuff, whizz

19 years, Midlands

James
and then I like glue sniffing as well, its good like (...) I get a good buzz from that like, stolen car’s good when you’re sniffing glue

18 years, Northern Ireland

Another popular combination that added to the excitement was that of joyriding whilst listening to loud, up-tempo music. In the following extract the music combined with a police pursuit made for maximum effect:

Carl
and I’m into like happy hard core [techno/dance music] and like as I come up the gates, if I heard that playing then I knew it’d be them waiting for me in a car (...) and like that’d be a buzz as well (...) say if the police were chasing you they’d turn it up full blast and its make it like, I don’t know it would make it better in some way. sort
Indeed it is interesting that for young male drivers in general music is often an emotive medium. McDonald et al (1992), in their comparative study of ‘safe’ and ‘unsafe’ younger male drivers, found that music and mood were inextricably linked. Furthermore, the ‘unsafe’ drivers tended to admit that fast, up-tempo, loud music tended to lead to a more aggressive driving style.

A further activity which appeared to have the effect of increasing arousal for some joyriders was when the joyriding led to involvement in a police pursuit; there were certainly many excited accounts of police pursuits recounted in the present study:

Craig
I used to look at it if you get away then, I look at it you’ve just got one over the police you know what I mean .. that’s how I look at it, just, used to give me a buzz being chased by the police

17 years, Midlands

Interviewer
how did it feel getting chased
Adrian
just adrenaline was going through you, like, just .. good feeling

20 years, Northern Ireland

However, although a police pursuit may have had the incidental effect of raising levels of arousal, the joyriders in the present study who described deliberately engaging the police in a pursuit just for the ‘buzz’ were in a minority (also discussed in Chapter 7, section 7.2.1 when considering the notion of tolerance).

Finally, it has also been argued that one mood-modifying function of potentially addictive behaviours is to reduce tension. For instance, Peele (1985) described how some people become addicted to certain experiences (such as the effects of drugs, alcohol, gambling or eating) that diminish pain, tension and awareness. Wilson (1987) similarly described how Tension Reduction Theory may explain why many people drink, some to the point of addiction, adding that the same theory has been advocated to explain other behaviours such as bulimia nervosa, cigarette smoking and drug abuse.
Some joyriders in the present study were clearly using the activity as form of either tension-reduction or escapism from life's problems and stresses, as in the follow example:

*Mickey*
I've just got nothing to live for, I've just fell out with my misses like, so I went out, I'm not proud of what I'm about to tell you, I did actually nick a Metro

*Other respondents*
[laughter]

*Mickey*
I was seething my lid off

*Pilot focus group respondent, Midlands*

Other respondents have also found the use of joyriding as a form of escapism. For example, Reeves (1993) found that over a third of joyriders interviewed said that they did it 'to relieve boredom', with 28% saying 'to forget everything else'. The issue of engagement in the behaviour as an escape from dysphoric mood state will also be discussed further in the following chapter (section 7.3.2 when considering 'relief behaviour' as a criterion for dependency.

### 6.2 Influences upon the behaviour

Whilst it appears that many substances and behaviours have the inherent ability to regularly reproduce feeling states that can alter arousal and lead to mood modification, this alone does not lead to addiction. In terms of substances, Falk *et al* (1983) have pointed out that although many people experience the effects of alcohol and other drugs, the majority do not become 'abusers', suggesting that exposure to the drug in itself is not sufficient to cause the development of a drug habit.

This section will now consider some of the influences upon regular joyriding activities that appear to reinforce the behaviour, again comparing joyriding with (other) potentially addictive behaviours during this maintenance phase.

#### 6.2.1 Operant conditioning

The learning principles of operant conditioning can help to explain why a person may be motivated to regularly indulge in a behaviour due to the influence of antecedents and consequences. In terms of antecedents, environmental cues can
increase the probability of the behaviour. Consequences include positive and negative reinforcements, which increase the probability that the behaviour will occur again, together with punishments, which decrease the probability of the behaviour repeating.

A number of people have suggested that operant conditioning plays a part in the development of both substance-based and behavioural addictions. For instance Orford (1985 p174-) has described how the development of strongly habitual behaviour, such as gambling, may be explained using the principles of operant conditioning. This, he stated, would include such factors as: (i) inconsistent reinforcement tending to be more resistant to extinction than consistent reinforcement; (ii) the increased probability of a behavioural response as time goes by; and (iii) the immediate consequences being more important in shaping behaviour, explaining why short-term positive effects may be chosen over the long-term negative consequences.

Orford also pointed out that antecedents might provide information regarding the likelihood of a behaviour occurring. Marlatt et al (1988), commenting on the transition from initial to problematic drug use, stated that there were a number of factors that were likely to be involved, including those relating to the complex system of physical and social stimuli that comprise the setting in which the drug is used. In the present study the main antecedents found to influence likelihood of joyriding similarly included socio-environmental and physical cues.

There were a variety of stimuli in the environment that for some car crime offenders appeared to act as a cue to their joyriding. For instance, a different geographical location led to a change in behaviour for the following young man:

*Jeremy*

just stopped, started hanging around with different people, different girls and everything, different area, that’s when I- you see
I moved all my mates and everything

*18 years, Northern Ireland*

Then, for some joyriders, it was the weekends that appeared to act as a cue for the behaviour.
6. Maintenance

Darren
weekends are far better, known what I mean

Interviewer
Why
Darren
don’t know, just are

16 years, Northern Ireland

This was especially noticeable in Northern Ireland, where Friday nights were particularly popular for joyriding. Indeed, because of this strong association between Friday nights and car theft, the Probation Team in Belfast deliberately arranged for their car crime offenders to attend a programme on Friday nights from 10.00pm to 2.00am as part of their compulsory Probation Order.

The association with particular friends also appeared to be a strong cue for many joyriders, as this example suggests:

Joe
if it weren’t for my friends- I know that’s easy to blame them but, like when I just get with certain people I just end up nicking cars, but when I’m on my own it don’t even- it don’t even enter my head to go out nicking

20 years, Midlands

Whilst for others it was the sound of others joyriding that elicited a response:

Robert
they used to pull up in stolen cars and smoke it up, and burn the back tyres out and then just piss off down the road, and it used to do my head in, I used to be sitting there thinking, fucking hell I could be in there now killing it

18 years, Midlands

There were also physical cues, such as the use of alcohol and other drugs. The following extracts give examples of how alcohol was for many a regular antecedent to joyriding, having an obvious influence on their likelihood to engage in the behaviour:

Chris
all the times this year were I’ve got into a car I’ve been drinking, or I’ve drunk at some point in that day

20 years, Midlands
6. Maintenance

Billy
probably wouldn't go out to steal a car when I wasn't drinking but when I was drinking I would want to go and steal it

19 years, Northern Ireland

As was the case with other drugs as these extracts show:

Simon
someone'd say, oh we'll get wrecked, we'll get wrecked off- like joints and that, I don't smoke it like all the time, just smoke it now and again, like we'd get so hammered we'd go and just get the urge for a car, just like get the buzzing feeling for a car

19 years, Midlands

In terms of the consequences of joyriding, many of the positive reinforcers found to influence likelihood of the behaviour occurring have already been discussed. For instance, one of the most commonly recurring positive reinforcements for the joyriders appeared to be the intensely pleasurable experience referred to by most as 'the buzz' (also described in section 6.1.2, above), also noted by other researchers. For example, Reeves (1993) in a study of young offenders and car crime, also concluded that car theft had been identified as having 'emotional' rewards, the most prevalent of which was the 'buzz' or 'excitement' (p60). The other important reinforcements noticed in the present study were the positive social consequences, such as enhanced status and identity (as discussed in the previous chapter).

Negative reinforcers are unpleasant things that can be reduced or removed by indulging in a behaviour, and therefore increase the likelihood of the person engaging in that behaviour. In terms of joyriding, one of the most common negative reinforcers to emerge was relief from boredom:

Matthew
its just when you're bored really, that's about it, its just when, you know, you're walking round, you've got nothing to do, and then you're like, oh come on lets have a laugh, lets get a car

19 years, Midlands

Not as common, but nevertheless occurring occasionally, were instances of negative reinforcement by those who claimed to engaged in joyriding in order to escape from person problems or distress:
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Interviewer
why do you think it is that some people, perhaps like yourself
joyride a lot
Jeff
to kill the pain
(...) 
to kill hurt feelings
Interviewer
what sort of hurt feelings
Jeff
I don’t know, think about something you’re upset so (...) lets go
out (...) 
Interviewer
do you usually go out because you’ve been upset about something
Jeff
aye, all the time
Interviewer
Jeff, tell me what sort of things upset you that make you want to go
out and steal cars
Jeff
my Ma and Da shouting at me that annoys me
(...) 
(mimics them) she says to Daddy you’ll not see me for about a
month and I just flip, go out steal cars

15 years, Northern Ireland

In general, punishments (negative consequences that can decrease the likelihood
of a person continuing in the behaviour) can take many forms. Potential
punishments for joyriders included accidents, which may result in injury or death,
and legal sanctions, such as a driving bans, loss of driving licence and / or a
custodial sentence. It was interesting that, although many of the young men in the
present study had been ‘punished’, or suffered severe adverse consequences in
some form or another as a result of joyriding, few seemed to have been deterred
permanently. However, it has to be noted that almost all the interviewees were
convicted joyriders selected from those in Young Offender Institutions or
Training Schools, and therefore these findings do not account for joyriders who
may have stopped the behaviour completely as a result of a punishing occurrence
and therefore either not entered, or not remained in, the judicial system.

Furthermore, many of the young men did not appear to find custodial sentences a
deterrent. For instance, one 19-year-old from the Midlands who had been
joyriding for 6 years said that he had been in prison ‘about 9 times for twock’, his
sentence at time of interview being for 3 years. For others, punishing consequences appeared to have acted only as a temporary deterrent, as can be seen in the following case:

_Noel_
I've lost my licence twice and I've not even got it, lost it for three years before and I've just lost it for a year now and I've not even took a lesson yet, so I won't be driving for a couple of years at the most
(...)
_Noel_
yeh, I've had a couple of friends that have killed themselves as well, not in nicked cars, just driving really fast you know what I mean, working with him one day and then he's dead the next, you know what I mean, you know that has effects on you
_Interviewer_
what effect does it have on you
_Noel_
just- just that how its happened, you don't think its going to happen and then it happens and its, but you think (...) 'cos its never going to happen to you, but it could so any time, you know what I mean so then you take more precaution about what you're doing

20 years, Midlands

When asked how long he remained more careful for, Noel replied:

_Noel_
I suppose just for a while until – until you're bored of being careful again and then, just go back into that stage

20 years, Midlands

A number of joyriders described how they had modified their behaviour after an aversive experience, rather than stopping altogether. Craig for instance said, after an accident during which he and his friend had to be cut out from under a lorry, and his friend suffered a broken arm:

_Craig_
felt guilty 'cos I was driving and I thought (...) well, I ain't going to cut down so I'll just, whenever I can I won't take no-one in the car with me, you know what I mean, I'll drive it on my own

17 years, Midlands

Similarly, Robert who said that he had caused an accident which left his girlfriend with a fractures to her skull, shoulder, arm, wrist, ribs, ankle, as well as internal bleeding, a torn ear and glass injuries to her face - said this when asked if it had put him off:
6. Maintenance

Robert
er... yeh it put me off letting girls into cars yeh

18 years, Midlands

In Northern Ireland, the situation was slightly different, because of punishments administered by informal policing systems that could include: curfews, 'placarding', banishments, punishment beatings and shootings (including 'knee-cappings'). Although at the time of the interviews (September 1997), Northern Ireland was at the beginning of a peace process and in a state of 'cease-fire', most of the interviewees had had either direct or indirect experience of paramilitary punishments, some saying that they were (at the time of interview) still under threat. Surprisingly however, even the more severe of these punishments had not always acted as a deterrent. For instance, Alan described how he was abducted from his sister's house, blindfolded, and taken at gunpoint to a forest where he had both his legs broken with iron bars. Although he couldn't walk for 9 months following this beating, he eventually returned to joyriding and was caught a second time, and had his legs broken a second time. Asked why he these punishments did not deter him, he answered:

Alan
I don't know just wears off after a while, you know you have a big fright when it happens to you but then it wears off, you know you're scared you know for a while then you just say really, fuck 'em, you know that's it

18 years, Northern Ireland

Some respondents from Northern Ireland claimed that they had modified their behaviour, although not as much as one might have expected given the nature of some of the punishments, as can be seen in the following extract from Steve, describing a punishment beating in which he admitted thinking he was going to be shot dead:

Steve
(...). kicking my face about and then they were going to shoot me and I said you know, what the fuck did I do, I was shitting myself like, and the provs held the gun and broke the gun (...). said beat me to death, and they beat me with metal crowbars, broke my legs, broke my arms, left me (...) you know in a derelict place like (...)

Interviewer
how did you feel at the time

Steve
at the time, very scared, thought that was it
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(...)

Interviewer
you- you’ve stolen cars since then
Steve
oh aye, but not in my home town

19 years, Northern Ireland

Others, however did appear to have stopped joyriding as a result of punishments – eventually. For instance Mike claimed that he had suffered 10 punishment beatings for joyriding, followed by a punishment shooting before he stopped. When asked why he did not stop after the first beating he replied:

Mike
it wasn’t- it wasn’t a really big beating first, the last one was, that put me in hospital for six months

Interviewer
six months, what damage did it do

Mike
Arms, legs, ribs all broke

At some point following the last beating Mike said that he was shot in the knees, elbows and sides. Asked if that had made a difference he said:

Mike
I’m not coming in here [prison], that’s me finished for a while, joyriding and that

20 years, Northern Ireland

A final example here is that of Andy who was driving a stolen car at high speed when there was an accident that left him in a coma and his friend dead. The following extract (edited for length) perhaps best exemplifies how adverse consequences can sometimes have very little effect on the overall behaviour:

Interviewer
have you had any nasty accidents yourself, or bad experiences

Andy
aye, killed my- that’s where I- killed my friend
(...)

Interviewer
were you driving

Andy
aye I was driving, hundred and twenty miles an hour- hundred and ten miles an hour
(...)
my mate went through the front windscreen
(...)

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Interviewer
how do you feel about it now, is it- does it affect you in any way, the fact that you know your mate died
Andy
aye, it does affect me sometimes, but you can’t do nothing about it, you know what I mean
Interviewer
mm, so you think you’ll still nick cars, is it- do you think it-
Andy
aye, I do still nick cars, I was out nicking cars-

19 years, Northern Ireland

Even allowing for a certain amount of exaggeration and bravado in the accounts, it is interesting to speculate as to why these joyriders persisted in maintaining their behaviour. There are a number of reasons why some of the negative consequences relating to joyriding did not appear to reduce their activities. For instance, according to the laws of operant conditioning, punishments only decrease the likelihood of a behaviour being repeated, and it is also generally accepted that the effect of punishment is usually temporary. Furthermore, in order for punishments to act as effective deterrents, they need occur as soon after the behaviour as possible, and to be consistent.

In the case of joyriding the length of time between the last joyriding incident and the punishment, particularly in terms of custodial sentences and driving bans could be quite considerable. In addition, the nature of negative consequences was often inconsistent, causing many of the young men to comment that although they were aware of possible dangers (such as accidents and paramilitary punishments), they never believed it would happen to them.

It also appeared that the effect of punishments in shaping behaviour were not as powerful as those of the positive and negative reinforcements. Unlike punishments, many of the reinforcing effects of joyriding were immediate, or even concurrent with the behaviour, therefore having a stronger influence in terms of their learning potential. Furthermore, as with gambling and drug use, whilst the rewards were continuous in some small way, many joyriders can recall ‘one off’ experiences that were particularly exciting, and presumably worth trying to re-capture (i.e. the reinforcing effect of variable or partial reinforcement).
Finally, social learning theories include the notion that learning can occur simply through observing the possible consequences of the behaviour. In other words observed reinforcements and punishments provide the learner with information about the likely consequences, and cause the learner to anticipate future outcomes. The following is an example of positive expectancies, being acquired through the observation of peers, which then appeared to influence subsequent behaviour:

*Simon*
just watching my mates buzz off it, buzz off the feeling, just watch my mates buzz off the feeling, I said, yeh a car, and like (brmmm) going fast and that, hand-braking it, things like that and, just driving backwards and forwards to different places and things like that, and people do that, I like watching them buzz off it, yeh man yeh (...) I get the fun of like watching others do it, and then after a while I think well I'll have a go and I'll have a go, and I get the same adrenaline like rush going through me like

19 years, Midlands

6.2.2 Social influences

Some of the main social influences on potentially addictive behaviours are those of general social support for the activity, together with the relative influences of parents and peers.

The influence of social support can be seen in both substance and non-substance behaviours. In terms of drugs use, Peele (1985) described how the subtle effects of social approval or disapproval influence the addictive experience. Then, within the context of running addiction, Sachs (1981) described the positive reinforcing contingencies from social interactions, such as running with friends and comments from others on improved physique.

In the present study it was clear that a strong joyriding culture existed amongst the offenders, and that within this culture that there was, not only a general acceptance of the behaviour, but also a sense of group cohesion and common purpose, the following extract partly demonstrating this:

*Simon*
... and no-one’s speaking, they’re all like (mmm) like this, and you’re like, this is rubbish, you know what I mean like, and then someone’d jump up and say, right, who’s coming to get a car, and
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everyone’d go, yeh, I’m into that, and everyone’s go out and get a car and that’s what it is, you see

19 years, Midlands

However, related to the influence of social support is the issue of whether regular joyriding is usually a social activity - or whether it tends to be engaged in alone. In the present study the social nature of the activity in the maintenance phase varied. Unlike in the initiation phase, when the novice joyriders often wanted to drive alone, once joyriding became a regular activity it appeared to be a mainly peer-related activity. Furthermore, as the following extract suggests, although joyriding was sometimes solitary, this was not considered to be as much fun as when it was engaged in with friends:

Interviewer
was it as good when you did it yourself as you thought it was going to be
Simon
no, ‘cos my mates weren’t there, and like I’d like to see their faces when I was driving, do you know what I mean
(...) Interviewer
when you did it yourself you didn’t find it was as good-
Simon
I didn’t find t that good no, because I was on my own and like I didn’t have no-one to speak to me and that, you know, and have a laugh with

19 years, Midlands

The finding that joyriding was mainly a peer-related activity has been noted in other studies. For instance, Light et al (1993) described how, although 9% of their sample said that they preferred to steal cars on their own, it was clear that for most, peers played an important part in the giving mutual moral support, as well as helping to increase the enjoyment. Kilpatrick (1997) similarly found that every young car crime offender interviewed said that they rarely, if ever, stole alone, because part of the ‘crack’ was being in a group.

However, there were a minority of joyriders in the present study who said that they had come to prefer to drive alone, generally stating that this was because they did not wish to be held responsible for causing harm to any of their peers.
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Craig
see I don’t like taking people in the car I’m out with now, but its if- if you get the police chasing you and that, and, and you have a crash, you know what I mean, and like- and they get hurt then you’re responsible ‘cos you’re the driver, but its where, is if you’re on your own now, I don’t mind you know I’ll go at any speed ‘cos I’m on my own I’ve got no-one else to hurt

17 years, Midlands

In terms of other social influences, Sachs (1981) argued that one of the factors contributing to adherence to regular running was the role of significant others. Perhaps the most significant people to influence a young person’s behaviour are parents and peers. McMurran (1994) describes the relative influence that family and peers have on young people’s drug use, saying that it varies according to the type of drug and the phase of use. In terms of alcohol use, the family tends to hold a greater influence during initiation than peers, whereas peers are a greater influence in the maintenance phase. However, in the case of illegal substances, it is the peers that have greater influence during both phases. Peele (1985, p105) similarly stated that in terms of regular behaviour, whereas parents provide models for patterns of alcohol and cigarette use, they are not typically the models for illicit drug use.

In the case of joyriding, clearly an illegal activity, it has already been shown in the previous chapter (section 5.1.1) that family members had sometimes been involved in car crimes, and that some joyriders had had prior exposure to car crime through them. There was also evidence that the respondents’ families were concerned about their offending, perhaps reflected in the numerous concerned comments from the offenders regarding the worry that they had brought upon their families:

Interviewer
how does your she [the respondent’s Mother] feel about you being inside
Matt
she doesn’t like it
Interviewer
how does she feel about you joyriding particularly
Matt
she doesn’t like it
(...)
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Interviewer
does your Mum get upset about you being inside
Matt
Yes
Interviewer
and how does that make you feel
Matt
crap

15 years, Northern Ireland

Kilpatrick (1997) similarly found, in a study of young car thieves in Northern Ireland, that most of the respondents' parents or family were concerned about their joyriding, and that for some joyriders the worst thing about the activity was getting caught, and subsequently 'hassled', by family.

In the present study, of those joyriders who did express concern about their families, there was often a particular concern regarding the respondents' mothers, especially in the Northern Ireland sample:

Stewart
I was thinking about stopping for my Ma's sake and then there's-the temptation gets to you .. that wee feeling- that wee buzz, flying about

16 years, Northern Ireland

It was also interesting to note that a number of the older joyriders expressed concerns about their children one day becoming involved in car crime:

Terry
I just know if he keeps seeing me like drive cars and everything that there's going to be questions what he's got to ask and I've got to tell him the truth and he'll be doing it and I don't want him to grow up like me

21 years, Midlands

Thomas
well I might look back an all, I might look at my kids in time and say well I don't want them's getting into the same- especially if it's a son like you know what I mean, I would say to myself well I'll have to set a new example over here you know what I mean, and it mightn't be for another two or three years or whatever

18 years, Northern Ireland

Moving on to general peer influence, McMurran (1994) described how it has been noticed that adolescents who drink, smoke or use other drugs tend to associate more with other young people who also drink, smoke or use the same drugs. She
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pointed out that this could be due to two processes, socialisation or selection. Socialisation refers to peers influencing or pressurising them into using the substances, whereas selection refers to the young people choosing to associate with others who have the same habits.

In this study it was certainly the case that joyriders did tend to socialise with other joyriders, and that both of the above processes were taking place. The following extracts show how peers encouraged others through subtle influence or overt pressure, to engage in the behaviour (i.e. socialisation):

_Gavin_
I want to feel part of- one of the crowd, and everybody else was doing it like

_Aged 19, Northern Ireland_

_Philip_
it's just like sometimes people pressure you in, you know if there's quite a few of them, say, oh come on you (...), chicken, then you’d have to- 'cos you’ve got a reputation you’ve got to live up to it so you say alright then yeh I’ll come (...) and maybe you don’t want to come

_17 years, Midlands_

And then this extract shows how some joyriders chose to mix with, and seek out people because of their mutual involvement in the activity (i.e. selection):

_Noel_
I've moved to different- like moved around a couple of estates, you know what I mean, different people, but there's always be-wherever you go there's always people that take and that so .. (...) 

_Interviewer_
did you have other friends who didn’t used to get involved with cars 

_Noel_
yeh, I had many different friends, people who didn’t rob at all, I had loads of friends like that but .. I s- I just used- when I was on a robbing spree I used to change my friends

_20 years, Midlands_

In the present study, one final peer-related influence on the joyriders appeared to be their girlfriends (where applicable). Many talked about cutting down or giving up joyriding altogether when they had a serious girlfriend (as will be discussed
further in Chapter 9). However, even in the maintenance phase it appeared that girlfriends had sometimes influenced a joyriders’ behaviour:

*Joe*
I was going out with this girl called Jenny, and she- she was coming with me sometimes and she was thinking it was good when she was driving with me and that, but she just got sick of it after a while and said I should stop

(...) I stopped for about a year and a half ‘cos seeing Jenny and that

*20 years, Midlands*

### 6.2.3 Availability and accessibility

A final influence on the likelihood of a potentially addictive behaviour being engaged in is that of the level of access to that activity. For instance, Teichman *et al* (1988) argued that one of the factors affecting both initiation and continuation of substance use was availability. Furthermore, McMurran (1994) described how although there are legal sanctions to cover the use of alcohol, cigarettes and other drugs, and that sanctions and general availability varied between the drugs, the drugs with the highest prevalence rates in young people tend to be those that are the least restricted (i.e. alcohol, cigarettes and solvents).

In the present study the comments of the respondents tended suggest that cars were both available and accessible commodities:

*Colin*
well we nicked, er, over all over all we must have nicked (phew)
over a hundred cars
*Interviewer*
in two months
*Colin*
in two months, its like we (...) used to nick people’s cars, that’s (...) there, they make it easy for you [laughs]

(...) .. just something to do ain’t it, somebody’d say, oh shall we go and steal a car, or why not, ‘cos it were that easy

*19 years, Midlands*

*Joe*
and its so easy to do, and cars take what, about a matter of seconds to take away, some cars, no more than three minutes and then you can just take any car

*20 years, Midlands*
6. Maintenance

These sentiments have been noted by other researchers, such as McCullough et al (1990), who argued that, as objects for crime, cars ‘amply fulfil two important criteria - they are available and they are attractive’, with residential streets being lined with ‘easily removed and valuable machines’ (p9).

However, not all cars were found to be easy to steal particularly when they were fitted with immobilisers or sophisticated alarms. But then, for some joyriders overcoming these obstacles became part of the thrill, serving to further enhance their status amongst their peers. The following extract provides an example of this (even allowing for possible exaggeration):

Robert
because all these cars- you know what you’re doing to them, Vectras and immobilisers, trackers, just an achievement when you’re driving off in a car that’s just took you an hour to pinch, that you’ve just had to re-wire from the main brain, you think you’ve just been playing with ninety odd wires [laughs] and you’ve got it started [laughs] and its just an achievement when someone sees you in it, ‘cos they know what you had to go through to pinch that car

18 years, Midlands

6.3 Summary and conclusions

As with many potentially addictive behaviours, the personal functions served by joyriding varied. However, the main motivations associated with stealing cars were social/cultural (i.e. the attainment of status and identity), practical (i.e. for transport, use in other crimes, or financial gain), and mood modification. It was clear that joyriding was particularly effective in manipulating mood by increasing arousal, resulting in what was described by most as ‘the buzz’. Furthermore it was found that some joyriders had developed strategies to manipulating arousal further, by using music, alcohol and other drugs, and/or provoking police pursuits.

In terms of these functional aspects to joyriding, similar findings have emerged in other studies. For instance Reeves (1993), found that although the reasons given for stealing cars by incarcerated young offenders varied considerably, they appeared to fall under three main motivational categories. Firstly there were peer-related reasons, which stemmed from the need to impress friends or girls; secondly were aspects of emotional/mood control, relating to various issues from
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escapism and relief of boredom to experiencing the 'buzz' or excitement; and finally there were functional reasons, including financial gain and basic transportation.

There were also a number of factors that influenced joyriding. For instance, the principles of operant conditioning (antecedents, consequences and punishment) and social learning theories (observational learning) contributed to an understanding of how mood-changing experiences were interpreted and manipulated by the joyriders.

In terms of antecedents, social and environmental cues are known to influence drug use, and this was also the case with joyriding. The main antecedents were found to be socio-environmental cues (such as geographical location, times of the week and peers) plus physical stimuli (such as alcohol and other drugs).

Also as with other addictive behaviours, the consequences, in terms of positive / negative reinforcements and punishments, increased or decreased the likelihood of the behaviour occurring. Positive reinforcements included the 'buzz', and the enhancement of status and identity; the negative reinforcements were mainly related to boredom, with occasional personal problems; and the punishments included accidents plus legal and informal sanctions. As is often the case generally, punishments seemed to have less effect than the reinforcements, probably due to their intermittent nature and because they were often not close temporally to the behaviour itself. Observational learning also took place during the maintenance phase, leading to positive expectancies of the feelings and consequences of joyriding.

In terms of social influence, joyriding emerged as a mainly peer-related activity, well supported in the joyriding culture. However, whilst peers appeared to have a consistent influence, there was evidence that the concern of parents also influenced behaviour in some individuals. Joyriders tended to associate with other joyriders, the influencing processes being those of both socialisation and selection. All the above social influences were similar in kind to those that
influence substance use in young people, although it must be noted that peer influence also has a significant effect on young male drivers who drive legally.

Just as choice of substance use is influenced by availability and accessibility, cars were generally seen as being readily available and easy to steal. However, vehicles that were harder to steal (due to alarm systems and immobilisers) were also stolen as this was often considered to be all part of 'the challenge'.

The joyriding career has thus far been described up to the phase of 'maintenance', and whilst, it has become clear that there are many analogies with other behaviours known to have an addictive potential, it remains an activity, like many other adolescent activities that is otherwise unremarkable. However, the following chapter will consider whether a qualitative change in the behaviour can develop, such that joyriding enters a phase of 'dependency' for some individuals.
Chapter 7: Dependency

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7.2 Increased tolerance
7.3 Withdrawal symptoms
7.4 Persistence despite harmful consequences
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7.8 Larger amounts of behaviour, or for a longer period than was intended
7.9 Subjective awareness of compulsion, craving or loss of control
7.10 Was there evidence for dependency to joyriding?

7. Dependency
Many people are able to maintain an activity believed to have the potential for addiction unproblematically, whereas others may develop dependency upon it. However, it is not always easy to plot the transition from maintenance to dependent behaviour. Whilst an increase in problems relating to the behaviour may signal the possibility of dependency developing, this in itself does not define dependency because serious problems can develop at during any phase. In the case of joyriding, which is inherently problematic due to its illegality, it is even more important to find other ways of defining dependency. An individual often subjectively experiences the move towards dependency as a crossover from controlled use of the behaviour in order to fulfil one or more functions, to the behaviour exerting some sort of control over the individual. As a result the purposes that the behaviour once served may also change. For example, whereas someone may have once used the behaviour to relax or to experience euphoria, dependency on the behaviour may lead to the substance or activity being used in order to avoid the unpleasant withdrawal symptoms that would otherwise occur.
In order to consider the possibility of joyriding activities developing into a phase of dependency, it is first necessary to be clear about the nature of the criteria involved. As much of the definitive work on dependency has been made by those involved in assessing people in a clinical setting, this chapter will begin by exploring some of the main contributors to the diagnosis of dependency, before considering joyriding behaviour in relation to those criteria that are generally accepted as being necessary for such a 'diagnosis' to be made.

7.1 What criteria define dependency?

There have been a number of attempts to identify, define and describe the 'classic' criteria of dependency, and some of the main contributors to this debate are now considered.

7.1.1 Edwards and Gross (1976)

The first attempt to describe a dependency to alcohol as a clinical syndrome was probably made by Edwards and Gross in 1976, who emphasised the need to see dependence in terms of degrees, rather than absolutes, noting that 'not every patient who drinks too much (...) is necessarily dependent upon alcohol' (p1061). They presented a provisional description of alcohol dependence that, they argued, developed due to a combination of biological processes and aberrant learning. Emphasising that the term syndrome referred to no more than the concurrence of phenomena, they added that 'not all the elements needs always be present, nor always present with the same intensity' (p1058). They also stated that the essential elements of the syndrome would 'exist in degree, thus giving the syndrome a range of severity' (p1058). It can be seen from Table 13 (below) therefore that there was no attempt to state how many elements would need to be present, nor to what intensity, for dependency to definitively exist.
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Table 13: A summary of the essential elements of alcohol dependence syndrome as described by Edwards and Gross (1976)

- A narrowing in the repertoire of drinking behaviour
- Salience of drink-seeking behaviour, often regardless of negative consequences
- Increased tolerance to alcohol
- Repeated withdrawal symptoms
- Repeated relief or avoidance of withdrawal symptoms by further drinking
- Subjective awareness of a compulsion to drink
- Reinstatement of the syndrome after abstinence

7.1.2 The World Health Organisation (1992)

The World Health Organisation (WHO) has, over the years, taken a similar approach in attempting to define a syndrome. In the most recent (10th) revision of the International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems (ICD 10), the WHO (1992) described the disorder of dependence syndrome as 'a cluster of behavioural, cognitive, and physiological phenomena that develop after repeated substance use' (p321). The typically presenting phenomena are applicable to both chronic alcoholism and drug addiction. As can be seen in Table 14 (below), the list is shorter than that of Edwards and Gross (1976), although there appear to be several points of overlap (i.e. notions of tolerance, withdrawal, persistence despite harm, and subjective feelings of compulsion). Also like Edwards and Gross, there is no attempt to quantify these phenomena.

Table 14: A summary of the cluster of typical phenomena that develop in dependency syndrome, as described by the World Health Organisation (1992)

- A strong desire to take the drug
- Difficulties in controlling its use
- Persisting in its use despite harmful consequences
- A higher priority given to drug use than other activities and obligations
- Increased tolerance
- Sometimes a physical withdrawal state

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7.1.3 *The American Psychiatric Association (1994)*

A more definitive approach is taken by the American Psychiatric Association (APA, 1994) in the 4th edition of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM IV), where substance-related disorders from the use of drugs of abuse (including alcohol) are described. The essential feature of substance dependence is described as being 'a cluster of cognitive, behavioural and physiological symptoms indicating that the individual continues use of the substance despite significant substance-related problems' (p176). Seven specific criteria (see Table 15, below) are said to be similar across most classes of drugs, although their salience and presence may vary. In terms of a quantitative description, the APA state that substance dependence is a maladaptive pattern of substance use, leading to clinically significant impairment or distress, as manifested by *three (or more) of the criteria occurring at any time in the same 12-month period*.

Table 15: *A summary of the American Psychiatric Association (1994) seven criteria of substance dependence, three (or more) of which must occur within a twelve-month period*

| 1. Tolerance                      |
| 2. Withdrawal                    |
| 3. The substance is often taken in larger amounts or over a longer period than was intended |
| 4. Persistent desire or unsuccessful efforts to cut down or control substance use |
| 5. A great deal of time is spent in activities necessary to obtain the substance, use the substance, or recover from its effects |
| 6. Important social, occupational, or recreational activities are given up or reduced because of substance use |
| 7. The substance use is continued despite knowledge of having a persistent or recurrent physical or psychological problem that is likely to have been caused or exacerbated by it |

The DSM IV additionally specifies that the criteria of 'tolerance' and 'withdrawal' are not *necessary* or *sufficient* for a diagnosis of substance dependence (i.e. some people can become dependent without tolerance or withdrawal, and others who present with both may not be dependent). In terms of the individual’s subjective experiences of addiction, it is particularly interesting to
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Note that whilst it does not appear as a specific criterion item, the DSM IV states that:

"craving" (a strong subjective drive to use the substance) is likely to be experienced by most (if not all) individuals with substance dependence

(APA, 1994, p176)

If this reference to craving is therefore accepted as indicative of dependency, then the DSM IV criteria can be seen to encompass most of the elements described by Edwards and Gross (1994), plus all of the phenomena listed by the ICD 10.

A separate, although similar, classification is also described by the APA (1994) to describe 'pathological gambling', a behaviour which is placed under the DSM IV's category of 'impulse-control disorders'. Pathological gambling is defined as being a persistent and recurrent maladaptive gambling behaviour indicated by the presence of 5 (or more) out of 10 given criteria (which can are summarised in Table 16, below), and which could not be better accounted for by a manic episode.

Table 16: A summary of the American Psychiatric Association (1994) ten criteria of pathological gambling, five (or more) of which must be present

| 1. | Is preoccupied with gambling |
| 2. | Needs to gamble with increasing amounts of money in order to achieve the desired excitement |
| 3. | Has repeated unsuccessful efforts to control, cut back, or stop gambling |
| 4. | Is restless or irritable when attempting to cut down or stop gambling |
| 5. | Gambles as a way of escaping from problems or of relieving a dysphoric mood |
| 6. | After losing money gambling, often returns another day to get even |
| 7. | Lies to family members, therapist, or others to conceal the extent of involvement with gambling |
| 8. | Has committed illegal acts such as forgery, fraud, theft, or embezzlement to finance gambling |
| 9. | Has jeopardised or lost a significant relationship, job, or educational or career opportunity because of gambling |
| 10. | Relies on others to provide money to relieve a desperate financial situation caused by gambling |
It can be observed from the criteria that, although worded to fit the context of gambling behaviour, many of the criteria for this 'impulse-control disorder' are in essence the same as the APA (1994) diagnostic criteria for substance dependence as contained within the same manual. For instance in Table 16 (above), item 2 could be described as representing tolerance, and items 4 and 5 are suggestive of withdrawal.

7.1.4 Goodman (1997)
Noting the similarities between the various attempts to diagnose both substance and non-substance dependencies, Goodman (1990, 1997) proposed a generic set of diagnostic criteria to determine any addictive disorder, derived from the DSM IV (1994), and he has used this to demonstrate how a diagnosis of sexual addiction could be made. Goodman's proposed diagnosis for an addictive disorder is that of a maladaptive pattern of behaviour, leading to clinically significant impairment or distress, as manifested by three (or more) of seven specific criteria occurring at any one time in the same 12-month period (see Table 17, below).

Table 17: A summary of the seven criteria for an addictive disorder, three of which must be present within a twelve month period, as described by Goodman (1997)

1. Tolerance
2. Withdrawal
3. The behaviour is often engaged in over a longer period, in greater quantity, or at a higher level of intensity than was intended
4. There is a persistent desire or unsuccessful efforts to cut down or control the behaviour
5. A great deal of time is spent in activities necessary to prepare for the behaviour, to engage in the behaviour, or to recover from its effects
6. Important social, occupational, or recreational activities are given up or reduced because of the behaviour
7. The behaviour continues despite knowledge of having a persistent or recurrent physical or psychological problem that is likely to have been caused or exacerbated by the behaviour
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7.1.5 Criteria to investigate dependency on joyriding

In order to consider the development of dependency to joyriding behaviour Goodman's seven criteria will be considered, together with the issue of 'craving', which features in most attempts to describe dependency. Evidence will be presented to show how these criteria have been found to be present in a variety of substance and non-substance behaviours, and their presence used to 'diagnose' dependency in those behaviours.

If joyriding has the potential for dependency then one would expect to find elements of those criteria, in varying degrees, in at least some of the accounts given by the joyriders interviewed – particularly as most of the sample are 'serious' joyriders who have been incarcerated for their activities. However, just as not all heavy drinkers develop alcohol dependence, not all regular gamblers become 'pathological' gamblers, and not all users of substances develop dependency to their drug(s) of choice, so not all joyriders would be expected to show signs of dependency to their chosen activity.

7.2 Increased tolerance

The DSM IV has defined substance tolerance as being either (a) a need for markedly increased amounts of a substance to achieve intoxication or desired effect, or (b) a markedly diminished effect with continued use of the same amount of substance. Increased tolerance has been noted in a variety of substances when used to excess. For instance, Edwards and Gross (1976), looking specifically at alcohol, described the tolerant drinker as being able to perform tasks that the non-tolerant drinker would not be unable to perform given the same alcohol intake - leading to increased drinking to achieve the same effect. They also pointed out that cross-tolerance may extend to drugs of a similar pharmacological type as alcohol (i.e. other depressants).

There is also literature suggesting that tolerance can occur in a number of non-substance behaviours. For instance the DSM IV describes pathological gamblers as needing to 'gamble with increasing amounts of money in order to achieve the desired excitement' (p618), which clearly represents the notion of tolerance. The
7. Dependency

Manual describes how this can be observed when gamblers seek 'action', in the form of an aroused, euphoric state, more than they do the money. Griffiths (1999) in a discussion of tolerance to Internet use, states that the user 'may gradually have to increase the length of time spent on-line to experience a mood-modifying effect initially obtained in less time' (p246). And in terms of sexual addiction, Goodman (1997) described the experience of tolerance being such that, 'as the behaviour is repeated, its potency to produce reinforcing effects tends to diminish' (p341).

It has also been argued that tolerance can be found in certain criminal behaviours. Gresswell & Hollin (1997), considering multiple murders and associated activities as being possibly addictive, stated that there is clear evidence to support progression of fantasies in sadistic offenders. They described how this was accomplished by 'increasing the sadistic content and including new material based on overt enactments and rehearsals of the main fantasy sequence' (p146).

Goodman (1997) has translated these various notions into a definition for addictive behaviour in general by stating that tolerance is either (a) a need for a markedly increased amount or intensity of the behaviour to achieve the desired effect, or (b) markedly diminished effect with continued involvement in the behaviour at same level of intensity. Although joyriding serves various personal and social/cultural functions (such as the enhancing of self esteem, self-identity and status) it appeared that the main desired effect, in terms of mood-modification, was the state of increased arousal described by most as the 'buzz'. If tolerance to the behaviour has developed then the joyriders should shown either (i) an increased amount or intensity of joyriding to achieve this 'buzz', or (ii) a diminished experience of the 'buzz' from the same level of joyriding.

As the following section will attempt to demonstrate, there appeared to be evidence for a diminished experience over time, plus increases in amount and intensity of the behaviour. However, it was not necessarily the case that these increases were necessary in order to maintain 'the buzz'.
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7.2.1 Increased amount or intensity of joyriding

The first consideration was the possibility that an increased amount or intensity of joyriding was needed in order to achieve a desired mood-modifying effect. In terms of an increased amount of the behaviour, this may have been achieved by stealing more cars per night, going out more often to steal cars or by spending longer periods of time joyriding on each occasion. Increased intensity of joyriding may have been achieved by stealing faster and more powerful cars, or by increasing the danger and excitement of the activity.

There did appear to be a tendency for a minority of the joyriders to report an increase in the amount of activity over time:

*Dan*

.. it was a couple of months, then it turned into a couple of weeks, then it just getting on to about most days

18 years, Midlands

With some clearly perceiving this increase to be indicative of ‘addiction’:

*Trevor*

I got into it quite a bit more by the end of the year, coming like a habit kind of thing, an addiction thing

21 years, Midlands

*Interviewer*

you mentioned its something like crack, can you just expand on that for me and tell me what you meant when you said that

*Ian*

(…) crack is like, you take so much, like heroin, and, you get a buzz, you take a little bit the first time, you need a tiny bit the first time, as it progresses you need more and more and more, its exactly the same with cars, you need more and more buzz, you need more to get that buzz, its like if I took- say I was taking crack- I took crack for a year, and I went back (…) the first ever time I took it it wouldn’t do nothing for me, its exactly the same with cars

19 years, pilot interview, Midlands

This raises an interesting debate as to what criteria individuals are using to define addictive behaviour in themselves or others, and how these criteria compare to the clinical diagnostic criteria. This issue will be discussed further in the next chapter.
In Kilpatrick’s (1997) study of fifteen young offenders in Northern Ireland who had committed car related crimes, she similarly found clear evidence that ‘the joyriders interviewed went for more and more cars as they became more expert at stealing them’ (p177), and Kilpatrick argued that this was suggestive of tolerance.

However, it is important to remember that, of those who reported an increase, unless it could be demonstrated that the increase was necessary (in order to achieve the desired mood-modifying effect), then it would not be definable as tolerance. Although, in the present study there was no direct evidence of this increased activity being necessary to maintain a desired level of arousal, when asked why they stole more cars / more often, many young men did talk about relieving boredom:

*Interviewer*
how many cars a night would you drive normally

*Leon*
most I’ve ever drove about five, five different cars

*Interviewer*
yes, did you find as time went on that you were stealing more cars in a night or less cars in a night

*Leon*
more times, more cars a night

*Interviewer*
why was that do you think

*Leon*
cos you get bored with one car, you want a different car

17 years, Northern Ireland

As the one of the desired mood-modifying effects for many joyriders was to relieve dysphoric mood states such as boredom (see Chapter 6, section 6.1.2), it is arguable that an increase in activity in order to achieve this purpose could be viewed as an example of tolerance in those individuals. However, this needs to be balanced against the accounts that suggested that they were engaging in the activity more often purely because their improved driving skills enabled them to do so:

*Stewart*
(you start) getting the buzz out of flying about there, because the more you drive like the better you’re getting at driving and the more you get control of it and the more you’ll start doing it

16 years, Northern Ireland
It was also interesting to note that the majority of joyriders interviewed stated that they had maintained the same level, or even reduced their level, of activity over time:

*Interviewer*

did that change over time, the amount that you were doing

*Thomas*

no, never

18 years, Northern Ireland

*Brian*

as time went on I'd say it got less and less

19 years, Midlands

In terms of increased *intensity*, the interviews with joyriders in the present study suggested that many had attempted to steal bigger and better cars over time:

*Nick*

when I was (...) I'd look for any kind of cars, I would have stole the first one I saw, and now I just go for fast ones

16 years, Northern Ireland

Furthermore, in the example of Billy (below), the discourse used to describe this progression seemed interestingly analogous to that of a drug user:

*Billy*

started off on slow cars like but after about six months I was into fast cars

19 years, Northern Ireland

Although again it needs to be pointed out that not all joyriders tended to drive more powerful cars over time:

*Interviewer*

and did the cars that you rode in tend to change over time

*Carl*

oh no, it was always Vauxhalls because they was easier to take, like they only take a few minutes

18 years, Midlands

Furthermore, it was not always clear whether the decision to steal ‘better cars’ was always because this was necessary in order to achieve the desired mood-modifying effect. The joyriders gave a number of other reasons for their desire for faster and more powerful cars over time, suggesting that this was not always in order to increase arousal. A popular response was that as time went on they
found that they need a faster car in order to get away from the police more efficiently:

\[\text{Stewart}\]

you want something bigger and better, something faster, you see
likes as well peelers chasing you, you’re going to want something
to get away

16 years, Northern Ireland

Others said that they stole better cars in order to improve their image or status amongst peers:

\[\text{Jeremy}\]

the image isn’t it, you go out in a Metro, you think, oh he’s not a
very good twocker, you go out in a BMW you think, oh that’s nice

18 years, Midlands

And some stole nicer cars because their improved skills afforded them more choice over time in terms of the type of vehicle they were able to drive:

\[\text{Interviewer}\]

why do you think the type of cars changed over time when you
were driving for fun

\[\text{Gordon}\]

er .. I think what it- it comes down to knowledge and knowing how
to take a car, ‘cos when I first started I only like knew how to take
the really old cars, like Y-regs and things like that, but as time’s
progressed on people have told me how to get into like better cars,
I’ve been with people who’ve got into better cars, I think its
progressed on like that

20 years, Midlands

However, it is also worth noting that although the legal acquisition of bigger and better cars cannot perhaps occur as quickly as illegal acquisition, it is still considered to be quite acceptable behaviour for ‘ordinary’ young drivers (who were probably once happy to drive almost anything as a first car) to desire to drive bigger and better cars over time. Many drivers ‘upgrade’ their cars over time as driving skills improve, and finance allows - not least because of the implicit pressure to do so from the car manufacturers - and the desire for bigger and better in these ‘ordinary’ drivers would not usually be regarded as evidence for addiction. Caution must therefore be exercised when viewing analogous desires and behaviour in joyriders as being indicative of dependency.
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However, some of the joyriders' discourse did suggest that the desire for a better car was related to the need for increased intensity in the behaviour, as with Philip (below) who described getting 'too used to driving a little car':

*Interviewer*
why would you want to take something bigger

*Philip*
'cos its .. I don't know 'cos its .. you get too used to driving a little car, you know what I mean, then you want to try something different, something with a bit more speed and power and that, so you start taking faster cars (...)

17 years, Midlands

These findings are similar to those of Light *et al* (1993) who noticed in their sample of 100 young car thieves that after about a year of joyriding 'skills seem to have improved sufficiently to allow thieves to steal better cars, and with greater speed' and that for many 'these improved skills are harnessed to increase the thrill of theft' (p34). Kilpatrick (1997) also noticed that young joyriders (in Northern Ireland) tended to steal 'better and faster cars well as cars that were more difficult to break into' (p177) and cited this as being evidence of tolerance. The observations in the present study suggest that whilst this may be so in a minority of cases, for many joyriders there are probably other explanations more related to skill and mastery.

There was some evidence to suggest that the behaviour had been deliberately made more 'challenging', such as driving faster, tackling harder alarm systems/immobilisers, stealing the cars at more dangerous times of the day or in more public places, and deliberately becoming involved in police pursuits. However, in terms of tackling alarms and immobilisers, it was clear that that the motives were not always to increase the danger and thrill of the activity, as personal achievement and status issues continued to be playing an important part. The following extract by Leon (also discussed with regard to status issues in Chapter 4, section 4.1.1) illustrates this:

*Leon [discussing alarm systems]*
well you'd try to go for the ones, the easy one- the hard one, you know where you get more kick out of it and if you steal a hard one and you come back onto the estate and go look, he stole that there they're hard, and then it makes you macho

17 years, Northern Ireland
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Although such ‘challenges’ were not aspired to by all joyriders:

*Dave*

I didn’t go for car alarms, cars with car alarms... if I ever did a car with a car alarm and it went off I’d just run off, and leave that and get another one

21 years, Midlands

As described in the previous chapter (section 6.1.2), Brown (1997) suggested that when behaviours are being used to manipulate hedonic tone, individuals often acquire skills in using the activity for this purpose. In the present study, stronger evidence for tolerance was perhaps found in the examples of how some young men had become skilled in using joyriding to further increase levels of arousal by combining the behaviour with other pleasurable activities, such as deliberately provoking a police pursuit, taking drugs and playing certain music.

Provoking the police into a chase appeared to be more popular in Northern Ireland than in the Midlands (possibly because, due to the geography of the estates in West Belfast, and the armoured nature of the RUC vehicles, escape was perceived as being more probable). As the following extract suggests, the reason given for provoking a pursuit was often ‘boredom’:

*Alan*

if it’s getting a wee bit boring you know, just driving about or something, and you see them then you’s, come on we’ll get a chase, you know

18 years, Northern Ireland

However, contrary to popular opinion, it was observed in this study that those who deliberately provoked a police chase were in the minority. Even in the Northern Ireland sample, where deliberately provoking a police pursuit was talked about quite frequently, and more than was the case in the Midlands sample, none of the joyriders admitted to wanting to increase their arousal levels by provoking a pursuit by the paramilitary organisations! The infrequency of joyriders wanting to deliberately engage the police in a chase has also been noticed by Light *et al* (1993) who pointed out that this practice may not be as common as has been assumed, with only 10% of their sample saying that they had deliberately provoked a police chase for the ‘buzz’.
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The following example shows how, for some, drugs were clearly being used to increase levels of arousal whilst joyriding:

*Interviewer*
how did you feel when you were driving and using crack
*Craig*
(...)
when like you have a hit and stoned and that and that gives you a-
that like gives you a rush yeh, and then when you’re going fast that gives you another rush, so you’re getting like two rushes at the same time

17 years, Midlands

In the present study a number of joyriders also talked about how music was used to encourage and enhance their driving experience:

*Simon*
and you’re going mad in the car man, you’re swerving out and everything its just madness, and they’ve got the music blaring like, its just buzzing me
(...)
yeh, yeh, music on, bom bom, and that’s what’s buzzing, you know what I mean, its just the music blaring and and in the car going (whaa) really fast like and (tshh), you know what I mean

19 years, Midlands

7.2.2 Diminished experience from the same level of joyriding

The second consideration when investigating tolerance is whether a markedly diminished mood-modifying effect was experienced from continuing the activity at the same level of intensity. There were several examples suggestive of this, including the following interesting example where the diminished effect of the behaviour was directly compared to drug use:

*Interviewer*
did you get a buzz out of driving stolen cars ever
*Dave*
yeh, like when we first started nicking cars and that like you’d see the car you want and that and then your heart started beating and that, you’d be like, like get it and that and get a really god buzz off it and that, but, just suppose like a drug isn’t it in a way like, you get used to it and that don’t you and its no longer a buzz

21 years, Midlands

A more common response was that of many joyriders who described becoming bored or fed up with the activity:
These extracts suggest that there was a tendency for the mood-modifying effect of the behaviour to diminish over time and it appears that one of the contributing factors to this was because the behaviour had become predictable. This is presumably why some chose to increase the intensity of the behaviour by added new elements such as drugs and music (see section 7.2.1, above).

7.3 Withdrawal symptoms

The symptoms that may present following the withdrawal of a substance vary considerably according to the type of substance, and may include both physiological and psychological features. The ICD 10 defined the withdrawal state from psychoactive substances as 'a group of symptoms of variable clustering and severity', adding that they are 'related to the type of psychoactive substance...' (p320). The DSM IV, giving a little more detail, described withdrawal as a 'maladaptive behavioural change, with physiological and cognitive concomitants...' (p178), further describing the characteristic withdrawal syndrome for each specific substance. Edwards and Gross (1976), specifically looking at alcohol dependency, have described how, in the most severe cases, withdrawal symptoms manifest as 'delirium tremens' which include the features of: tremor; nausea; sweating; and mood disturbances, such as anxiety and depression, which are not merely a reaction to the physical symptoms.

Withdrawal symptoms have also been noticed in non-substance behaviours and, like the substance addictions, it can be observed that the actual symptoms appear to vary according to the behaviour. For instance, although not specifically referred to as a withdrawal state, the DSM IV, when defining pathological gambling, described the cognitive states of feeling restless or irritable when attempting to stop or cut down gambling. In looking at sexual addiction Goodman (1997) stated that withdrawal phenomena usually manifested as 'affective discomfort, irritability, or restlessness' (p342). Thornton and Scott (1995), investigating the notion of dependency on running, described how recognisable psychological or physical symptoms (such as tension, irritability,
insomnia, depression, bloatedness, guilt and pain) could occur when an opportunity to run is withdrawn. Finally, Griffiths (1999) argued that addicted Internet users might suffer the withdrawal symptoms of ‘the shakes, moodiness and irritability if prevented from going on-line’ (p246).

Goodman (1997) in his attempt to reconcile the variations between substance and non-substance behaviours has described a characteristic withdrawal syndrome of ‘physiologically described changes and/or psychologically described changes upon discontinuation of the behaviour’ (p341). Whilst this still leaves the details of exactly what changes one might expect to find rather vague, this is probably unavoidable, as the physiological symptoms associated with substance use also vary considerably.

It would seem logical however to at least look for those psychophysiological signs that have been noted in the behavioural addictions (e.g. tension, restlessness, irritability, depression, insomnia, guilt and moodiness) when considering dependency to joyriding. However, when considering the interview data, evidence of withdrawal symptoms amongst joyriders was not overwhelming.

7.3.1 Withdrawal symptoms from non-engagement in joyriding

There did not appear to be any evidence in the interviews of physiological withdrawal symptoms when the joyriders were not engaging in their behaviour, although there was evidence for some minor psychological effects. The main negative feeling state from non-engagement appeared to be ‘boredom’:

Alan

well the first punishment beating I got, I couldn’t walk for nine months, so I couldn’t do nothing for nine months

Interviewer

right, and how did you feel when you couldn’t do it

Alan

I felt bored, you know what I mean, I hadn’t anything else to do, you know all my mates were still out doing it, you know what I mean, and I couldn’t join in

18 years, Northern Ireland

Interviewer

you know that two or three weeks that you described that you wouldn’t joyride for
Whilst it seems clear that a number of joyriders did miss the behaviour and described feeling bored, boredom has also been observed as a factor leading to initial commencement in the activity (see Chapter 4, section 4.2.2), and as a negative reinforcement in the maintenance phase (see Chapter 5, section 5.1.2). Analysis of the interviews does not suggest that the levels of boredom following non-engagement were any worse than descriptions of boredom in these earlier phases. Furthermore, in above extracts the respondents described not having anything else to do (Alan), and wanting something to do (Matthew), implying that perhaps 'something' or even 'anything' else may have relieved their boredom. It seems possible therefore that if the respondents had been given opportunities to engage in some other activity then they may not have experienced these feelings.

There was also one respondent (in a Training School at the time of interview) who described feeling 'really down' because he was unable to joyride:

_Interviewer_

obviously you can’t joyride while you’re in here, do you miss it
_Shaun_

Aye

_Interviewer_

how does it make you feel, how do you feel when you can’t joyride
_Shaun_

really down sometimes, you just don’t think about it

15 years, Northern Ireland

Whilst others only missed the money that selling the car (or parts) used to bring:

_Interviewer_

so if you weren’t doing it for a while, if you were having a time when you weren’t joyriding at all, or nicking cars, how did you feel .. did it bother you
_Adrian_

no, not really, I’d just have no money in my pockets, but other than that it didn’t really bother me

20 years, Northern Ireland
Similar findings were reported from Kilpatrick's (1997) study of young car crime offenders, and cited as being evidence for withdrawal distress after a period of non-engagement. Many had described feeling awful if they were not able to joyride, and some who had stopped joyriding had stated that they missed both the buzz and the money, as well as feeling bored.

Clearly, with regard to the money, it must be noted that although lack of money was probably a very real side effect of not selling the cars (or parts) following joyriding, in these instances it was the secondary benefit of having money from stealing the cars, rather than the driving of the cars *per se* that was being 'missed', and therefore strictly speaking not a withdrawal symptom from the 'joyriding' itself.

Finally, not all the joyriders had negative feeling states following cessation of the activity. The following young man described feeling positive during a time when he gave up joyriding - except for the inconvenience of having to walk home occasionally!:

```
Interviewer
  right, so you gave up for about eight or nine weeks
Gordon
  mm
Interviewer
  during that eight or nine weeks how did you feel
Gordon
  .. I felt- I felt quite good actually, 'cos I used to be able to walk around, see a police car, someone that knew me, or someone that’d arrested me and just carry on walking, without (...) knowing I’ve got to run 'cos they’d got something on me
(...)  
Interviewer
  did you miss the cars at all, did you miss it
Gordon
  sometimes I did, 'cos I have to walk quite long distances, like three or four miles at a time
```

20 years, Midlands

7.3.2 Relief behaviour

Relief behaviour (engaging in the behaviour in order to relieve some other unpleasant state) is primarily described as a further consequence of the
withdrawal state. For instance, the DSM IV criteria for substance dependence states that withdrawal is either manifested by the characteristic syndrome for the substance, or the same (or closely related) substance being taken to relieve or avoid withdrawal symptoms. Brown (1993) similarly described relief behaviour in terms of learning to avoid the negative effects that result from ceasing an activity that has a major effect on hedonic tone.

To give examples, Edwards and Gross (1976) described one of the features of alcohol dependence as drinking that is cued by both withdrawal relief (i.e. in response to withdrawal symptoms as they present, for example first thing in the morning), and withdrawal avoidance (i.e. the maintenance of a certain level of alcohol consumption in order to prevent withdrawal symptoms from occurring). Then in terms of non-substance behaviours, Thornton & Scott (1995) have stated that the goal of runners may be determined by a need to reduce withdrawal symptoms.

The notion of relief behaviour has been translated by Goodman (1997) from substance into general behavioural terms as when 'the same (or closely related) behaviour is engaged in to relieve or avoid withdrawal symptoms' (p341), and there was some evidence of joyriders engaging in the same (or closely related behaviour) when unable to joyride. For instance, one young man, who had decided to 'go straight' for a period of time, described joyriding by other means:

Interviewer
what did you do in those eight months that you couldn't joyride or nick cars, what did you do to take your mind off it, what did you do instead
Robert
I had a petrol go-kart, I used to burn about with it on the fields, I had a motor bike as well, I used to spend loads of time on the fields just driving about on the bike isn't it, and I used to spend time with my missus isn't it
Interviewer
so you did some things that were a bit similar
Robert
yeh, but they weren't stolen [laughs]
Others had turned to drugs:

*Interviewer*
how did you feel when you didn’t- you know for that couple of months that you weren’t joyriding, how did you feel
*Craig*
odd .. its boredom ain’t it, just there’s nothing to do, you know what I mean, just used to take more drugs and that
(...)
*Interviewer*
why do you think you took more drugs when you weren’t joyriding
*Craig*
‘cos its boredom and there’s nothing to do and [laughs] and you’ve been always used to holding a steering wheel in your hand, ‘cos you’ve got nothing to hold in your hand, you ain’t got one (...) and its boredom, its like smoking, trying to give up you know, you just (...) you need the steering wheel in your hand and that, and you can’t so you just- you get a pipe or something and hold that in your hand

17 years, Midlands

The example of Craig (above) was interesting, as he appeared to have been using drugs to replace ‘going through the motions’ of driving a car. It was of interest, not only because of the drug-type analogy that was made by the respondent, but also because of the unusual nature of this kinetic effect. The following teacher had noticed a similar phenomenon:

*George*
when they’re out walking in the corridor they’ll walk down very fast and when they’re in the corner they’ll sort of, hand-braker [demonstrates motion of driving a car] you know

*Teacher in Training School, Northern Ireland*

However, although some of the above activities had been engaged in as an alternative to joyriding, it did not follow that they were being engaged in to avoid withdrawal symptoms. As the previous section suggests, withdrawal symptoms were not obvious, and therefore go-karting and drug-taking may have simply been extensions of existing alternatives.

Having considered the criteria of tolerance, withdrawal and relief from withdrawal, it is worth pointing out that the DSM IV states that neither tolerance nor withdrawal are necessary nor sufficient for a diagnosis of substance dependence to be made. The ICD 10 similarly states that there is only sometimes
a withdrawal state. So now to consider some of the other dependency criteria in relation to joyriding.

7.4 Persistence despite harmful consequences

Another generally accepted criterion for dependency to both substance and non-substance addictions is the tendency for individuals to persist in the behaviour despite having knowledge of its harmful physical or psychological consequences. Edwards and Gross (1976) have described how drink-seeking behaviour may have such salience that priority is given to maintaining a certain level of alcohol intake regardless of negative consequences such as financial, marriage or health problems; and some of the criteria listed by the DSM IV as being indicative of pathological gambling also suggest the behaviour persists despite negative consequences (e.g. lying to others, committing illegal acts, and relying on others for 'bailout').

However, there are two points that need to be taken into account when considering the negative consequences of a potentially addictive behaviour in terms of indicating dependency. The first was made by the APA (1992) who, in describing this criterion in relation to substance dependence, stated that the key evaluative issue is 'not the existence of a problem, but that the individual fails to abstain from using the substance despite having evidence of the difficulty it is causing' (p179). In other words, individuals need to be aware of the possible harmful consequences - and yet still persist in the behaviour.

Then, even if there is an awareness, there may not be a real concern, which leads to the second point, made by Edwards and Gross (1976), who pointed out the importance of the part played by the individual's personality. They argued that whereas some people may show an awareness of deterioration in personal and moral standards over time, for others the disregard of consequences might be due to general irresponsibility. Perhaps this is why some researchers in the field of addiction (e.g. Brown, 1997; Griffiths, 1999) have focused on the notion of 'conflict': that is, when the knowledge of negative consequences also gives rise to feelings of conflict within the individual (or results in conflict with others). This
may perhaps be particularly emphasised in those behaviours that, due to their nature, cause physical or psychological harm. For instance, Gresswell & Hollin (1997) described how some multiple murderers suffer from feelings of intense conflict (such as revulsion and guilt) after they have killed.

In the analysis of joyriding behaviour it seems important then to discover whether the individuals (i) were aware of the dangers and consequences of their behaviour, (ii) were concerned by this knowledge, and then (iii) still persisted in the behaviour; and the following section suggests that in some individuals this appeared to be the case.

7.4.1 Persisting in joyriding despite harmful consequences
Most of the joyriders demonstrated an awareness of the consequences, as they were able to list at least some of the downsides to their behaviour when asked. In the Midlands the most popular responses included having a crash, getting injured, killing themselves, and injuring or killing someone else:

*Robert*

`erm, crashing, kill someone, or, get chased and kill yourself`

18 years, Midlands

*Anthony*

`I've lost six friends through stolen vehicles crashing`

20 years, Midlands

Other less popular responses included making enemies, ruining relationships with their family, getting caught and going to prison. It was however interesting, and important, to note that a number of joyriders did not consider custodial sentences to be a downside:

*Brett*

`crashing and killing somebody, that's the only thing what can go wrong really, crashing and killing someone, 'cos prison this ain't the downside of it really, this is the next laugh of it, 'cos this place, it's just a joke`

19 years, Midlands

These findings are supported by Light *et al* (1993), who found in a sample of 100 young car thieves, that in terms of legal deterrents 'three quarters put thoughts of being caught out of their mind, and nine out of ten were not deterred by the risk of
apprehension anyway’, with younger offenders being ‘least likely to think about what punishment they might attract if caught’ (p44). They also noticed that certain measures were considered to be of very little deterrent (e.g. cautions, probation or community service). In addition, whilst half of those who expected to get custody (should they be caught) saw this as a deterrent, only one of the fourteen offenders who had actually experienced custody said that this had stopped them re-offending. McGillivray et al (1993) similarly found, in their study of 17 young people who had been involved with stealing cars, that most tried not to think of things that might worry them (such as the police), with half stating that they had never thought about getting caught.

The issue of persisting despite the harmful consequences also revealed an interesting cultural difference, in that the potential and actual consequences of the activity were far more severe in Northern Ireland than they were in the Midlands. In Northern Ireland, in addition to an awareness of the above elements, most joyriders were also aware of risks related to paramilitary punishments:

Interviewer
tell me then, what are the downsides of joyriding
Alan
punishment beatings, getting put out of the country, curfews, you know just paramilitary stuff

18 years, Northern Ireland

As well as knowing about the dangers, most of the joyriders interviewed had experienced some of the negative effects of joyriding. For instance, due to the nature of the sample, all of the respondents had been caught by the police, many serving prison sentences. In addition, many had been involved in accidents whilst joyriding, some of which had had serious consequences:

Jeremy
you could have a crash, or you could kill one of your mates, like I put one of my mates in a coma before

18 years, Midlands

Billy
my mate went out the windscreen, my- one mate went out the back window

19 years, Northern Ireland
Then in Northern Ireland there were also many joyriders who had observed and/or incurred paramilitary threats and punishments, including curfews, banishments (being put out of the country), punishment beatings and shootings:

**Thomas**  
they pulled up- you know beside me- jumped out and beat the hell out of me with a baseball bat, then pulled me into their car and I can’t remember, then took, took me round to the back of a chapel and that’s where they beat me  
*21 years, Northern Ireland*

**James**  
they caught me once like, something I’d done in a stolen car .. and they baseball batted me so they did  
*18 years, Northern Ireland*

**Leon**  
there was a car on the estate and the car was parked and the two boys were stopping us at the street corner, they had the car, they were good joyriders (...) we were smoking, they were drinking beer and I seen two men walk up the street and I went, who’s that, and they went, aye- aye they’re alright, and then the next minute they pulled out a gun and shot it and the other one went, no-one move, and I run, couple of others run and one of them stayed there, the one that was drinking, he’s stole the car, and they got him in the back of a taxi- a black taxi and drove him up to their estate- its more republicans on their estate, and (there’s joyriders)- and shot him, shot him through the knees [makes shooting noises twice] twice  
*17 years, Northern Ireland*

For some, the awareness and/or experience of these consequences had led them to reduce or stop joyriding (as will be discussed in Chapter 9). Kilpatrick (1997) similarly found, when considering the awareness the young men in her sample had of the negative consequences of joyriding, that most had experienced paramilitary threats or punishments, with some stating that as a result they were trying to stop joyriding.

However, in the present study there were many who, although aware of the consequences, did not appear to be concerned by them. For instance, as has already been mentioned, the possibility of going to prison was rarely a source of worry, with one young man stating that the risk of getting caught was all part of the ‘buzz’:
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Interviewer
yeh, you could get caught or-

Colin
‘cos that’s all part of the buzz isn’t it

Interviewer
what the fact that you might get caught

Colin
you might get caught, the speed, what you’ve just done, hand-brake or, see how good your skills are basically

19 years, Midlands

Others in the present study did not appear to be very concerned by the possibility, or experience, of having an accident. Light et al (1993) who, in considering the deterrent effect of car accidents, similarly found that although 78% of their sample said that either they or their friends had been involved in an accident (32% resulting in serious injury and 18% having experienced a friends dying), only five said that having an accident had made them desist.

Perhaps even more surprising in the present study, were those from Northern Ireland who claimed that the possibility of paramilitary punishment did not bother them:

Interviewer
what might they do if they catch you

Martin
break your arms and legs

(...)

Interviewer
do you think that will happen to you

(...)

Martin
aye, they always catch you in the end

(...)

Interviewer
does that worry you

Martin
no

Interviewer
why, you don’t want your arms and legs broken do you?

Martin
no but I know its going to happen so its no use worrying about it

15 years, Northern Ireland
It was interesting that these types of responses were mostly from the younger joyriders who had not actually experienced the punishments themselves. As one older joyrider commented:

David

no, just, you see you don't really- you don't really- you don't think about getting a beating like unless you are beaten yourself so, I was never beaten thank God

20 years, Northern Ireland

Although there may have been a certain amount of bravado in stating that the threat of punishment did not bother them, for dependency to be demonstrated there needs to be clear evidence for awareness and concern on the part of the joyriders and in the present study there were many young men who did show concern about the possible consequences, and yet still persisted in the behaviour. The following extracts by Simon (below, edited for length) clearly show the presence of conflict within an individual who was aware of the harmful consequences of his behaviour. Simon described the intense internal struggle that he felt between wanting to continue his joyriding activities which he enjoyed, and the consequences of this in terms of (i) the effect that this was having on his mother (who was not well), and (ii) the potential risk of a serious accident:

Simon

at the end of the day she doesn't need it, you know what I mean, and like, I'm not the perfect child in the world, you know what I mean, but I try- I look after my mum as well

(...) sometimes- there's half of me thinking- half of myself thinking, why do I do it, bad, its bad stuff, and the other half of me thinking, yeh, go for it, go on, its wicked, go on you're getting a buzz of it, you're getting adrenaline off it, you're getting the fear off it, its wicked man, go for it, like that

(...) 'cos my mum like, she's got arthritis in her back and like I'm supposed to be her carer, you know what I mean, out shopping and things like that, I used to be- I used to be alright, I used to like help her

(...) I've seen what affect that I pose upon pedestrians, a lot of people in cars, I've seen a lot of crashes in my time in cars, I've been in a crash myself in a car

(...) I'm going to end up dying or something in a car, if I keep carrying on, and like I just- that's the feeling, I'm not scared of the dying but it's the fear, you know dying in pain do you get me, dying in
the car, wrapped round the steering wheel, glass in your eyes, scratched your face, and like your broken neck, broken limbs
(…)
just the risk you take, hundred per cent risk you take, if you go in the car you’ve got to be prepared to take the cons- responsibilities

19 years, Midlands

But perhaps the most extreme examples of this phenomenon of persisting in the behaviour despite the harmful consequences came from Northern Ireland, one of the more serious examples being that of Alan (below, edited for length), whose friend had been left seriously disabled following a crash, and who also claimed that he had been beaten twice by the paramilitaries (once after having been abducted at gun-point) – yet he persisted in his joyriding activities:

Alan
they were in a Cavalier, and they were just messing about, you know up the roads, and he came to a junction, didn’t stop at the junction, and hit a quarry lorry
(…)
erm that was a real bad crash, like he was in a coma for- he’s only come out of a coma about six months now, and er now he’s in a wheelchair and you know his hands are sort of like this and (…) he doesn’t know who I am and that
(…)
he was in the car on his own, but I’ve always thought to myself like erm- I could have been in that car if I hadn’t been in here
(…)
Interviewer
and that made you think a bit did it
Alan
mm, I didn’t really- when I got out I didn’t do it as often, but I was still doing it like

[later in the interview]
I walked into the house one night you know, just opened the door and walked in like and they were there before me, they were hiding in my sister’s house waiting for me
(…) and er, and they blindfolded me and, I had- put a gun to my face, they says you know, if I screamed or anything like that I would get shot, so I didn’t, they took me down into the forest and laid me on my back and broke my two legs with iron bars … and I suppose I had that- I couldn’t walk for nine months
Interviewer
mm, and did that put you off joyriding
Alan
no, not really because I got caught- I got- done it again like
(…)

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when I got better it just wore off again, you know the punishment beating
(...)
erm I was actually in the car you know and I was doing handbrakers and things like that there and the vigilantes had started you know
(...) they patrol the streets at night you know looking for joyriders and I- I was in the car I mean and I was doing handbrakers an all and er (...) and they had you know the thing inside the car with (...)and fused the whole car you know, blew all the fuses an all and the car wouldn't go no-where, which meant that, I was caught you know, so the paramilitaries only took me out and broke my legs again

18 years, Northern Ireland

7.5 Important activities being given up or reduced
The ICD 10 describes one of the phenomena of substance dependency as the giving of a higher priority to drug use than other activities and obligations. The DSM IV elaborates on this theme by describing how important social, occupational or recreational activities may have been given up or reduced, adding that this may either have been in order to use the substance in private, or to spend more time with substance-using friends. Brown (1993), for instance, described how an addictive activity (such as drinking) could become more important than eating, sleeping, sexual satisfaction or relationships.

As with the previous criteria this is not confined to substances. The DSM IV diagnostic criteria for pathological gambling includes the item ‘has jeopardised or lost a significant relationship, job, or educational or career opportunity because of gambling’ (p618). Goodman (1997) also described how, in sexual addiction, there could be ‘the neglect of other areas of life as the behaviour assumes priority’ (p341). Giving a definition for this criterion that would encompass addictive behaviours in general, Goodman (1997) said that this was when important activities were given up or reduced because of the behaviour.

In terms of young men, important activities that may be given up due to joyriding are likely to include social and family relationships, educational commitments, and recreational activities, such as sports. It is however necessary to take into
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account two aspects (i) for some these activities may not have been perceived as being important by the joyriders, and (ii) some of the activities may have been curtailed as a natural consequence of adolescent development. Indeed the following section suggests that whilst some important activities appeared to have suffered as a direct consequence of joyriding, other activities may have naturally curtailed.

7.5.1 Important activities being curtailed due to joyriding

In terms of the commitment to their families, up to half said that their joyriding had not affected their relationship with their family, and that they still spent time at home:

Carl
some nights I came in late when I was joyriding, but I was still spending time with my family

18 years, Midlands

Although for some this appeared to be because they had kept their activities a secret:

Joe
I still went home every night and that, its just, at night, I went at night, but I’d still be in home in the morning and they wouldn’t notice I’d be gone

20 years, Midlands

Whilst a reduction in time spent with the family may be viewed as normal adolescent behaviour, approximately half of the joyriders did say they that did not spend much time with their family due to their joyriding:

Jeremy
like when I went home, I just went home to get something to eat, or five o’clock in the morning, bang my dad out of bed, to undo the front door and then just go in, go to sleep, wake up and then go straight back out again
Interviewer
so you didn’t see much of your folks then
Jeremy
no

18 years, Midlands

Leon
never in the house, only in for my dinner and that was it, out in the morning in for my dinner
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_Interviewer_
how did your family feel about that
_Leon_
disgusted, didn’t feel right

17 years, Northern Ireland

However, it was the case in a few instances that they hadn’t seen much of their family before they started joyriding:

_Interviewer_
how much time do you spend with your family and your friends
_Nick_
not much
_Interviewer_
mm, did you used to spend more time with them before
_Nick_
aye, with my friends, not my family

16 years, Northern Ireland

About half said that they had lost contact with old friends directly as a result of joyriding:

_Interviewer_
do- have you lost contact with friends at all
_Simon_
yeh, I’ve lost loads of friends over this, lost friends, lost loads of life friends

19 years, Northern Ireland

Approximately the same number of respondents said that they had not lost friends through joyriding. However, some of those who had not lost friends seemed to have managed this through leading a ‘double life’ – i.e. having joyriding and non-joyriding friends:

_Craig_
I still see everyone I know and that, they just like- I just like- in the day they go out and do burglaries and I’d go out and nick cars, and then I’d see them at night time or something

17 years, Midlands

Whereas others said that their friends were all joyriders anyway:

_Nick_
the friends I hang around with’s the ones who I joyride with

16 years, Northern Ireland

Then there were some who stated that although may have lost some of their old friends because of joyriding, they had made more friends through joyriding.
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Interviewer
did you lose touch with any of your friends through nicking cars

Joe
a few, but I made a lot more

20 years, Midlands

Some young men also talked about the detrimental effect that their joyriding had had on their relationships with girlfriends:

Anthony
my girlfriend, she’s just finished with me because, me in jail, and like she knows that when I get out I’m going to st- probably carry on with what I’m doing, she’s just lost the baby through stress and worrying about me

20 years, Midlands

In terms of education, most of the young men who were young enough to be at school had not been attending, and were out joyriding when they should have been at school. However, in most instances they did not appear to be missing school because they were joyriding. Most of those who did not attend school had stopped attending before they started joyriding, mostly because they had become bored with school:

Joel
I’d stopped school anyway

Interviewer
you’d stopped going anyway, why was that
Just didn’t like it, it was boring

21 years, Midlands

Or occasionally because they had been expelled (for other reasons):

Brett
I got expelled ‘cos I had a fight with my headmaster then, oh I just didn’t go to school after that again

19 years, Midlands

However, there were a minority of respondents who claimed that they had stayed away from school specifically to joyride, such as Philip (below):

Interviewer
would you have gone to school if you hadn’t been out nicking cars

Philip
probably

Interviewer
were you going to school before you started nicking cars

Philip
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yeh
Interviewer
you were stealing them during the day then
Philip
I managed to do- I got through first year at secondary school and
that was it, I didn’t want to go
Interviewer
why do you think that was then
Philip
I was out all day isn’t it, I was never home and that, so didn’t
bother about school
Interviewer
and what were you doing when you were out all day
Interviewer
driving round in cars

17 years, Midlands

Overall, it seemed that if the young men felt that school was important then they
continued with their education, alongside their joyriding:

Interviewer
what about your school work, did that suffer at all
Gordon
erm, not really ‘cos when I used to come home I used to more or
less do my homework straight off anyway, so them I’d have the
rest of the night free
Interviewer
right, did you do any exams at school
Gordon
er, I done GCSE maths, art, science, got quite good grades in them
as well, I think I- I got two- two C’s erm, three- three B’s and an
A, in my exams, yeh, going out pinching cars didn’t really affect
my school work

20 years, Midlands

Although, as this young man pointed out, the joyriding may still have been having
an effect on their education:

Carl
I lost concentration at school, because all I’d be thinking about is,
am I going out tonight, will we get a chase
(...)
I’d get into school, like I’d sit there, I’d start doing my work to
start off with and then I’d be thinking, that was good last night, I
enjoyed it, good buzz, just went away from my school work

18 years, Midlands

The area of ‘important’ activities (i.e. important to the joyriders) that seemed most
affected by joyriding was that of sports and leisure. Of those who had engaged in
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sports, the most popular sport was football (particularly in Northern Ireland). In the Midlands, football, swimming, fishing and working on mountain bikes were all quite popular. Whilst young people often lose interest in activities as they get older, many of these car thieves who used to participate in sports stated that they regretted giving up a sport for their joyriding activities. As the following examples show, for some stopping sports was because joyriding had become more important:

Joe
I used to like go football training and that twice a week .. and all my mates like, I’d hang around with my mates after and that, but, then I started going off- we all started nicking cars and that, like I gave up football training for cars and I never really got back into my football training again, just cars all the time

20 years, Midlands

Whereas for others it was because of the consequences of joyriding:

Mike
I liked to play football like, but until I got shot
Interviewer
have you been able to play football since you’ve been shot
Mike
no

20 years, Northern Ireland

As one young man said:

Leon
took my mind off sports, more into joyriding and cars, that was my sport, stealing cars and joyriding

17 years, Northern Ireland

Overall these findings are not equivalent to those of Kilpatrick (1997) who reported that (in Northern Ireland) her sample of young joyriders ‘stealing cars was generally more important than having a meal, getting a night’s sleep, going out with a girl, drinking or using drugs of any sort’ (p178 – emphasis added), although Kilpatrick did add that for many some of these activities would be combined with the joyriding anyway. However, one finding that was supported in the present study was that in Kilparick’s sample several of the boys had also indicated a reduced involvement in hobbies that had once interested them. Perhaps, this quote from the present study illustrates the importance that joyriding
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held for at least one young man, who also interpreted the salience of his behaviour as a sign of addiction:

Joe
you just get addicted to it, and then you’d rather do that than play football, and you’d rather do that than have your dinner even 20 years, Midlands

7.6 Unsuccessful efforts to cut down or control behaviour

It is has been widely noticed that a common feature of addiction to a substance or behaviour is the individual’s lack of success in attempting to abstain from, or even cut down on, the activity. For instance, the ICD 10 states that dependency syndrome included difficulties in controlling psychoactive substances; and the DSM IV adds that there may be a persistent desire (as well as unsuccessful efforts) to cut down or control substance use. In terms of behavioural addictions, pathological gamblers are also recognised as having had repeated unsuccessful efforts, to cut back, or stop gambling (APA, 1994); and Gresswell and Hollin (1997) reported that whilst multiple murder was by its nature repetitive, there were also accounts of multiple murderers who had felt increasing internal conflict by their behaviour, yet had failed in their attempts to try and stop killing.

Although many young offenders (particularly joyriders) are repeated offenders, this does not necessarily mean that (i) there is a desire to curtail their behaviour, or (ii) there is any actual attempt to abstain from or reduce their behaviour between offences. It is also important to take into account that the occasional thought, or a single attempt to stop / cut down does not amount to ‘persistence’. Therefore, when investigating this phenomenon in joyriding, it was necessary to consider the ‘persistence’ of either (i) desire and/or (ii) actual attempts to control the activity - thereby distinguishing between recidivism and genuine relapse. Indeed the analysis indicated that unsuccessful efforts to reduce or control joyriding had been present in a number of respondents.

7.6.1 Unsuccessful efforts to cut down or control joyriding

In terms of having a persistent desire to stop or cut down on joyriding activities, there was a mixture of responses, including those who had never considered altering their behaviour. However, there were a number who did show signs of
having persistent thoughts of stopping, with the typical case being that of thinking about stopping each time they found themselves in trouble:

Nick
when I get out this time I’m going to stop
Interviewer
right, have you ever thought about it before
Nick
aye the last time I was in

And there were also a minority of young men who appeared to have an on-going persistent desire to stop joyriding, although they had never been able to act on this desire. The following is a good example of this phenomenon, interpreted by the respondent as indicative of this behaviour being addictive:

Interviewer
have you ever thought to yourself that you ought to stop or cut down at all
Simon
yeh. I’ll always think that, I’ll always think that all the time, but its just never worked, its just like addiction, just like- you just want- you just want to keep going and going, just want to keep going and going and going and going until you can’t stop

In terms of failed attempts to stop, or cut down, the picture was similar. There were some who had never tried (or had only tried once or twice); but then there were those who appeared to have regularly failed in attempts to stop, the following example being the typical scenario:

Interviewer
so when you go out this time do you think you’ll stay out then
Brian
yeh, well I said it last time .. but .. obviously got back into trouble .. I was out for a long time last time, I was out for about a year, so, I’m staying out this time
Interviewer
you’re staying out
Brian
yeh, definitely

Kilpatrick (1997) also found, in her study of fifteen young car thieves from Northern Ireland, that of the nine who were in the process of trying to stop
joyriding there was evidence of 'great difficulty' (p180), with three reporting that they had tried in the past but failed. It was clear in the present study that, for some, persistent relapse was a feature of their behaviour. Furthermore, as the following example (edited for length) suggests, this phenomenon had also been interpreted as being indicative of his behaviour having an addictive quality:

**Respondent**

I don't know, it's just like, it's a drug in a way like, if you can get addicted to some drugs can't you, its like addicted to twocking cars, you can't stop until you have to stop, I don't know, I should have stopped [extended discussion about two friends who have died, one in a car, one on a bike] I don't know what it is, I've tried to stop, I just can't do it, I've tried and tried but I just can't do it, I don't know why

16 years, pilot interview, Midlands

### 7.7 Great deal of time spent related to the behaviour

A further criterion of dependency is an increase in the amount of time spent on activities related to the behaviour (i.e. in addition to time spend actually engaging in the behaviour). For instance, the DSM IV criteria for substance dependence, includes time spent in activities necessary to obtain the substance (such as visiting multiple doctors), or recovering from the effects of the substance. Then in the consideration of pathological gambling it is also noted by the DSM IV that the preoccupation may include reliving past experiences, or planning the next venture. Griffiths (1999) similarly discusses how, in the case of dependent internet users 'even if they are not actually on-line, they will be thinking about the next time they will be' (p. 246). This area of thinking about the behaviour, or 'day-dreaming', is also associated with sexual addictions (e.g. McGregor & Howells, 1997) and criminal behaviours such as serial killings. Gresswell & Hollin (1997), in their consideration of multiple murder, describe how 'many hours may be spent in fantasy, 'try-outs', acquiring weapons, selecting victims and locations, 'environmental grooming', i.e. preparing the environment for an offence, offending, and following their cases in the media' (p145).

To consider the notion of time spent on joyriding activities, it would seem appropriate to include the time spent preparing for, or recovering from the behaviour, as well as the time spent thinking about, and/or talking about, past and
potential future driving experiences. The following section suggests that despite minimal time spent in preparation, some respondents spent considerable amounts of time in fantasy and recovery.

7.7.1 Time spent preparing for or recovering from the effects of joyriding

It was apparent that most of the joyriders interviewed had spent a great deal of time actually engaging in the activity, with many stating that they did little else when their behaviour was at its most frequent:

*Interviewer*
were there ever any days or nights when you didn’t steal a car
*Terry*
no
*Interviewer*
ever
*Terry*
no, I was always driving

21 years, Midlands

However, in terms of preparing for the activity and recovering from the effects a varied picture emerged. Generally speaking, it appeared as if very little, if any, preparation in terms of planning was necessary, and any planning that did take place did not take up a great deal of time. This can be observed in the following typical response when asked whether stealing cars was ever planned:

*Matthew*
its just like bumping into them or something, then they’re like, what you doing, I’m going out twocking, are you coming with me then or what

19 years, Midlands

For many it appeared that a great deal of time was spent thinking about what they would like to do - something akin to the aforementioned ‘fantasy try-outs’:

*Leon*
it was a big part of my life but I enjoyed it and always thinking about it, I’m going to steal this kind of car, I’m going to steal that type of car and stuff

17 years, Northern Ireland

In the next quote, the young man worried in case his excessive thoughts were a sign of madness:
7. Dependency

Joe
when I’m bored in my pad I think about it all the time you know, driving round and picking people up and that
(…)
yeh did it all the time, even at home .. I thought I was going mad, you know I was going to see the doctor and then but, I asked my mum about it, she said, no you’re just thinking, day-dreaming, something- just bored isn’t it .. its all I do is to think about it all the time

20 years, Midlands

Many of the young men described re-living past experiences – both good and bad. As with day-dreaming about the future, the recalling of positive past experiences, was often undertaken in terms thinking about them. However, there was also a great deal of time spent talking about these experiences with their peers:

Alan
if we’ve had a chase, you know that something happened, you know, it might be the police crashed or something like that, you know we’re always talking about that and laughing about it an all

18 years, Northern Ireland

This activity appeared to be particularly popular whilst they were in custody, where they would discuss their experiences with other incarcerated joyriders:

Interviewer
do you talk to your friends a lot about it, about cars and stuff
Joe
yeh, talking just before I came in here [interview room in prison] about cars
Interviewer
what were you saying just before you came in here about cars then
Joe
oh he was on about these cars he’s nicked and that, and I’m just going, I’ve had one of them myself, not that good, and all that, that’s all they ever talk about in here is things what they’ve- what they used to do

20 years, Midlands

This was interesting because there were others (albeit a minority) who denied spending any time thinking about their experiences:

Jeremy
just weren’t bothered about it man, just like (…) my mates’d come
round for a laugh and say, are you going to get a car, you just go
out and get one, come home and forget about it

18 years, Midlands

Negative past experiences were also recalled by individuals, but most usually as
private thoughts. A psychologist in one of the young offender institutions commented that some joyriders who had experienced extremely traumatic incidents could suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder with its associated intrusive thoughts. The following examples show how past accidents (and even near misses) had sometimes occupied thoughts:

Roger
the only thing like when I’m on my own I think about, is, the last
one, because, of the crash

(...)  
Interviewer
and what do you think about it, about that then
Roger
I don’t know, I just think what I- when I’ve just think over what I
done

16 years, Midlands

Gordon
I used to think about it quite a bit afterwards, but when I first went
out to do it my mind used to be blank, I used to go out and do it
and think about it afterwards, think, oh I was lucky to get away
that night, or, went round that bend, I remember there was an old
woman walking across the road- just managed to miss her, and
things like that

20 years, Midlands

In terms of recovering from the effects of joyriding, considerable time was spent
by some, mainly in terms of court appearances and custodial sentences:

Interviewer
how many times have you been in prison for it
Matthew
what for twock, about nine times
Interviewer
right, and how long have you been in each time, about
Matthew
each time about, first couple of times, about first four times it was
just remand and that, but since then I’ve had a six month sentence,
an eight month sentence, a nine months sentence and another six
month sentence plus this one
Interviewer
and this one is-
Others had (also) spent time in hospital recovering from injuries incurred in joyriding accidents, although for most this was not a regular occurrence, therefore overall it would not amount to ‘great deal of time’:

**Terry**

erm, its like crippled half my mates legs and it put me in a coma for about two and a half weeks

**Interviewer** [discussing an accident]

how long were you recovering from that physically then

**Peter**

just a couple of- about two weeks or something

However, there were some in Northern Ireland who had spent a great deal of time recovering from various forms of paramilitary ‘punishments’:

**Mike**

it wasn’t- it wasn’t really a big beating at first, the last one was, they put me in hospital for six months

**Thomas**

I was put on a curfew so I was (...) **Interviewer**

how long was the curfew for **Thomas**

about four months (...) I got mine from nine o’clock have to be in at nine o’clock it was crap at the weekends like

The following young man actually assessed the time spent in hospital (after being ‘beaten up’ by vigilantes) literally in terms of missed opportunities to joyride:

**Interviewer**

how long was it that you couldn’t joyride for on that occasion **Darren**

four days, two Friday and Saturday nights, two weeks
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One other potentially time-consuming joyriding-related activity, engaged in by one young man was the keeping of joyriding records (which had also been a pastime of his older brother):

Joe
I used to have a diary before, the police took it out the house of all the cars I’d done (…)
Interviewer
how long did you keep a diary for
Joe
.. right from when I started twocking, I didn’t- I didn’t like write what I did every day and that, I just wrote like Astra GTE (…) and all that

20 years, Midlands

Finally, this last extract perhaps serves to illustrate the awareness that some joyriders had regarding their potential to spend time devoted to the activity:

Stewart
last year- if you were to ask me that I would never shut up about it, I wouldn’t have shut up the whole length of that tape, and I wouldn’t have shut up about joyriding
Interviewer
you’re not shutting up about it now [laughs]

16 years, Northern Ireland

7.8 Larger amounts of behaviour, or for a longer period than was intended
The notion of tolerance has already been described as a need for more of the substance or behaviour in order to achieve the desired effect. The DSM IV, in relation to substance dependence, has also included the further criterion of taking a substance in larger amounts or over a longer period than was intended. This differs subtly from tolerance as it introduces the element of breaking self-imposed limits. The criterion of indulging ‘more then intended’ also differs from having unsuccessful efforts to cease the behaviour (discussed in section 7.6) as it implies that the behaviour will continue – albeit within set limits.

To investigate the breaking of self-imposed limits of joyriding, Goodman’s (1997) definition as applied to addictive disorders in general was used; being that ‘the behaviour is often engaged in over a longer period, in greater quantity, or at a higher level of intensity than was intended’ (p341). As will be seen, there was very little evidence to support this criterion being present in joyriding activities.
7.8.1 *Indulging in joyriding more than intended*

As has already been discussed in relation to other dependency criteria, a number of joyriders did express concern about the extent of their behaviour. This can be seen in the following extract that illustrates an interesting cultural difference in the behaviour, in that this young man from Northern Ireland felt that he had good reason to limit his activities. Although he did not state exactly *how* much he thought he ought to have been indulging, he was aware that it was *too much*:

*Steve*

there were nights when we went out (...) we went too far (...) maybe taking about seven or eight cars, you know a night, and (...) that would be about sixteen cars like (...)

*Interviewer*

did you feel that was too much sometimes

*Steve*

that’s really too much for me, too much (...) too much for people to hear about

*Interviewer*

like who

*Steve*

(...) and paramilitaries

19 years, Northern Ireland

However, there was very little evidence to support the notion that joyriders tended to set actual limits as to how much they thought they should indulge. That said, there was just one example that suggested that the young man had broken some self-imposed limit on his behaviour:

*Interviewer*

did you ever feel you were doing it more often that you wanted to do it

*Terry*

yeh, I did, ‘cos like really I only really wanted to do it like once a week or something like that, but it got to the- basically I was doing it every single day

21 years, Midlands

7.9 *Subjective awareness of compulsion, craving or loss of control*

Finally, though not always recognised as a ‘criterion’ of dependency, there are numerous anecdotal and academic references to dependent individuals’ subjective feelings of compulsion (sometimes described as ‘cravings’) giving rise to a sense of ‘loss of control’ over their behaviour. As will be seen, these two aspects (‘craving’ and ‘loss of control’) are inextricably linked.
Taking first the notion of ‘craving’, Davis (1996) has described it as being a ‘subjective awareness of a compulsion to take the drug or engage in the particular behaviour’ (p10). Edwards and Gross (1976), in their description of alcohol dependence, similarly described a compulsive feeling which often accompanied withdrawal symptoms, and which was usually associated with a preoccupation of thoughts of drinking. It is interesting to note that although the DSM IV states that craving is ‘likely to be experienced by most (if not all) individuals with substance dependence’ (p176), it does not include the experience of ‘craving’ as a specific criterion for diagnostic purposes.

However, this may be because, as Edwards and Gross (1976) have argued, many of the phrases used to describe this subjective awareness were inadequate, stating that notions of ‘craving’ can vary between individuals. Variations in the notion of craving can also be observed between academics. For instance, Edwards and Gross (1976) describe craving as ‘a subjective interpretation of withdrawal’; whereas the APA (1992) describe it as ‘a strong subjective drive to use the substance’. So, as Peers (1996) pointed out, although the term ‘craving’ is widespread, there is very little academic or clinical consensus as to what it actually means, the only agreement being that it is a ‘subjective state in humans that is associated with drug dependence’ (p179). Due to these definitional problems a number of researchers (e.g. McMurran, 1994) have tended instead to talk of a ‘strong desire’. Diagnostically, the WHO (1992) has also stated that ‘a strong desire to take the drug’ (p321) was part of the substance dependency syndrome.

Davis (1996) described how expectancy (resulting from previous experiences and peer influences) could play a role in the severity of craving, adding that this intensely unpleasant experience increased as an individual ruminated about the positive outcome expectancies from indulging in the behaviour. In addition, through the process of classical conditioning, various cues in the environment could act as triggers, also leading to a ‘craving’ to perform a particular addictive behaviour. Edwards and Gross (1976), for instance, had noticed how ‘craving’ was often influenced by environmental cues.
Linked to the subjective experience of 'craving' is the notion of subsequent 'loss of control'. Brown (1993) described how this was first applied to alcoholics during the switch in popularity from the moral to the disease model of addiction. He emphasised that an inner experience of 'reduced and patchy control over overwhelming cravings and urges' (p254), had sometimes been elevated into the myth of total loss of control. He argued that loss of control could never be absolute, otherwise how would a recovering alcoholic manage to achieve 'the "miracle" of suddenly regaining total control of his drinking in abstinence, as many did?' (p254). Edwards and Gross (1976) similarly pointed out that although awareness of 'loss of control' is often said to be a crucial factor, it is unclear whether this is truly a loss of control, or whether it is more a decision not to exercise control.

Support for this view can be found in a special article written for *The Lancet* (Merry, 1966) entitled 'The "loss of control" myth'. Merry challenged the then popular notion that just a small amount of alcohol (even taken inadvertently) could cause a biochemical demand reaction within some drinkers leading to a subsequent loss of control over the quantity drunk, and thus inevitable intoxication. In an experiment he found that a single alcoholic drink after a period of abstinence did not trigger off relapse into acute alcoholism in a sample of so-called 'loss of control' type alcoholics, concluding that psychological and environmental factors may be of more influence in initiating 'loss of control' drinking.

Drawing these threads together, McMurran (1994) has described how, as a result of cue exposure, the desire for a substance may act as a precursor to loss of control. In other words, it appears that social, psychological or environmental cues can give rise to a strong desire or 'craving', which involves an associated preoccupation with thinking about the substance and its effects, which may then lead to the individual engaging in the activities necessary to fulfil that desire. As such, the discourse of the joyriders was analysed for (i) instances of cues that lead to persistent thoughts and/or a strong desire to engage in the behaviour (possibly
described as a ‘craving’); and (ii) the individual acting on that desire, and perhaps experiencing a sense of ‘loss of control’ over their behaviour.

In fact, it was found that even when cues could be identified, they did not necessarily lead to a sense of ‘craving’. However there were descriptions of subjective compulsion and/or ‘loss of control’.

7.9.1 Compulsions, cravings, and loss of control over joyriding

It has already been suggested that there were various socio-environmental and physical cues that led joyriders to steal cars (see Chapter 6, section 6.2.1), the main ones being the use of drugs (particularly alcohol) and the presence of certain peers. However, these cues did not necessarily lead to a sense of ‘craving’ when the respondents were unable to engage in the behaviour. In fact the majority of joyriders stated that they did not miss joyriding if they either chose not to, or were unable to, engage in it, as these typical examples show:

*Interviewer*
*do you miss it now you don’t do it so much*

*Ben*
*no, there’s nothing to miss is there*

19 years, Midlands

However, there were a number who, although they did not using the word ‘craving’, did expressed a strong desire to joyriding when they were unable to do so, with some describing a sense of loss:

*Adrian*
*about eighteen, seventeen, eighteen I packed it in for a bit and then, just like there was something missing in my life, it was just like there was part- just part of me, you know, just get used to it*

20 years, Midlands

When discussing how the sound of other joyriders could act as a cue to wanting to engage in the activity, extracts of discourse from Robert were used (sees Chapter 6, section 6.2.1). An extended version of that dialogue now shows Robert talking about feelings of ‘torment’ and ‘aching’ as he described this strong desire to joyride during a period of abstinence:

*Interviewer*
*what was it like during those eight months when you weren’t joyriding, did you ever miss it*
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Robert
all my mates were still doing it and they used to come round outside my house in stolen cars and that, and just drive off, just to torment me (laughs)

Interviewer
how did that feel

Robert
it used to do my head in ‘cos they know that- and they knew that I wouldn’t go with them, they used to pull up in stolen cars and smoke it up, and burn the back tyres out and then just piss off down the road, and it used to do my head in, I used to be sitting there thinking, fucking hell I could be in there now killing it (...)

I dunno, ‘cos like you’re just sitting at home and like, I don’t know you just get like an aching in your mind that you- like you’re thinking about it and you just want to go out there and just drive about in it

18 years, Midlands

Then, as has been discussed in the previous section, there were many who described having persistent thoughts of joyriding (see section 7.7). Kilpatrick (1997) also found that seven of the fifteen joyriders she interviewed showed clear evidence of day-dreaming about stolen cars or joyriding, and this, she argued, was also indicative of withdrawal and ‘craving’.

In terms of the subjective feeling of ‘loss of control’, there were many examples in the present study of joyriders who stated that they did feel able to control their behaviour, including the following young man who was able to compare joyriding with using solvents:

Interviewer
did you ever feel out of control at all, that you couldn’t stop

William
no, no I don’t think, no not ever felt that I- I know with glue there was a time I though I was never going to stop and I just- I was just going- I thought I was mad

19 years, Northern Ireland

However, there were also a few cases of respondents talking about having to act upon ‘temptation’, suggesting that they did experience a sense of loss of control:

Interviewer
what would it be that made you go back into it again do you think

Craig
temptation ain’t it

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*Interviewer*

temptation

*Craig*

yes, I just- I just walk down, see a car and then, if it was a good one and nice and I’d just- I’d just have to take it

17 years, Midlands

And the following two young men describing an almost physical ‘pull’ towards the activity:

*Simon*

its like somebody pulling you towards something yeh, a fire or something, yeh, I want to go in that, but you don’t want to, and arms like- they’re pulling you yeh, and you’re like, there’s someone behind you saying, no don’t do it, don’t do it, like that, you just- and then just go, they just move out the way and stop pulling and you move towards it

19 years, Midlands

*Interviewer*

I don’t know, it’s a- it’s a thing with cars with me, I- I tr- there was like the first time I tried to stay out of cars, I don’t know what it is, its something that just, I haven’t got a clue, its like a magnet that pulls me towards ‘em, I try hard to give up, try really hard to give up sometimes, well that first time I tried really hard, I walked past a car and (phhh)

20 years, Midlands

One joyrider, who interestingly interpreted his (past) perceptions of lack of control as being like an addiction, implied that only sexual activity would prevent him from joyriding:

*Ian*

I know there’s a choice now yeh, I’m going back to how I was before, I had no choice then, it was like- it was like being addicted to drugs, I couldn’t stop it, the only thing that could stop me was if some girl wanted to take me to her bed, that’s the only thing that would stop me

*Interviewer*

that was a better buzz was it

*Ian*

oh yes [laughs]

19 years, pilot interview, Midlands

It appears possible that those who reported having no adverse effects when not able to joyride were exposed to the same cues as those that did, but that the former did not attribute the associated feelings as being signs of ‘craving’, ‘loss of
control’ or ‘addiction’. As such it is interesting to speculate as to the effect of attributions on potential relapse. Reeves (1993) for instance found in a questionnaire study of incarcerated car thieves, that ‘there was a significant association between committing high levels of car crime and holding the belief that ‘you could not stop if you wanted to’ (p48). The following extract shows how one young man appears to have made a cognitive decision that (unlike a drug addict) he was able to control his behaviour:

Interviewer

so how do you know that you won’t go back to it then

Colin

.. how do I know I won’t, ‘cos I can control myself .. I ain't, I ain't like a drug addict, [mimics] ‘oh I need it, I need it’ I don’t need to do it, I don’t need prison, I don’t need a car

19 years, Midlands

7.10 Was there evidence for dependency to joyriding?

As the interviews were conducted on a sample of (arguably) the most serious cases of joyriders, one would expect that if a dependency criterion was viable then there would be some evidence for its occurrence, even if only in a minority of respondents. Having considered various dependency criteria, the main findings are summarised before discussing whether there is sufficient evidence to support the notion that the career of some of joyriders pass through a phase of dependency.

7.10.1 Summary of the presence of dependency criteria

Tolerance: Some joyriders described a reduction in the ‘buzz’ over time, with discourse suggesting that the behaviour often became boring as it became more predictable. Some also described an increased amount and/or intensity of the behaviour over time, in terms of: going out more often, taking more cars, taking ‘better’ cars, and increasing the potential dangers, together with using drugs and music to enhance the experience. Of these, there were some for whom this appeared to be necessary in order for them to achieve either relief from dysphoria (boredom), or the sought-after ‘buzz’. For many however, increases in the activity appeared to be linked to a desire for personal achievement and status amongst peers, or because the acquisition of skills simply allowed them more choice.
7. Dependency

Withdrawal: There were no obvious physiological withdrawal symptoms from voluntary or enforced non-engagement in joyriding. However, some did show minor psychological effects (mainly boredom), although these were possibly due to a lack of alternative activities, and therefore not withdrawal states as such. In terms of relief behaviour, although there was evidence of engagement in similar activities (e.g. go-karting) when joyriding was not possible, the (not so similar) activity of drug use was a more popular alternative; these may have simply been alternative behaviours, rather than being undertaken to relieve a withdrawal state.

Persistence despite harm: Most respondents showed an awareness of at least some of the downsides of joyriding, the most popular examples being crashes and injury/death to self or others, with legal deterrents being less likely to be considered. Those from Northern Ireland were however aware of the risks from paramilitary 'punishments'. A number of joyriders had experienced some of the above consequences, some had stopped/reduced their behaviour to minimise harm, though others seemed unconcerned about the risks. Many however did show concern, and yet still persisted in the activity, with the most extreme examples being those from Northern Ireland who reported having persisted despite severe, and often repeated, punishments from the paramilitary organisations.

Giving up or reducing other important activities: A number of activities had been reduced or given up. However, whilst reduced or severed contact with family members and friends was often as a direct result of joyriding, reduction in other activities were not always related to joyriding. For instance, although many of school age were joyriding during the day and not attending school, it was often the case that they reported having stopped attending school prior to developing an interest in joyriding. Furthermore those interested in school often did attend, fitting their joyriding activities in at other times. However, one area of reduced activities often associated with regret was the area of sports - particularly football.

Unsuccessful efforts to stop or cut down joyriding: Although there were many who had not considered changing their behaviour, there were a number who did
have regular thoughts of stopping (usually each time they had been caught!), and some who appeared to have a more ongoing desire to stop joyriding. Similarly, although some had never felt able to attempt to stop or cut down joyriding, or had only tried once or twice, there were also examples of respondents who appeared to have regularly failed in attempts at stopping.

**Time spent in related activities:** Generally speaking, it appeared as if very little, if any, preparation time was necessary before joyriding, although many appeared to spend a great deal of time fantasising about what they would like to do. Many also described reliving past (good and bad) experiences, the more positive ones of which were also talked about with their peers, particularly when in custody. In terms of recovering from the effects of joyriding, considerable time had been spent by many in court appearances and custodial sentences. Whilst some joyriders had also spent a short amount of time in hospital recovering from accidents, there were some from Northern Ireland who reported spending considerable time recovering from the effects of (often repetitive) paramilitary ‘punishments’.

**More joyriding than intended:** A number of joyriders did express concern about the extent of their behaviour, but there was little evidence to support the notion that joyriders tended to set personal limits as to how much they thought they ought to indulge.

**Compulsion, craving and loss of control:** There were various cues that appeared to lead joyriders to steal cars (such as taking alcohol and drugs, and the presence of peers), but these did not often lead to a sense of ‘craving’ if the respondents were unable to engage in the behaviour. However, there were a number who expressed a strong desire to joyriding during periods of abstinence, with many describing persistent thoughts of joyriding. There were also cases of respondents talking about having to act upon ‘temptation’, and others describing the experience of a physical ‘pull’ towards the activity, all suggestive of a sense of loss of control. Some also added that they had limited control over their behaviour when they had been drinking alcohol.
7. Dependency

Overall, the analysis suggested that it is possible for a wide range of dependency criteria to be present in joyriding behaviour, with the strongest criteria being the persistence despite knowledge and concern about harmful the consequences; the persistent desire and/or unsuccessful attempts to stop joyriding; and the large amounts of time being spent thinking about, or recovering from, joyriding activities. Although not strictly speaking criteria of dependency, tendencies for subjective feelings of compulsion and/or ‘loss of control’ were also found to be a common feature of the behaviour. Finally, examples of tolerance, withdrawal and the giving up of other important activities were present in some individuals.

7.10.2 How much is too much?

There does not appear to be universal agreement as to how many criteria need to be demonstrated in order to confirm the presence of dependency upon (or addiction to) a behaviour. Edwards and Gross (1976) stated that not all of their seven elements needed to be present to describe an alcohol dependence syndrome; and the ICD 10 describes six phenomena that are typically included. On the other hand the DSM IV states that three (or more) out of eight criteria need to be present within the same twelve month period for diagnosis of substance dependence, with five (or more) out of ten possible criteria for pathological gambling. Although it is not clear how the APA (1994) arrived at these (possibly arbitrary) figures, Goodman (1997) followed the above DSM IV substance dependency approach when formulating a method of diagnosing addictive behaviour in general, and suggested that three (or more) of the seven criteria should be present.

This study does not attempt to be definitive over the number of criteria necessary to demonstrate dependency in joyriding behaviour for two reasons. Firstly, the criteria identified as specifically likely in joyriding may be different to those identified by the DSM IV and Goodman (1997). Secondly, and more importantly, the principle of recommending a prescriptive labelling technique for joyriding to be ‘clinically diagnosed’ as a dependent behaviour may be unwise. Indeed, the individual’s subjective perception of their behaviour, and their level of motivation
to change, may be of more therapeutic use than the objective (but possibly *unhelpful*) counting of criteria.

In this chapter it has been shown that it is feasible for any of the dependency criteria investigated to occur (including a sense of compulsion / ‘loss of control’) within the context of joyriding behaviour *per se*. However, in order to demonstrate a dependency phase of joyriding it is perhaps still necessary to show the presence of ‘a number’ of these criteria within *any one individual*. The following case example of *Shaun* illustrates that this is possible:

Shaun, who was 15 years old and from Northern Ireland, was interviewed while on remand in a training school. He was the youngest of six children, and when not in custody, lived in Belfast with his parents, three brothers and two sisters. He admitted to having committed other crimes (burglaries) prior to first getting involved in joyriding, which was when he was about thirteen years old, because he says he ‘got in with the wrong crowd’.

He stated that his best ever experience of driving was ‘the very first time when I done it myself, hand-braked a car myself’. When asked how this felt he said that it was so good he was unable to explain it. The situations that would most make him want to steal a car and joyride were when there were crowds around, so that he could show off doing ‘nose-dives’ and ‘hand-brakers’, which he said made him feel ‘good, brilliant’. He stated that he mainly stole cars for the buzz, and never to sell them - although he had sometimes sold radios from stolen cars.

Shaun’s interview revealed signs of tolerance to his joyriding activities. It appeared for instance that over time joyriding was not providing the ‘buzz’ that it once had. He said that the number of cars he tended to steal had decreased because he had ‘just got fed up with it’. He also said that driving was not as good as when he first started, and that he had tried going faster to make it feel better. He stated that he particularly liked driving fast through the streets, and claimed that on the motorway he would travel at speeds of up to a hundred and twenty miles an hour. Shaun also appeared to be doing other things to increase the intensity of the behaviour. For instance he reported drinking up to five tins of beer and smoking cannabis when out joyriding. He also stated that he had been chased by the police on occasions, which he described as making him feel scared although there was an associated buzz, and that sometimes he deliberately provoked a police chase by performing hand brake turns outside the police barracks.
There was also some evidence to support the possibility of withdrawal-type symptoms and associated relief behaviour. When asked how it felt if he was not able to joyride he said 'really down sometimes, you just don’t think about it', adding that he tried to take his mind off it (in the training school) by playing football and snooker.

However, Shaun appeared to have spent a great deal of time in activities associated with joyriding—particularly recovering from the effects. For instance, at the time of interview he had spent four months in the training school but stated that he had been in 'loads of times before like'. He also admitted to spending a lot of time thinking about cars, particularly when he was in custody, knowing that his mates were all 'out there'. The sorts of things that he would think about were 'driving about and joyriding ... things I've done in the past whether I could do it again'. He also talked with his friends about joyriding whilst in custody.

When asked about other hobbies and pastimes he said that he had 'liked playing football an all, and snooker and all sorts of things', but agreed that he had done less of these because of joyriding, adding 'didn’t really have time for anything else .. I was thinking about driving so I was'. He also talked about friends that he said he once saw 'every day, playing football an all with them'. When asked if that had changed through joyriding he replied 'didn’t see them that much, wouldn’t even have talked- wouldn't even have hardly talked to them'.

Finally there was considerable evidence that Shaun had persisted in joyriding despite being aware of (and having experienced) harmful effects. For instance, he described having had a couple of crashes, one being the worst experience he had ever had joyriding. On that occasion he stated that his friend was doing a 'nose-dive' when the front wheel hit something and the car 'just went over'. There were six of them in the car at the time and he stated that after the accident he felt 'shocked'. He had also been in trouble with the paramilitaries at least three times, stating that they 'haven’t broken my leg or anything, just beat me over the head with a baseball bat an all, and glued my head and make me walk up the [name] road like it’. Shaun was clearly concerned about the punishments, also describing how upset it had made his parents.

He stated that since being in custody this time he had thought about stopping, commenting that 'it will be serious next time, that’s why I don’t- that’s why I want to stop .. they’ll just break my arms and legs next time’. However, when asked why, after the accidents and punishments, he hadn’t stopped already, he simply answered ‘like it so much’.
Finally, he said, when asked, that he felt that he *could* control his joyriding, but when it was pointed out to him that he hadn’t stopped when it got dangerous he replied ‘no, that’s the whole thing about joyriding ... just the way you’re mad, you know you’re- once you’re in the car you’re mad like, you just go mad’.

As can be seen, Shaun’s joyriding activities showed signs of at least five dependency criteria (i.e. tolerance, withdrawal, a great deal of time in activities associated with the behaviour, other important activities being reduced, and continuance despite harmful consequences). As such, Shaun could be described as having been dependent upon joyriding, or to use an alternative phrase, to have indulged in the activity ‘in an addictive manner’.

It is important to point out that even if a behaviour is shown to have the potential for addiction, dependency is not inevitable, and the proportion of those who do develop dependence upon it is likely to be small. As Faulk *et al* (1983) pointed out in terms of drugs and alcohol:

> Literally multitudes of people have experienced the effects of alcohol and other drugs, and yet the number of occasional or controlled users appear to outweigh the number of abusers by far (...) It seems that simple exposure to and experience with a drug with potent abuse liability is not a sufficient condition for learning or maintaining a problematic habit (p49).

Similarly, although it appears that dependency upon the behaviour of joyriding can occur in *some* individuals, such as Shaun (above), as with other phases in the joyriders career, this is not an *inevitable* phase, even when joyriding is particularly excessive. Some joyriders stop joyriding without first becoming dependent, and of those that do become dependent most eventually cease the activity. The proposed cycle of change said to bring about a cessation in the behaviour is the subject of Chapter 9.

Having suggested that, for some, the behaviour may have had qualities of dependency, a further problem exists in that historically there has been circularity in the defining and diagnosing of a behaviour as dependent. Davies (1997b) points to the circularity of explaining addiction (or dependence) by definition, citing McMurrnan (1994, pp75-76) as being one of the few researchers in the
addictions field bold enough to tackle this problem. The problem, as identified by McMurrnan (1994) and Davies (1997) is that a cluster of problem behaviours relating to substance use were given the label of dependence, then people were said to display these behaviours *because* they were ‘dependent’. As Davies says, ‘thus, the word “dependence” starts off as a summary descriptor for certain behaviours, and ends up in a clinical transaction as the explanation for the behaviours that define it’ (p28), leading to the term ‘addiction’ being used to both define and explain behaviour.

Taking these observations on board, it seems appropriate now to consider whether the *respondents* in the present study felt that joyriding could become addictive, and how they *perceived* the notion of addiction within this context. In addition, it is important to investigate the criteria being used by respondents to define addiction, and how this compares with the clinical/academic criteria of dependency as described above.
Chapter 8: Notions of Joyriding and Addiction

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  8.2 Is joyriding thought to be addictive?
  8.3 Defining ‘addiction’
  8.4 Comparison of addiction criteria in different contexts
  8.5 Labelling and its consequences
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8. Notions of joyriding and addiction

Analysis thus far has suggested that there are a number of elements to joyriding that are comparable to other addictions, and that criteria of dependency are evident in some cases of joyriding. Furthermore, it has been interesting to note several examples of impromptu discourse emerging from the joyriders themselves suggestive of the behaviour having addictive qualities. This chapter will explore the notion of being ‘addicted to joyriding’ by (i) considering the respondents’ views of the causes of excessive joyriding, (ii) their perceptions of the notion of being addicted to joyriding, (iii) the criteria being used by them to define addiction, and (iv) the perceived consequences of the label of addiction, particularly when applied to joyriding.

8.1 Excessive joyriding

Orford (1985) viewed addictions as being ‘excessive appetites’. However, excessiveness, which suggests ‘too many’ or too often’, is a difficult notion when talking about an illegal behaviour as it could be argued that any amount of car theft is too much. Furthermore, the joyriders interviewed were selected on the basis of (often repetitive) criminal convictions for car theft, most of whom were in prison as a result of their activities, thus it is not surprising that many had been heavily involved in the behaviour. Nonetheless, it appeared that some joyriders were engaging in the activity more extensively than others, and therefore to an extent that could be considered as relatively excessive.
8. Notions of Joyriding and Addiction

It has already been shown that some respondents talked about spending a great deal of time engaging in joyriding activities (see Chapter 7, section 7.8). In terms of the frequency of engagement, many of the young men interviewed claimed that at its peak they had been joyriding every day/night, with one respondent representing this level of behaviour as being indicative of addiction:

Interviewer
and was it any particular days of the week
Brett
every day of the week
Interviewer
every day, was there ever a day when you didn’t
Brett
no, I have to nick a car every day on the out, I’ve just got to- it- its like you get addicted to things like, I’ve just got addicted to nicking the cars now, even on my first days out I have to nick a car
19 years, Midlands

It appeared that Brett, speaking in prison, knew that he would begin stealing cars as soon as he was released, clearly risking re-arrest and further imprisonment in order to do so. Regardless of whether Brett fulfilled the ‘diagnostic’ criteria of dependency, he believed that he was addicted to the behaviour. What is interesting is that this belief appeared to be based on levels of excessiveness, a factor that does not feature in the diagnostic dependency criteria, and a point that will be returned to later in the chapter.

In terms of how many cars they stole on each occasion, many stated that they usually stole one or two, with more ‘on a good night’, whilst others claimed to be regularly stealing three, four or even more per night:

Interviewer
how many cars a day would you be stealing
Ben
what a day, about four or five
19 years, Midlands

Billy
seen myself stealing six, seven cars a night like
19 years, Northern Ireland
There were also, what appeared to be 'one off' cases of extremely high numbers on occasions, bearing some resemblance to the 'bingeing' sometimes found in eating disorders and problem drinking:

*Interviewer*
and how many cars would you nick in a day

*MATTHEW*
I don't know, I've had as high as thirty four in one night before

19 years, Midlands

Although the use of a precise number of cars ('thirty-four in one night') as a rhetorical device, is quite persuasive in suggesting Matthew's account to be true, one wonders whether it is practically possible to steal and drive this number of vehicles in one night. However, even acknowledging the possibility of exaggeration in the joyriders’ accounts, several of those who had care and control of young offenders (and particularly the social workers from Northern Ireland) claimed to have known joyriders who had engaged in the activity particularly excessively:

*HARRY*
er, I've known people who have taken five, six hundred cars

*Interviewer*
over what sort of period of time would that be

*HARRY*
two years, at least one a day, they'd sometimes have four or five different cars in a day, take them, break them, leave them .. take another one

Social Worker, Northern Ireland

When those professionals were asked why they thought some joyriders engaged in the activity so excessively, the majority gave answers that suggested addiction. Some responses only *implied* addiction,

*TIMOTHY*
we had certain joyriders who just couldn't stop, they can not stop

(...) there was no stopping them, when they had it in them, its like it was in the blood, there was no stopping them

Probation Officer, Midlands

whereas a number were quite specific:
8. Notions of Joyriding and Addiction

Emma
its like an addiction isn't it

Probation Officer, Midlands

The responses by those with care and control of the joyriders were in contrast to the non-joyriding young offenders, most of whom gave responses such as 'showing off', 'attention-seeking' and 'competitiveness', suggesting that levels of excessiveness were linked to status and identity:

Barry
'cos they like the attention isn't it, probably attention-seekers, some people like a lot of attention so they do it more and more, 'cos it makes them look bigger when they're in the group or something like that

18 years, Midlands

Bob
show off really isn't it, to their friends and all that

16 years, Midlands

Only one non-joyriding young offender suggested that the behaviour was addictive:

Robbie
its like addictive to joyriding, its like, they just get a buzz out of it .. silly

Interviewer
what do you think that- what do you mean when you say that they're addicted to it

Robbie
its like if you're addicted to f-cigarettes, you know what I mean, they're like addicted to robbing cars and, they like joyriding and laughing- having a laugh

17 years, Midlands

Having established that excessive joyriding was interpreted by some of the respondents as being a sign of 'addiction', it is now interesting to consider the respondents' overall perceptions of the notion of being 'addicted to joyriding'.

8.2 Is joyriding thought to be addictive?

As has been reported earlier, some academics have suggested that joyriding could be addictive (e.g. Kilpatrick, 1997). In this section the respondents views regarding the possibility of joyriding being a potentially addictive behaviour are considered. At the end of the interviews most respondents were asked whether
they had ever heard of the notion of joyriding being addictive, and whether they thought that the behaviour could be addictive. The analysis of this material took account of the reasons given for the respondents' beliefs in order to assess what criteria were being used to define addiction within the context of joyriding.

### 8.2.1 Had people previously heard of the notion of being addicted to joyriding

Giving a quantitative feel to the pervasiveness of this notion, it was found that 40% of non-joyriding respondents (i.e. the professionals and non-joyriding young offenders) reported that they had heard joyriding being talked about in terms of being potentially addictive in the past (i.e. prior to interview). The likelihood of people having heard of this notion was slightly higher in Northern Ireland than the Midlands (47% and 38% respectively), although there was very little difference between the young offenders and those charged with their care and control (42% and 40% respectively).

It was interesting therefore to investigate where the notion of being addicted to joyriding had been discussed. Of those who had heard of joyriding being addictive and stated from whom they had heard it, an equal number said that they had heard it from the joyriders themselves, as from others (such as 'professionals' or the media). However, more young offenders reported they had heard of it from other joyriders (60%) than by anyone else (40%); whilst more of those with their care and control reported having heard of it from other professionals (60%) rather than from the joyriders (40%).

It appeared then, that both the young offenders and the professionals who looked after them were more likely to have heard ideas about joyriding being addictive from their own peer groups. This may have been a function of individuals spending more time talking about these issues with others in their own peer groups per se, but it may also indicate a certain reticence to share such views outside of their peer groups. For instance, the professionals may have been reluctant to share such opinions with young offenders in case they were to be seen as condoning criminal activities. These themes will be returned to later in the chapter when discussing the consequences of a label of addiction.
8.2.2 What did non-joyriders feel about the notion of joyriding being addictive?

Having established that fewer than half of the respondents had heard that joyriding could be addictive, it is interesting to consider the views of all the respondents regarding this notion, and to assess what criteria they would use to define addiction within this context.

Firstly the views of non-joyriders will be considered, as, although they had not been involved in the behaviour themselves, they knew a number of young men who had. The 'non-joyriders' included professionals who had care and control of joyriders, as well as non-joyriding young offenders.

In terms of the professionals, the notion of being addicted to joyriding was only raised spontaneously by one respondent. However, the following extracts from this interview suggests that, using an analogy with drug use, he introduced the aspect of the behaviour being addictive because the joyriders continue despite possible harm, as well pointing to its excessiveness:

John
its like a lad taking his first smoke or his first drink or his first drug, his first E pill or whatever it may be, once he gets the buzz and gets the kick out of it, that is the addiction, he wants more (...)
we've had boys in here who have actually driven through road blocks and been fired at by the police and by the army, and have caused injury to policemen and caused injury to soldiers and doing so, all for the buzz so, and my- my personal view, I think, I think it is an addiction, and er definitely is an addiction, its an addiction society will have to look at in some way (...)
if you were to take a person now who would maybe steal a hundred cars in a year for the purpose of joyriding as its called, erm it has proved to be addiction

Prison Officer, Northern Ireland

When the remaining professionals were asked directly whether they thought that joyriding could be addictive, approximately three quarters believed that it was. This belief was strongly associated with the 'buzz' that was said to be experienced through the activity, with most referring to the excessiveness, or repetitiveness, of the behaviour.
Harry

there were certainly some, the ones that are more hard to get hold of, who in that their behaviour itself would suggest it was addictive, no other way of describing it because they were doing it so often, so many erm that it had to be

Probation Officer, Midlands

A minority appeared to base their belief that joyriding could be addictive on the 'compulsive' nature of the behaviour:

Harry

erm, its something- something about the addictive nature of the behaviour of the risk-taking, something about the buzz, the excitement, the thrill, you know, erm, I think with some of them it borders on almost being sexual behaviour, you know its something that you can't, you feel a compulsion to do and it did seem to become quite compulsive in quite a few of them

Probation Officer, Midlands

Those with care and control of joyriders who did not believe joyriding to be potentially addictive offered a number of suggestions as to why, and it was interesting that some gave 'compulsion' as a preferred explanation for the behaviour:

Respondent

no I can buy into addiction but I can't buy into car related- you know joyriding addiction, you know I would say its more compulsive behaviour or maybe its boredom or its maybe- (...)

Interviewer

what's the difference then- you said its compulsive, what's the difference between a compulsive thing and an addictive thing

Respondent

well you tell me, I don't know, I'm just suggesting that they're not necessarily addicted to it

Teacher in Training School, Northern Ireland

With a number appearing to prefer to use similar terms such as 'obsessive' or 'impulsive':

Jamie

I tend not to use words like addictions right, er-

Interviewer

Do they use the word addiction though, is it a word you've heard used

Jamie

Not particularly, er I- I think it can be an obsession, but you can move on from that, er I don't hear them saying I'm addicted to car
8. Notions of Joyriding and Addiction

crime, but they will say that they're in search of the buzz, right, the thrill, right, er, and what have you and that they're in search of that, and its, er, so they might be obsessed with the buzz

Youth Worker, Midlands

Paul
I'm not convinced that it's addictive, impulsive maybe, but not addictive

Social Worker, Northern Ireland

As has been discussed, subjective feelings of 'compulsion' are recognised clinically as being associated with dependency (see Chapter 7, section 7.9). In the present study it appeared that some respondents were using evidence of 'compulsion' as an indicator of addiction, while others used it to argue that the behaviour was not addictive.

Some professionals who did not believe the behaviour to be addictive pointed to the fact that most 'grew out' of the behaviour, assuming that addictive behaviours could not give rise to spontaneous remissions:

Howard
I think it's really just a teenage thing, which they do grow out of and I wouldn't class an addiction as a thing that you grow out of in the natural course of events

Prison Officer, Northern Ireland

Others focused on lack of physiological evidence to suggest that the behaviour was not addictive. This included factors such as the joyriders not feeling worse than normal if they were unable to joyride, and/or that they survived quite well in custody without the behaviour. These types of explanations suggested that respondents felt addiction should have been characterised by withdrawal phenomena:

Carol
I think with joyriding, no matter how much of the buzz you get, you don't feel worse than normal when you stop doing it (...) so in terms of is it an addiction I think on my quick grasp of what an addiction is, no

Probation Officer, Midlands

Few of the respondents speculated as to why the joyriders themselves might constitute their behaviour as addictive, although one respondent did comment that the sense of loss of control made them think that they were addicted:
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Paul
I don't think it's a pure defin- scientific definition is it, because if it were there'd be some kind of physiological explanation (...) the way it appears to take place appears like it is out of their control, that's what they're saying I think, they're not saying it is a- they're not saying its a physical addiction and [laughs] they're driven by some physiological force, they're just saying that they haven't got the self-control and erm they might want to give up and say they're going to, but in practice they don't, and therefore it feels like its an addiction

Social Worker, Midlands

This is another example of how some respondents referred to a feature that is clinically recognised as being present in dependency (i.e. subjective feelings of loss of control), in an attempt to argue that the behaviour was not addictive. The criteria being used to define addiction by the respondents, and how it compares with the clinical criteria of dependency, will be considered in more detail later in the chapter (see section 8.4).

Turning now to the young offenders who claimed never to have been involved in joyriding (i.e. the sample of non-joyriding young offenders), approximately three quarters said, when asked, that they felt joyriding could be addictive. As with the professionals the main reason given was the excessiveness of the behaviour, particularly as this inevitably involved a prison sentence – something that they could clearly relate to. In the following instance the explanation also suggested the dependency criterion of ‘continuing despite harm’:

Tony
they come in here for years non-stop keep coming in, so obviously it must be addictive

16 years, Northern Ireland

By contrast, one said that that he believed the behaviour was no more than a response to boredom:

Dean
no they don't depend on it, its just that they're bored, they want something to do

19 years, Midlands

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Overall it appeared that those that had contact with joyriders either professionally or as their peers, and felt that joyriding could be addictive, appeared to have been basing their perceptions mainly on the excessiveness of the behaviour, with a further indication for some being the apparent compulsiveness of the behaviour and instances of continuance in joyriding despite it causing harm to themselves or others. On the other hand, those that did not feel that the behaviour was addictive appeared to have been basing their views mainly on the absence of physical symptoms (such as withdrawal phenomena), and the observation that joyriders invariably ‘grew out’ of their behaviour.

8.2.3 Did the joyriders think that their behaviour could be addictive?

Having considered the criteria being used by non-joyriders, the joyriders’ own feelings about the notion of joyriding being addictive are now considered, together with the criteria that they used to define addiction to joyriding.

Unlike the non-joyriders, it was interesting that (prior to the topic of addiction being raised by the interviewer) there were several occasions when joyriders spontaneously described their behaviour as being addictive. Simon (below) for instance, made several references to the behaviour being addictive during the interview, including some comments regarding not being able to stop, suggesting that ‘loss of control’ was the defining criteria:

Simon
I started hanging around with them and then just goes, oh come out in the car like, come out in the car, yes all right, and I go out in the car and then I’ve been addicted to cars
(...)
addicted to it now, its like I think it’s a good thing you know what I mean, like a good thing driving around in cars
(...)
it’s just like an addiction, just like- you just want- you just want to keep going and going and going and going and going until you can’t stop
(...)
‘cos I’ve always been fast in it, going fast, do you know what I mean, like, its just like that’s the addiction, just getting a car, it’s the- the fast (...)

19 years, Midlands
And the following young man, also implying 'loss of control', likened joyriding to drug use:

_Dale_
I don't know its just like, its like a drug in a way like, if you can get addicted to some drugs can't you, its like addicted to twocking cars, you can't stop until you have to stop

16 years, focus group respondent, Midlands

Towards the end of the interview the joyriders were specifically asked whether they thought that joyriding could be addictive for some and whether they had ever felt that they had been addicted to it. Approximately three quarters of those in Northern Ireland and the Midlands stated that they thought joyriding could be addictive. As with those who had care and control of them (see section 8.2.2), a number of joyriders related this to the 'buzz':

_Philip_
I could say I was addicted to it, its just a buzz isn't it, its adrenaline, its something you can't explain, its just dead good

17 years, Midlands

And again, this was sometimes likened to drug use:

_Philip_
Can be .. 'cos you get to like the buzz, its just to, gets to- it gets like a habit, its like smoking, once you've started its hard to stop

17 years, Midlands

Most of those who thought that it was addictive gave their reasons as being because they felt some people 'couldn't help it' - implying a loss of control over their behaviour:

_Carl_
like for example, the mate that I had a car crash with, I'd say he's addicted to it because like he steals cars, and he drives them, sometimes he does it on his own, he can't go without taking a car, about three days and that's it then he's behind the wheel, like if- if you're not like kind of, say addicted to joyriding you can go long times without stealing a car, like you find other things to do

18 years, Midlands

However many also associated addiction with excessiveness:

_Darren_
'cos once you do it once you want to do it again and again and again

16 years, Northern Ireland
8. Notions of Joyriding and Addiction

Other perceived indications of addiction to joyriding included the tendency for joyriding to continue despite harmful consequences:

*Ben*
well, I know my friend- I know this person- he’s not my friend but he used to be, he was in a car yeh and his mate’s dies, and he still nicks cars and his best mate died and he still goes out and nicks cars, so you know what I mean, he must be addicted to it

19 years, Midlands

Of the few that did not believe that the behaviour could be addictive, reasons given included absence of withdrawal symptoms:

*James*
I’ve known other joyriders that go out every night like, and steal a car, but I don’t think they’re addicted to it like, for if they’re put in here like they wouldn’t break out in to a cold sweat an all because they need to go out joyriding, its not that bad like

18 years, Northern Ireland

As well as the absence of loss of control:

*Matthew*
I reckon that it ain’t like, do you know, coke or anything like that where you get hooked and you’ve got no choice or anything like that, its were you’ve got the choice, so you decide whether or not you’re addicted, so it ain’t exactly addictive, its up to you at the end of the day, you can give it up like that or you can carry on

19 years, Midlands

When the joyriders were asked if they had ever felt *personally* addicted to joyriding, approximately half of those from both Northern Ireland and the Midlands stated that they thought they had. Most had based this belief on the excessiveness of their behaviour:

*Joe*
I was addicted- I reckon I was in the past yes, ‘cos I just couldn’t stop doing it, I was out there every day, literally every day, nicking like two, three cars a day

20 years, Midlands

and often with an associated perceived loss of control:

*Alan*
‘cos you just couldn’t stop doing it, there was just sometimes you
were stealing four or five cars a day, just for the- just for the point of stealing them, you know

18 years, Northern Ireland

Some appeared to describe a form of ‘craving’:

Robert
I dunno, ‘cos like you’re just sitting there at home and like, I don’t know you get an aching in your main that you- like you’re thinking about it and you just want to go out there and just drive about in it

18 years, Northern Ireland

And the discourse of the following young man suggested that he considered his joyriding to be addictive because it took priority over other activities:

Gordon
er, well I used to go- I used to go out pinching cars with my mates when I could be doing something different, I suppose in a way that’s an addiction

Aged 20 years, from the Midlands

Those joyriders who did not think that they had ever been addicted also tended to consider the (lack of) excessiveness in their behaviour as the defining criteria:

Interviewer
have you ever felt that you could become addicted to it

Matt
not really, I don’t do it that often

15 years, Northern Ireland

Plus the (presence of) control over the behaviour:

Joel
I never felt I was addicted, I never felt that I’d got to go out and do it

21 years, Midlands

Overall then, the joyriders who thought that the behaviour could be addictive (including those who felt that they had been personally addicted), appeared to have based their reasons mainly on the excessiveness of the behaviour, together with an implied loss of control. Other factors apparently suggestive of addiction included continuance despite harm, craving, and joyriding becoming more important than other activities. In general support of this, the reasons given by joyriders for thinking that it was not addictive (including those who felt that they
had not been addicted to it personally), were lack of excessiveness and presence of control over their behaviour.

Having considered some of the joyriders’ perceptions of their behaviour being addictive, is interesting to refer to the work of Davies (1997a and 1997b) who has considered the functional aspects of drug user’s accounts. Davies (1997a) argued that often in addiction literature ‘explanations for behaviour become the reasons that the behaviour takes place’ (Davies, 1997b, p85). Referring to attribution theory, he warned however, that the reasons people gave for their drug use should not be taken as ‘objective’ data with which drug use could be explained, as these explanations were primarily functional.

For instance, he suggested that rather than revealing the causes of behaviour, ‘the kind of explanation the person chooses to give can reveal something about how they think, and what they make of themselves and the researcher’ (Davies, 1997b, p97). As he pointed out, explanations of behaviour can have positive or negative consequences according to the situation, and in a climate of moral and legal censure it may make sense to choose to state that a behaviour is out of one’s control.

Considering these insights in relation to the joyriders’ accounts, it is possible that some may have felt that ‘joyriding as an addictive behaviour’ made the activity more acceptable to those whom they felt might not approve of the behaviour, such as the interviewer. This could explain why the joyriders were more likely to mention ‘loss of control’ over behaviour and physical withdrawal phenomena, than non-joyriders. However, it is still interesting that whilst the majority stated that they felt joyriding could be addictive, only half of them thought that they themselves had ever been addicted. In fact the professionals charged with their care and control were as likely to consider that joyriding could be addictive as the joyriders themselves.

The functional aspects of addiction discourse will be returned to when considering the possible consequences of an addiction label (see section 8.5), but
first, and in order to make further sense of all the respondents' views on the notion of being addicted to joyriding, it is important to verify what the word addiction meant to them in terms of its application to behaviours other than joyriding.

8.3 Defining ‘addiction’
The respondents’ perceptions of the meaning of addiction in general were explored by asking them how they would define addiction to any behaviour or substance. When asked, the overwhelming majority of respondents, regardless of their status, described the notion of addiction as either ‘not being able to go without’ or ‘having to have’.

Looking first at the professionals, almost all talked about addiction in terms of either having to engage in the behaviour, for example:

Richard
it means that they’re- to me it means that they’ve got to have it, if they don’t have it then there’s something missing, they’ve got to have it

Prison Officer, Midlands

Or not being able to manage without it:

Liam
can’t live without it, or they- they feel that they can’t survive without it, they need it to get through the day

Police Officer, Midlands

The non-joyriding young offenders similarly stated that addiction meant having to do something, although some also qualified their statements by describing consequent withdrawal phenomena:

Carlton
you ain’t really got the choice whether you want it or not, you’ve got to have it, otherwise you do your turkey ain’t it

18 years, Midlands

Some of the other non-joyriding young offenders appeared to be implying that addiction was related to a behaviour becoming excessive:
8. Notions of Joyriding and Addiction

Bob
like smoking, that’s addictive, like when you have one fag then you want another and then another
16 years, Midlands

The joyriders themselves tended to define addiction in the same way as the non-joyriding young offenders, most mentioning not being able to stop the activity:

Trevor
addicted to something like you can’t stop kind of, once you’ve started you can’t stop
21 years, Midlands

Some drew on personal experiences of substance use:

Ben
well like you can’t stop it, like fags I can’t stop that, I know I can’t
19 years, Midlands

They similarly talked of needing, or having to engage in, a behaviour:

Joel
I suppose you depend on it, you need it
21 years, Midlands

Notions of excessiveness and repetitiveness were also frequently referred to:

Simon
like you have something, or you do something, and you like it and you just keep doing it, it just makes you keep- well just think well you’ve done it once, and you like it, you do it again, and again and again and again, and again, and you just get addicted to it
19 years, Midlands

And there were a number of comments describing ‘craving’:

Robert
its when you’re addicted to it like, like drugs isn’t it, when you’re addicted to drugs isn’t it and you have to have one because its just like a craving isn’t it, you have to feed your craving
18 years, Midlands

As well as withdrawal phenomena:

Leon
when you take the drug and you can’t get drugs you can’t get no more- there’s no more for you to get any more, you do mad things and .. you get sore heads and stuff and you want- you need drugs to cure you
17 years, Northern Ireland
The young offenders were more likely to allude to the presence of withdrawal phenomena and 'cravings' than those who had care and control over them, which may have because they had had more personal experiences of feeling addicted to behaviours/substances than had the professionals.

However, it is also important to consider the perceived ability by the respondents to be able to give a response to the questions being posed. For instance, when asked to define addiction, it appeared that some respondents may have felt that they knew what the word addiction meant, but found it hard to express, whereas others may have had no perception at all as to what it meant to be addicted to something. Although almost all the respondents in the present study were prepared to provide a response when asked what the word addiction meant, the following extract from a joyrider suggested that perhaps some respondents may not have been sure about their responses:

*Interviewer*
what do you think the word addiction means

*Gordon*
to be honest with you I haven't got a clue what it means, I know its
.. what I think it means

*Interviewer*
in your mind then, what does it mean to you

*Gordon*
something that you do that you want to keep doing and doing, I think- I think that's what it means, I might be wrong I don't know, that's what I think it means

*20 years, Midlands*

Having looked at definitions of addiction, the following section will consider how the criteria used by respondents to define addiction in general compared with the criteria they had used to define addiction to joyriding.

### 8.4 Comparison of addiction criteria in different contexts
This section will firstly consider respondents initial views on whether joyriding was (or was not) addictive with their subsequent comments regarding their beliefs about the nature of addiction in general; and then there will be an overall comparison of the criteria used to define addiction by respondents in this study.
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with the criteria used to define dependency clinically / academically (as described in Chapter 7).

8.4.1 Addiction to joyriding versus addiction in general

It appeared that generally, similar criteria were being used by respondents to make judgements as to the addictiveness of joyriding, as were being used to define addiction in general. The main criteria being used to make judgements about addiction to joyriding were excessiveness of the behaviour and 'loss of control'; with cravings, withdrawal, important other activities being given up, and continuance despite possible harm also being referred to. The main criteria used to define addiction per se were 'loss of control' and excessiveness; with craving and withdrawal states also being mentioned.

However, it appeared that although 'loss of control' and excessiveness were the most popular criteria used to define both types of addiction, and by all types of respondents, there were some interesting differences in the responses given by the joyriding and non-joyriding respondents.

The joyriders appeared to use similar criteria to define addiction to both joyriding and other behaviours. In both instances they referred to 'loss of control' and excessiveness as being the main indicators of addiction, with craving also being mentioned in both categories. The non-joyriding respondents, on the other hand, although citing 'loss of control' as being particularly indicative of addiction generally, did not tend to mention this factor when considering addiction to joyriding. Conversely, although they considered excessiveness / repetitiveness to be an important indicator of whether joyriding was, or was not, addictive, excessiveness was not an important criteria for addictive behaviour in general.

These findings may have been in part due to different types of respondents having varying levels of joyriding and/or other behaviours to draw upon in order to make their judgements. The joyriders had obviously experienced joyriding personally (rather than having only witnessed or heard about talk about it), with their
responses also suggesting that most had engaged in a variety of other potentially addictive behaviours.

It was clear, for instance, that some of the joyriders were drawing on personal experience of drug use to judge the likelihood of joyriding being potentially addictive. For some, experiences with drug use confirmed their belief that joyriding could become addictive, as in the following example which describes ‘tolerance’ to both drugs and cars:

\[\text{Interviewer} \]
\[\text{you mentioned its something like crack, can you just expand on that for me and tell me what you meant when you said that} \]
\[\text{Ian} \]
\[\text{crack is like, you take so much, like heroin, and, you get a buzz, you take a little bit the first time, you need a tiny bit the first time, as it progresses you need more and more and more buzz, you need more to get that buzz, its like of I took- say I was taking crack- I took crack for a year, and I went back (...) the first ever time I took to it it wouldn't do nothing for me, its exactly the same with cars} \]
\[19 \text{ years, pilot interview, Midlands}\]

The majority of joyriders, however, appeared to be using their experiences of joyriding and substances to describe qualitatively different kinds of addiction:

\[\text{Interviewer} \]
\[\text{what does the word addiction mean do you think} \]
\[\text{Colin} \]
\[\text{addiction, you need to do you, you need- you think it- you need that to live, its like a drug addiction, people think they're going to die if they don't get the drug} \]
\[(...) \]
\[\text{Interviewer} \]
\[\text{have you ever been addicted to a drug do you think} \]
\[\text{Colin} \]
\[.. I've been addicted to many drugs \]
\[(...) \]
\[\text{Interviewer} \]
\[\text{what does the word addiction mean if you’re talking about driving} \]
\[\text{Colin} \]
\[you want it, you want to do it, you want to do it that bad that you're risking, what two years in prison for it .. not the addiction that you need it or else you're going to die} \]
\[19 \text{ years, Midlands}\]
Some differentiated between the withdrawal phenomena:

\textit{Interviewer}

is being addicted to a drug the same as being addicted to cars do you think

\textit{Robert}

yeh it is yeh, you’d go out and do anything, yeh, like of drugs- like for drugs it’s a bit- it’s a bit different because that puts you like, through a kind of like pain isn’t it, but like when you’re with- with cars, its just like playing on your mind, but when its drugs you’ve got it playing on your mind and going all- you get cold sweats and everything, pains in your stomach, being sick isn’t it, so its kind of different isn’t it

\textit{18 years, Midlands}

And others the experience of ‘craving’:

\textit{Interviewer}

do you think being addicted to a car is the same as being addicted to tobacco or alcohol

\textit{Jeremy}

yeh in a way it is, ‘cos you can stop yourself smoking if you want, and you can stop yourself from nicking cars, but you’ve really got to put your mind to it .. but when I was nicking cars, you know, its not like- with a fag you’re gagging, really, when you’re nicking cars you like can stop yourself, and you just .. or just sitting thinking, oh I could be out in a car now, and then the next night you’d go out and nick a car, so it’d be over

\textit{18 years, Midlands}

The non-joyriding respondents, by definition, had claimed not to have experienced joyriding. Furthermore, as non-joyriders included a high percentage of professionals with care and control of young offenders, it was probable that their overall experience of using potentially addictive (and illegal) substances was also less than that of the joyriders. However, there were non-joyriders who were able to draw upon personal experiences of substance use to make judgements about joyriding, and in some instances this led to the respondents \textit{not} believing that joyriding was potentially addictive:

\textit{Howard}

I’m a smoker myself and if I was in a room on my own I would smoke and I would take the same thing with drink, drugs and everything else, if I was a young lad of fifteen who’d been stealing cars for the last two or three years, if I was on my own, all my friends had gone on holiday or they were all inside and I had no other outside influences whatsoever I don’t believe that I would have incentive to steal a car
8. Notions of Joyriding and Addiction

(...)
I don’t think there’s much point in doing it on your own and on that basis I wouldn’t class it as an addiction

Prison Officer, Northern Ireland

Although they were clearly limited in their comparisons by not having experienced joyriding for themselves:

Dean
I can’t see how people can say they’re addicted to it, I honestly can’t .. I’ve never done it so I wouldn’t know

19 years, Midlands

A final factor needing consideration is that, as discussed above (section 8.2.1), over half of the respondents had never heard of joyriding being addictive, with the interview being the first time they had ever thought about their position on this issue. As such, it was apparent that some of the respondents, although stating that they thought it was addictive when first asked, changed their views following deliberations of their beliefs regarding word addiction. The following extract (edited for length) illustrates how, during the course of the interview, some respondents changed their views:

Interviewer
what do you think about it, do you think its like an addiction
William
aye, could be
Interviewer
could be
William
definitely, if you don’t have a crash, there’s one in Belfast who takes nearly six or seven cars a night, that’s every night
(...)
Interviewer
have you ever felt in the past that you might be addicted to it
William
mm thought I was, my mother thought I was too
(...)
Interviewer
do you think you were addicted to joyriding in the same way as somebody’s addicted to drugs
William
no
Interviewer
no, what’s the difference
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William
not really, people don’t have to have a drive, if the car wasn’t there
(...) if you know what I mean, if you never seen a car all day
(...) if you were addicted to drugs you have to get the drugs, you’re
addicted to cars- if you’re addicted to cars you- you can wait to
some other day do you know what I mean, if you can’t get one that
day you try the next day to get one .. drugs, I think its definitely
different, it definitely is
Interviewer
do you think its an addiction then
William
what drugs, yes
Interviewer
with cars, do you think its addiction
William
no, no definitely not, I don’t think its addiction
Interviewer
you don’t think its addiction, no, a different sort of thing
William
I can’t see how anybody can be addicted to a car
19 years, Northern Ireland

8.4.2 Respondents’ definitions of addiction versus the clinical / academic criteria for dependency

It was found that the main criteria used by respondents to define addiction (be it
to joyriding or other behaviours) were excessiveness / repetitiveness, and having
to engage in the activity / ‘loss of control’. Other criteria mentioned were
cravings, withdrawal phenomena, continuance despite harm and the reduction of
other activities.

These findings taken together appeared to indicate that most of the criteria being
used to define addiction per se were similar to the criteria used to clinically define
dependency in other behaviours (see Chapter 7). However, although a number of
these dependency criteria were occasionally identified in the respondents’
accounts, the two most popular defining factors by the respondents were (i) the
level of excessiveness / repetitiveness in an addictive behaviour and (ii) the actual
presence or absence of control over the behaviour. It will now be argued that
neither of these defining criteria clearly match the clinical criteria for dependency,
and that therefore the definitions used by respondents to make judgements about
addiction were not, on the whole, analogous to the criteria that would be used to define dependency within a clinical/academic setting.

Taking first the notion of excessiveness / repetitiveness as a criterion indicative of addiction, the previous chapter has described how the criterion defining the relationship between excessiveness and dependency would be either (i) that a behaviour is more excessive than was intended by the person engaging in the activity, or that (ii) the person spends large amounts of time engaged in preparation for and/or recovery from the effects of the activity. Excessiveness of the behaviour in itself is not said to be indicative of dependency. In the present study many respondents appeared to perceive addiction to be a question of degree, and as such it is argued that the respondents’ criterion of excessiveness is not comparable with the clinical criteria of dependency.

In terms of not being able to control the behaviour, it was argued in the previous chapter that perceptions of loss of control (often linked to subjective feelings of compulsion) were indicative of dependency, but not absolute ‘loss of control’. In other words, dependency often included a strong desire to engage in the behaviour, rather than actual inability to control it. Another dependency criterion often linked to the notion of ‘loss of control’ is that of people having unsuccessful efforts to stop or cut down their behaviour. However, when talking of loss of control respondents in the present study did not appear to be describing subjective feelings, nor did they refer to failed attempts to control the behaviour. In general the respondents who considered ‘loss of control’ to be indicative of addiction appeared to be using the notion in its most literal sense, which would not be in keeping with the clinical criteria. Interestingly, one respondent (Paul), who did refer to a sense of loss of control in the joyriders, considered this to be indicative that the behaviour was not addictive (see section 8.2.2).

A further observation was that many respondents appeared to be making a connection between the buzz obtained through joyriding and that derived from certain drug use. The implication being that drugs produce a buzz and are addictive, and therefore as joyriding also provides a buzz, it must also be
addictive. Davies (1997a), however has argued against the notion that some so-called addictions such as gambling could be classified as such on the basis that they produced internal states in the person, stating:

The idea that people can generate their own internal addictive pharmacology can be applied to all sorts of behaviours other than gambling and drug-taking, including such valued activities as playing the violin, walking to the North Pole, or becoming a Member of Parliament, things which in themselves are not regarded as pathological. Consequently, if we adopt this line of argument, any type of commitment or dedication stands in danger of becoming an 'addiction', especially if the person feels good as a consequence. (Davies, 1997a, p73).

In conclusion, it appeared that the respondents in the present study were not, in the main, using the same criteria to define addiction to joyriding as would be used by clinicians to 'diagnose' dependency in other behaviours. In fact the findings suggested that although they drew on a range of concepts to define addictive behaviour, some of which were comparable with dependency criteria, the main criteria being used were not analogous to clinically / academically accepted criteria of dependency. It is valuable therefore to move on to consider the consequences of applying a label of addiction upon a behaviour such as joyriding, particularly when that label clearly means different things to different people.

8.5 Labelling and its consequences

This section will discuss some of the possible effects of labelling behaviours as addictive, and will particularly consider the beliefs held by respondents as to the meaning of the term 'addiction'. The consequences of labelling any activity as addictive will be discussed first, followed by a consideration of the perceived effects of labelling joyriding as an addictive behaviour.

8.5.1 Consequences of labelling a behaviour as 'addictive'

This section will consider some of the assumptions held by people regarding the label of addiction as applied to substance use or behaviours in general. To begin with it appears that it may be functional, on occasions, to label an 'undesirable' activity as addictive.
A number of behaviours recognised as having the potential for addiction could give rise to associated problems. For instance, they might involve the breaking of cultural norms under certain situations (e.g. smoking); cause potential physical or psychological harm to the person engaging in the behaviour (e.g. drug use), or to 'innocent' others (victims of drink-driving accidents); involve spending large amounts of money that the person may not have (e.g. gambling); or involve breaking the law (e.g. serial killing). It is also feasible that the more negative associations there are with an excessive behaviour, the more functional it may be to describe that behaviour as 'addictive'.

For instance, in the following example, Barry (a non-joyriding young offender) appeared to be implying that there were certain circumstances under which it may be functional to have a 'habit' that needed supporting:

_Barry_

I reckon circumstances does- well .. if you got reason for doing something, person don't look on you as like hundred per cent bad then do they really, but if you got a reason for doing it, it looks better than doing it for the fun of it don't it, if you- if I was saying, I'm shop-lifting to support my habit, that looks better than just shop-lifting just for nicking for the sake of it isn't it, it looks better doesn't it, it's a reason at the end of the day

17 years, Midlands

It was perhaps because of people's awareness of the functional aspects of the term that there appeared to be some discomfort with use of the label of addiction. It was particularly the case that when addiction was associated with the 'disease' model people felt that the label of addiction unfairly reduced personal responsibility:

_Harry_

I think anything that undermines someone's responsibility for their own behaviour is not going to be helpful, and erm addiction is a classic one isn't it, because it makes it seem like an illness that shifts the blame

_Probation Officer, Midlands_

Eiser (1990) recognised that the concept of addiction may also be unhelpful for the individual engaging in the behaviour. He stated that the use of the term 'addiction' tended to remove individual responsibility for behaviour change. Eiser suggested that if people believed that addiction meant 'being unable to stop
8. Notions of Joyriding and Addiction

by one's own devices', then it allowed them to excuse their continued behaviour even though they knew it may be, for instance, unhealthy. He argued that:

Most people that use drugs do so for their own reasons, on purpose, because they like it, and because they find no adequate reason for not doing so; rather than because they fall prey to some addictive illness which removes their capacity for voluntary behaviour (p xi).

The following respondent talked quite specifically about her discomfort with labelling sexual offences as being addictive:

Emma

I used to work with erm sex offenders, and they would argue that, that they've erm, the focus of the Probation Service's work is to un-pick it, you know, that things don't just happen, that you actually planned all this, so for a sex offender for example to say its addicted is copping out, so that's always challenged, I mean that's it in a nutshell, I mean it's a lot more detailed than that, but they plan things, you know, they don't just flash, you know, its planned

Probation Officer, Midlands

The above dialogue suggested that sexual offences could not be addictive because they were generally 'planned' - and therefore presumably within the control of the perpetrator. This again taps into a model of addiction that assumes actual loss of control over behaviour.

McGregor & Howells (1997), in considering addiction models of sexual offending, suggested that disease models of addiction contain a number of other assumptions, including the belief in a biological predisposition. They described the difficulties of adopting a disease model approach to sexual offences, due to the resultant assumption that people can be biologically predisposed to such behaviours.

Davies (1997a) has cited some behaviours that appear to have been given a disease label as a 'preferred explanation for badness', such as kleptomania (habitual stealing) and dyslexia (reading difficulties). Describing them as functional labels, or socially acceptable ways of temporarily making something
easier to live with, he stated that unfortunately this had the effect of trading ‘*temporary* badness for *chronic* illness’ (p75, italics added).

However, a functional application of addiction may not be perceived as being necessary, or even advantageous. For instance, there are excessive behaviours that are usually socially acceptable (e.g. excessive engagement in sports, or work), and even though behavioural excess may have serious negative consequences (e.g. health risks, family breakdown and social isolation), it may be functional to avoid the notion of addiction, with its undesirable image of sickness, moral weakness, and out-of-control behaviour. In fact an individual may never feel the need to excuse their behaviour, if in their social groupings the behaviour was actively encouraged.

In support of this the following non joyriding young offender’s extract suggests that addictive behaviours were more acceptable amongst those who also indulged in the activity:

*Robbie*
If- well if they’re on the same stuff, or if they’re doing the same thing, they probably think its alright

*17 years, Midlands*

Furthermore, as the following extract by a non-joyriding young offender implies, the associated and assumed ‘loss of control’ over behaviour may be seen as a weakness:

*Dean*
Then like they’ll find out that you’re addicted to drugs and that and they’ll go, oh he’d let himself go away, got into bad ways and that, relying on drugs, look at the state of him and things like that

*19 years, Midlands*

Lack of personal control is linked to the ‘willpower’ model of addiction. As the following extracts suggest, models of addiction that utilise this assumption do not appear to be particularly functional, as, rather than removing personal responsibility, they tend to give the responsibility firmly back to the ‘addict’:

*Bill*
I think addiction to some people is stereotypically seen as er .. erm, a drug thing, a, erm, you know, an uncontrollable thing, whereas a
lot of addictions are because the person hasn’t got enough discipline to control themselves

*Project Worker, Midlands*

This section has attempted to describe how people’s assumptions regarding what it means to ‘be addicted’ to an activity, and the models of addiction that they hold, influence the likelihood of a label of addiction being seen as functional or dysfunctional. Leading on from this, the next section will consider the possible consequences of labelling *joyriding* as addictive.

### 8.5.2 The perceived effects of labelling joyriding as an addictive behaviour

Many of the respondents with care and control of joyriders were clearly uncomfortable with the notion of joyriding being labelled as potentially addictive, with a number seeing the term as excusing the offending behaviour:

*Timothy*

I think it would give them a nice little excuse I do, to hide behind that particular term, I try to avoid terms, because I think its un-boxes it nicely, thank you I’m addicted, thank you very much, I’m a joyrider, end of story, and it takes away all the horrors for the victim, I think its too easily packaged

*Probation Officer, Midlands*

*Tom*

young people are very- are very good at manipulating situations, er I could see young people as saying, well you know I’m addicted to this, you know I can’t help it, er, I need help you know, but in the mean time you know if we get a chance we’re going to steal another car

*Social Worker, Northern Ireland*

It was also interesting to note that one of the *joyriding* respondents shared similar opinions:

*Joel*

like when you give your reasons for why you’ve been in crime, I’ve heard people say, I can’t help it, I’m addicted to it kind of thing, I don’t believe it though

*Interviewer*

do they believe or do you think they- they’re saying it-
8. Notions of Joyriding and Addiction

Joel
I don’t know, they’re just trying to get a lighter sentence

21 years, Midlands

This view was also expressed by Chapman (1992) when speaking about a community-based strategy for preventing car theft in West Belfast. He stated that the Turas Project did not see joyriders as pathological or addicted, adding that:

... joyriders often use the image of addiction as an excuse which bolsters their glamorous image of themselves. It excuses them from the responsibility of ‘thinking’. (Chapman, 1992, pp17-18)

However, in considering further the criteria being used to define joyriding as being addictive, it appeared that, as with the use of the label of addiction in general, there were links with underlying assumptions about what it meant to be addicted. Firstly, many of the respondents associated the notion of addiction with some degree of loss of control over behaviour (see section 8.3). And again, as with other activities, this assumption appeared to influence their view of joyriders being addicted:

Carol
sometimes I think it might be a cop-out [laughs] erm, because therefore I haven’t got any control, because I’m addicted

Probation Officer, Midlands

Secondly, when discussing the notion of joyriding as a potentially addictive behaviour a number of the professionals with care and control of the joyriders appeared to have held a medical or ‘disease’ model of possible addiction to joyriding:

John
two things, one erm, they, I believe personally that its like any addiction, and I believe it is an addiction, er it gets into the blood, and er they wake in the morning looking forward to having a fix if you want to call it by stealing a car

Prison Officer, Northern Ireland

A view perhaps also held by wider society. For instance, Vincent (1982), writing for New Society portrayed an interesting biological model of addictions when she stated that:
8. Notions of Joyriding and Addiction

To judge from statistics, to listen to any little Ulster boy, you would think that to be born male in Northern Ireland gives you an innate addiction to cars. A joyrider starts young with the overwhelming urge to get into a car, as a warm and welcoming womb, and just rest inside it

(Vincent, 1982, p460)

As with its application to other behaviours, there was a resistance to applying the term addiction to the behaviour of joyriding in the respondents holding to a medical model. Again, the idea of 'illness' appeared to suggested an unfair reduction in personal responsibility:

Tom
to actually say you know that this is actually a need to be desired for this young person you know that this young person can't help it, that you know they're addicted to stealing cars, I can imagine very clearly what the community response would be [laughs] to that if someone were to actually say something like that

Interviewer
what do you think the response would be

Tom
(laughs) oh they would slate you for it, I think you'd get slated for it

(…)
I could also maybe see that it could be quite difficult for you know professional qualified people er, even for ordinary lay people like working with those people to actually you know to take it all- I don’t know maybe to take it too seriously [laughs] if you are applying some kind of medical type model to it all

(…)
er.. [whispers] I don’t think it would work you know

Social Worker, Northern Ireland

Regardless of whether individuals thought that joyriding could or should be considered as potentially addictive, there were mixed views as to whether the addiction label would extend any advantage to the joyrider. For instance, although a number of respondents expressed the view that young offenders may use the label of addiction as a 'cop out', some pointed out that 'being addicted' to an offending behaviour would actually be disadvantageous in attempting to avoid custodial sentence:

Emma
there'd be a Probation Officer doing the court report when we look at, the offence, the aggravating and mitigating circumstances, risk to the public, and assessment of whether the offender has motivation to change, so of course they all sit there, oh I'm not
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going to do it again, oh I'm really sorry, they're not going to say, oh I'm addicted, I can't stop, I need some help

Interviewer
right, so they're unlikely to use the idea of addiction to- for leniency then, it would probably have the opposite effect

Emma
I think so yeh, because if I- somebody said they were addicted, in the section of risk I would have to say I have concerns about the risks to the public because X is offending

Probation Officer, Midlands

Although one respondent thought that being 'diagnosed' as addicted to joyriding may lead to the offenders getting more help and support through the judicial system:

Bill
they would perhaps have a more supportive view if it was deemed as an addiction, rather than er, just a straight crime, they might look to actually deal with the crime, but actually deal with the addiction as well

Project Worker, Midlands

A Police Officer also supported these sentiments - although he appeared to be basing his comments on an assumption of 'loss of control' that meant 'really can't stop':

Dennis
and from my own point of view maybe we'd be a little more sympathetic towards them, knowing that its something that's like as alcoholic and they can't really stop, but I mean erm I've never had my car stolen you know [laughs] I mean next to your house its the biggest capital outlay

Police Officer, Northern Ireland

It appeared then that the notion of addiction to joyriding was often linked with a perceived reduction in personal responsibility for the behaviour. This was in turn related to underlying assumptions, such as the premise that addiction meant actual loss of control over the behaviour, or that addiction was an 'illness'. Then, some also pointed out that there were circumstances when it would be neither necessary nor advantageous for joyriders to describe their activities in terms of an addiction.
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However, many of these consequences were similar to those noted in other behaviours labelled as addictive. As with joyriding, addiction per se was seen as 'excusing' some behaviours, particularly when associated with the disease model of addiction, or when it was defined in terms of 'loss of control'.

8.6 Summary and conclusions

It appeared from the interview data that some of the joyriders were engaging in their activities particularly excessively, compared to other joyriders, possibly stealing several hundred cars during their joyriding career. Most of those who had care and control of joyriders appeared to feel that this could, in some individuals, be due to the behaviour having become 'addictive', whilst the non-joyriding young offenders were more likely to attribute excessive joyriding to status and identity factors.

The idea of joyriding being potentially 'addictive' did not appear as novel to a number of the respondents, with almost 40% stating that they had heard of the notion prior to being interviewed, usually from their own peer groups. In terms of whether the behaviour was considered by the respondents to be potentially addictive, the majority of those who knew joyriders, either as their peers or professionally, felt that it was. When the joyriders themselves were asked about this, the majority thought it could be addictive, although only half of them felt that they had personally been addicted to joyriding.

Similar criteria were used by respondents to define addiction to joyriding as were used to define addiction to other behaviours. However, in terms of comparing these criteria with those generally accepted in a clinical / academic setting (and presumably from which any research-based interventions could be derived) there were important inconsistencies. Notably, the main criteria used to define addiction (i.e. excessiveness and 'loss of control' over behaviour) were not being used in a comparable sense with clinical / academic definitions of dependency criteria.
In terms of the consequences of the addiction label being applied to the behaviour of joyriding, whilst many respondents were reluctant to use the term 'addiction' in association with joyriding activities, this was often due to their underlying assumptions regarding what it meant to be addicted. However, as previously stated, the criteria being used by respondents to define addiction where often different to those that tended to be used in a more clinical or academic setting. The findings in this chapter have clear implications when considering interventions for joyriding that may draw on the models of addiction, particularly if those interventions are to be implemented by professionals whose underlying assumptions about the nature of dependency differ from the theoretical knowledge base from which the interventions are derived.

However, before considering whether the addiction model has anything to offer in terms of therapeutic intervention, it is important to remember that joyriding is predominately a teenage and younger adult activity. As such it follows that, with or without intervention, most joyriders stop, or at least change, their behaviour whilst they are quite young. The following chapter will consider this process of change in more detail.
Chapter 9: Stages of Change

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  9.7 Summary of change in behaviour

9. Stages of change

The previous chapter has described how both joyriders and those who knew joyriders believed that the activity could sometimes be addictive, albeit their definitions of addiction differed in part from the clinical/academic criteria of dependency. Furthermore, in Chapter 7, where evidence for the presence of dependency criteria was considered, it was found that all of the criteria investigated could be identified in joyriding behaviour, although some criteria appeared to occur more frequently than others. One of the more common criteria found was that of 'unsuccessful efforts to stop or cut down joyriding'. Many joyriders described how they had regularly failed when attempting to stop their activities, often describing subjective feelings of compulsion and/or 'loss of control'. Indeed this pattern of cutting down or abstaining from a behaviour, followed by relapse to the former activities is a recognised feature of addictive behaviours per se.

The issue of stopping is particularly interesting in relation to joyriding because one feature of the behaviour is that it appears to predominate in adolescence, with the majority of offenders being under 20 years of age (Light et al., 1993; McGillivray et al. 1993). In fact it appears that joyriders either 'grow out' of the activity in their early twenties, and/or move on to more lucrative forms of car crime (see Chapter 3). Indeed it was this feature of the behaviour that led at least
one respondent to argue that it couldn’t therefore be ‘addictive’ (see comments by Howard, a Prison Officer, in Chapter 8, section 8.2.2). However, the tendency for a decrease in both criminal and non-criminal adolescent activities is not uncommon in early adulthood, including those that are potentially addictive (e.g. drug and alcohol use, computer games and playing on fruit machines). In the context of an inspection of the use of addiction models it is therefore still of interest to consider whether the stages of change leading to cessation in joyriding activities are in any way similar to those that take place in other behaviours recognised as having the potential for addiction.

This chapter will seek to explore Prochaska and DiClemente’s (1984) transtheoretical model of behaviour change in relation to changes towards cessation of joyriding behaviour, because this model has been specifically used to describe the process of change in addictive activities (e.g. Miller & Heather, 1986; see also Chapter 1). If cessation in joyriding behaviour follows the processes of other addictive behaviours, then it should be possible to plot changes through the various stages of precontemplation, contemplation, preparation, action, maintenance and termination, as well as instances of past relapse.

In order to measure an individual’s stage of change, a short ‘readiness to change’ questionnaire has been developed by Rollnick et al (1992) for use in interventions among excessive drinkers. McMurran et al (1998) attempted to adapt this for use with offending behaviour amongst a population of patients suffering from Psychopathic Disorder and resident in special hospitals, but even after modifying the questionnaire to take account of the prison environment, it was found that the items were not useful measures for assessing the stage of behavioural change in these offender populations. In view of this, the present study identified the stage of change on the basis of interview dialogue provided by the respondents.

Prochaska and DiClemente’s (1984) notions of precontemplation, contemplation, preparation, action, maintenance, and termination will now be discussed in more detail, demonstrating how some joyriders were represented in all but the action stage, together with numerous instances of past relapse.
9. Stages of Change

9.1 Precontemplation

Prochaska and DiClemente (1984) stated that in the precontemplation stage people are not aware of having a problem (or would not admit to it), and are usually very resistant to receiving help in changing their behaviour. Interview data from the present study suggested that a number of joyriders were in a precontemplative stage, and that on the whole these respondents stated that they did not want to stop, with some having never considered stopping:

James
I've never thought of stopping, no, I've never thought about stopping, it's just a spur of the moment thing, you end up walking past somewhere and you go, that car I'll try and steal it

Interviewer
do you think you'll joyride when you get out next time

James
aye, I will

18 years, Northern Ireland

Prochaska and DiClemente (1984) stated that precontemplators have no intention of changing in the near future, with Prochaska and Velicer (1997) measuring the foreseeable future in terms of 'the next 6 months' (p39). It was interesting to note that in the present study, although the precontemplators did not intend stopping their behaviour yet, most stated when asked that they did not see themselves as always joyriding, believing that they would 'grow out of it' one day. This was something that had also been observed by some of those who had care and control of the joyriders:

Tom
they don't actually see a future in it, but they couldn't tell you when they're going to stop it (...) they can't see themselves doing it in five years time, but they can possibly see themselves doing it for the next year or two (laughs) you know

Social Worker, Northern Ireland

A number of the joyriders attributed this future potential change of behaviour with either becoming bored with the activity, the opportunity to drive legally, or having increased responsibilities that would come with a serious relationship:

Matthew
I'll give up sometime 'cos I'll have no choice but to 'cos I've got to grow up sometime really ain't I
9. Stages of Change

Interviewer
why, why will you have to sometime do you think
Matthew
why will I have to, 'cos I'm going to- I'm bound to get a Misses
sometime and have a kid off her and things like that, and I've
always said that as soon as I get a kid then that's it everything's
stopping

19 years, Midlands

However, not all were optimistic about stopping in the future:

Brett
I do seriously hope that I will grow out of it, but
Interviewer
you hope you will
Brett
I- I don't- I just don't think I will

19 years, Midlands

A further feature of the precontemplation stage, as described by Prochaska and
DiClemente (1984), is that although the person themselves may not feel they need
to change, other people may think that the person has a problem and needs to
change their behaviour. Many of the respondents in the present study stated that
parents and/or girlfriends had expressed these sentiments, plus (on occasions)
their non-joyriding friends. However, it must be noted that significant others may
be more likely to express a desire for the person to cease joyriding because, unlike
many potentially addictive behaviours, the activity is illegal under any
circumstances, and there is concern about the consequences of the individual
being caught:

Roger
well there's this girl that I hang around with, she's moaning at me
Interviewer
is she
Roger
yeh
Interviewer
what's she saying
Roger
I don't know, she says, you're just going to get sent down, and
stuff like that, moaning

16 years, Midlands

Furthermore, Prochaska and DiClemente (1984) commented that if
precontemplators feel others are coercing them they might temporarily change
their behaviour, but only until the pressure eases off. They stress that these are manipulative ploys rather than genuine attempts to change behaviour, as is suggested in the following extract:

_Interviewer_

have you ever thought that oh, maybe I should cut down or stop or has anyone ever suggested that to you

_Adrian_

a-hu my girlfriend, or my ex-girlfriend, she used to crack up, she says, you know she was always threatening its either me or your cars, and I used to sort of knock it on the head for a while

20 years, Northern Ireland

As has previously been discussed (see Chapter 7, section 7.4.1) internal conflict can arise as joyriders continue in their behaviour whilst also being aware of the possible associated problems. Prochaska and DiClemente (1984) stated that working with precontemplators tended to be difficult ‘because of the very defensiveness which keeps them from confronting their problems’ (p25). Festinger’s (1957) theory of cognitive dissonance is based on the notion that people attempt to establish an internal ‘harmony’ or consonance in terms of cognitions - such as opinions, attitudes, knowledge and values. If certain elements of cognition are in a ‘discordant’ or dissonant relation then the individual will be under pressure to reduce the dissonance, by changing one of the cognitive elements causing dissonance, adding new cognitive elements, or decreasing the importance of the dissonant elements. There were several examples of precontemplators in this study who appeared to have been attempting to reduce the cognitive dissonance associated with potentially conflict-inducing aspects of joyriding. The following extracts, although all from the same respondent, provide typical examples:

(i) _Brett_

you’re in somebody else’s car, and at the end of the day that car’s stolen anyway so they’re going to get something off the insurance, so it don’t really matter if you smash it up a bit at the end of the day

(ii) _Brett_

I drive at high speeds, but I still think about other road users as well and all that, I drive at high speeds but I slow down, like when I know I need to slow down and all that stuff, I won’t go through red lights if I don’t need to
9. Stages of Change

(iii) **Brett**

like I've never been burgled myself personally but I've known other peoples that have been burgled, so like I have seen the effects that it does have on people like ... I bur- I nicked your car- say I nicked your car for instance yeh, right fair enough you’re going to be angry and pissed off and all that ‘cos I stole your car, but at the end of the day you’d rather me to nick your car than you would like not knowing who’s- who’s burgled your house, been through every part of your house do you know what I mean, been through your bedroom, ransacked your bedroom looking for money, jewellery and everything, you know what I mean, you would prefer to go back to your car after I’d stolen your car (...) you know that we’re out of your car but like, you could come and disturb us in your house and we could hide under your bed and not be able to get out of your house until you’ve gone to bed yourself.

*19 years, Midlands*

These examples suggest that Brett is attempting to reduce the cognitive dissonance caused by the conflict between knowledge of the problems associated with joyriding and his desire to continue in the behaviour by describing how: (i) victims’ car insurance justifies potential damage to the stolen car; (ii) safer driving when ‘necessary’ counterbalances generally driving fast; and (iii) stealing a car may cause some upset to the victim- but not as much as would a house burglary.

Prochaska and DiClemente (1984) describe how people might also be in the precontemplative stage as a result of previous failed attempts to give up the behaviour. The present study showed that many of the precontemplators had relapsed back into the precontemplative stage following one or more previous failed attempts at stopping, with the following extract exemplifying the typical relapse scenario:

*Interviewer*

how many times have you tried to cut down or stop, or have you ever been successful

*Craig*

I have for like a couple of months and that, and then sometimes just get rid of cars altogether and never nick ‘em for two, three months and then after that just go straight back into them again

*17 years, Midlands*
9.2 Contemplation
The contemplation stage refers to people who are aware that a problem exists and are seriously thinking about changing, although they have not yet made a commitment to do so. Although Prochaska and DiClemente (1984) argue that this stage can last for months or even years depending on the particular problem and the personality of the individual, Prochaska and Velicer (1997) later state that contemplation implies an intention to change within the next six months. There appeared to be a number of joyriders in the contemplation stage, typically reporting that they had begun to think about giving up joyriding since being in prison / training school, and giving a variety of reasons for having had these thoughts. Many, for instance, claimed that they had become fed up with either cars,

*Alan*
I don’t know, the novelty seems to be wearing off more now, you know, I just don’t seem to be doing it as much

18 years, Northern Ireland

or prison:

*Interviewer*
what’s made you want to stop this time
*Matt*
‘cos I want out for good, I’m sick and tired of this place
*Interviewer*
how many times have you been in
*Matt*
five

15 years, Northern Ireland

Others stated that a particular incident had ‘made them think’, such as a serious accident:

*Interviewer*
what’s made you decide now that you want to stop
*Gavin*
‘cos I had a bad accident
*Interviewer*
could you tell me what happened in the accident
*Gavin*
it was just .. flying about in a stolen car as usual and, crashed into another car and left, four people, in hospital, injured .. I was just put in here for it
*Interviewer*
right, were you driving
9. Stages of Change

Gavin
mm
(...)
Interviewer
were they badly hurt
Gavin
broken legs, broken breast bones .. broken (...) fractured ribs,
broken arms, what have you
Interviewer
how did that make you feel
Gavin
.. shattered

19 years, Northern Ireland

Some of the older ones appeared to feel that it was now time to 'settle down':

Interviewer
so now you're thinking to yourself you ought to stop, have you ever thought about it in the past before
Terry
no, 'cos really I was still a teenager, but like this time I've turned twenty-one like, you know what I mean, its time for me to stop
21 years, Midlands

Gordon
I'm going to try and give it up definitely this time, 'cos its getting-
I'm getting on a bit in my life now, its about time
20 years, Midlands

It appeared from some of the above examples that respondents had made a definite commitment to stop, and therefore could possibly be categorised in the next stage (i.e. action). However, as the decisions to stop had been made whilst in custody, the commitment (no matter how firm) had not yet had the opportunity of being tested outside of prison / training school.

Prochaska and DiClemente (1984) described how contemplators were in the process of trying to understand their problem and assessing the costs and benefits of changing their behaviour. This, they said, could lead to a certain amount of distress associated with what they would have to given up as a result of their changed behaviour, and concern about whether they would actually be successful in achieving the change.
There was evidence of joyriders in the present study considering the costs of benefits of the behaviour. For instance, Philip shows concern over the possibility of losing his reputation,

*Interviewer*
what do you think would tempt you to go back to stealing cars again if you did get tempted in the future, what would it be that'd do it
*Philip*
it'd be old mates keep coming round in cars and that, you know .. its like if somebody come round house in a, say XR2i, and he says, right, come on we've got a car, are you coming out, then you'd have to go, 'cos .. its just like sometimes people pressure you in, you know if there's quite a few of them, say, oh come on you (...) chicken, then you'd have to- 'cos you've got a reputation you've got to live to it so you say, alright then yeh I'll come (...) and maybe you don't want to come

17 years, Midlands

whilst Simon considers the benefits of a sense of achievement if successful:

*Simon*
there's only one thing that can beat cars, and that's stopping altogether, you know I reckon that'd be good (...) when my mates come up in the car and I say, no, sorry, I'm not getting into the car, and I walk off, well its just the feeling that I could do that, do you know what I mean (...) they'll come in the car and say, right are you coming in, say, no, I'm not getting in it this time, I'll say I've given up, I'll say- I'll just walk away, that- I'll be buzzing- like I'll be buzzing my head off if I can do that

19 years, Midlands

However, many were not confident about their ability to stop joyriding, often showing considerable insight into the possible causes of relapse, the main factors being use of drugs/alcohol, and pressure from peers:

*Terry*
like if I go back to the same drugs when I- like what I was on before I come in here, I will- I'm confident that I will be coming back to prison, 'cos they make- they're like- the buzz of them just make you think, oh lets go out and get a car and make the buzz like even better

21 years, Midlands
9. Stages of Change

Shaun
I think about it all the time now, don’t really, really want to joyride no more, I just want to have my own car and be able to drive about without the peelers chasing me
(…)
if I’m drinking or something when I go out and, I meet up with all of my mates, all they need to do is ask me and I’ll do it

15 years, Northern Ireland

Indeed anecdotal comments from prison staff suggested that young men on release often stated that they would not be returning to prison, but that many did return – often within a few weeks or months. Indeed half of the contemplators in the present study described having had one or more previous failed attempts at stopping joyriding:

Philip
I’m trying to stay out of trouble but .. I got .. I got a job and that, and then, just one night .. like I was- I was (on my own then) I thought pinch a car, so I pinched an Escort
(…)
Interviewer
how long after that was it before you nicked another one than Philip
couple of days

17 years, Midlands

Nevertheless, it was possible in the following extract to observe how Terry had progressed from the precontemplation to the contemplation stage:

Terry
my mum and then my old mates what I lost, they keep saying to me [surname] you should stop, you’re getting on now, you’re getting to- you keep getting to prison and everything, you should stop it, get yourself a job, but now its like, ‘cos at one time it was going through one ear and out the other, but now its like, it ain’t gone through one ear and out the other, its stopped in there and that’s what I’m going to do

21 years, Midlands

9.3 Preparation

Prochaska and Velicer (1997) described this stage as having undertaken a certain amount of preparation with a plan of how they are going to change their behaviour in the near future (i.e. with in the next month). Of course in the present study many of the joyriders interviewed were not able to joyride within the foreseeable future due to them being interviewed either in prison or a training
school. For the purposes of the study, the notion of 'within the next month' was therefore replaced by 'a commitment to stop joyriding when released from custody'. Even so, this still led to some problems differentiating between those in the contemplation and preparation stages. Whilst it is acknowledged that there may well have been a certain degree of overlap, some joyriders clearly appeared to be a step further towards a commitment to change than those in the contemplation stage as they had started to plan strategies for implementing change once released.

The following extracts illustrate that although the motivations to stop joyriding were similar to those of the contemplators, plans to prevent relapse had been made, such as by getting a job,

_Interviewer_
do you think you'll go back to it again
_Ben_
no, even when I go out, no, definitely, my brother's got me a job and I've got something- I've got- when I get out yeh

19 years, Midlands

passing their driving test,

_Interviewer_
do you think if you'll- if you get out now and you're allowed to go back into your neighbourhood again, do you think you'll joyride again
_Leon_
no
_Interviewer_
why's that
_Leon_
'cos my dad's going to try to get me his car, do my test and he says you can have my car, you can drive it

17 years, Northern Ireland

and staying away from former joyriding peers:

_Interviewer_
you said that this time you'd like to stop when you leave
_Nick_
mm
_Interviewer_
do you think you'll be successful
_Nick_
aye
9. Stages of Change

*Interviewer*
why
*Nick*
just stay away from my friends who joyride an all

16 years, Northern Ireland

As with other stages, there were previous failed attempts at stopping. In fact all of the respondents in this preparation stage had experienced relapse at some point in their past, with cases such as Nick (below) being typical:

*Nick*
the last time I was out I tried to stop
*Interviewer*
and 'what happened
*Nick*
just got into car, started joyriding
(...)
*Interviewer*
how long did it last
*Nick*
don't know, about a couple of weeks
*Interviewer*
couple of weeks .. what do you think it was that made you go back to it
*Nick*
just went to Belfast and saw some of my mates from over there, couldn't get home so stole a car and went home in it

16 years, Northern Ireland

9.4 Action

The action stage describes people who have made significant and observable changes to their lifestyle (within the past six months), which may also include changing the environmental conditions that affect their behaviour. Prochaska and DiClemente (1984) argued that this was the shortest stage, usually lasting only a few months whilst behaviour change strategies are put into action, and was characterised by marked enthusiasm - albeit for a limited period of time.

This was a difficult stage to assess in relation to joyriding because the accepted criteria for what constitutes behaviour change *per se* appears to vary between 'cutting down' and 'total abstinence' according to the activity (e.g. total abstinence in the case of smoking, and a reduction to 30% of calories being consumed from fat in terms of dieting; Prochaska and Velicer, 1997). In the case
of joyriding it seems intuitive to think of change in terms of total abstinence; i.e. stopping car crime altogether. However, it was observed that some offenders appeared to consider that stealing cars for other purposes (e.g. to sell to provide an income, or to get home when stranded) would still represent a significant and observable change in their behaviour. Indeed, when considering the stages of maintenance and termination (see sections 9.5 & 9.6, below), some of the car thieves thus categorised included those who were still stealing cars occasionally, but for non-joyriding purposes.

However, even taking these points into consideration, and although there were cases in the present study ofjoyriders planning to change those cues that affected their behaviour and being enthusiastic about their plans (see section 9.3, above), there did not appear to be any joyriders who could be described as being in an action stage at the time of the interviews. This was probably due to the short nature of the action stage combined with the fact that the majority of respondents were interviewed during a period of (often extended) imprisonment for car crime offences. As such it is feasible that joyriders do pass through an action stage of change when attempting to cease their joyriding activities in their regular environment.

9.5 Maintenance

This stage represents a continuance of change as the person works to maintain the changes made during the action stage and tries to avoid relapse to previous behaviour. In fact, according to Prochaska and DiClemente (1984), fear of relapse, which usually characterises the maintenance stage, can last for at least six months, often years, or even a lifetime in some cases. However, the levels of temptation to relapse do reduce as the individual develops self-confidence in their ability to maintain the change.

This was another difficult stage to assess in the joyriders, particularly in distinguishing the maintenance stage from that of termination (see section 9.6, below). As will be discussed, the stage of termination is characterised by having no temptation to engage in the activity, and therefore presence or absence of
9. Stages of Change

temptation was one the main criteria used to differentiate between the two stages. Even so, this was in some ways an arbitrary decision as levels of disclosure varied between the respondents. This taken into account, there were some joyriders who were considered to be in the maintenance stage.

Some of these respondents had not actually stopped *stealing* cars, but they were now stealing them for *non-joyriding* purposes:

*Noel*

> don’t joyride so much now, its only if I’m drunk I joyride, now I just- if I nick a car now its just like to get somewhere and then I’d sell it after

20 years, Midlands

*Peter*

> I’m in this time for nicking cars, but I nicked the car to earn money, I’m not a joyrider no more

18 years, Midlands

Another respondent claimed that although he stole cars to joyride in, he had ‘cut down’ significantly:

*Joe*

> I like, some days yeh we’d be nicking cars what we needed to sell like Novas and things like that, and then, I’d nick the odd car here and there, but I’d never really nick- I would never really say I got back into nicking cars, just had a few, never- never loads

20 years, Midlands

Joe (above) was considered as being in the maintenance stage because there was clearly a significant and observable change in his behaviour.

Respondents in this stage stated that they had decided to stop for one of two categories of reasons. For one respondent it appeared to be due to the cumulative effect of a number of serious incidents:

*Interviewer*

> why did you stop then

*Peter*

> ‘cos my mate killed that woman ... and then after that another lad in a different area killed another- well- killed his mate I think- then a learner driver or something like that, it was just getting all on top, so now I done it no more
9. Stages of Change

[then later in the interview discussing an accident that the respondent had been involved in]

Peter
I didn’t- I can’t remember the crash but I seen the photos at court and that car looked a bit smashed up, so I’m never nicking a car again

18 years, Midlands

Most of the others had stopped because they felt they had ‘grown up’ and/or acquired adult responsibilities:

Noel
I’m getting older, I suppose I’m growing out of it

20 years, Midlands

Interviewer
what made you stop

Adrian
my girlfriend (...) she’s pregnant

20 years, Northern Ireland

However, although they had made a decision to stop (or significantly cut down) their joyriding activities, and appeared to be maintaining the change, there was still evidence of possible of the temptation that defines the stage of maintenance:

Interviewer
do you think you’ll go back to it again

Noel
I can’t- like say- I suppose I’ll try my hardest not to but can’t say

20 years, Midlands

Indeed many had had previous experiences of relapse, which would probably have been contributing to their fear of relapse on this occasion. A good example of repetitive relapse being found again in the interview with Noel, below:

Interviewer
did you ever think you should stop or cut down at all

Noel
yeh, I used to go through like, a couple of months I’d be alright and then the next couple of months I’d just be in a robbing spree, I’d just- I’d forget everything else and go on one, it used to happen like twice a year I suppose, for four months I’d be alright, and then for four months I wouldn’t, and it’d just be like that every year

20 years, Midlands

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9.6 Termination
Prochaska and DiClemente (1984) stated that the stage of termination is when the person no longer experience any temptation to return to the behaviour (regardless of circumstances or situations), and therefore never have to make any efforts to prevent relapse. However, Prochaska and Velicer (1997) have stated that in certain behaviours (e.g. exercise and weight control) this stage may never occur, and therefore a lifetime of maintenance was often a more realistic therapeutic goal.

9.6.1 Stopping or reducing joyriding
Due the nature of the sample, it was unsurprising that there were only a minority of joyriders who appeared to be in a stage of termination. These individuals could be distinguished by their apparent certainty that they no longer desired to steal cars purely for the fun of driving:

*Interviewer*
*do you think anything would make you want to go back into joyriding again*

*Carl*
*nothing, never*

*18 years, Midlands*

It was noticeable in the present study that all of those in the termination stage were in an older age range (i.e. between 18 and 21 years), with several of those who had care and control of the joyriders also commenting on the tendency for joyriders to stop with age and/or maturity:

*Carol*
*I think at that age the main motivation for offending is the buzz and that tends to die off with maturity*

*Probation Officer, Midlands*

*Jenny*
*when people have got responsibilities, like kids, family, they’ve got themselves set up in a house, they see they have more to lose, or maybe they’ve got more to occupy their time*

*Probation Officer, Midlands*

And as the following extract shows, this was sometimes combined with statements suggesting that crime *per se* was something that young men tended grow out of.
9. Stages of Change

Emma
well by the time you get to twenty-five, one in three males in the
country will have been often-committed some kind of offence, and
then people start growing out-you know they get married, they
have children whatever

Probation Officer, Midlands

The findings in the present study generally correspond to those of Light et al
(1993) who stated that, in a survey of 100 car thieves, over half of those that had
stopped joyriding gave reasons of increased maturity and responsibility.
Explanations included: growing out of it, the influence of a girlfriend, settling
down, becoming a parent, and getting a job.

However, as well as a gradual 'maturation', in the present study there were also
examples of stopping as a result of 'sudden insight'. Peele (1985) described how
natural remission might occur in addiction due to sudden insights, when the
person appeared to 'suddenly' recognise their problems clearly and cease the
behaviour. As can be seen in the following extract, this appeared to have been the
case with Carl:

Carl
I had that car crash and (...) and I said to myself, well it's stopping
from this day on, I'm never getting into a stolen car again, so I was
lucky

18 years, Midlands

9.6.2 Moving from expressive to instrumental car crime

Some of the respondents although no longer identifying themselves as 'joyriders',
did admit to continuing in car theft (and in at least one case in increasing
amounts) but as a source of income:

Trevor
I did it for about a year really
Interviewer
about a year
Trevor
then I got caught for it and I thought, well it's not really worth it is
it, just for-just for the sake of it and that, if I'm going to do it I'm
going to earn some money out of it

21 years, Midlands

Indeed for many individuals the stealing cars for 'fun' appeared to have generally
decreased over time, with a corresponding increase in the theft of cars for other
purposes – such as to sell (or to sell the parts), to use for other ‘jobs’ and for pure transportation (see Table 18, below).

Table 18: The change over time from expressive to instrumental car crime (N.B. some were concurrently using stolen cars for more than one purpose)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reported reasons for first ever car thefts</th>
<th>Reported reasons for car theft at the time of interview</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>n=37 (%)</td>
<td>n=37 (%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stealing for fun</td>
<td>35 (96%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stealing to sell (parts)</td>
<td>1 (3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stealing to use in other crimes</td>
<td>3 (8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stealing for transportation</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This change in the reported reasons for stealing cars represents not only a trend towards termination of joyriding activities, but also the move from expressive to more instrumental car crime (as described in Chapter 3).

9.6.3 Moving from car crime to other types of crime

As has already been revealed when discussing the initiation phase, the majority of joyriders had been involved in other crimes prior to joyriding (see Chapter 5, section 5.1.1). Furthermore, it appeared that this involvement in other criminal activity grew following their initial involvement in joyriding. Almost a quarter of joyriders, commenting on this topic, claimed that they had only ever engaged in joyriding at the time of their initial involvement in the behaviour (see Table 11, section 5.1.1). At the time of their interview, only two claimed that they had still never been involved in any other crimes (see Table 19, below).
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Table 19: Breakdown of types of criminal behaviour indulged in by respondents both prior to joyriding and at the time of interview (N.B. some respondents having committed multiple crimes)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of crime</th>
<th>Committed prior to joyriding n = 43 (%)</th>
<th>Committed by the time of interview n = 43 (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Burglary</td>
<td>15 (35%)</td>
<td>35 (78%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theft</td>
<td>14 (33%)</td>
<td>20 (44%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assault</td>
<td>3 (7%)</td>
<td>7 (16%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robbery</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>6 (13%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criminal damage</td>
<td>3 (7%)</td>
<td>5 (11%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drug-related</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>2 (4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fraud</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>2 (4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-specified</td>
<td>6 (14%)</td>
<td>3 (7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joyriding only</td>
<td>11 (26%)</td>
<td>2 (4%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It also appeared that the range of involvement in criminal behaviour had changed from pre-joyriding experiences. As discussed in Chapter 5, of those that were asked, and who gave information on this topic, the main crimes prior to joyriding had been theft and burglary (see Table 12, section 5.1.1). Whilst these crimes continued to be the most popular (and with more respondents committing them over time), at the time of interview further crimes had emerged, such as robbery, drug-related offences and fraud (see Table 19, above).

9.7 Summary of change in behaviour

Before summarising the findings from this chapter it is worth noting that although change has been discussed as the final phase in the career of the joyrider, as with the progression of any potentially addictive behaviour, change may occur at any point. Orford (1985), for instance, stated that change in 'appetitive behaviour' can occur at any stage or level of attachment to the activity; and McMurran and Whitman (1997), in developing a brief intervention for car theft, similarly pointed out that a change towards moderation or abstinence can occur at any stage in the development of an attachment.

There was evidence for joyriders being in the all of the stages of change typically seen in the cessation of addictive activities, with the exception of the action stage. There were also numerous instances of relapse to a previous stage of change. This bears out the work of Kilpatrick (1997), who, in describing a study of 15 young car thieves, stated that there were examples of joyriders in the stages of
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precontemplation, contemplation, action and maintenance, as described by Prochaska and DiClemente (1983 & 1984).

In the present study, the precontemplators were identified as not wanting to stop joyriding, with some having never thought about stopping even though other people had suggested that they should. However although they intended to continue joyriding on release, most did not see themselves as always joyriding, assuming that they would stop at some stage. Cognitive conflict in this stage, between knowledge of the problems caused by joyriding and the desire to continue engaging in the activities, was evident in the instances where attempts had been made to reduce cognitive dissonance.

Those in the contemplation stage had begun to think about stopping (especially whilst in prison). Sometimes this was because of a serious incident, but in the older respondents it was more because they felt it was time to 'settle down'. There was evidence of weighing up the costs and benefits of stopping, together with an appraisal of the likelihood of relapse.

Some were in a stage of preparation, in that they had clearly thought about strategies for stopping and preventing relapse on release from prison. However there were none in the action stage, presumably due to the relatively short nature of this stage (Prochaska and DiClements, 1984) combined with the reality of most of the sample being imprisoned for car crime offences at the time of interview.

There were some joyriders in the maintenance stage, categorised on account of their claims of maintaining a 'significant and observable change' in their joyriding behaviour and successfully avoiding relapse. However, it was also noted that these changes in behaviour did not always constitute total abstinence, and sometimes included significantly cutting down, or even stealing cars for non-joyriding purposes. Furthermore, the temptation to return to joyriding was usually still present in these respondents, with some having experienced one or more prior relapses.
Finally, in terms of the stages, there were also some who appeared to be in the stage of termination, as they claimed to have no desire to return to joyriding. Again there were ex-joyriders in this stage who continued to steal cars - but for more lucrative purposes. Most of these respondents in this stage were in the older age range, and had either gradually ‘matured out’ of the activity or had had a ‘sudden insight’ into the problems associated with joyriding.

Indeed, it was observed that throughout the process of behaviour change, stopping joyriding appeared to be repeatedly associated with an increase in age or maturity, a serious relationship, and/or parenthood. Many joyriders in the precontemplation stage saw themselves as stopping joyriding when they got older, with their girlfriends being cited as encouraging the respondents to stop their activities; some respondents in the contemplative stage stated feeling that it was ‘time to settle down’; most of those in the maintenance phase had stopped because they felt they had matured in some way; and some of the ex-joyriders in the termination stage appeared to have stopped as a result of ‘maturing out’ of the activity. However, as has been commented on several times, many joyriders had matured out of joyriding and ‘moved on’ to more lucrative forms of car crime, with a corresponding increases in other criminal activities.

It was also noted that relapse was a feature of all the stages, with over half having experienced one or more failed attempts at stopping in the past. The final part of this study therefore needs to consider how, given these findings, behavioural change might best be brought about in joyriders. To help those who may be engaging in the behaviour in an addictive manner and have, for instance, had previous unsuccessful attempts at stopping, it would be particularly useful to combine an assessment of the stage of behavioural change with the therapeutic insights drawn from the addiction literature.

Indeed McMurran et al (1998), when considering motivation to change in offenders, pointed to the clinical relevance of identifying the stage of change. They suggested that in the early stages (such as contemplation and preparation) cognitive and experiential processes were indicated; whereas in the later stages
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(such as the action and maintenance stages) behavioural programmes are more appropriate. The possible therapeutic usefulness of being able to classify joyriders according to their stage of change, and how this has been used with other addictive behaviours, will therefore be considered further in the following chapter.
Chapter 10: Therapeutic Implications

Summary of contents:
10. Therapeutic implications
10.1 Models of addiction
10.2 Stage model of behaviour change
10.3 Precontemplation, contemplation and preparation stages
10.4 Action stage
10.5 Maintenance stage
10.6 Summary of ways forward

10. Therapeutic implications
As has been stated, joyriding is predominantly an adolescent activity, with most joyriders ceasing their behaviour in their late teens or early twenties with or without intervention. It could therefore be argued that therapeutic intervention is largely unnecessary. However, although most joyriders do stop of their own accord eventually, cessation usually follows several years of persistent car theft, often including instances of harm to themselves and others. Furthermore, as noted in previous chapters, some joyriders, having made the decision to cease their activities, undergo several unsuccessful attempts at stopping before they are finally able to move on. It therefore makes sense to try and intervene as early as is possible with whatever can be brought to bear upon the problem in order to expedite the process of change and thus reduce the negative effects of this activity, both to the joyriders as well as to society in general.

In the discussion of the notion of addiction as applied to joyriding, it has been found that some joyriders described several dependency-type elements in their behaviour (see Chapter 7). In addition it has been found that when ceasing the behaviour joyriders follow similar stages of changes as do those ceasing other addictive behaviours (see Chapter 9). It seems reasonable from these findings to argue that for those offenders who indulge in their offending behaviour in an addictive manner, it may be appropriate to consider interventions that have been developed for, or found to be effective with, other addictive behaviours. This
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This chapter will first consider the therapeutic implications of addiction models in general, before discussing how interventions derived from the addiction literature can be applied to the joyriding problem within Prochaska & DiClemente’s (1984) transtheoretical model of behaviour change. Finally, issues relating to the use of the concept of addiction to help rehabilitate joyriders will be explored.

10.1 Models of addiction

A number of models have been proposed to explain the causes of behaviours considered to have an addictive potential, with interventions often being linked to an underlying model. For instance, McMurran & Hollin (1993) have described interventions linked to different models of excessive drinking. They pointed to the moral model as emphasising personal choice, and therefore excessive drinking being seen as wilful misconduct, the intervention being punishment. The temperance model they described as viewing the substance as detrimental to well-being, the interventions being education and legislative controls to enforce moderation. The disease model suggested an inherent biological predisposition to alcoholism, the interventions being drug therapy and/or rehabilitation in order to achieve abstinence. Finally they described the learning model which explains drinking through classical, operant and social learning, which can be unlearned using behavioural therapies, such as cue exposure, behavioural self-control training, social skills training, relapse prevention, and lifestyle modification.

It is an interesting exercise to briefly locate joyriding within each of these models. For instance, when considering joyriding from the perspective of the moral model, it is clear that joyriding is considered by society as wilful misconduct and thus punished. Then, from within the temperance model, the behaviour can certainly be detrimental to well-being and therefore there may be a place for increased education to make these dangers known to all vulnerable young people. Though there is no evidence to suggest that joyriding has a biological basis, nor that it is a 'disease', the ultimate aim when dealing with joyriders is nevertheless to bring about 'abstinence'. Finally, from the learning theory point of view, joyriding can be seen to be influenced by cues and triggers in the environment, and also that it is perpetuated through various inter- and intra-personal reinforcements. As
such cognitive-behavioural interventions are often used to help rehabilitate joyriders, particularly by the probation services.

However, one of the barriers to adopting an addiction model to explain the behaviour of joyriding is the belief by many that the label of ‘addiction’ removes personal responsibility, and thus excuses an illegal and potentially dangerous activity (see for instance Chapter 8, section 8.5.2). Indeed, the issue of responsibility causes debate within the field of addictive behaviours per se, and is not unique to non-substance addictive behaviours, or even those behaviours that are considered to be socially unacceptable.

Brickman et al (1982), in considering models of helping and coping, drew a distinction between the attribution of responsibility for the problem (who was to blame) and the attribution of responsibility for the solution (who controls future events). They argued that, with a ‘moral’ model individuals are said to be held responsible for both the problem and the solution (and therefore need proper motivation); with a ‘compensatory’ model they are not responsible for the problems, but are responsible for the solution (and need power); with a ‘medical’ model they are responsible for neither the problem nor the solution (and need treatment); and with an ‘enlightenment’ model they are responsible for the problem but unable/unwilling to provide the solution (and need discipline). In terms of psychotherapy for instance, they argued that rational-emotive therapy and existential therapy appear to embody the assumptions of the moral model; psychoanalysis the medical model; therapeutic communities (including Alcoholics Anonymous) the enlightenment model; and cognitive-behaviour therapy the compensatory model.

However, placing joyriders into one of the above models, based on the attribution of responsibility, is problematic. It could be argued, for example, that joyriders are responsible for the problem in that they choose to engage in the behaviour, but also that they are not responsible for the problem in that society prevents some young people from achieving their desires through legitimate means (see Chapter 4). Similarly, they are responsible for the solution in that they need to be willing
to address their offending behaviour, yet it would not be reasonable to hold them responsible for bringing about change in the wider social/cultural and socio-economic climate strongly associated with the behaviour.

Further limitations in adopting these models have been highlighted by Brickman et al (1982), who argued that 'the wrong choice of model in a situation would undermine effective helping and coping' (p368). For instance, they proposed that although criminal activity may ultimately have environmental causes, and that some individuals are denied legitimate access to achievement, the law demands that individuals are held responsible for their actions. As such neither the compensatory model nor the medical model are likely to be considered when attempting to find solutions to offending behaviour. They then pointed out that while the enlightenment model usually guided responses to offenders, prisons did not meet the requirements of an effective therapeutic community. Finally, they argued that the moral model, which would require that the offender make some sort of restitution to the victims/society, 'stands as a more compelling principle of justice than either deterrence or rehabilitation' (p380).

It appears then, that although the activity of joyriding can be located within the various models of addiction, finding an appropriate intervention based on these models may be problematic. Perhaps a more effective method of considering intervention within an addiction framework is to match the individual to an intervention dependent their stage of motivation to change, as described in the previous chapter.

10.2 Stage model of behaviour change
Chapter 9 attempted to illustrate how joyriders tended to pass through the stages of behavioural change identified in other addictive behaviours, as described by Prochaska and DiClemente (1984):

- Precontemplation (not thinking about changing)
- Contemplation (a serious intention to change)
- Preparation (planning the change)
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- Action (implementing a change in lifestyle)
- Maintenance (continuing actions to avoid relapse)
- Termination (no further temptation to relapse)
- Relapse (often occurring in the action and maintenance stages)

Interestingly, Prochaska and DiClemente’s model has been applied to offenders, but with regard to their drug and alcohol issues. In the context of offenders who had drug and alcohol problems, McMurran (1996) referred to Prochaska et al’s (1992) model of change in addictive behaviours, and pointed out how each stage of change was associated with different processes, and that different interventions were useful dependent upon the stage. McMurran discussed how, during the early stages, cognitive interventions, such as consciousness raising, were more useful. For instance, in the precontemplative stage, marked by resistance to change, she suggested it would be more appropriate to provide advice and information about where to find help in the future; and then in the contemplative stage, during which individuals were thinking about change, it would be beneficial to use motivational interviewing techniques, followed by further assessment and goal setting. In the later stages she pointed to how behavioural techniques are more useful. For instance, for those in the action stage, behavioural self-control training and skills training could be used; and then those in the maintenance stage might benefit from lifestyle modification and relapse prevention strategies.

Indeed the Turas Project for joyriders in West Belfast was part-based on a stage model of behaviour change. Chapman (1995) described how various methods of outreach, personal planning and core programmes were implemented depending upon whether the individual was in the precontemplation, contemplation/determination, or action/maintenance stage of change. It seems appropriate therefore that this stage model could be developed further with joyriders.

To demonstrate the applicability of this stage model to joyriding, there will now be a consideration of a selection of psychological interventions described in the addiction literature that might be adapted for use in rehabilitation programmes with joyriders as they present at the various stages of change. However, it is important to point out that while certain interventions are described as being
appropriate for use within a particular 'stage', many of them will be also have therapeutic utility in other stages.

### 10.3 Precontemplation, contemplation and preparation stages

It is first worth mentioning that as joyriders were generally well aware of the dangers associated with joyriding, and as initial experiences of crashing did not appear to have had any effect in deterring the joyriders (with fear often being an integral part of the experience) then ‘shock tactics’ would probably be inappropriate for intervention. Indeed this has been found to be the case in anti-drug campaigns where such tactics have only served to further glamorise the drug-taking activities.

The interventions that will be discussed within the context of these stages are therefore harm reduction strategies and motivational interviewing techniques. Both strategies can be applied to all stages of behavioural change, but it are perhaps most effective in the earlier stages. For instance, Jarvis et al (1995) argued that the motivational approach was particularly useful with substance users in the precontemplative stage, to begin the process of thinking about change; as well as for use with those in the contemplative stage who were ambivalent about changing their behaviour. Harm reduction strategies may also be used throughout the joyriders career, but again they are perhaps most important in the precontemplative stage.

#### 10.3.1 Harm reduction

In the present study the joyriders in the precontemplative stage stated that they did not want to stop joyriding, with many of those that were in custody at the time of interview believing that they would continue joyriding upon release. However, some of the joyriders in this stage also described engaging in safer driving practices, in what appeared to be an attempt to reduce cognitive dissonance. It may be appropriate therefore to encourage discussions of harm reduction with offenders in this stage.
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In the field of drugs and alcohol, if individuals do not wish to abstain from taking a substance, then harm reduction is often suggested. Hodgson (1992), for instance, described some of the harm-reduction approaches that might be used with drug and alcohol abusers who are unwilling to commit themselves to total abstinence, such as moderation of use, drug substitution and needle-exchange schemes. Applying a harm reduction philosophy to joyriding is clearly controversial due to the illegality of the behaviour, particularly when applied to offenders who are too young to drive, or who have a driving ban. However, if joyriders are not considering changing the behaviour in the immediate future then perhaps it is sensible to consider ways in which their behaviour can be made safer (whilst also nudging them towards contemplating behavioural change). This may include suggesting to joyriders that they reduce their joyriding activities and/or to engage in the behaviour in a safer manner in order to reduce the potential harm, both to themselves and to others.

The present study has indicated that a number of joyriders used drugs and/or alcohol to further manipulate their mood whilst driving. One of the most effective harm reduction strategies may be to provide factual information regarding the effects of taking drugs and alcohol whilst driving, coupled with identifying and dispelling myths surrounding this topic. Other points to consider might be sensible education regarding the benefits of wearing seat belts; the judging of distance and stopping times; the effects of adverse weather conditions; and discussions of the times and places that increase the likelihood of encountering pedestrians - especially young children.

10.3.2 Motivational interviewing

In the present study, joyriders identified as being in the contemplation stage reported that they had begun to think about giving up joyriding, and there was evidence that some were already considering the costs and benefits of their behaviour. However, there were also a number who lacked confidence in their ability to stop joyriding.
Miller & Rollnick (1991) have described their motivational interviewing approach as a method of helping people who are reluctant or ambivalent about change, to recognise and do something about their problems, emphasising how the responsibility for change should remain with the client. In support of motivational interviewing, Jarvis et al (1995) emphasised how, unlike traditional confrontational approaches, the goal was to encourage clients to talk themselves into deciding to change their behaviour.

There have been some examples of motivational interviewing strategies being used within the context of offending behaviour. For instance, McMurran (1996) has considered how Miller and Rollnick's methods could be used in the context of offenders with drug and alcohol addiction in encouraging them to express concern, intention to change and optimism about changing. Garland and Dougher (1991) similarly stated that sex offenders 'typically present as unmotivated for treatment and uninterested in changing their deviant behaviour' (p301); and, as such, they described how motivational interviewing strategies could be particularly useful in encouraging these types of offenders to contemplate, work at, and maintain change.

Miller & Rollnick (1991) described various strategies for eliciting the arguments for change from within the client, arguing that different approaches and therapeutic skills were needed at each stage. The therapist's motivational tasks in the early stages, as outlined by Miller and Rollnick, could also be useful for motivating joyriders, as follows:

**Precontemplation:** Raising doubt - increasing the joyrider's perception of risks and problems with their current joyriding behaviour.

**Contemplation:** Tipping the balance – evoking reasons to cease joyriding and the risks of not changing, plus strengthening the joyrider's feeling of self-efficacy for stopping joyriding.

**Preparation:** Helping the joyrider to determine the best course of action to be taken in seeking a change in their activities that would result in stopping joyriding.

(Adapted from Miller & Rollnick, 1991, p18)
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10.4 Action stage
According to Prochaska and DiClemente's (1984) model, those in the action stage will have high levels of motivation, but may still need practical help in implementing behavioural change. There are a number of cognitive and behavioural approaches, developed in the field of substance addictions, which could be considered when supporting joyriders through this transition, including skills training, and behavioural self control training (BSCT).

10.4.1 Skills training
McMurran (1994) described three types of skills training that may be needed to help cope with obstacles that may arise when attempting to change drinking or drug use:

1. Social skills training
2. Problem solving training
3. Stress management training

She describes social skills training as learning to socialise confidently and to cope with peer pressure. This is relevant to the present study, as the influence of peers within the joyriding sub-culture is well documented (see Chapter 4). In considering treatment approaches for drug and alcohol dependence, Jarvis et al (1995) suggested training in assertiveness, and communication skills to teach clients how to refuse to engage in certain behaviours in an appropriately assertive way, arguing that these skills were particularly useful with clients who lacked confidence under social pressure. It seems likely that those joyriders who are back in the early stages of change following a relapse may benefit from training in appropriate and effective ways of coping with peer pressure and peer influence.

The present study has also indicated that some joyriders may have been engaging in the behaviour as a way of escaping from negative feeling or difficult family situations (see Chapter 6, sections 6.1.2 & 6.2.1). McMurran (1994) described how people could learn how to cope with unpleasant emotions without resorting to the problem behaviour through developing problem solving skills. In
considering treatment approaches for drug and alcohol dependence, Jarvis et al (1995) described the goals of problem-solving training as:

- Recognising when a problem exists
- Generating variety of potential solutions to the problem
- Selecting the most appropriate option and generating a plan for enacting it
- Being able to evaluate the effectiveness of the selected approach

Problem-solving skills would be clearly be useful for those offenders for whom stealing cars was a response to a particular area of difficulty in their lives, as it would attempt to tackle the root of their problems. As an alternative, for those joyriders who steal cars as a way of managing tension and anxiety, training in stress management may be appropriate.

10.4.2 Behavioural self control training (BSCT)

The present study has described how the joyriders often experienced strong desires to engage in the behaviour during periods of abstinence, often coupled with feelings of compulsion which led to a sense of loss of control over their behaviour (see Chapter 7, section 7.9.1). Furthermore, many were able to identify those cues that increased the likelihood of them stealing cars, such as geographical location, certain days of the week, particular friends, alcohol and drugs (see Chapter 6, section 6.2.1).

McMurran (1994) described how BSCT aimed to teach skills and strategies needed to control behaviour. She argued that the effectiveness of BSCT was well established in reducing alcohol consumption, and suggested that self-help manuals could be useful for offenders with drug/alcohol problems to use upon release from prison. It is suggested here that a similar strategy might be useful for rehabilitating joyriders. Some of the aspects of BSCT, as described by McMurran, could be adapted for joyriders, by working through a programme such as:

- Self-assessment of current joyriding activities
- Setting goals for change (e.g. stopping joyriding, obtaining a legal licence)
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- Changing antecedents to behaviour (i.e. stimulus control) by deciding upon personal rules, including strategies to reduce likelihood of the behaviour (e.g. avoiding certain places/people, planning alternative activities for popular ‘joyriding’ days)
- Actually stopping joyriding
- Changing the consequences of the behaviour (i.e. contingency management) by giving rewards for goal achievement

(Adapted from McMurran, 1996, p229)

10.5 Maintenance stage

According to Prochaska and DiClemente (1984), fear of relapse usually characterises the maintenance stage, and in the present study the temptation to return to joyriding was often present, with many respondents having experienced one or more prior relapses. Indeed some of the joyriders in the precontemplation, contemplation and preparation stages had returned to those stages following a relapse. It is clear therefore, that any intervention has to take account of both relapse prevention and relapse management.

10.5.1 Relapse prevention and management

Cummings et al (1980) described a cognitive-behavioural theory of relapse. They argued that during adherence to a self-imposed rule (such as abstinence) individuals feel a certain amount of personal control over their behaviour, which increases over time. If they encounter a high-risk situation that they are not prepared for, and are able to elicit an adaptive coping response, then their feelings of self-efficacy (expectations of personal control) will increase further, often generalising to other high-risk situations. If, on the other hand, they are not able to elicit an appropriate coping mechanism then this can lead to decreased self-efficacy and a strong temptation to ‘give in’. Furthermore, this temptation will be worse if indulgence in the behaviour is associated with positive outcome expectancies.

As has been noted in previous chapters, joyriding is usually associated with positive outcome expectancy (see Chapter 5, sections 5.1.2 & 5.3.1; and Chapter 6, section 6.2.1), and therefore it is particularly important to help the joyriders
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who wish to stop joyriding to find ways of reducing the temptation to re-indulge when faced with high-risk situations.

Cummings et al argued that when abstinence was the self-imposed goal, a transgression would produce an ‘Abstinence Violation Effect’ (AVE), which had two components. Firstly, they predicted feelings of cognitive dissonance (caused by being an abstainer, and yet engaging in the forbidden behaviour), which result in increased motivation to engage in the behaviour, as the coping mechanism to reduce those types of feelings. Secondly (and probably more importantly for the present study) they suggested that, because individuals tended to attribute success to internal processes, then they were also more likely to attribute relapse as being due to internal processes (e.g. personal failure / weakness) - rather than being due to some external processes (i.e. the high-risk situation). This, they argued, would lead to a sense of decreased self-efficacy, expectation of failure and the belief that ‘once an addict, always an addict’.

These observations can be applied to the rehabilitation of joyriders who, after a period of abstinence, experience a relapse. For instance, joyriders could be encouraged to identify the internal processes that contributed to being able to resist the temptation to joyride during the period of abstinence (such as determination). They could then be helped to consider the external processes that may have led to the relapse (such as high risk situations), whilst discouraging focus on internal processes (such as personal failure / weakness).

Cummings et al further argued that the AVE increased the likelihood of a ‘slip’ becoming a full relapse. In terms of treatment, they pointed out that most abstinence-orientated programmes did not adequately address the problems associated with relapse, as they did not provide skills for preventing, or moderating the effects of a relapse. Returning to the present study, as the ultimate aim with joyriders would be to bring about total abstinence, and as it has been noted that many of the respondents had experienced a relapse, it is therefore very important to consider what strategies could help prevent a lapse becoming a relapse.
Marlatt and Gordon (1985) have developed the work of Cummings et al (above), and proposed specific intervention strategies dependent upon the stage of relapse, ranging from high-risk situations to the AVE. Their book *Relapse Prevention: Maintenance Strategies in the Treatment of Addictive Behaviours* emphasised behaviour change in addictive behaviours such as substance abuse, and the authors acknowledged its possible utility with a variety of behaviours, such as compulsive gambling. Indeed there are chapters relating to applications of their approach in the areas of problem drinking (Donovan & Chaney; and McCrady et al), smoking (Shiffman et al), and weight control (Sternberg). As will be seen, the interventions would also be suitable for use with joyriders.

Marlatt & Gordon (op cit) suggested that change could be brought about by implementation of prevention skills and cognitive-behavioural strategies focusing on three areas:

1. Skill training - the learning of cognitive and behavioural responses in high-risk situations
2. Cognitive reframing - procedures designed to view habit-changing as a learning process, to use coping imagery to deal with urges, and to restructure cognitions surrounding an initial lapse.
3. Lifestyle intervention - strategies such as relaxation and exercise, to reduce cravings and enhance the capacity for coping.

The interventions focus on teaching the individual to recognise the high-risk situations that may precipitate or trigger a relapse, and Marlatt (1985a) identified the following determinants of relapse, many of which have been identified in the present study as being factors influencing joyriding behaviour:

1. *Intrapersonal-environmental determinants*
   a) Coping with negative emotional states, moods or feelings (such as anger, frustration, fear, boredom, loneliness, worry, anxiety and depression)
   b) Coping with negative physical states (such as withdrawal, craving associated with withdrawal, pain and illness)
   c) Enhancement of positive emotional states (such as pleasure, joy and freedom)
   d) Testing personal control / willpower
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e) Giving in to temptation, urges, 'cravings' or intense subjective desire (either in the presence or absence of cues)

2. Interpersonal determinants

a) Coping with interpersonal conflict (which results in such emotions as frustration, anger, anxiety, fear and apprehension)

b) Social pressure: which may be direct (pressure from another person or group) or indirect (observation of another person or group)

c) Enhancement of positive emotional states (such as pleasure and freedom)

(Adapted from Marlatt, 1985a, pp80-81)

Drawing on the work of Marlatt (1985a), high-risk situations could be elicited by joyriders using self-monitoring techniques (when not in prison), together with noting the context of past relapse episodes and relapse fantasies. They could then be asked to rate each high-risk situation according to degree of temptation likely to be experienced, their perceived confidence to avoid a relapse (self-efficacy), plus an account of their coping responses. These exercises would also be particularly suited to group work, where joyriders could work together to identify high risk situations, and then generate possible coping mechanisms. According to Marlatt (op cit), discriminating stimuli which signal a high-risk situation (cues) would then act as early warning signals for the individual to take appropriate steps to deal effectively with the situation - usually avoidance of the situation or the use of previously determined coping strategies. Marlatt (op cit) also suggested relapse rehearsal techniques that could be used either in real life settings or imaginary high-risk situations.

Should a lapse occur, the joyriders would need to be able to cope with the outcome in order to help prevent a lapse become a full-blown relapse. To address the AVE Marlatt suggested both behavioural and cognitive strategies, such as combining specific coping skills with a cognitive reframing approach. These strategies, he suggested, could be specified ahead of time as part of a 'relapse contract'. Instead of treating the first lapse as a sign of personal failure, the individual could be taught to reframe the episode as a mistake that constitutes a single, independent event. In view of the number of joyriders in the present study who had relapsed in their attempts to stop joyriding, it seems that the drawing up of a 'relapse contract' whilst in prison may be particularly beneficial.

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10.5.2 Lifestyle modification

Marlatt (1985b) described a number of more global self-control techniques to provide skills and strategies for coping with high-risk situations. These included a balanced daily lifestyle and substitute indulgences. In the maintenance stage it is similarly important to help the (ex-) joyrider to adjust to a lifestyle that does not include stealing cars. McMurran (1996) described lifestyle modification as addressing issues such as the development of work and leisure activities, plus social networks that would enable the individual to enjoy life without engaging in the problem behaviour. In terms of the present study, appropriate strategies for joyriders would probably include:

- Life skills training
- Education and vocational training
- Leisure counselling
- Relationship counselling

(adapted from McMurran, 1996, p233)

10.6 Summary of ways forward

A number of interventions have been described, based on models of addiction, which could be used to help rehabilitate joyriders. When assessing the overall benefits of this approach it is also interesting to note that those working with some other criminal behaviours have considered the contribution of addiction literature on therapeutic intervention.

For instance, McGregor & Howells (1997), pointed to the pros and cons of using addiction models and to the suitability of the relapse prevention model, describing how the methods of cognitive interventions education, and behavioural skills training were already included in sex offender programmes. However, one potential problem that McGregor & Howells (1997) raised was that of the negative impact of the notion of 'addiction'. For instance, they cited Marshall et al (1991) as highlighting 'the importance of the offender viewing the prevention of further offending as achievable and under their own control rather than as an uncontrollable urge' (see McGregor and Howells, 1997, p129). In the present
study too, the assumption has been noted that if a behaviour was perceived to be 'addictive', then it was also be perceived to be something an individual had to do (see Chapter 8, section 8.3). McGregor and Howells further pointed to Marshall et al's comment that 'inclusion of the relapse-prevention components should not imply acceptance of an addiction model of offending per se' (see McGregor and Howells, 1997, p129).

Leading on from these comments, it is perhaps important to consider that within the context of the present study, even if the above strategies (developed for use with addictive behaviours) were found to be helpful in reducing recidivism amongst joyriders, this would not 'prove that joyriding was addictive'. Nor would it follow that other theoretical models should be ignored when considering rehabilitation programmes.

Beliefs about ability to control behaviour within the wider field of addiction have raised some important warnings about the effects of the addiction label. For instance, Eiser (1989), considering the effects of attitudes and attributions upon addictive behaviour, argued that people's confidence in their ability to give up a behaviour affected their likelihood of attempting to give up, as well as their subsequent success. Furthermore, he explained how people's lack of confidence could be linked to a readiness to identify themselves as addicts. In other words, Eiser suggested that those who identified themselves as addicts tended to feel unable to give up because they were addicted.

When looking at the factors that contributed to the various subjective explanations (or attributions) that individuals might place upon events, Eiser argued, 'if being addicted "means" being unable to stop by one's own devices, then one can "afford" to admit that one would like to give up if one could do so easily, ... of course, giving up would be very difficult indeed because of one's "addiction"' (p 276). It is perhaps easy to imagine how joyriders might come to use this circular logic in a functional way to explain their continuance in joyriding activities. This leads on to the use of the term addiction to abdicate personal responsibility for socially unacceptable behaviours, and a number of the respondents in the present
study were clearly uncomfortable with the notion of joyriding being labelled as potentially addictive for this reason (see Chapter 8, section 8.5.1).

However, Davies (1997b), in his book *Drugspeak: The Analysis of Drug Discourse*, considered the functional explanations of addiction given by drug users in terms of therapeutic possibilities. Davies suggested, for example, that the therapist could view the client's discourse, not so much as a window to the 'truth', but as an indicator of their current motivation. He described a classificatory model that plotted drug users at various 'discursive stages', according to the nature of their attributions. Davies suggested that therapeutic judgement could be used to determine (a) the client's discursive stage, (b) the functions that the discourse was serving for them, and (c) whether those functions were in the client's best interests. Then, if necessary, a type of discourse that might better suit the client's long term needs could be identified and fostered using cognitive-behavioural techniques, such as motivational interviewing.

Finally, Keene & Raynor (1993) conducted an interesting study into the relationship between the beliefs and theories of clients and their therapists at an alcohol treatment centre, and found that people showing similar behaviour, but attaching different meanings to this behaviour, responded differently to various types of treatment. The staff at the centre worked within a 'disease' model and considered it essential that clients should also believe that they had a disease and were helpless. Keene & Raynor found that although there was very little scientific support for the 'disease' model, if clients were able to accept the theory then it was as likely to work for them as any other method. They concluded that 'the term addiction means different things to different people and therefore, to some extent, it *is* different things to different people' (p85), arguing that the central question was not 'is addiction a disease?', but rather 'can people be helped if they believe it is a disease?'.

This raises the possibility that if some joyriders believed that they were addicted to their behaviour (regardless of whether they displayed any dependency criteria) then by using an intervention overtly based on an addiction model, they may be
more able to address their offending behaviour. However, Davies (1997a) pointing to the assumption that it does not necessarily matter whether a theory is ‘true’ so long as it has a beneficial effect, warned that this was an unethical approach to therapy.

Overall, it appears that the label of addiction might be useful for some joyriders in helping them to understand and address their behaviour, particularly if the therapeutic intervention is in line with the model of addiction that they hold. On the other hand, there will be cases where the notion of addiction is not going to be helpful, even though the associated interventions may still be therapeutic. Taking on board Davies' view that it is unethical to deceive the recipients of treatment, it is perhaps advisable to target the joyriders' stage of change (but using interventions that have been derived from the addiction literature), rather than to explicitly cleave to any particular model of addiction.
Chapter 11: Conclusions

Summary of contents:
11.1 Overview of findings
11.2 Implications of the research
11.3 Future research
11.4 Conclusion

Joyriding is a potentially dangerous, illegal activity, with associated risks that can range from public shame to serious injury, or even death. For some young people, it is also an extremely exciting leisure activity, having the potential to raise arousal levels several degrees above that of being bored. Indeed certain joyriders have likened the 'buzz' to the experience of drug use. However, the persistence with which joyriding is sometimes engaged in, particularly in the face of repeated threats to their well-being, has led to the suggestion that the behaviour might be 'addictive'. Whilst other researchers have described the career of the joyrider, these studies have not tended to address notions of excessiveness, nor considered the potentially addictive nature of the activity. Furthermore, at the time of writing, the only in-depth study known to the researcher that has specifically investigated joyriding as an addictive behaviour was based on particularly young joyriders in West Belfast (Kilpatrick, 1997).

The overall aim of the research was therefore to consider whether joyriding could be usefully understood from an addiction perspective. Through a qualitative analysis of interviews with 54 joyriders aged between 15 and 21 years, 12 professionals, and 11 non-joyriding young offenders, drawn from both the Midlands and Northern Ireland, this study has demonstrated that whilst joyriding can be represented as a deviant subculture, the career of the joyrider can be further described within a continuum analogous to that of addictive behaviours. In addition, the range of dependency criteria identifiable in the behaviour suggests that some individuals do engage in joyriding in an addictive manner.
11. Conclusions

11.1 Overview of findings

It was considered relevant to begin by looking at joyriding within the context of a deviant subculture, and therefore some of the culturally induced beliefs and aspirations that might lead young people towards car crime, such as the desire for status and identity, were explored. It was argued that although many of the types of activities engaged in by joyriders were pursued through employment and/or leisure by legitimate road users, the deviant joyriding subculture appeared to be more a leisure activity that developed because the situation afforded it, rather than as a frustrated response to perceived failure to achieve ideals legitimately.

The career of the joyrider was then examined, to consider whether it could be mapped on to the career pattern generally found in the development of addictive behaviours. It was found that joyriding behaviour could be represented within each of the phases of an addiction continuum (i.e. initiation, maintenance and dependency), together with the various stages of change relating to cessation. Overall, this model was found to be an interesting and informative representation of joyriding behaviour.

The findings highlighted the potential for addiction right from the earlier phases of the joyriding career, due to the mood modification properties of behaviour. Then, using the DSM IV criteria for dependency (APA, 1994) as the standard by which addictive behaviour could be determined, the analysis suggested that it was possible for a wide range of dependency criteria to be present as the career progressed. Most notable in the findings were: persistence despite knowledge and concern about the harmful consequences; persistent desires, or unsuccessful attempts to stop; and large amounts of time being spent thinking about, or recovering from the activities. In addition, although not a specific DSM IV criterion of dependency, there were many instances of subjective feelings of compulsion and/or "loss of control", both of which are commonly accepted as phenomenon indicative of dependency. Finally, when joyriders decided to cease their behaviour, the cycle of change was found to be similar to that found in the cessation of other addictive activities, most noticeably through occurrences of
11. Conclusions

Thus, it would be reasonable to say that there were cases of individuals engaging in joyriding in an addictive manner.

There was a consideration of how notions of ‘addiction’, and ‘addiction to joyriding’, were perceived by joyriders, together with those with their care and control, comparing these notions with the clinical/academic criteria of dependency. Although most respondents thought that joyriding could be addictive, many of the professionals were reluctant to use the term ‘addiction’ in association with joyriding activities. This appeared to be in part due to an underlying assumption that labelling a behaviour as addictive would remove personal responsibility from the individual ‘addict’ for their behaviour. Furthermore, the actual criteria used by respondents to define addiction (mainly excessiveness and ‘loss of control’ over behaviour) were not being used in a comparable sense with the clinical/academic definitions of the respective dependency criteria.

Finally, the value of applying an addiction model to joyriding, in terms of intervention strategies, was explored. Given that some joyriders described several dependency-type elements in their behaviour, and that when ceasing the behaviour they followed similar stages of change noted in the cessation of other addictive behaviours, a number of therapeutic interventions derived from the addiction literature were outlined.

11.2 Implications of the research

The research has clear implications in terms of the policies and practices governing the rehabilitation of joyriders, as well as in the wider field of addiction studies. For instance, the findings suggest that it may be useful for those professionals involved in the rehabilitation of joyriders to consider joyriding within the model of a continuum of addiction. This could, for instance, include the mobilising of treatments derived from the addiction literature, as has been partly addressed in Chapter 10 (Therapeutic Implications).
It also appears that the addiction model may be useful for joyriders themselves, in helping them to understand why they find it so hard to control their behaviour. In fact the joyriders' discourse demonstrated that some had been thinking about their behaviour in these terms prior to interview. In view of this, it seems sensible to assume that therapeutic interventions that are line with the offenders' beliefs about their behaviour would have an increased chance of being successful.

11.2.1 Applying the addiction model to offending: Possible drawbacks

Interestingly, the findings indicated that although the majority of those with care and control of joyriders felt that joyriding could be addictive, they were paradoxically unwilling to accept this notion, often commenting that it was a convenient excuse for their behaviour, or a 'cop out'. This opens up debate within the wider forensic field regarding the suggestion that (other) criminal behaviours may have the potential for being engaged in addictively. It appears that it would not be sufficient to simply demonstrate (through the identification of dependency criteria) how criminal activities may, in some cases, have the potential for addiction. It is also necessary to acknowledge and address the reluctance, or discomfort on the part of the professionals in accepting a model of addiction in relation to offending behaviours.

Furthermore, there is the concern that, for some offenders, the notion of addiction may act as a barrier to addressing their offending behaviour. As has been discussed elsewhere (e.g. Eiser, 1989), it can be argued that people who identify themselves as addicts tend to feel unable to stop their behaviour because they are addicted, and that confidence in their ability to stop a behaviour can then affect their likelihood of trying, as well as their subsequent success in ceasing the activity.

It is proposed that the key to understanding these potential difficulties may be found in considering the differences between lay notions of addiction and the clinical/academic definitions of dependency.
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11.2.2 Issues raised regarding notions of addiction: A way forward

There were a number of inconsistencies between the criteria being used by respondents to define addiction and the clinical/academic criteria used to determine dependency. Many respondents defined addiction predominantly in terms of actual 'loss of control' and excessiveness of the behaviour. In contrast, the criteria generally accepted as being indicative of dependency do not include these notions in their literal sense. In the face of these differences it is not surprising that there is reluctance amongst professionals to consider joyriding as having the potential for addiction.

Some professionals understandably found themselves unable to accept that some joyriders may be engaging in their activities in an addictive manner because they felt that this unfairly reduced personal responsibility for their behaviour. It therefore follows, that if interventions for joyriders based on the addiction literature were to be introduced, then those interventions may in turn be implemented by professionals whose underlying assumptions about the nature of dependency differed from the theoretical knowledge base from which the interventions were being derived.

These issues are equally important for the study of addiction per se, as they highlight problems that may be encountered when considering any behaviour within an addiction perspective. People's notions of what it is to be addicted appear to affect the way in which they treat addicts, or think that they should be treated. If the notion of addiction is discouraged on the basis that it implies an unfair reduction in responsibility for the behaviour, then an appropriate formulation of their problems, followed by the most apt treatment may also be denied.

It appears that if models of addiction are to be successfully employed in the rehabilitation of joyriders (and possibly other types of offenders), there are two possible options. The first would be to educate both the professionals (and possibly the joyriders) as to the nature of dependency from a clinical/academic perspective. Concerns about reduced responsibility could be overcome by
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bringing about an awareness of the varieties of models of addiction/dependency, such as those based on learning theories. The emphasis would then be on how the development of the behaviour may not be the responsibility of the offender (due to, for instance, social and cultural factors), but that the responsibility for change is within their control - although they may need help in achieving change.

While such education would undoubtedly be advantageous, a second, and perhaps easier, option would be to assess joyriders as to their motivational stage of change, and then use the therapeutic interventions drawn from the addiction literature (as described in Chapter 10), but to couch both the assessment and intervention in ‘addiction-free’ language. Joyriding that is being pursued in an addictive, or dependent, manner need not be labelled as an addiction in order for appropriate help, based on interventions from the field of addiction, to be offered. After all, if some alcohol and drug treatment centres manage to help those with ‘problematic drug or alcohol use’ without labelling the behaviour as an addiction (and thus the person an addict) then the same could be true for joyriders. In other words, the knowledge could be used, but not the label.

11.2.3 Implications regarding addiction research

A final implication of the research worthy of mention concerns the nature of exploratory research into the field of potentially addictive behaviours. In the present study, prior to the analysis, each dependency criterion was operationally defined specifically in relation to joyriding. Then during the analysis a careful search for meanings and counter-evidence was conducted. This procedure demonstrated that whilst there was often ‘apparent’ behavioural evidence for dependency criteria in the accounts provided by joyriders, more detailed analysis occasionally uncovered alternative explanations for that behaviour (see for instance the discussion on tolerance in chapter 7, section 7.2). This highlights the importance for care to be taken when investigating behaviours for possible dependency criteria, to ensure that inaccurate conclusions are not drawn.

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11.3 Future research

The study has raised a number of interesting issues, some of which would benefit from further research. The first, and arguably most important, next step would be to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions drawn from the addiction literature and applied to joyriding, as outlined in Chapter 10. While a number of the strategies (such as skills training and relapse prevention) are already in use with some young offenders (including joyriders), there is need for research to evaluate a systematic approach to the rehabilitation of joyriders using a range of strategies drawn from dependency programmes.

Furthermore, despite having observed that joyriders present within the various stages of change, there is not, to the researcher's knowledge, an instrument that can assess these stages in terms of non-substance behaviours. Development of such an instrument would allow appropriate interventions to be targeted according to the joyriders' motivational stage, and thus maximise the likelihood of positive changes in behaviour.

As previously mentioned, statements made by some professionals indicated that they were unwilling to use the label of addiction on the basis that joyriders didn't 'deserve' to be given a label that they felt would excuse criminal behaviour. This, it has been suggested, may be in part due to prevailing models of addiction, something that has been found to be of relevance when considering other types of addictive behaviours.

For example, discussing drug use, Davies (1997a) has described how attributional processes cause people to link causality with blame. He suggested that the concept of addiction encouraged the notion that if a behaviour is bad, but is not done on purpose, then it is deserving of help (but that bad things done on purpose are not). He argued that people shouldn't feel that they have to be 'good' in order to deserve help, nor that notions of 'good' and 'bad' be linked to voluntary and involuntary behaviour. The apparent assumption by some professionals in the present study, that joyriders may not be deserving of the label of addiction because they were to blame for their behaviour, leads one to wonder whether this
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has further implications in terms of them being perceived as being deserving or undeserving of help. These issues would surely benefit from further research from an attributional perspective.

It was also noted that respondents associated the notion of addiction with having to engage in a particular activity; and it has been postulated that, in terms of joyriders identified as being dependent upon the behaviour, this may reduce their feelings of self-efficacy in overcoming their joyriding activities. Further research would therefore be beneficial in evaluating whether there is a relationship between belief by joyriders that their activities could be 'addictive', and confidence in their ability to cease the joyriding activities.

Finally, although the focus has been on the development of joyriding, and the subsequent rehabilitation of joyriders, it has been noted that most of the joyriders in the present study were engaged in other criminal activities, the range of which increased as their joyriding career progressed. Indeed, although most young men 'grew out of' joyriding, many stopped the behaviour, only to focus their activities on more lucrative types of car crime. Further research is therefore needed to examine the effect of early intervention with joyriders on (other) criminal activity, to explore the shift from expressive to instrumental car crime in more detail, to suggest ways in which the likelihood of this transition occurring may be reduced, and to consider whether other criminal activities (for instance burglaries) are also being engaged in addictively by these individuals.

11.4 Conclusion

This study set out to investigate whether joyriding activities could be usefully understood by viewing the behaviour through an addiction model. Through a qualitative analysis of interviews with joyriders, their peers and the professionals involved in their care, it was found that features of the behaviour were, for some joyriders, similar in kind to the criteria that define dependent behaviour. However, in considering the respondents' views on the nature of addiction, differences were highlighted between lay definitions of addiction and the academic/clinical criteria of dependency. It is therefore proposed that the
addiction continuum model could be a useful framework with which to view the behaviour of joyriding, providing that the notion of addiction and the criteria used to determine possible dependency are clearly defined. This being the case, it should be possible to plan targeted interventions, derived from the addiction literature, and tailored to individual offenders. It is suggested that this approach could be particularly helpful in reducing recidivism in those cases where joyriding is being pursued in an addictive manner.
References


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References


References


Appendices

1. Topics for individual interviews with joyriders

Biographical details
- General details: age, where they live, who they live with, siblings, parents
- Offending history: past and current history of crimes committed - not just those apprehended for (probe for which were prior to car crimes)
- Driving history: general interest in cars, driving lessons, read the highway code, driving licence

Defining joyriding
- What does the term ‘joyriding’ mean, what term is usually used?

Initiation
- Describing first involvement in stealing cars (probe for age, where, why, who with, expectations and feelings both before and after first experiences):
  - Observing / spectator
  - Passenger
  - Driver

Maintenance behaviour
- Discussing pattern of car theft after first involvement: main reasons, when, where, who with, preferred type of car, how often, whether more than intended, concurrent drug use, how cars were abandoned, use of seat belts, planning (probe for changes over time)
- Describing the last experience of joyriding (probe for details as above)

Describing driving the cars
- Describing driving the cars: technical manoeuvres, positive & negative feelings (probe for changes over time)
- Describe police chases (probe for whether they were generally provoked or avoided, positive and negative feelings, how they thought the police felt)
- Describing best ever experience of joyriding
- Describing their perceived level of driving competence (probe for comparison with others, e.g. people with licences, the police...)
- Do girls ever joyride? (probe for gender issues)
Appendices

Importance of the behaviour
Describing how important joyriding is and the time it takes up (probing for changes over time)

- Describe day-dreams / fantasies about joyriding (probe for frequency, context)
- Time spent joyriding and ‘recovering’ (probe for accidents, prison, late nights)
- Time spent talking about joyriding with friends
- Describing other past or current activities (probe for those given up/reduced due to joyriding)
- Effect of joyriding on schooling
- Time spent with family and ‘other’ friends (probe for severed friendships, relationship problems)

Consequences

- What are the bad experiences of joyriding? (probe for knowledge and personal experiences)
- Has this knowledge ever affected behaviour?
- Describing the worst ever experience (probe for what effect this had on behaviour)

Stopping

- Has anyone ever suggested stopping / cutting down? (who?)
- Ever felt you should stop / cut down? (why?)
- Ever tried to stop / cut down? (what happened?)

OR does respondent think they could stop if they wanted to?

- Ever gone back to it after stopping? (causes of relapse)

OR what does respondent think would cause them to go back to it?

- Feelings when unable to joyride for any reason (probe for cravings, mood - and what they do to find relief from negative mood states)
- Does respondent think they will stop joyriding eventually? (probe for what might cause this)

OR describing having ‘grown out’ of joyriding (probe for why, and what respondent does instead?)

Other activities

- Describing other hobbies / pastimes (probe for comparative feelings with joyriding)
- Discuss dangerous sports (probe for comparative feelings with joyriding)
Appendices

- Discuss ‘arcade games’ involving cars (probe for comparative feelings with joyriding)
- Does anything feel as good as, or better than, joyriding?

Joyriding as an addiction
- Have respondents heard it suggested that joyriding can become addictive? (probe for reactions)
- What do people mean when they suggest that? (probe for mean meaning of addiction as applied to joyriding)
- Have any of the respondents ever felt addicted to joyriding? (probe for why, describe feelings)

Other behaviours and addiction
- What does it mean to be addicted to something in general? (probe for models)
- Can joyriding be like that?
- Are any other crimes addictive?

To end
Anything else you would like to talk about / tell me about?
Appendices

2. Topics for focus group interviews with joyriders

Biographical details
- General details: ages

Defining joyriding
- What does the term 'joyriding' mean, what term is usually used?

Initiation
- Describing first involvement in stealing cars (probe for main reasons and feelings):
  - Observing / spectator
  - Passenger
  - Driver

Experiences of joyriding
- What sort of things did respondents do - e.g. technical manoeuvres, police chases...? (probe for feelings)
- Describing best ever joyriding experiences
- Describing other hobbies / pastimes (probe for comparative feelings with joyriding)
- Discuss dangerous sports (probe for comparative feelings with joyriding)
- Does anything feel as good as, or better than, joyriding?
- What are the downsides of joyriding?
- Describing worst ever experiences

Stopping
- Ever tried to stop / cut down? (what happened?)
- Feelings when unable to joyride for any reason (probe for cravings, mood)
- Ever gone back to it after stopping? (causes of relapse)

Excessiveness
- How excessive it became at its most? (probe for frequency and number of cars per day/week)
- Possible reasons why some people joyride more than others
Appendices

Joyriding as an addiction
- Have respondents heard it suggested that joyriding can become addictive? (probe for reactions)
- What do people mean when they suggest that? (probe for mean meaning of addiction as applied to joyriding)
- Have any of the respondents ever felt addicted to joyriding? (probe for why, describe feelings)

Other behaviours and addiction
- What does it mean to be addicted to something in general? (probe for models)
- What can be addictive? (probe for substances, non-substances and crimes)
- Why do people usually become addicted to something?
- If you are addicted to something what difference does it make to the way people treat you?

Gender issues
- Do girls get involved in joyriding? (probe for perceived reasons)

Causes and prevention of joyriding
- Who or what is to blame for the joyriding problem?
- How can the problem be solved?
- What should happen to joyriders?

To end
Anything else you would like to talk about / tell me about?
3. Topics for focus group or individual interviews with (non-joyriding) young offenders

Biographical details
- General details: ages

Defining joyriding
- What does the term ‘joyriding’ mean to the respondents?
- What terms are usually used?

Knowledge of joyriding / joyriders
- Friends who are or have been joyriders
- Observation of joyriding activities
- Girls who joyride (probe for gender issues)

Causes and prevention of joyriding
- Who or what is to blame for the joyriding problem?
- How can the problem be solved?
- What should happen to joyriders?

Excessiveness / addiction
- Why do respondents think some joyriders steal more cars than others?
- Have respondents heard it suggested that joyriding can become addictive? (probe for reactions)
- What do people mean when they suggest that? (probe for mean meaning of addiction as applied to joyriding)
- What do respondents think of this suggestion?

Other behaviours and addiction
- What does it mean to be addicted to something in general? (probe for models)
- Can joyriding be like that?
- Are any other crimes addictive?
- What usually causes an addiction?
- What causes people to become hooked on joyriding?
Appendices

- If someone is addicted to something, what difference does it make to the way people treat you? (probe for positive and negative)
- What about if joyriding was addictive?

To end
- Anything else you would like to talk about / tell me about?
Appendices

4. Topics for focus group or individual interviews with professionals

Biographical details
- Biographical: professional / occupational details

Defining joyriding
- What does the term ‘joyriding’ mean to the respondents?
- What terms do they (prefer) to use?

Knowledge and experiences with joyriders
- In what ways are they involved with joyriders?
- Do they know of any female joyriders?
- What sorts of activities do joyriders engage in when they steal a car for fun?
- What can happen when things go wrong?
- Discuss police chases (probe for if provoked by joyriders and why, plus perceived feelings of the joyriders)
- [Police only] Have respondents ever been involved in a police pursuit? (probe for feelings)

Causes and prevention of joyriding
- Who or what is responsible for the problem of joyriding?
- Who or what is responsible for the solution?
- What should happen to car crime offenders? (probe for punishment, rehabilitation…)

Excessiveness / addiction
- To what levels do people engage in this behaviour? (probe for perceived reasons for excessiveness)
- Have respondents ever heard people suggest that the behaviour can be addictive? (probe for who - joyriders themselves and/or other professionals)
- What do respondents think of this suggestion?
- What might the consequences be of labelling joyriding as ‘addictive’? (probe for positive and negative)
Appendices

Other behaviours and addiction

- What does the word addiction mean?
- What causes addiction in general?
- How does this compare to joyriding?
- Can other crimes be addictive?

To end

- Anything else you would like to talk about / tell me about?