

**EXPLORING AUTO THEFT PATTERNS IN BRITISH COLUMBIA :
A CASE STUDY OF “TOP-END” PROBLEM-ORIENTED POLICING**

by

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Exploring Auto Theft Patterns in British Columbia: A case study of top-end problem-oriented policing

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Abstract

Motor vehicle theft is a major property crime problem in Canada; however, studies of auto theft in Canada are limited. By providing a case study of the most comprehensive auto theft study yet conducted, this thesis extends the situational crime prevention case study literature and advances a 'top-end' variant of problem-oriented policing.

Embracing an action research paradigm, the British Columbia Association of Chiefs of Police, in conjunction with personnel at the Insurance Company of British Columbia and the School of Criminology at Simon Fraser University, explored recent auto theft patterns and trends within the province of British Columbia with the specific purpose of finding out more about the site-specific and situational characteristics of this offense that would inform potential auto theft reduction strategies. The study found that young offenders who target older, Japanese manufactured vehicles with theft vulnerable door and ignition locks are responsible for a disproportionate amount of the auto theft problem in British Columbia.

> There was little evidence to suggest that auto stealing is carried out by organized, profit motivated adult offenders; however, willful damage of stolen vehicles by thrill-seeking youth is widespread and costly, and contradicts the innocuous connotation of the term "joyriding". <

Using insurance data for 1992, theft rates were calculated for different vehicle makes, models and model years for the fleet of passenger vehicles in British Columbia. The results were triangulated with information learned from other components of the research including interviews held with various criminal justice personnel (N=43), a victimization survey (N=506), > interviews with a sample of incarcerated young offenders <(N=31), and a high

school student self-report survey (N=1254) in an effort to better understand the sources of motivations for young people's auto stealing activities. <

The findings suggest that automobile owners should protect their cars differently: Owners of older, Japanese manufactured vehicles may be well advised to employ widely available, inexpensive after market anti-theft devices such as steering wheel locks to deter opportunistic youth, while the owners of vehicles whose parts are highly sought after for resale will need to layer anti-theft technologies and be diligent guardians to better protect their vehicles against theft. Information learned in this study is forming the basis of a number of auto theft reduction initiatives being undertaken jointly by police and insurance personnel in British Columbia, and the processes involved in its unfolding theoretically inform the closely related fields of situational crime prevention and problem-oriented policing.

To Herman Goldstein, whose work inspires me to think about policing a free society.

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Introduction

In recent years, police agencies throughout the English-speaking world have been experimenting with a number of new approaches to police service delivery, including situational crime prevention, community-based and problem oriented policing. Among other things, these approaches seek to have police practitioners consider how scientific modes of inquiry about the social and crime problems with which they must deal can be incorporated into their day to day functioning. The research presented in this thesis constitutes a case study of recent efforts senior police administrators in British Columbia have undertaken to engage in one variant of problem-oriented policing whose focus was reducing auto theft in the province.

In 1979, Herman Goldstein published an article entitled “Improving the Police: A Problem-Oriented Approach” in which he put forth a revolutionary operational model for policing.¹ Goldstein argued that the potential effectiveness of the police is compromised by the trappings of their bureaucratic organization and operation. Police agencies spend too much of their time, energy and resources on activities designed to improve organizational efficiency and too little of their time trying to find ways to effectively solve problems society has come to expect the police to solve. In the years following that publication, police agencies have been experimenting with a number of variants of Goldstein’s model. Most

¹ To say Goldstein sought to provide a policing “model” is to put the cart before the horse. More correctly, he seeks to cultivate a problem solving ethos in policing and presented the police institution with an operational model it could use as a vehicle for coming to appreciate the centrality of problem solving in policing. More recently Goldstein has described problem-oriented policing as the “Sine Qua Non of Policing” - Latin for “without which there is nothing” (Goldstein, 1992).

have stressed the normative role front-line personnel play in orchestrating a multitude of human actors providing a number of different services in order to resolve problems. This thesis considers the usefulness of a “top-end” variant of Goldstein’s model.

In the closing months of 1991, an informal group of municipal police chiefs and senior administrators of several detachments of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police gathered to discuss the rapid increases in auto theft being experienced in their respective municipalities. This group quickly concluded that conventional police enforcement strategies were inadequate and that, in order to design and implement strategies for curbing the rising rate of auto theft, much more information than currently existed in police databases was needed. They developed an ad hoc committee that included representatives of the Insurance Corporation of British Columbia (ICBC) and Professors Patricia and Paul Brantingham of the School of Criminology at Simon Fraser University.

Given the widespread nature of the problem, this informal group sought the sponsorship of the British Columbia Association of Chiefs of Police (BCACP). An Auto Theft Committee consisting of representatives of municipal police agencies, RCMP detachments, the Police Services Division and Coordinated Law Enforcement Unit (CLEU) of the Attorney General’s Ministry, the Insurance Corporation of British Columbia (ICBC), and Simon Fraser University was formed under BCACP auspices. The effort marked the first time the BCACP had undertaken research of this nature. The Committee devised a research plan that was subsequently endorsed by the full membership of the BCACP.

This case study thesis provides an overview of the actions of this committee and the research it conducted over a two and a half year period. I begin this story with a chapter on

modern policing in which I endeavor to succinctly describe the historical developments that have shaped police institutions in North American in order to contextualize how the actions of this Committee relate to the larger reform movements currently underway in policing. I follow with chapters covering the nature of auto theft (and all its nomenclature), and the action research orientation of the overall project. Chapters 4 through 8 detail the research aims and strategies of the various components of the study, and the major finding of each. I piece together what was learned in an effort to explain the “car crime culture” operating in British Columbia, and cover the auto theft reduction strategies recommended by the Committee. I conclude the thesis with a discussion of how these efforts constitute a promising new way for police to engage in problem-oriented policing.

Chapter 1

MODERN POLICING

I strongly believe that the role of the police in the 21st century will be that of community organizer, advocate, protector. The police will be the "glue" that bonds communities together and makes them strong.

David Couper, 1994 (excerpt from his farewell address upon his retirement as Chief, Madison, WI.)

Democratic society is defined in part by the manner in which it polices itself. For the better part of this century, police in North America have narrowly focused on law enforcement to the extent that they neglected to consider how their role and mandate might be better focused on solving the substantive problems that give rise to their need to enforce the law. A growing body of police reform literature (Goldstein, 1979, 1987, 1990; Braiden 1986a; Eck and Spelman, 1987; Cordner, 1988; Sparrow, Moore, & Kennedy, 1990; Toch & Grant, 1992; Rossmo & Fisher, 1993) is promoting the idea that the public police exist to help *solve* social problems. The institution has only recently begun to conceive of its task this way, and like any fundamental shift in mega-institutional thinking, a problem solving ethos in policing will have to undergo years of nurturing before it will take root and bear fruit.

The mechanisms for this cultivation process are embedded in the rhetoric of two overlapping policing reform endeavors currently underway throughout the English speaking world - *community* and *problem-oriented policing*. In order to more fully appreciate the reform impulse influencing these trends, it is necessary to reflect on the nature of policing a

free society, and how this has changed over time. I begin my discussion by reflecting on the insights of the eminent police scholar, Egon Bittner. His circumlocation thesis suggests that a profound contradiction exists between the ethos of Western society and police functioning. Police institutional attempts to resolve this contradiction gave rise to the professional era in policing and influence contemporary police reform sentiment.

In his provocative essay about the source of antagonism between the police and the public, Bittner (1970:46) suggests that we abandon our tendency to employ a norm-derivative definition of the police function and instead define it by its means: “[t]he role of the police is best understood as a mechanism for the distribution of non-negotiably coercive force employed in accordance with the dictates of an intuitive grasp of situational exigencies.” Bittner advances the argument that since the Peace of Vienna in 1815, the core cultural goal of Western societies has been the desire to abolish violence and install peace as a permanent condition of everyday life. Juxtaposed against this desire is what he characterizes as the essential function of the police - the capacity to use coercive force. Thus, in an effort to maintain domestic peace, we summon the police to any incident harboring the potential for violence because the democratic state aims to monopolize the right to exercise coercive force. Herein lies the fundamental contradiction inherent in the functioning of the police in democratic society. Bittner frames it poignantly:

The proposed definition of the role of the police entails a difficult moral problem. How can we arrive at a favorable or even accepting judgment about an activity which is, in its very conception, opposed to the ethos of the polity that authorizes it? Is it not well nigh inevitable that this mandate be concealed in circumlocation? (as cited in Klockars, 1988:239).

Bittner contends that American police (and there is no compelling reason to exclude Canadian police from his circumlocation thesis) have pursued three institutional strategies, more or less simultaneously, in an attempt to rectify this moral dilemma - *legalization*, *militarization* and *professionalization*.

Western police, Bittner argues, are undoubtedly the most thoroughly legalized in the world; however, “[o]ur courts have no control over police work, never claim to have such control, and it is exceedingly unlikely that they will ever claim such powers in the foreseeable future” (cited in Klockars, 1988:242). As a function of operational prerogative, police often exercise their power with no intention to invoke the judicial process (Black, 1970). It is primarily on those occasions when police choose to initiate the state’s capacity to punish, that the courts influence police behavior (Bittner, 1970)².

The second institutional strategy police have pursued to mystify their culturally offensive mandate revolves around what Folgelson (1977) has labeled the “military analogy” and the metaphorical notion of the “war on crime”. Bittner (1970:47) contends that the military analogy confers a sense of honor and respect on the police, invokes a sense of emergency and circumvents the problematic exercise of force by defining the “targets of legitimate force as enemies and the coercive advance against them as warfare”. Bittner’s stated purpose was to show that police adherence to the quasi-military model is largely a self-defeating pretense that creates obstacles for the development of a truly professional police system.

² The legal climate has changed considerably in the past two decades. It is likely that perceptions of vicarious liability, especially tort actions under Title 42 U.S.C. Section 1983 in the U. S. that provides federal relief for civil rights violations, are strengthening the ability of the courts to affect police behavior.

The third circumlocation strategy police employ involves an altogether different imagery. The targets of force are conceived as “practical objectives and their attainment a matter of practical expediency” (Bittner, 1970:47). Owing to this circumlocation mechanism police are compelled to craft a definition of “professional” very different from its meaning outside policing. As Klockars (1988:246) notes, the distinctive characteristic of the work of professionals is the range of discretion accorded them in the performance of their work. Contrasting sharply with the notion of professionalism in civilian life, police professionalism has been made subservient to the institution’s quasi-militaristic posture which emphasizes control and policy making, a tight command structure incorporating strict discipline and careful oversight.

It was around this notion of police as “snappy bureaucrats” (Skolnick, 1966) that the professional model of policing was sold to the public by way of cultural icons such as automaton Sergeant Friday’s assertions that he was interested in “just the facts, ma’am”. Thus, our police are “exposed to the demand of a conflicting nature in that their actions are supposed to reflect military prowess and professional acumen” (Bittner, 1970:47). Bittner claims that the basis for legitimacy by means of militarization and professionalization are profoundly incompatible.

Professional Policing

It is impossible to appreciate the reform urgings of community-based and POP without understanding some of the dominant trends these two policing orientations seek to reverse. A complete inventory of the multi-faceted social, economic and political forces

shaping the history of American policing³ is beyond the scope of this thesis; however, I do believe it necessary to briefly comment on some of these developments in order to contextualize what has transpired and provide the reader with a basis for understanding how these developments prompted the BCACP to undertake the research examined in this thesis.

The body of literature documenting the evolution of the “professional model” of policing (sometimes referred to as the “reform” model, Kelling, 1986; Kelling and Moore, 1988; Braiden, 1986; Moore and Stephens, 1991) traces its impetus to the desire to interject Weberian rational bureaucracy⁴ into the day to day operations of American police. The seeds for this model’s fruition were planted by post-Civil War Progressives concerned with the corrupt municipal governance associated with partisan politics, a legacy of the spoils system popularized by Andrew Jackson’s administration (1829-37). The fiscal and personnel excesses of the Grant administration (1869-77) prompted Congress to pass the Pendleton Act in 1883, aimed at bringing civil service and merit principles into federal government. These features likewise found their way into municipal governance in relatively short order. Citing Hale’s *Police and Prison Cyclopaedia* (1893), Stecher (1992) notes that 35% of the police departments surveyed in 1893 reported being under civil service laws.

³ Chris Murphy (1988:178) notes that Canadian policing is typically a modified response to or copy of, U.S. police ideology and practice. He believes that this “unavoidable importation of police ideology, research and technology ... explains the origin and pattern of much development and innovation in Canadian policing over the last ten years.” What is most curious about attempts to “professionalize” Canadian police, is that political conditions drawing the ire of American progressives (e.g., partisan manipulation of the police and widespread corruption), did not exist in Canada.

⁴ The seminal work in the study of bureaucracy is Max Weber’s *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization* (1947).

The Prohibition era (1919-1933) presented police with an unprecedented level of organized crime. Renewed concerns about the nature of municipal police organization and its corruptibility were aired in the Wickersham Commission of 1931. August Vollmer, regarded by many as the leading proponent of efforts to insulate the police from partisan politics,⁵ became particularly influential in the aftermath of Prohibition. The professional model of policing began to take shape under the tutelage of rational bureaucrats Bruce Smith (1940) and especially one of Vollmer's students, O. W. Wilson (1950, 1972). A police administrator who left the profession and taught at the University of California at Berkeley for many years, O. W. Wilson was appointed Chief of the Chicago Police Department in 1960 and became the "principal architect" (Kelling and Moore, 1988) of police professionalization. Wilson, whose stature Braiden (1986) elevates to that of a "guru" to two generations of policing, believed that the decentralized territorial organization of policing into beats and precincts made police agencies vulnerable to corruption (Reiss, 1992). Wilson's anti-corruption strategy aimed to radically change the way American police were typically organized and deployed.

Kelling and Moore (1988) note that Wilsonian policing adopted an organizational form resembling the scientific or classical theory of administration advocated by Frederick W. Taylor (1911). They identify two assumptions of classical theory that are especially relevant to the human resource orientation of the professional model, and to the subsequent

⁵ Strecher (1992) notes that the political values dominating the character of American governance in the second half of the 1800s likewise influenced how Americans organized their police. He faults others for referring to this period as the "Political Era" (Kelling and Moore, 1988) because doing so glosses over two important considerations: "[I]t raises the question of whether policing was deviantly political, or simply part of an era that was inherently political ... [s]econd, this labeling implies that politics were uniquely manifest in this period and that in later eras the influence of politics were eliminated, reduced, or displaced by some other

self-actualization considerations implicit in community and POP policing orientations⁶: (1) Classical theory assumes that workers are inherently uninterested in their work and prone to avoid if left to their own devices; (2) being uninterested in their work, a managerial class was needed to plan and direct workers' activities in as detailed a manner as possible. These assumptions further shaped the specialization of police agencies witnessed during this period as well as the emphasis placed on centralized, bureaucratic means of control: "supervision, limited span of control, flow of instructions downward and information upward in the organization, establishment of elaborate record-keeping systems requiring additional layers of middle managers, and coordination of activities between various production units (e.g., patrol and detectives), which also required additional middle managers" (Kelling and Moore, 1988).

Wilsonian era police administrators likewise redefined the nature of the proper relationship between police officers and citizens. Kelling and Moore (1988) contend that police aspirations to claim special competence to manage crime problems was characteristic of the confidence larger society felt during this era about the ability of professionals to manage physical and social problems:

The proper role of citizens in crime control was to be relatively passive recipients of professional crime control services. Citizen action on their own behalf to defend themselves or their communities [the hallmark of community

mechanisms. The question is not whether politics has a role in policing, but only what that role should be and when it is legitimately to be exercised (Strecher, 1992:335-336).

⁶ Some advocates of community-based and POP argue that these orientations greatly enhance the self-actualization needs of patrol officers (Toch and Grant, 1991). This is believed to be especially important given current downsizing plans in many police agencies and projections that a majority of police officers, many with university degrees and higher self-actualization expectations of their work, will not be promoted beyond the rank of patrol officer. Although recent studies have found higher job satisfaction among officers engaged in community-based and POP efforts (Cordner, 1988; Wycoff, 1988; Goldstein, 1990), self-selection bias is suspect because community-based and POP initiatives most often solicit for volunteers from amongst patrol ranks (Greene and Taylor, 1988).

policing], came to be seen as inappropriate, smacking of vigilantism (Kelling and Moore, 1988:12).

Guided by Taylorian ideology, the emergent professional model sought to make use of three interrelated technologies to install the best way to provide “crime control” (Sherman, 1992) policing. By the 1950s, better than 85% of U.S. households had telephones. Police agencies adopted the automobile as the primary mode of patrol and equipped them with two-way radios. Given the widespread availability of these technologies, bureaucratic rationality dictated that police agencies develop centralized communication centers in which to receive and process citizens’ calls for police services. Patrol officers were deployed in clearly defined geographical areas to provide for an even dispersal of human resources, who could, by virtue of their radio contact with the communication center, be judiciously dispatched to rapidly respond to emergency calls. When not responding to calls, patrol officers were expected to randomly patrol their designated areas (in many departments they were forbidden to leave them unless dispatched to assist another officer on a call), but were not permitted to otherwise engage the citizenry, which was viewed as a potentially corrupting activity.

Braiden (1986) notes that this police deployment strategy was expected to achieve an aura of police omnipresence because rapid response to emergency calls was supposed to increase the on-scene rate of criminal apprehension, provide for general deterrence due to the increased risk of apprehension, and increase citizens’ feelings of safety owing to the seeming ability of the police to be “everywhere”. Police agencies throughout the country hastened to centralize command and control management, to specialize investigative functions and to

deploy patrol officers (typically 80% of police agencies' personnel resources at the time) in accordance with this theory of police omnipresence. By the early 1960s, virtually all big city police agencies had bought stock in crime control policing and acquired the technological means for putting it in place; however, anticipated reductions in crime never materialized. To the contrary, crime, particularly violent crime, began to climb steadily.

The professional era of policing reached its zenith in the early 1960's.⁷ Strecher (1992) notes that the introduction of systems science into the planning and management of the U.S. Department of Defense by Secretary of Defense McNamara profoundly changed the administration of all other federal government operations as well. Thus, when President Johnson commissioned a study of crime and law enforcement in 1966, "systems thinking" dominated:

When the President's Crime Commission had done its work and published its reports, the social context of the end of the 1960s (prosperity, increased higher education for police, improvement of the police occupational status and image, social values that supported crime control legislation, a strong presidency) was ready for a massive attempt to reform policing -- unlike in 1931, when the Wickersham's proposed reforms found no sentiment or funding to implement them (Strecher, 1992:344).

Strecher further notes that in the two decades that followed Johnson's Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice (1967), more police research and development occurred than had been previously undertaken in the entire history of American policing. Expenditures in the range of \$1 billion per year during the early years of work signaled a

⁷ The "professional era" of policing is generally thought to span the second half of this century. Although Strecher (1992) notes that civil service arrangements enacted to insulate municipal policing from partisan politics was well under way before the turn of the century, efforts to improve the internal functioning of police were not evident until the 1950s.

major shift in the study of police operations, administration and management away from the “cookbook” approach popularized by Vollmer (1931) and O.W. Wilson (1950, 1972), to a more systematic examination of long standing policing doctrines (Strecher, 1992).

As mentioned above, the undergirding of the professional model rested on three main policing strategies: 1) preventative patrol; 2) rapid response to calls; and 3) retroactive investigation of crime. The empirical demise of the professional model can be traced to three research projects in particular, whose findings inflicted major damage to the theoretical assumptions supporting this model.

Preventative Patrol

The *Kansas City Preventative Patrol Experiment* (Kelling, et al., 1974) sought to evaluate the efficacy of preventative patrol by varying the number of officers patrolling 15 discrete areas (beats) of the city. Three experimental patrol conditions were created -- *proactive* beats received double the usual number of patrol officers, *control* beats retained the usual number, and patrol officers were removed altogether in *reactive* beats.⁸ For the purposes of measurement, the researchers hypothesized that:

- 1) Crime, as reflected by victimization surveys and reported crime data, would not vary by type of patrol;
- 2) Citizen perception of police service would not vary by type of patrol;

⁸ The terms "proactive" and "reactive" used in this experimental design merely designated quantitative differences in the number of officers patrolling a given beat, rather than qualitative differences in police activities. Proactive policing generally refers to police initiated tactics undertaken for some specific policy objective, such as aggressive stop and frisk activities in areas where open drug dealing is commonplace, or more recently, POP initiatives. These types of proactive activities were not undertaken in "proactive" beats in this experiment.

- 3) Citizen fear and behavior as a result of fear would not vary by type of patrol; and
- 4) Police response time and citizen satisfaction with response time would vary by experimental area

Notwithstanding methodological criticisms of the study (e.g., the fact the officers responding to high priority calls in adjacent areas often times traversed reactive beats), the study found no significant statistical differences amongst the experimental beats concerning crime victimization, reported crime rates, arrest patterns, citizens' fears of crime and their attitudes about the police, or response times. These findings laid bare a major tenant of "professional" policing, and prompted more cynical observers to quip that the study demonstrated that "[i]t makes about as much sense to have police patrol routinely in cars to fight crime as it does to have firemen patrol routinely in fire trucks to fight fire" (Klockars and Mastrofski, 1991:131).

Rapid Response

The second major blow to the professional model focused on what was, perhaps, the essential ingredient for creating an aura of police omnipresence -- rapid response to emergency calls. In their three year study of citizen crime reporting and police response, Spelman and Brown (1984) concluded that rapid response may be unnecessary for three out of four serious crimes reported to the police.

The emphasis on rapid response in the Wilsonian model assumes citizens witness the actual commission of the vast majority of serious crimes. The response time study found that 75% of serious crimes were discovered by victims after they had been committed and

the perpetrator had ample time to escape. Citizen delays in calling the police in the remaining 25% of witnessed crimes greatly reduced the probability of police making an on-scene arrest. Spelman and Brown (1984) concluded that citizens either victimized by or witnessing a crime in-progress, must call the police within one minute, or the likelihood of response-related arrest drops dramatically.

The policy implications growing out of this study advocated expanded availability and mass media advertising of 911 call systems in an effort to reduce citizen delays in calling the police. The findings of this study prompted serious reservations about the police institution's commitment to rapid response. As well, proliferation of 911 calling systems resulted in a massive increase in the volume of calls police received in the years that followed the media blitz advocated, and continue to strain the capacity of the police to respond to everything citizens request of them (Goldstein, 1990; Braiden, 1986; Moore, 1992).⁹

Retroactive Criminal Investigation

The third large scale research project tending to undermine the professional model concerned the criminal investigative functions of the police. The nationwide Rand study of detectives (Chaiken, Greenwood and Petersilia, 1977) constituted the first empirical study of the work of detectives; its findings were less than flattering to the detective mystique.

⁹ Another important finding of the study was that citizens would accept alternatives to rapid response in all but the most serious cases provided they were informed by police why an immediate response was unwarranted, and provided an estimate of when a police officer would be able to attend the scene if needed. This aspect of alternative police response is gaining prominence in community-based and POP orientations (e.g., Farmer, 1981; McEwen, Connors and Cohen, 1984; Hornick, Leighton and Burrows, 1993; Couper and Lobitz, 1991; Goldstein, 1990).

Klockars and Mastrofski (1991) note that no matter how urgent or passionate our need to know “whodunit”, the detective’s job is constrained by the only three means by which he or she can hope to answer this question:

(1) a *witness*, someone who can testify to the fact that whodunit did it or part of it;

(2) *physical evidence*, trace elements of an act that can link whodunit to it; and

(3) a *confession*, an admission by whodunit that he, she or it did it

(Klockars and Mastrofski, 1991:135).

The sobering conclusion of the Rand study was that all but about 5% of serious crimes solved by detectives are solved because a patrol officer caught the perpetrator at the scene, because a witness tells the detective “whodunit”, or because the detective simply followed thoroughly routine clerical procedures (Klockars and Mastrofski, 1991).

Implications of the Rand study need to be reevaluated given recent technological advancements and procedures for gathering and analyzing forensic evidence; nevertheless, my purpose is to show how the findings of the three major research projects briefly described above served to challenge long standing doctrines on how best to organize and orchestrate police resources. The research undertaken in this period grew out of the systems thinking that preoccupied the positivist aspirations of the Great Society, and constituted the first attempt to empirically and systematically assess a half a century’s thinking on the proper mandate, role and function of the police. Given the massive resources devoted to these efforts, and the culture ties that exist between the U.S. and Canada, Canadian policing has been greatly influenced by American policing trends. This is true also for the latest police reforms taking shape in community and problem-oriented policing.

Community Policing

The hallmark of democratic police legitimacy derives from public consensus about its mission and authority. The term “community policing” represents a relatively recent revival of what is believed to be the consensus-oriented philosophical, organizational and operational approach to urban policing as envisioned by the establishment of the London Metropolitan Force in 1829 by Home Secretary, Sir Robert Peel (Hornick, et al., 1993). For example, Braiden (1986:6) argues that no better statement of the proper relationship between police and citizens can be found than that espoused by Peel:

To maintain at all times a relationship with the public that gives reality to the historical tradition that the police are the public and that the public are the police; the police being only members of the public who are paid to give full-time attention to duties which are incumbent on every citizen, in the interest of community welfare and existence.

The literature on community policing is replete with references to Peelian principles (see Braiden, 1986:5-6); however, this tendency is not without its detractors. Walker (1984) charges that some police scholars (notably Kelling, 1986, 1988; Wilson and Kelling, 1982, 1989; Moore and Kelling, 1983, 1988) have “misused” police history in their enthusiastic attempt to re-install a community orientation to police functioning (Walker, 1984). Owing partly to his belief that policing mechanisms are inherently ordered by socio-economic class conflict (Walker, 1977) Walker’s (1984) main criticism of recent attempts to account for the crisis in contemporary policing -- the idea that policing has failed because it has neglected the importance of social order in favor of a narrowly law enforcement focused efficiency

model -- is that these historical accounts assume that turn of the century neighborhood-oriented policing enjoyed more consensus of values than was the case.

Undoubtedly, the large scale urban riots associated with nascent capitalism factored into the establishment of a publicly financed police. Equally important to our understanding of police history is the role of consensus rhetoric in overcoming nineteenth-century British ambivalence about the establishment of the police.¹⁰ As used in the discourse on community policing, the term community in meant to connote something of a geographically bounded notion of value consensus, the quintessential ingredient of democratic policing arrangements. The need to craft rhetoric embracing this idea was no less important to the formation of the London police. Miller (1975) notes that London's "Bobbies" (so named after Robert Peel) took to the streets amidst England's constitution crisis over parliamentary representation for disenfranchised middle-class citizens:

Since their role was fundamentally political amidst challenges to the legitimacy of government, the commanders of the force had to devise a strategy for containing conflict if they expected the new police to survive the Tory government which created them (Miller, 1975:83).

Miller's thesis is that London police, in stark contrast to the very personal authority afforded American police, were tolerable only in so far as they existed as the embodiment of British national sovereignty. An observer of the 1850's vividly captured the police image in London: "P.C. X59 stalks along, an *institution* rather than a man. We seem to have no more hold of his personality than we could possibly get of his coat buttoned up to the throttling point" (Miller, 1975:84). This aspect of the Peelian era is largely overlooked in the

¹⁰ See Critchley's (1975) fascinating account of the development of the London Metropolitan Police.

contemporary tendency to reiterate Peel's contention that "the police are the public and the public are the police". It also raises questions related to the quasi-militaristic organization of the London police, the desire to have Bobbies wear uniforms intended to set them apart from the citizenry, as well as provisions that they not reside in areas where they worked¹¹ (Monkkonen, 1992). Are these the kinds of deployment strategies one would expect from a group of people ostensibly organized to perform functions "incumbent on every citizen"?

The role of "community" rhetoric has been vilified by some observers of the community policing reform movement.¹² In an effort to make sense of the latest police reform urging, Klockars (1988:240) extends Bittner's circumlocation thesis discussed earlier in this chapter:

The modern movement toward what is currently called "community policing" is best understood as the latest in a fairly long tradition of circumlocations whose purpose is to conceal, mystify, and legitimate police distribution of nonnegotiable coercive force.

Klockars (1988:251) calls our attention to a number of features in this circumlocation mechanism that borrow from, and build on, earlier mechanisms identified by Bittner (1970). The most intriguing concerns the "new professionalism" which implies that the police serve, learn from, and are accountable to the community - that the police and the public are "co-producers" of crime prevention (Skolnick and Bayley, 1986).

¹¹ This provision in particular, contrasts sharply with the present day practice of some police Chiefs to take up residence in their city's most crime ridden areas in order to demonstrate their commitment to a community-based policing orientation.

¹² For example, the most comprehensive anthology of research in this area published to date took the title of one of its articles - *Community Policing: Rhetoric or Reality* (Greene and Mastrofski, 1988).

Community policing, among other things, may well represent a palatable attempt to infuse the circumlocation strategies of militarism (e.g., rhetoric about the “war” against drugs and “taking back our streets”) and professionalism. The past two decades have witnessed a marked retreat from professional era rhetoric that sought to convince the public that the police possessed a unique crime fighting competence. Today’s police administrators are more comfortable talking about organizing *citizens* to effectively fight the war on crime (Greene and Mastrofski, 1988; Braiden, 1989; Brown, 1984; Skolnick and Bayley, 1986).

Searching for the genesis of community policing, Manning (1988:28) suggests that it harbors something of a reactionary impulse, a desire for the orderliness of a unspecified yesteryear:

While community identification and the symbolic authority of the police and other U.S. institutions is declining, a new ideological theme has been emerging in police rhetoric in the past five to ten years: community policing. Rather than being a new strategy that replaces the crime control professionalism strategy that produced social distance [between communities and their police], it is a contrapuntal theme: harmony for the old melody. It now seeks control of the public by a reduction in social distance, a merging of communal and police interests and a service and crime control isomorphism. Clearly, as in the past, the symbols created organized and displayed by police are ways of shaping thinking, focusing attention and defining the meaning of situations. The community policing strategy ... is a new tool in the drama of control.¹³

Community policing is, so many of its adherents proclaim, more a policing philosophy than a set of operational imperatives. It conveys a variety of metaphorical, ideological, programmatic, and pragmatic meanings, all of which make defining it

¹³ More recently, Manning (1990, cited by Strecher, 1992) has described community-oriented policing as more of an ethos than a method or concept, an ethos driven by the academic establishment rather than by developments in policing.

problematic (Manning, 1984 cited by Murphy, 1988:177). Sensitive to its elastic nature, Murphy (1989:178) defines community policing as:

... an ideological response to the ongoing search for community and order in modern urban society; a political promise of responsive and responsible police service; a programmatic set of internal, organizational, and managerial reforms; and pragmatic, operational strategies aimed at enhancing police effectiveness.

Community policing is very much interested in “recapturing” that sense of dynamic security thought to exist when police and citizens share a more socially intimate relationship.

Trojanowicz & Bucqueroux (1990:5) note that:

[c]ommunity policing is a new philosophy ... based on the concept that police officers and private citizens working together in creative ways can help solve contemporary community problems ... [i]t shifts the focus of police work from handling random calls to solving community problems.

Although I cannot provide a more complete definition for the nebulous idea of community policing, I do think it important to point out that the sheer variety of activities making up the rubric of community policing creates confusion about what this term implies. Suffice it here to say that broadly defined, community policing embraces the idea of a public police driven by a publicly defined mandate as opposed to professional policing era’s claim to a unique competence to develop policing priorities and strategies. It advocates visible, accessible, responsive and interactive policing activities that engage the citizenry in a spirit of cooperation, a partnership in the sense of the much quoted Peelian assertion that “the police are the public and the public are the police”.

The story of how community policing has come to be thrust to the “centerstage” of the institution’s struggle for legitimacy has yet to be written, and this thesis cannot attempt to

do so, even though it is a story worth hearing. When this tale is told, it will no doubt explore the following aspects and demonstrate the linkages between them: (1) The impending collapse of the social welfare state; (2) the “communification” of social service delivery; (3) the larger societal orientation toward prevention; (4) recognition of the limits of professionalism; (5) the collapse of the crime control model; (6) retreat from the first wave of “proactive” policing;¹⁴ (7) police responses to citizens’ fear of crime; (8) the loss of market share - encroachment of private policing; (9) continued minority tensions; and (10) the revolution in private sector human resource thinking and management practices.

There is one other aspect of the community policing reform movement that I am obligated to mention as it informs the subjective matter of this thesis. Related to the second and third features of community policing’s evolution mentioned above, community level, crime prevention police service delivery first gained prominence in the late 1970s when rational police administrators were forced to confront the body of research hostile to the underpinning of the professional model (Kelling et al, 1974; Spelman & Brown, 1981; Chaiken et al, 1983 - discussed earlier in this chapter). These events prompted policy makers to experiment with new approaches for controlling crime.

¹⁴ Faced with rising crime and the prospect that rapid response was an ineffective crime control strategy, American police experimented with a number of proactive interventions in the late 1970s including sting and decoy tactics. Sting operations involved police run fencing operations designed to snare persons involved in the crimes against property, while decoy tactics sought to arrest persons having a propensity for crimes against persons. Police decoys would present themselves as attractive targets (helpless drunks on subway cars or elderly “women” walking alone at night) in an effort to induce a mugging attempt. Sting operations fell into disrepute when it was learned that they actually created markets for stolen goods (see, Klockars, 1991). While I am unaware of research on police decoy programs, it seems reasonable to assume that they came to be used infrequently because they too can be perceived to be a crime producing activity. Americans harbor a deep distrust of widespread police undercover activities, it is too Orwellian and upsets the peculiar American sense of “fair play” amongst cops and robbers. As Bittner has noted, the public does not want the police to do anything too well.

Criticized for their subversive proactive policing activities (stings and decoys) and undoubtedly influenced by the larger emphasis on prevention, police agencies began to establish crime prevention programs such as Block Watch, Operation Identification, home security assessments, and commercial robbery prevention. Many of the programs targeted residential property crimes and were delivered at the neighborhood level. As such, they increasingly became enmeshed in community rhetoric.

Subsequent academic assessment of community crime prevention initiatives, most notably Block Watch programs, tended to conclude that some of these programs were not sustainable in the most problematic neighborhoods because of citizen apathy and a lack of experience in self-empowerment amongst residents in high crime areas. It was also noted that property crime reductions realized in socially organized neighborhoods were sometimes displaced to less organized neighborhood whose residents were already experiencing disproportionate criminal victimization (Rosenbaum, 1986). These assessments aroused pessimistic sentiment about the prospect of community crime prevention involving geographically bounded citizens engaged in coordinated self-help.

Throughout the 1980's, community rhetoric increasingly found its way into descriptions of the concerns and political activities of groups traditionally referred to as 'special interest' groups. It became more and more common to hear reference to the "gay community", the "Indo-Canadian community", or even the "police community", none of which are, in a strict sense, geographically bounded. This type of "community of interest" factors into the subject matter of this thesis. Reference is made in the literature on community-based and problem-oriented policing to the need for police to form 'partnerships'

(Goldstein, 1990; Normandeau and Leighton, 1990) with various other organizations affected by a particular problem in order to arrive at collectively identified corrective action. Although this type of response has been pursued in the past to a greater or lesser extent, what is new is the explicitness by which these kinds of partnership building actions are being initiated by police actors.

The BCACP embraced the notion of identifying a community of interest relative to the problem of auto theft. The RCMP Superintendents who initiated this project sought to enlist the assistance and resources of ICBC personnel, and faculty in the School of Criminology at Simon Fraser University who would be able to facilitate the research aims of this undertaking. Their efforts resulted in the formation of a community of actors interested in finding ways to reduce auto theft in British Columbia.

Community policing has been described as the “official morality” of policing today. This morality provides part of the backcloth for contextualizing how police leaders in British Columbia found themselves attempting to deal with a serious crime problem in a way never before considered. The form of community invoked in this study transcends the notion of a geographically bounded community and can be described as a “community of interest”, a partnership.

Problem-oriented Policing

Whereas community policing enjoys diverse origins, the second, closely related police reform urging to have emerged in the past decade has a more exact pedigree. During the social upheaval of the late 1960s, a graduate student named Herman Goldstein was

engaged in ethnographic research popular in this, the first wave of research into the police function, and began to take note of the challenging mandate of *policing a free society*. He eventually wrote a book of the same title (Goldstein, 1977) and continued in his quest to bring about a confluence of the police mission with the aspirations of larger society. In 1979, Goldstein published an article entitled “Improving the Police: A Problem-Oriented Approach”, in which he presented an operational model for police that seeks to organize their day to day functioning around substantive *problem solving*. Goldstein (1990:32) defines problem-oriented policing in a narrow sense as an orientation that:

[f]ocuses directly on the substance of policing - on the problems that constitute the business of the police and how they handle them. This focus establishes a better balance between the reactive and proactive aspects of policing. It also creates a vehicle for making more effective use of the community and rank-and-file officers.

A visual depiction of how POP differs from traditional, incident-driven policing is provided in Figure 1.1.

Continuing in his longtime goal to bring about democratic reform in policing, Goldstein (1990:14-15) critiques the current state of American policing and highlights some of the more salient considerations leading him to advocate the problem-oriented approach:

- (1) The police field is preoccupied with management, internal procedures, and efficiency to the exclusion of appropriate concern for effectiveness in dealing with substantive problems;
- (2) The police devote most of their resources to responding to calls from citizens, reserving too small a percentage of their time and energy for acting on their own initiative to prevent or reduce community problems;
- (3) The community is a major resource with an enormous potential, largely untapped, for reducing the number and magnitude of problems that otherwise become the business of the police;

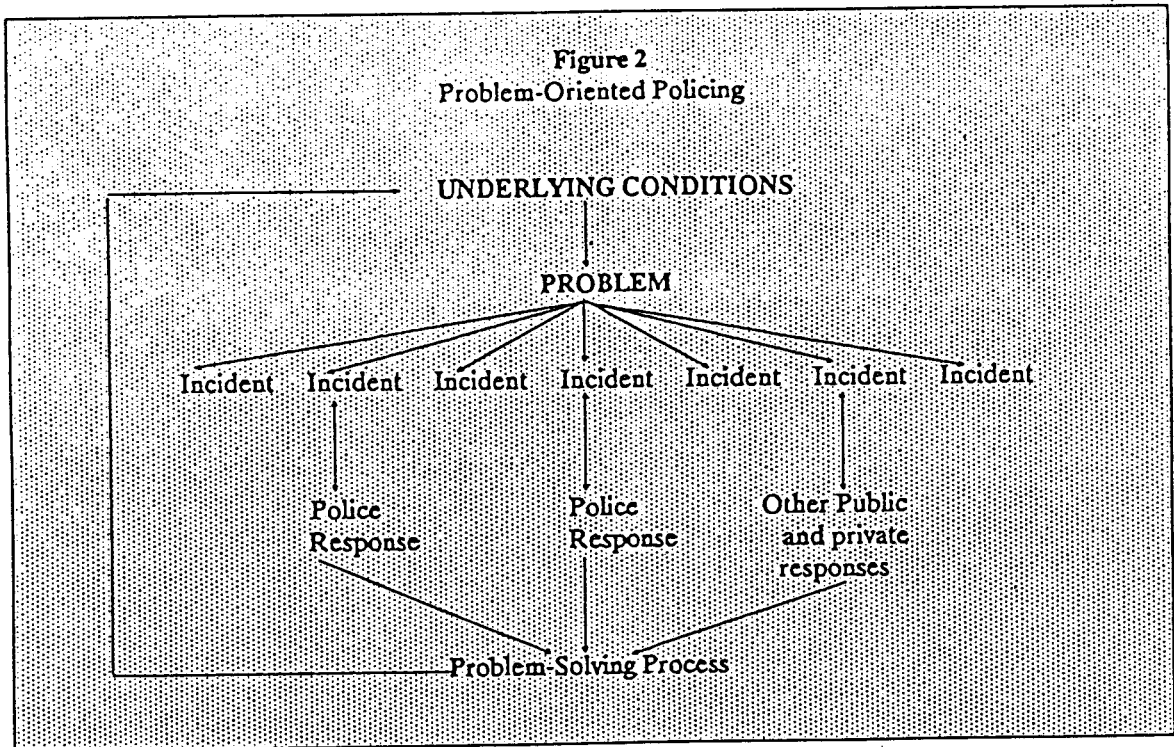
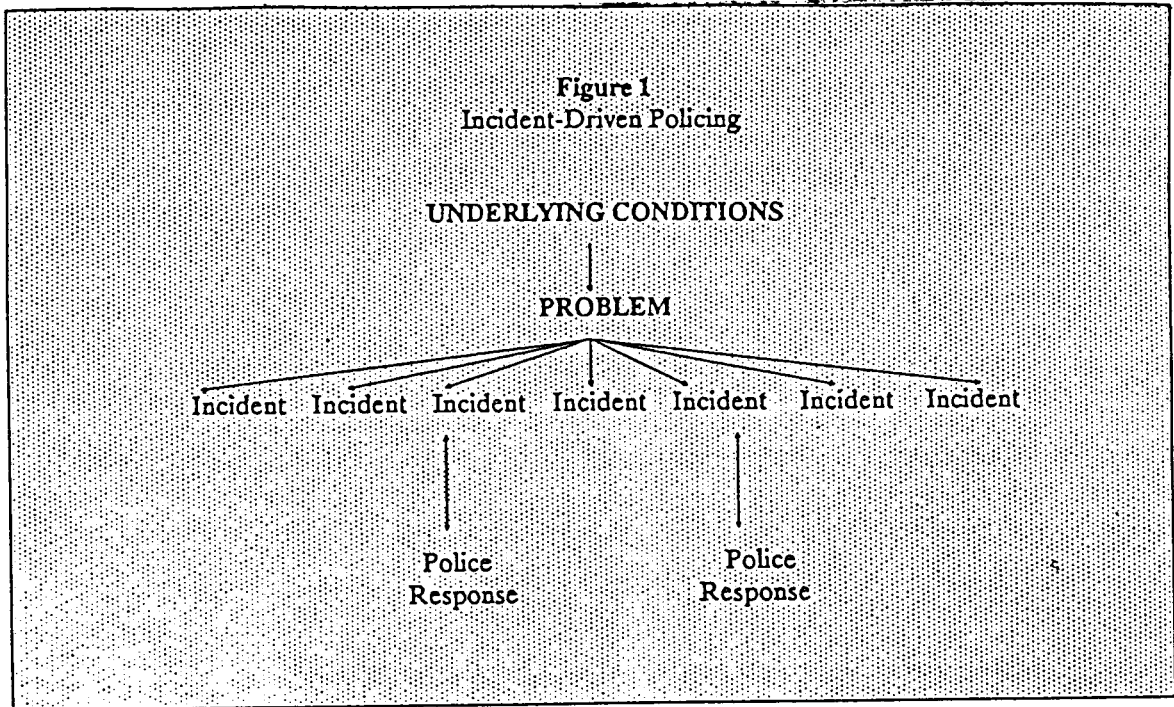
- (4) Within their agencies, police have readily available to them another huge resource: their rank and file officers, whose time and talent have not been used effectively; and
- (5) Efforts to improve policing have often failed because they have not been adequately related to the overall dynamics and complexity of the police organization. Adjustments in policies and organizational structure are required to accommodate and support change.

It is not difficult to identify the sources of theoretical overlap in community and problem-oriented policing; both are largely anti-bureaucracy reforms, and the similarities between the two have led many police practitioners to speak of them as analogous terms. Braiden (1989c) asks us to think of community policing as a policing philosophy and POP as the method by which to give it operational substance. Although these police reform models share much in common, I think it is possible to distinguish between them.

For reasons I have outlined above, some aspects of community policing are encumbered by the rhetorical excesses of some of its proponents.¹⁵ At this juncture in my education, I tend to agree with Klockars (1988:257) when he writes that the police “can no more create communities or solve the problems of urban anomie than they can be legalized into agents of the courts or depoliticized into true professionals”.

¹⁵ Rhetorical excesses and definitional problems may be the inevitable result of the number and diversity of people invoking a term. Then too, the very nature of community policing suggests that it will mean different things in different communities. Braiden (1987:1) notes that in response to a question put to him about what community policing was, exactly, London Metropolitan Police Chief, Kenneth Newman, retorted that, "It seems to be all things to all people".

Figure 1.1: Incident Driven and POP Approaches



Source: Eck and Spelman (1987:4)

In contrast with community policing, problem-oriented policing holds out the potential for police reform that is free of the overly nostalgic notions of “community”. Goldstein (1990:25) notes that as distinct from the rhetoric of community policing:

[p]olice tend to engage the citizenry in a very pragmatic and more relaxed manner. They use “community” rather deftly to describe those affected in any way by the specific problem they are attempting to address, or the program being launched in response to the problem. There is no expectation that they have identified a community with shared values.

Goldstein first envisioned POP as a means for police executives in larger cities to make greater use of their crime analysis capabilities in an effort to more effectively respond to the crime problems they faced.¹⁶ Field experiments with the POP model undertaken in several U.S. cities have stressed the participation of line personnel in formulating problem-solving strategies. These experiments have made use of the SARA model -- Scanning, Analysis, Response and Assessment:

Scanning. Instead of relying upon broad, law-related concepts -- robbery, burglary, for example -- officers are encouraged to group individual related incidents that come to their attention as “problems” and define these problems in more precise and therefore useful terms. For example, an incident that would be typically classified as a “robbery” might be seen as part of a pattern of prostitution-related robberies committed by transvestites in inner-city hotels.

Analysis. Officers working on a well-defined “problem” then collect information from a variety of public and private sources -- not just police data. They use the information to illuminate the underlying nature of the problem, suggesting its causes and a variety of options for its resolution.

Response. Working with citizens, business, and public and private agencies, officers tailor a program of action suitable to the characteristics of the problem. Solutions may go beyond traditional criminal justice system remedies to include other community agencies or organizations.

¹⁶ I spoke with Prof. Goldstein about his original intention during his recent visit to Vancouver in January, 1993.

Assessment. Finally, the officers evaluate the impact of these efforts to see if the problems were actually solved or alleviated (Spelman and Eck, 1987).

At the operational level, POP expects line personnel within a given agency to identify and disaggregate problems, undertake sophisticated, systematic analyses of the problem, develop responses and assess them. These activities, which mirror situational crime prevention and action research paradigms, necessarily entail wide-range support from management because officers will have to be free to seek out and engage whatever resources are available to effectively deal with the problems identified, and will not be available to handle the endless stream of calls for service. These kinds of activities also require personnel with considerable analytical skills and the availability of resources necessary to conduct meaningful analyses.

While Goldstein (1990) devotes considerable space for his discussion of some of the changes police organizations will have to make for this orientation to gain widespread usage, he also notes that the model allows for considerable variation in approaches. The Auto Theft Study undertaken by the BCACP might be appropriately viewed as one variant of POP, one that engages the top levels of organizations affected by this province-wide problem in an effort to formulate preventive strategies. More importantly, it represents a police response never before taken in British Columbia, or perhaps for that matter, North America.

Thesis Rationale

Although the POP approach appears promising (Wong, 1992; Goldstein 1990; Spelman & Eck, 1987), the agency specific nature of the most widely employed variant may

hamper its potential usefulness in the same way that geographically bounded notions of community hamper the potential effectiveness of community policing. This is not to say that in the course of analyzing a specific problem, police in one jurisdiction will not come to appreciate that criminal network linkages cutting across jurisdictions need to be addressed. Even reactive police organizations may come to this realization and endeavor to do something about it, usually by assigning personnel to a temporary task force that is disbanded when the problem subsides.

The dominant focus of the POP model thus far experimented with has been on problems that exist *within* a given police jurisdiction. Recognizing the importance of inter-agency cooperation, Goldstein (1990:106) stresses the need for police to more permanently connect themselves to, and coordinate with, other government and private agencies. This logic needs to be extended to problems that cut across police jurisdictional boundaries. Increasingly, police are trying to develop inter-organizational mechanisms that more permanently facilitate the sharing of resources deemed essential to cooperative, inter-jurisdictional problem solving. In British Columbia, the Coordinated Law Enforcement Unit (CLEU) of the Ministry of the Attorney General is an example of provincial efforts to institutionalize mechanisms for coordinating police activities.

Although most POP case study literature reports on implementation of the model in American police agencies (Goldstein, 1990; Eck, & Spelman, 1987; Couper & Lobitz, 1988; Hope, 1994), elements of this policing approach have found support in Great Britain (Newman, 1985; Hoare, Stewart & Purcell, 1988); Australia (Clifford, 1984); and Canada

(Braiden, 1987, 1989c; Wong, 1992; Normandeau and Leighton, 1990; Rossmo and Fisher, 1993; Saville and Rossmo, forthcoming).

Noting the need for “inter-agency cooperation”, Normandeau and Leighton (1990:44-45) advocate a problem-oriented approach for Canadian policing wherein police personnel operate as “information managers who engage in ‘interactive policing’ by routinely exchanging information on a reciprocal basis with community members through formal contacts and informal networks”. Police have no doubt come to appreciate cooperative approaches, and are beginning to extend the scope of their searches for resources when attempting to solve problems. The result has been the development of inter-agency networks that serve to assist police in the identification of new problems and potential solutions.¹⁷

Field experiments with the POP model have demonstrated the potential for inter-agency cooperation, but more needs to be done to identify the processes by which this can be accomplished beyond the spontaneous, front line driven orientation of Goldstein’s model. While I would agree with the rationale for making rank-and-file officer input the centerpiece for this operational model (Goldstein, 1990:27-29), I think we can apply the wisdom of the POP model to the type of inter-agency police problem-solving effort undertaken by the BCACP.

¹⁷ While conducting interviews in Kelowna in June of 1992, I learned of the close working relationship between an ICBC special investigator and a constable known for his investigative skills. Commenting on the source of his success the constable remarked, “I’m like the poor cousin, I go begging for help from everyone ... I make it a point to establish my own network ... networking lets me be successful at my job”.

Research Questions and Trajectories

Knowing that I was interested in doing my M.A. research in the area of policing, Professor Patricia Brantingham asked me if I wanted to be a part in this undertaking. We decided that while the project was likely to take two years to complete, it offered me the kind of graduate school experience I sought -- the opportunity to be directly involved in a police initiated problem-solving exercise. I subsequently developed two main research interests for this thesis.

Firstly, I was interested in exploring a problem-solving typology that engages the 'top-end' of police organizations in the hope that members of the police community will find it applicable to other crime problems they face. In so doing, I hoped to extend Goldstein's operational model of line-officer driven, neighborhood focused problem-oriented policing to include a multi-agency, multi-jurisdictional variant, and was interested in theoretically evaluating the undertaking in an effort to make generalizations about police problem-solving efforts. More specifically, I was interested in:

- (1) The role the university has to play in assisting police with their problem solving endeavors, and how university personnel might go about teaching police personnel to engage in more sophisticated forms of problem analysis on their own;
- (2) How, given current financial constraints, police might go about funding research intense community based and POP approaches;
- (3) How Goldstein's agency specific conception of POP can be expanded to enable the larger police community to adopt this approach for multi-agency, multi-jurisdictional problem solving.

Secondly, because the research objective of this particular effort involves the reduction of auto theft, I was likewise interested in a more focused description of this effort

including the various components of the study and the decisions and processes involved in its unfolding. More specifically, I was interested in:

- (1) What might explain the rapid increase in auto theft rates experienced in much of British Columbia beginning in the later part of 1989;
- (2) How a study of this nature would be able to examine all the factors necessary to develop a good understanding of the auto theft problem;
- (3) How the information gained from this study would be received by the agencies involved, and how they would act on what was learned.

Summary

The establishment of the London Metropolitan Police in 1829 signaled the development of publicly-funded policing mechanisms that served as the model for policing arrangements throughout the English-speaking world. Social, political and economic developments in the U.S. during the last 100 years have greatly influenced Canadian policing, even though many of the reform pressures exerted on American police were not factors in Canada, and historical accounts of Canadian police evolution fail to inform the development of contemporary reform movements referred to as community and problem-oriented policing.

In the U.S., turn of the century Progressives sought to end the patronage and nepotism associated with municipal governance by introducing civil service and merit principles; the police institution in particular, was targeted for reform. Law enforcement problems occasioned by Prohibition prompted police reformers to advocate the reorganization of police organizational structures and operations in line with rational bureaucratic thinking. These reform urgings led to the subsequent development of the

professional model of policing in the personage of O.W. Wilson, who emphasized the need for centralized control and policy making, tight command structure, strict discipline, and careful oversight of policing functions.

Police response to the social upheaval of the 1960's -- their role in civil rights and anti-war demonstrations -- and the escalation of crime, led the U.S. government to appropriate massive funding to study the problem of crime and the police response to it. These efforts represented the first attempt to systematically study the police. Research findings called into question many long standing policing doctrines, prompting police to reconsider their mandate, role and operations. What has emerged from this exercise in introspection is the idea that organizing police as snappy bureaucrats removed them from the people they serve. Contemporary police reforms seek to reinstall police in the "community".

There exists in America today, a growing belief that crime is out of control. Some observers are apt to blame the media for sensationalizing crime stories; however, the deeply felt need to be safe and secure cannot be reconciled with the fact that violent crime in America far exceeds that experienced by any other Western democracy. Given this state of affairs, it is perhaps understandable that nostalgic sentiment and the reactionary desire to re-establish more socially cohesive and orderly communities feature prominently in community policing rhetoric. Some police scholars (Klockars, 1991; Manning, 1988; Strecher, 1992; Goldstein, 1977, 1979, 1990), hint that these police reforms signal a growing crisis not only in the ability of the police to enforce the law and maintain social order, but also the ability of the criminal justice apparatus to function effectively in the face of rapid social and technological change.

The challenge of maintaining effective, democratic policing mechanisms in the coming century will not be served best by exorcising community rhetoric, but rather, by finding ways to cultivate this idea, even if some are understandably pessimistic about its potential success. Admittedly, the broad drama line I have drawn in this chapter has all the trappings of a good existential epic, but the police have few other choices. Should policing retain its commitment to the professional model it is doomed; if it embraces the ethos of community and problem-oriented policing it *may* be doomed. Perhaps it is fitting that the institution immerses itself in the poetic countdown to Valhalla that constitutes so much of the psyche of many, and, in my experience, certainly the best, of its practitioners.

Simplistic assertions that police acquisition of the automobile removed them from the communities they served reflects a naiveté about the nature of the technological changes that have taken place in the urban metropolis over the last century. Centralized air conditioning (Sherman, 1986), the widespread acquisition of television and other home entertainment systems, and especially the increasing “automobility” of urban residents have dramatically changed where and how the contemporary urbanite works, shops, and makes friends (Felson, 1987). It is not as if police took to racing around, encapsulated in patrol cars, windows rolled up tightly, while the rest of the city’s residents sat around on the stoop listening to the Phillies game on the radio waiting for Tony the Italian water-ice guy to make his rounds.¹⁸

The very nature of our “sociocirculatory” (Felson, 1987) system has changed. If it is true, as Felson (1987) suggests, that we are witnessing a massive transition in urban form

¹⁸ This is how I remember the night life on my Grandparent's street in Southwest Philadelphia circa 1970. We ran up and down the street, played wire ball, and were disciplined by any adult present when we did something too bizarre. That was not long ago. Today, I would not venture into Southwest Philly without a bazooka.

from “metroreef” to “metroquilt” (consisting of large tracts of interconnected private and quasi-public facilities), then the challenge facing contemporary policing is to find how it can be the “stitches” that hold will hold these quilts together. One way they can began to carve out a niche for themselves is to learn how to be good problem-solvers. Hopefully, the activities highlighted in this thesis will help them cultivate a problem-solving ethos so that they can successfully occupy this niche.

Chapter 2

THE NATURE OF AUTO THEFT

Theft from and theft of motor vehicles constitutes a significant proportion of all crime in industrial societies. Together these offenses accounted for nearly half of all UCR larceny-thefts in 1989 (U.S. Department of Justice, 1990), and 18.5% of all offenses reported in the 1988 British Crime Survey (Mayhew et al., 1989). The financial costs attributable to auto theft have been reported to be substantially higher than those accruing from residential burglary (Hough and Mayhew, 1985). Curiously, this crime has historically received little attention from criminologists.

Clarke and Harris (1992a) note that although Shover's (1991) review of criminological literature identifies ten books that pertain to burglary, not a single academic book concerning auto theft exists in the literature. They further assert that this omission is all the more surprising given the fact that motor vehicle theft is perhaps the best reported of all property crimes, and the offenders usually involved, juveniles, are the most accessible group for study.

Recent attention to automobile crime in criminological literature has underscored its importance. The term "car crime" is used in Britain to refer to theft of and from automobiles. The study described in this thesis is restricted to theft of motor vehicles with body styles designating them as passenger vehicles (including light trucks and dual purpose

vehicles such as mini vans). I have taken the liberty of using the terms “motor vehicle theft”, “auto theft” and “car theft” interchangeably; all referring to the theft of passenger vehicles.

Clarke and Harris (1992a) draw a distinction among the varieties of auto theft which provides a good starting point for my discussion. “Joyriding” is widely used to describe opportunistic thefts committed by juveniles who are interested in the temporary appropriation of motor vehicles, and is distinguished from profit-motivated thefts which intend to permanently deprive lawful owners of their automobiles. Many jurisdictions in the U.S. have criminal code provisions that allow for this distinction (e.g., “unauthorized use”), as does the “taking and driving away” provision used in England and Wales. Section 335.1 of the *Canadian Criminal Code* likewise provides for the “taking of a motor vehicle without the owner’s consent”.

In this thesis, the term “joyriding” refers to the auto theft activities of young persons interested in the temporary acquisition of automobiles for short-term transportation (including use for other criminal activity), or for status and thrill-seeking motives, including willful damage of vehicles. The profit-motivation category requires further definition because it will inform my discussion of the differential risk of theft amongst the vehicle fleet in British Columbia. Typically auto theft for profit takes several forms, including the operation of “chop shops” that dismantle cars into collections of parts; the theft of vehicles for resale either locally or abroad; and the theft of vehicles to allow convenient “stripping” of selected parts in protected locations.

Chop shops operate in a number of ways. As will be demonstrated in Chapter 8, large chop shop operations that systematically dismantle vehicles and distribute desired parts

to shady auto body repair businesses, are rare in British Columbia. Tremblay, Clermont and Cusson (1991) found that changes in the insurance industry's preference for used parts for repairs in the late 1970s to mid 1980s, partially explained auto theft increases in the province of Quebec. Much more common in British Columbia are chopping operations specializing in the modification and upgrading of select vehicles for resale whose parts are highly interchangeable (e.g., Pontiac Firebird and Chevrolet Camaro), or models enjoying a considerable degree of part interchangeability across several years of manufacture (most notably, the Porsche 911). The success of professional theft operations, which typically involve the resale of automobiles with altered or switched vehicle identification number (VIN) plates, hinges on the degree of laxity in governmental vehicle inspection and registration procedures, as well as the lack of effective regulation of the parts salvage industry and the rebuilding of wrecked vehicles (Kajander et al, 1992).

In contrast to the systematic, organized removal and distribution of automobile parts carried out by "chop shops", "stripping" refers to the ad hoc removal of select parts (e.g., audio equipment, specialty magnesium ["mag"] wheels and performance tires) by amateurs (Challinger, 1987) interested in using them to upgrade their own vehicles, or selling them in ready-made "hot" parts markets. There exists a steady demand for stolen automobile parts from status conscious, cash-strapped youth willing to purchase them for a fraction of their legitimate cost, and motivation for supplying this demand is widespread. Profit motivated youth can often steal a car in less time than it takes to remove parts for resale. Because they often move stolen cars to remote areas to avoid detection while stripping, profit motivated

“strippers” typically exploit a lack of citizen surveillance and inflict considerable incidental damage to the cars they steal when removing desired parts.

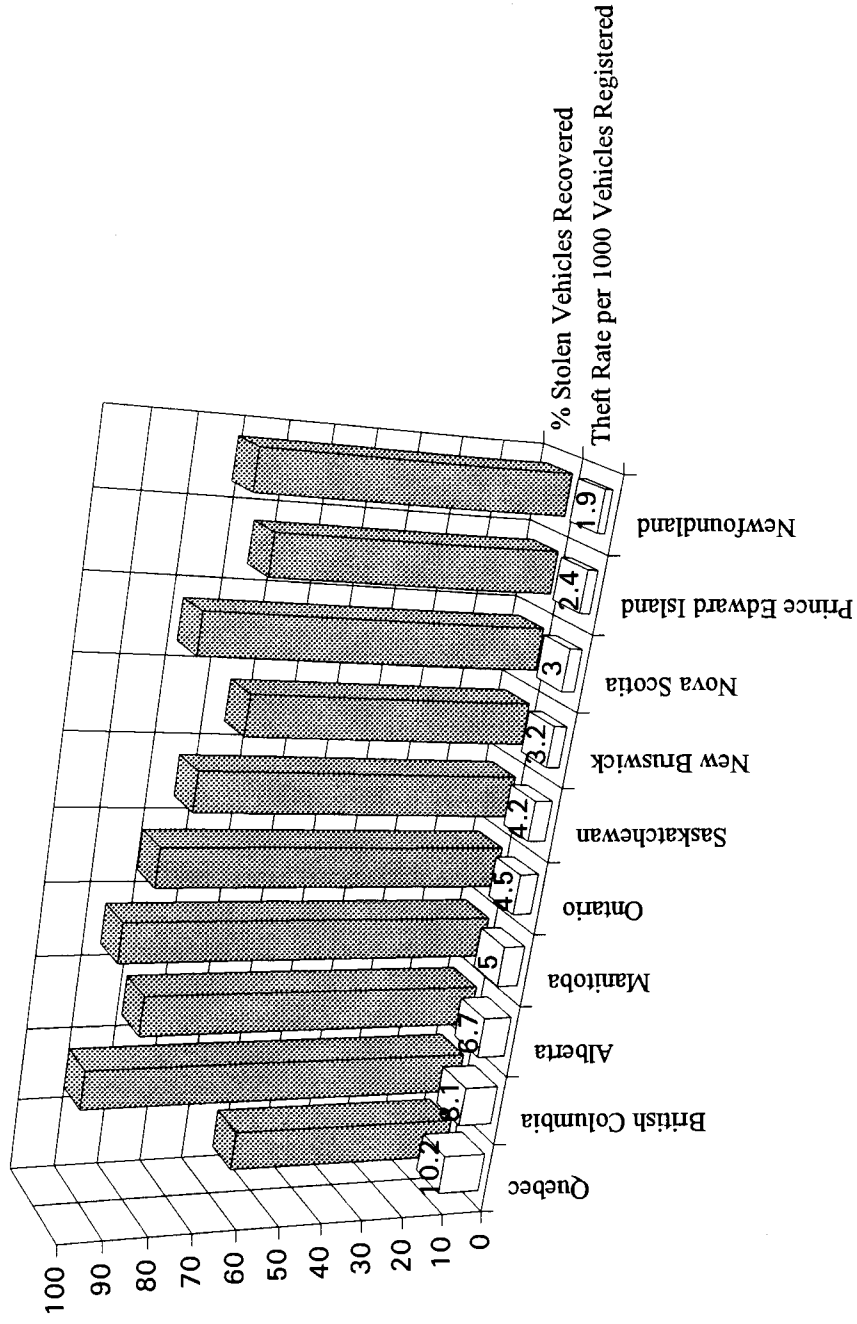
Canadian Auto Theft Trends

Canada had a population of slightly more than 27 million people in 1991. Canadians reported 139,310 motor vehicle thefts to the police in that year, about 516 vehicle thefts per 100,000 population (Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, 1991:5-1). The Insurance Crime Prevention Bureau of Canada estimates that the direct costs attributable to motor vehicle theft totaled more than \$300 million in 1991. This figure does not include associated criminal justice, economic, or other indirect costs identified by Field (1993).

According to an international victimization survey conducted between 1984 and 1988, Canada ranked 10th among 14 participating countries in the number of motor vehicle thefts per 1000 vehicles registered (van Dijk, Mayhew and Killias, 1990). Thefts per 1000 registered vehicles remained fairly constant between 1980 and 1990, ranging from a decade low of 5.1 in 1983, to a high of 6.7 in 1980 (Ogrodnik and Paiement, 1992).

On average, three out of four vehicles stolen in Canada between 1980 and 1990 were recovered. Since 1980, the proportion of unrecovered vehicles has increased from 19% to 27% (Ogrodnik and Paiement, 1992). An increase in the proportion of unrecovered vehicles is generally thought to be indicative of an increase in adult offenders engaging in organized auto theft activities for the resale and stolen parts markets (Clarke and Harris, 1992a). Vehicle recovery rates differ considerably among provinces. Figure 2.1 summarizes auto theft rates by province for 1990.

Figure 2.1: Auto Theft Rates and Recovery Percentages by Canadian Province

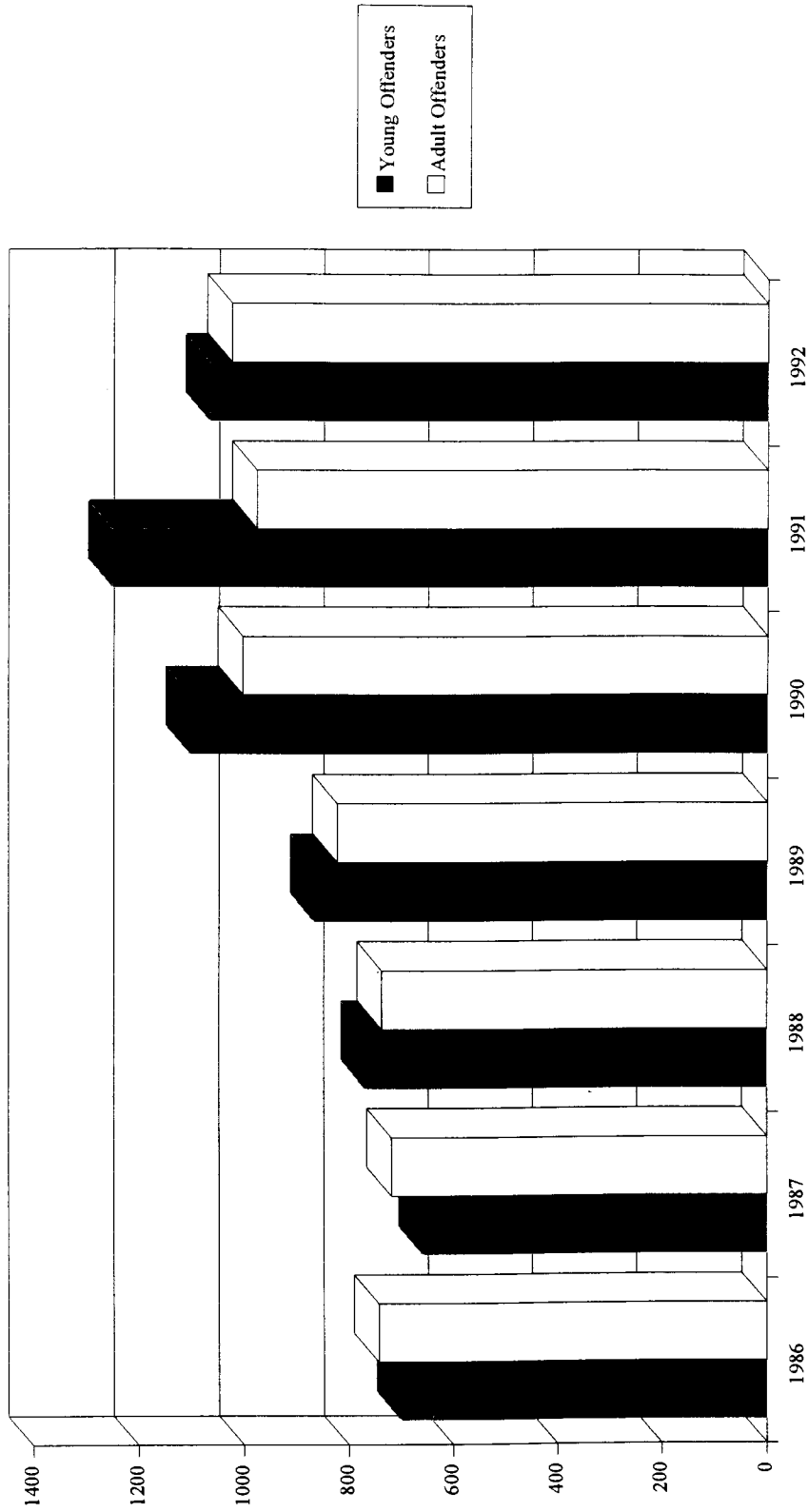


Auto Theft Trends in British Columbia

During the fifteen year period between 1977 and 1992, the number of motor vehicle thefts in British Columbia more than doubled from fewer than 12,000 to over 24,000. During the same period, the rate per 1000 population ranged from a low of 3.87 in 1983 to a high of 7.20 in 1992. After hovering around 4.6 between 1977 and 1983, this rate rose steadily to the 1992 high. The Insurance Corporation of British Columbia (ICBC) reported direct auto theft losses amounting to \$47 million in 1992, and total auto crime losses exceeded \$125 million in 1993.

While British Columbia had the second highest rate of auto theft among Canadian provinces in 1992 (8 thefts per 1000 registered vehicles), it enjoyed the highest rate of recovered vehicles -- 91% versus the national average of 73% (Ogrodnik and Paiement, 1992). Again, a high proportion of recovered vehicles usually indicates thrill-seeking behavior by young persons as the source of motivation for theft, while the opposite points to theft for the chopping and vehicle resale markets (McCaghy, Giordano and Henson, 1977; Challinger, 1987; Tremblay et al., 1991). Figure 2.2 shows the proportion of young offenders and adults charged for motor vehicle theft in British Columbia between 1986 and 1992.

Figure 2.2: Young Offenders and Adults Charged with Motor Vehicle Theft in British Columbia - 1986-92



The number of auto thefts reported monthly to the police increased from approximately 600 to over 1600 between 1986 and 1992. In some municipalities, the rate of auto theft per 1000 population increased as much as 125% between 1985 and 1991. Table 2.1 shows the rank order of the eight municipalities in British Columbia experiencing the greatest auto theft rate increases per 1000 population during the seven year period 1985-1991.

Table 2.1: Rank Order of the Eight British Columbia Municipalities Experiencing the Greatest Increases in the Auto Theft Rate per 1000 Population - 1985-91

Municipality	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	7 YEAR AVERAGED % INCREASE
1. Richmond	2	2	3	2	3	6	10	125%
2. North Vancouver	4	5	4	5	6	9	13	99%
3. Nanaimo	4	4	4	3	3	5	9	98%
4. Surrey	6	6	6	7	8	13	17	94%
5. Langley City	7	7	8	8	9	14	19	92%
6. Burnaby	7	7	7	9	10	11	17	88%
7. New Westminster	14	14	12	12	13	15	19	67%
8. Vancouver	6	6	6	7	10	14	10	59%

Source: Police Services Division, Ministry of Attorney General, British Columbia

The rapid increase in auto theft was more dramatic than increases in other property offenses in the province during this period. These increases are only partially explained by a corresponding increase in the proportion of the male population aged 10-19.¹⁹ Marginal

¹⁹ Statistics Canada data includes gender proportions of the population in 15, four year increment age groupings. Because young males are largely responsible for auto theft in British Columbia, the two groupings relevant to this analysis are proportion male age 10 -14, and 15-19. I summed these age groupings for the municipalities in Table 2.1 when calculating the percentage change from 1986 to 1991.

increases are likewise true for those municipalities identified in Table 2.1. Between the 1986 and 1991, this segment of the population increased slightly more than 10% for these municipalities, from 133,826 in 1986 to 149,121 in 1991 (Statistics Canada, 1986, 1991).

Clearly, other factors were driving this meteoric rise in auto theft rates in British Columbia. In the closing months of 1991, an informal group of municipal police chiefs and senior administrators of the RCMP gathered to discuss how best to identify these factors. Within the context of the community and problem-oriented policing paradigms, this thesis documents how this group went about that task, what it learned and what is being done to reduce auto theft in British Columbia.

Chapter 3

A CASE STUDY, ACTION RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Criminology faculty and graduate students, working with police agencies, can assist in developing research agenda ... for the creation of environmental models for crime prevention purposes ... I think there is value in that kind of research. These areas allow for a mutual exchange of ideas.

Margaret Jackson, February 1992²⁰

This thesis is essentially a case study of the actions of the Auto Theft Committee formed by the British Columbia Association of Chiefs of Police. The research undertaken by this committee entailed a number of different methodologies, each of which is described in the thesis as it relates to the specific research aims of the various components of the study. The methodological orientation of the overall project might best be described as a variant of action research. I will discuss these methodological considerations in turn.

Case Study Methodology

A case study can be defined as an “in-depth, multifaceted investigation using qualitative research methods, of a single social phenomenon” (Orum, Feagin and Sjoberg, 1991:2). Yin (1984) describes a case study as an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context using multiple sources of data. He notes that the case study has a distinctive place in evaluation research, in that it seeks to

²⁰ Excerpted from her welcome address to participants in the Police Studies Series - Policing in the Global Community: The Challenge of Leadership.

explore those situations in which the intervention being evaluated has no clear, single set of outcomes. Orum, Feagin and Sjoberg (1991:6-7) suggest that there are several fundamental lessons to be conveyed by the case study:

- (1) It permits the grounding of observations and concepts about social action and social structure in a natural setting studied at close hand;
- (2) It provides information from a number of sources and over a period of time, thus permitting a more holistic study of complex social networks and of complexes of social interaction and social meanings;
- (3) It can furnish the dimension of time and history to the study of social life thereby enabling the investigator to examine continuity and change in lifeworld pattern; and
- (4) It encourages and facilitates, in practice, theoretical innovation and generalization.

The essence of a case study is that it tries to illuminate a decision or set of decisions - why they are taken, how they are implemented, and with what result (Schramm, 1971 cited in Yin, 1984). Yin (1984) asserts that case study methodologies are preferable when “how” or “why” questions are being posed, when the investigator has little control over events, and when the focus is on a real-life context. All of these characteristics are present in the case of this auto theft study, and I am therefore documenting the decisions and actions of the BCACP Auto Theft Committee, the unit of analysis for this thesis, in an effort to produce a multi-agency, multi-jurisdictional problem solving model for use by the police community.

Essentially, I am interested in documenting how police officials in British Columbia tried to reduce the rising problem of auto theft, and why they decided to respond to this problem in the manner chosen. By working directly with the Chiefs on the various components of the study described in this thesis, the information I gathered may have

influenced the decisions of the committee, but I certainly did not control events. Lastly, while the focus of this case study is limited in scope, it is nonetheless concerned with making generalizations about the potential of police-initiated problem solving, and is necessarily focused on real-life context *vis a vis* the artificial social setting often sought by say, the psychology researcher.

Yin (1984: 20) notes that the unique strength of a case study is its ability to deal with a full variety of evidence including documents, artifacts, interviews and observations. The following data sources inform this case study:

- Memoranda circulated between the various actors involved in the project;
- Audio tape recordings of committee meetings and observations I made during these meetings;
- Observations of various criminal justice personnel recorded during interviews I conducted in the Summer of 1992 (N=43);
- Interviews I held with RCMP Superintendents who were instrumental in initiating this undertaking and chairing the Committee;²¹
- Notes I kept during the last two years of meetings with members of the research team; and
- Findings of the study's various research components.

²¹ I interviewed Don Render, former Superintendent of the RCMP Surrey Detachment, and Bruce Geisbrecht, Superintendent of the RCMP Richmond Detachment, concerning developments leading up to this undertaking since these two in particular were instrumental in initiating the project. I also sought their views on how this approach differs from others they had seen during their careers with the RCMP. During the two year study, Donald Render retired from the RCMP, but stayed on the Committee due to his interest in the project and his association with SFU's Institute of Canadian Urban Research Studies. Bruce Beaudreau, Superintendent of the RCMP Burnaby Detachment, assumed chairmanship of the Committee and was likewise interviewed.

Action Research

The overall methodological strategy employed in this thesis involves the action research paradigm. Action research grew largely out of the work done at the Tavistock Institute of Human Relations founded in London in 1946. Trist and Murray (1990) note that the circumstances of World War II brought together an usually talented group of psychiatrists, clinical and social psychologists who developed a number of radical innovations in social psychiatry and applied social science. Ramirez (1983) notes that action research, sometimes referred to as action learning, was developed to enable organizations to deal with turbulent conditions:

Action learning strategies join direct participation of those affected by an issue within an organization or set of organizations with effective ways of dealing with that issue. The action learning approach facilitates the on-going creation and invention of means to enable a level of organizational effectiveness to be attained which cannot be reached through traditional means alone (Ramirez, 1983:725-6).

Ramirez (1983:726) further identifies two characteristics of action research that inform the overall methodological strategy of the BCACP study. The first characteristic concerns “agreement among the stakeholders facing a continuing, intractable, turbulent problem issue that some form of co-determination in resolving it is desirable for each and every one in the community of interest concerned”. The second relates to the “co-learning relationship in which experts and laymen hold learning in common trust as the basis for the resolution process”.

Action research methodologies underlie both situational crime prevention and POP approaches. Curiously, action research is rarely mentioned in the literature on POP.²² Clarke (1992) is more explicit about the influence the action research paradigm has had on the development of situational crime prevention, noting that its influence can be seen in the following five stages of situational crime prevention:

- (1) collection of data about the nature and dimensions of the specific crime problem;
- (2) analysis of the situational conditions that permit or facilitate the commission of the crimes in question;
- (3) systematic study of the possible means of blocking opportunities for these particular crimes, including analysis of costs;
- (4) implementation of the most promising, feasible and economic measures; and
- (5) monitoring of results and dissemination of experience (Clarke, 1992:5).

Research Strategy

It is not difficult to see the overlap in the methodology of situational crime prevention efforts and the SARA model advocated in POP (Chapter 1). Apprised of the concerns of the Chiefs who initiated the study, and influenced by the theoretical orientation of their own “pattern” theory which seeks to “explain crimes as etiologically complex patterns of behavior” (Brantingham and Brantingham, 1993:260), Professors Patricia and Paul Brantingham of Simon Fraser University’s School of Criminology developed a number

²² One exception is *Police as Problem Solvers* (Toch and Grant, 1991); however, considerable portions of this work including the explicit references to the action research methodology involved in the study are taken from their earlier *Agents of Social Change: A Study of Police Reform* (1975), a time when action research was becoming popular.

of research strategies dependent on the level of funding achieved. Lesser funding would have restricted the research to a study of auto theft in the province's lower mainland. Ultimately, funding was obtained for a province-wide examination of auto theft, and this research strategy was subsequently endorsed by the full membership of the BCACP.

The research strategy adopted by the Committee was designed to triangulate information about offender, victim, and vehicle characteristics, the auto theft event, and the justice system's response to the problem. These research aims were explored using multiple data sources including the following:

- (1) A literature review of past studies on auto theft;
- (2) Spatial and temporal analysis of existing official police data;
- (3) Interviews with criminal justice personnel of various agencies affected by auto theft, including police auto theft investigators and crime prevention personnel, CLEU personnel, youth probation, custody and diversion officers, ICBC special investigators, Crown prosecutors, and judges;
- (4) A victimization survey;
- (5) Offender interviews with a sample of known auto thieves;
- (6) A school survey of high school students in the age cohort believed responsible for the bulk of the auto theft problem in the province; and
- (7) Analysis of ICBC and police data in order to calculate relative rates of theft by make, model, color, body style and year of manufacture.

Table 3.1 provides a summary of the research aims of the study and primary data sources that informed these aims. The study sought to provide data at different levels of aggregation. For example, province-wide data were sought for spatial and temporal analysis of auto theft for some components of the study, while others, such as the analysis of high risk vehicles was focused at the municipal (micro-spatial) and various regional levels as well as

province-wide. Theft risk rate analysis described in Chapter 8, was restricted to the 32 municipalities whose Chief Constables share membership in the BCACP.

Research Chronology

At their September 1991 meeting, the BCACP passed a motion to form an Auto Theft Committee made up of representatives from several municipal police agencies, RCMP detachments, personnel from the Police Services Branch of the Ministry of the Attorney General, ICBC and the Insurance Crime Prevention Bureau of Canada. Chiefs on the Committee decided to approach their respective city councils to obtain funding for the study at one cent per resident of their respective municipalities. The Ministry of the Attorney General contributed \$10,000 to this effort and ICBC matched all other funding provided. Approximately \$70,000 was raised, and research began in the summer of 1991.

The sequential order of the research basically followed that outlined above. The findings of research components conducted earlier in the study aided in the design of later components. For example, information gathered in interviews conducted with criminal justice personnel, was considered when developing the offender interview protocol and school survey instrument. In this way, a feedback loop was maintained, permitting the Committee a degree of flexibility in deciding how best to proceed over the two year term of the study.

Table 3.1: BCACP Auto Theft Study -Summary of Research Aims and Data Sources

DATA SOURCES:	CRIMINAL JUSTICE INTERVIEWS	VICTIMIZATION SURVEY	OFFENDER INTERVIEWS	HIGH SCHOOL SURVEY	ICBC & RCMP DATA
RESEARCH AIMS:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
OFFENDER CHARACTERISTICS		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
VICTIM CHARACTERISTICS		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
VEHICLE CHARACTERISTICS		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
AUTO THEFT EVENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
JUSTICE SYSTEM RESPONSE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
• POLICE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
• CROWN	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
• JUDICIARY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
• PROBATION	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	

The Committee met nine times between November 1991 and July 1993. Table 3.2 provides a chronological overview of the research:

Table 3.2: General Chronology of Research Tasks

Time	Task
Winter 1991	Funding Obtained
Spring 1992	Literature Review & Development of CJS Personnel Interviews
Summer 1992	CJS Personnel Interviews & Development of Victimization Survey Instrument
Fall 1992	Victimization Survey
Winter 1992	Offender Interviews
Spring 1993	School Survey
Summer 1993	ICBC and Police Data Analysis & Recommendations
Fall 1993	Final Report

A Focus on Youth

Since a recent study had shown that British Columbia had a very high stolen vehicle recovery rate (91%) (Ogrodnik and Paiement, 1992), and because it was widely believed in police circles that joyriding accounted for most of this theft, the orientation of the Committee was toward auto theft committed by juveniles. Also beginning in the summer of 1992, the Joint Forces Operations component of the Coordinated Law Enforcement Unit undertook an investigation of organized auto theft in the province. A CLEU analyst on the BCACP Auto Theft Committee kept the Committee informed of developments of the CLEU investigation. Steps were taken to supplement what was learned in that investigation to avoid unnecessary duplication of those efforts.

During the course of the research, I functioned as the principal investigator, and conducted the field work, including interviews with criminal justice personnel and offenders. I supervised the administration of the victimization and school surveys, and analyzed the data gathered in each using the *Statistical Program for the Social Sciences*. The methodologies and instruments involved in these research components are more fully discussed in the chapters that follow. In Chapter 11, I elaborate the action research paradigm as it relates to POP efforts such as that undertaken by the BCACP.

Chapter 4

INTERVIEWS WITH CRIMINAL JUSTICE PERSONNEL

Official police data on auto theft in the province provide only a limited amount of information. In an effort to gain a more complete understanding of the complexities involved in how the criminal justice system responds to the problem of auto theft, in-depth interviews were conducted with personnel in various agencies directly affected by the problem.

The interviews had great heuristic value for the research team, as they enabled us to explore in-depth, various aspects of auto theft as perceived by personnel in the agencies responsible for responding to different aspects of the problem. Advancing useful recommendations for reducing auto theft would have been compromised had we not endeavored to hear the concerns of “front-line” personnel.

Methodology

A snowball sampling technique was employed to reach persons willing to engage in semi-structured, open-ended interviews lasting between 30 and 90 minutes. A total of 42 interviews were held with judges, Crown prosecutors, youth probation and custodial personnel, police administrators, investigators and constables, in about a third of the municipalities for which the study was commissioned. Additionally, representatives of the Special Investigation Unit of the Insurance Corporation of British Columbia were also interviewed.

As this was the initial component of the research, respondents were encouraged to identify what they believed to be the most salient features of the auto theft problem as it affected their respective agencies. We were especially concerned with two issues:

- (1) Why had auto theft increased so dramatically in the past two years? and;
- (2) What strategies offered the best potential for reducing auto theft?

Respondents were also asked to identify what they viewed as short-comings in the criminal justice system's response to the problem either within their own agencies or others. Respondent input was also sought to develop the victimization and high school student surveys, as well as offender interview protocol.

Findings

Many of those interviewed were quick to point out that the nature of auto theft presents a few unique criminal justice system related problems. Those interviewed voiced concerns relating to the status of young offenders in the Canadian legal system and the philosophy of the juvenile court, the laying of criminal charges by the Crown, a perceived judicial laxity in sentencing and a resulting lack of general deterrence. While many of the comments reflect the occupational perspectives of the persons interviewed, the following areas of consensus emerged:

- "Joyriding" by young persons is the biggest source of auto theft in BC;
- About 90% of stolen automobiles are recovered;
- In most cities, only a small proportion of stolen vehicles have a significant number of parts removed;
- Prosecution for auto theft is difficult;

- Youths active in auto theft are often active in other crime, most notably, burglary;
- Processing youth through the criminal justice system is not an effective means for reducing auto theft;
- Because most victims of auto theft will recover damages from an insurance company, few are incensed about being victimized, and are instead inclined to view the theft episode as an inconvenience;
- While automobile manufacturers may be equipping new vehicles with better anti-theft devices, most vehicles in operation are easy to steal. Skilled youth can break into and drive a car away in less two minutes;
- The installment of after-market anti-theft devices such as, alarms, steering wheel locks and fuel cut-off switches constitutes the best hope for reducing auto theft in the near term;
- Most cities have a few locations of high victimization or “hot spots”, and special efforts directed at these locations may help reduce auto theft;
- The vehicle registration system under the auspices of autoplan offices is too lax; and
- Regulation is needed in the auto salvage industry as there is no control over the sale of used parts.

Case studies of successful problem-oriented policing efforts have stressed the cooperation of various agencies making up the ‘criminal justice system’ (Eck and Spelman, 1987; Goldstein, 1990; Rossmo and Fisher, 1993; Hope, 1994). However, little attention has been paid to the processes involved in overcoming the disjuncture that may exist in how representatives of these various agencies perceive their roles in police orchestrated problem-solving scenarios *vis a vis* those of other agencies in the ‘system’. Again, the interviews conducted for this component of the research were sought for their heuristic value in helping the Auto Theft Committee formulate other aspects of the research. As ‘systems’ people are fond of saying, in order to ask the right questions, one needs to know half of the answer (Strecher, 1992).

The views of some of the occupational groups of interest to the Committee cannot be said to be representative due to the non-probabilistic sampling technique employed and small sample sizes for some groups. Nevertheless, the interviews underscore the importance of forging a consensus of purpose relative to finding solutions to a problem among those whose coordinated actions are deemed essential. The following sections of this chapter summarize the occupational viewpoints of those agencies whose input the Committee believed to be important for identifying potential auto theft reduction strategies. Recommendations for addressing the need for coordinated activity among occupational groups is discussed further in Chapter 11.

Police and ICBC's Special Investigative Unit (N=21)

With the exception of West Vancouver's experience with unrecovered thefts or significant stripping of autos taken from auto dealer lots in that city, all police agencies and RCMP detachments identified joyriding by young persons as the biggest source of auto theft. Police sources noted the rarity of recovering stripped vehicles (Vancouver investigators, for example, estimated that less than 3% of the auto thefts experienced in that city included the removal of any parts other than the radio). When parts are removed, they most often come from sporty model Japanese imports and include the seats, and after-market additions like sport steering wheels, sound systems, mag wheels and high performance tires.

Police and ICBC investigators identified a number of ways auto theft is perpetrated in the province; however, concerns about laxity in vehicle registration procedures and the absence of auto salvage regulations in the province, point more to theft activities engaged in by a small percentage of the adult offending population. Police believe that most joyriding activity is restricted to the activities of a small group of young offenders, many of whom are also committing residential break and enters and theft from autos.

Police in several jurisdictions identified a handful of young offenders who have admitted to taking 50 - 80 cars over a year's time. Taken together, police sources indicated a

belief that this small group of very active young offenders accounted for a significant portion of the overall auto theft rate. They further voiced concern that the criminal justice system seems incapable of deterring the activities of this hard-core group. When these multiple offenders are prosecuted, police note the leniency of courts as an important factor in the seeming lack of either specific or general deterrence for this crime. These opinions are not restricted to auto theft, but are characteristic of how police generally view the criminal justice system's processing of young offenders. Some police sources wanted the term "joyrider" dropped in favor of another term denoting the criminal nature of the activity.

Most police sources believe that target hardening is the best hope for reducing auto theft. Ultimately, this should become a priority for the automobile manufacturer, but in the interim, police personnel interviewed advocate the use of anti-theft devices such as alarms and steering wheel locks, and public education campaigns to reduce the opportunities for theft. Officers assigned to crime prevention units think their efforts with younger kids may help ease the auto theft problem in the long-run.

Youth Probation Officers and Diversion Workers (N=10)

Youth probation officers see the increase in auto theft by young persons as a reflection of the growing number of kids interested in thrill-seeking and immediate gratification. They are apt to blame the excesses of the 1980's that produced these trends and the influence of media for glorifying criminal lifestyles. They doubt that kids today even think of auto theft as anything more than a petty crime. They are perplexed about the seeming attraction of quasi-gang affiliation that seems to be influencing the popularity of auto theft. They also note that the most active car thieves are also involved in other crimes, often come from dysfunctional families, and were identified as problem kids early in life.

Youth workers do not think increasing the probability of incarceration will reduce auto theft. They believe most kids in detention homes do not look further than a week into the future and view the nearly exclusive association young offenders have with one another

as a big part of the problem. They believe that incarceration only serves to cement these connections and further isolate troubled youth from mainstream society. They do not see much hope in reducing auto theft unless better ways are found to respond to problematic families. They recognize that these types of broad social intervention strategies will require a considerable expansion of publicly funded social services, and are skeptical of society's commitment to such undertakings. Some youth workers believe a good starting point would be the introduction of "life-skills" and ethics classes into the curriculum of secondary schools.

Many youth probation officers believe court proceedings must be speeded up when young offenders are involved. In some jurisdictions, sentence dispositions typically come eight to ten months after the offense. They asked how such untimely sanctions can favorably effect the behavior of fifteen year-olds. Many feel the system is too lenient with the repeat offender who will continue to receive probation after multiple convictions. A majority also believe something has to be done to address the group activity nature of auto theft. Youths are telling their probation officers that everyone knows they are immune from prosecution for merely riding in a stolen car. If we can somehow dissuade riders, the thinking goes, we should see auto theft become less fun and decline.

Some probation officers feel overwhelmed, and indicated that they often felt like they were just going through the motions, that their job stresses accountability via documentation, instead of counseling troubled youth and finding the community resources necessary for rehabilitation.²³

Crown Counsel (N=6)

Prosecutors in several jurisdictions whose official data show increases did not have a sense that auto theft was increasing. All prosecutors interviewed vehemently defended the

²³ One probation officer commented that he had a monthly caseload of 105, and only saw his charges ten minutes a month.

charge approval process and dismissed police criticism on this point.²⁴ Prosecutors were reluctant to characterize auto theft as a trivial offense, most said that it is taken “very seriously” in their offices. Whereas police were apt to criticize the Crown for prosecution delays, prosecutors in most jurisdictions blamed the police investigative process as the single biggest source of delay in going to trial. Some prosecutors feel they are the undeserving scapegoat of police frustration (however, some even empathize with police) with the difficult legal requirements of proving possession of stolen property - it requires knowledge and control: This legal hurdle means that many of the cases police forward for prosecution do not make it past charge approval.

Because the actual theft of an automobile is rarely witnessed, most cases are prosecuted under provisions of the code governing possession of stolen property. When asked about the desirability of enacting a separate code offense for motor vehicle theft, prosecutors thought it would make no qualitative difference in existing sentencing patterns. They noted that the lesser summary offense of taking a vehicle without the owner’s consent almost always involves a familial or otherwise intimate relationship between victim and offender. Contrary to police perceptions, prosecutors indicated a willingness to pursue dangerous driving and evasion charges when the facts in a case warrant it.

Youth Court Judges (N=5)

None of the judges interviewed had a sense that auto theft was increasing in their jurisdictions.²⁵ None indicated that repeat auto theft offenders are treated leniently in their courts, and all were eager to deflect criticism on this issue pointing out that the law requires a “graduated response” to young offenders. Several said they rely greatly on probation officers’ recommendations in pre-sentencing reports.

²⁴ Since 1982, police in British Columbia have had to submit ‘informations’ to the Crown for final charge approval. Police generally disapprove of this oversight mechanism believing the Crown reluctant to prosecute lesser offenses.

²⁵ A judge in one municipality whose official auto theft rate had increased 88% between 1989 and 1991, thought the figure “alarming if correct”.

While not willing to label auto theft as a trivial offense, several hinted that other matters before the court are more important. Most want to save the 'heavy hand' for crimes against the person. If the symbolic gesture of incarceration is to be imposed for a property offense, they feel breaking and entering a crime more deserving of a tougher sentence.

In contrast to other occupational groups, judges note that youth from otherwise stable, middle-class backgrounds are often defendants in auto theft cases. Although most thought that the entire trial process should be accelerated when youth are involved, judges also believe that many of the delays are unavoidable when defendants exercise their rights. Of all the occupational groups interviewed, judges were the most optimistic about the potential for rehabilitation, and most voiced concern about the search for "easy answers to complex problems."

Summary

The interviews established that auto theft is not viewed as an enforcement priority by personnel in any agency of the criminal justice system. Police investigators indicated that they merely perform a clerical function for victims' insurance reimbursement interests, and that most police departments are moving away from attending auto theft calls.²⁶ Youth probation officers, Crown prosecutors and youth court judges said they are much more concerned with violent offenders -- auto theft is "small potatoes" in the scheme of things and the criminal justice system seems reluctant to sanction auto thieves, either young offenders or adults.

I certainly would not be the first to characterize the term criminal justice "system" as a misnomer. The occupational perspectives encountered in these interviews point to agency agendas that are, in some ways, at odds with one another. For example, youth probation

²⁶ This point of view reflects the attitudes conveyed by auto theft investigators and crime prevention personnel interviewed. That the BCACP selected auto theft for the subject of a province-wide study signals the importance senior police administrators in British Columbia attach to this crime.

officers ask how a fourteen year old is supposed to appreciate the ramifications of his criminal behavior when the process drags out for ten months after the offense; Crown counselors and judges say delays are an unavoidable feature of due process in our adversarial system.

Examples of successful problem-oriented policing efforts reported in the literature identify as a core feature of their success, the need to bring together various actors in the criminal justice system and forge consensus about the short-term objectives being sought in order to rectify a particular problem. For example, officers in Newport News, Virginia working to curb street robberies associated with prostitution in an area of that city, realized that they could accomplish their objective only if they could gain the cooperation of prosecutors and the judiciary. Their success in doing so resulted in a 40% reduction in robbery in the target district over an eighteen month period (Eck and Spelman, 1987).

Efforts must be made to identify some common objectives around which a consensus of action can be cultivated amongst the various actors in the criminal justice system, in order to affect the changes necessary to reduce auto theft in British Columbia. For example, police and probation personnel need to examine mechanisms for effectively monitoring young offenders on probation, and taking action when probation conditions are breached if this non-custodial sanction is to have any value as a crime deterrent.

The most contentious relationship encountered in these interviews was that between the police and Crown. Auto theft prosecutions are not unique in this respect; however, the prosecutorial arrangement in British Columbia presents unique challenges for problem-oriented policing strategies looking to secure cooperation from the prosecutorial function. Efforts to address the concerns of both of these agencies relative to the problem of auto theft are discussed more fully in Chapter 11.

Chapter 5

VICTIMIZATION SURVEY

Existing police data in British Columbia provide limited information about the characteristics of the auto theft event. Precise information about the condition and location of recovered vehicles, for example, is not generally stored in computerized form and may not even be recorded in investigation files. As a result, many characteristics of auto theft are not generally available for analysis. Environmental factors such as the lighting or vehicular and pedestrian flows around the locations where vehicles are stolen have not been studied.

Because professional auto thieves are primarily interested in exploiting laxity in vehicle registration procedures that are of no concern to amateur car thieves, the strategies one would undertake to reduce profit motivated auto theft are very different than those aimed at dissuading the thrill-seeking joyrider. For this reason, a victimization survey was undertaken in an effort to get a clearer picture of the typical auto theft event in British Columbia. The survey was designed to provide information not available from police records or insurance data, and to identify the site and situational characteristics of the theft and characteristics of vehicles being stolen.

Survey Instrument & Sampling Methodology

The survey instrument (Appendix A) contained 77 items organized into six sections which were designed to obtain information about the following aspects of automobile theft believed to inform potential strategies for auto theft reduction:

- ◇ Vehicle characteristics and the precise condition of recovered vehicles (parts removed versus parts damaged) -- from which to deduce the motivation for theft;
- ◇ Security and guardianship of the vehicle -- intended to inform the Committee about specific features of theft opportunities for which preventive actions could be developed;
- ◇ Suspect information -- with which to assess victim-suspect relationships and case attrition;
- ◇ Characteristics of the theft site -- intended to identify features of high risk situations or locations;
- ◇ Other criminal victimizations -- intended to provide information about repeat victimizations as well overall victimization; and
- ◇ Victim demographics -- intended to identify potential risk factors.²⁷

A total of 506 surveys were completed in 32 municipalities whose Chief Constables share membership in the BCACP. The survey took approximately twenty minutes to complete. The number of surveys conducted within each municipality or township was roughly proportional to the number of auto thefts reported to the police in each during the previous year.

Funding for the project could have been disproportionately spent on this component of the study had the Chiefs not come up with the innovative approach they did. Cognizant of the costs involved in survey research, the Chiefs sought the assistance of Victim Service Volunteers already working in their departments and detachments for conducting telephone

²⁷ During its October, 1992 meeting, the Committee considered including items intended to measure the emotional impact auto theft has on victims and their satisfaction with the police response to this crime. A lengthy discussion took place, and it was ultimately decided that these things would not be asked of victims because they would offer the Committee little information about potential auto theft reduction strategies.

surveys in their respective jurisdictions. This is the first time this pool of volunteers has been utilized to gather data for a situational crime prevention effort.

Limited funding, the geographic dispersal and the volunteer status of Victim Services personnel made on-site interview training unfeasible; however, the experience volunteers have interviewing crime victims over the telephone convinced us that they could administer the victimization survey by following written instructions and listening to a training tape that included a mock interview. The survey was pre-tested in one jurisdiction prior to making final changes to the instrument. The pre-testing also helped us identify potential interviewing problems and informed the development of the training material.

Prior to having the survey administered, members of the research team visited the RCMP Detachment in North Vancouver to examine a sample of auto theft offense reports. It was learned that approximately six files had to be carefully read before finding one that met the selection criteria that:

- The stolen vehicle be privately owned/leased (as opposed to a being owned by car dealer or rental car company whose personnel would be unlikely to know the information we sought);
- The stolen vehicle be a passenger vehicle; and
- The owner/leasee live within the local calling area

The labor intense sampling effort convinced us that a non-random sampling procedure would have to suffice. Steps were taken to sample thefts occurring in comparable time periods in all jurisdictions, and summer/winter seasonal differences were avoided by working back from October 1, 1991. Volunteers were instructed to select passenger vehicles

stolen from private owners living within the local calling area.²⁸ For all municipalities, fewer than 4% of victims contacted chose not to participate. Language problems in some municipalities accounted for most of the non-selections.

Findings

The percentage of stolen vehicles recovered (95%) in this sample was slightly higher than the provincial rate (91%) reported by Ogrodnik and Paiement (1992).²⁹ As noted in Chapter 2, this high vehicle recovery rate suggests that the auto theft problem in British Columbia is dominated by young offenders interested in the temporary appropriation of vehicles.

Almost 40% of the vehicles stolen in this sample were Japanese automobiles manufactured prior to 1986 (relative risk rates by make and model are presented in Chapter 8). The crude force methods most often employed by offenders resulted in substantial damage to door and ignition locks to a majority of victims' vehicles.

Parts reported removed from vehicles, as opposed to those damaged, most frequently included audio equipment (14%), followed by wheels and tires (9%), and seats (4%) taken mostly from later year Japanese models and most notably from Volkswagens, 45% of which were stripped of their seats. Removal of these vehicle parts, it was later learned from the

²⁸ Passenger vehicles are designated by their body styles. They include sedans, station wagons, hatchbacks, fastbacks, coupes, hardtops, convertibles, vans, light trucks, and dual purpose vehicles

²⁹ Auto theft investigators have informed me in subsequent interviews that reporting inefficiencies account for about 4% of recovered vehicle being coded as unrecovered. The problem arises when a vehicle is recovered in a jurisdiction other than the one in which it was stolen and the registered owner has settled his or her claim with ICBC. In such cases, the recovering jurisdiction will notify the registered owner about the vehicle's recovery but often times the owner, having settled the claim with the insurance company, will not notify either ICBC or the police jurisdiction where the stolen auto was reported stolen, that it has been recovered.

interviews held with offenders, is consistent with theft by youth seeking parts to upgrade their own vehicles or to sell to an informal network of delinquent friends.

This pattern of parts theft is quite different from systematic parts removal for the “chopping” and “retagging” or “resale” markets identified by Challinger (1987). Damaged parts most often included the under-carriage, drive train and body damage. The reported average dollar value for parts replaced due to *damage* in this sample was greater for vehicles stolen with the owner’s keys than those stolen without (\$1567. versus \$1445.). One would expect the opposite given that door and ignition lock damage usually results in theft without the keys. These findings support the contention of the criminal justice system personnel who were interviewed, that intentional destructive forms of joyriding are widespread in British Columbia.

By and large, offenders avoid being sanctioned. Suspect information obtained from the survey reflects case dispositions as recalled by interviewed victims. In some cases, victims may not have been well-informed about actual events. Figure 5.1 depicts a flow diagram of case dispositions as recalled by victims.

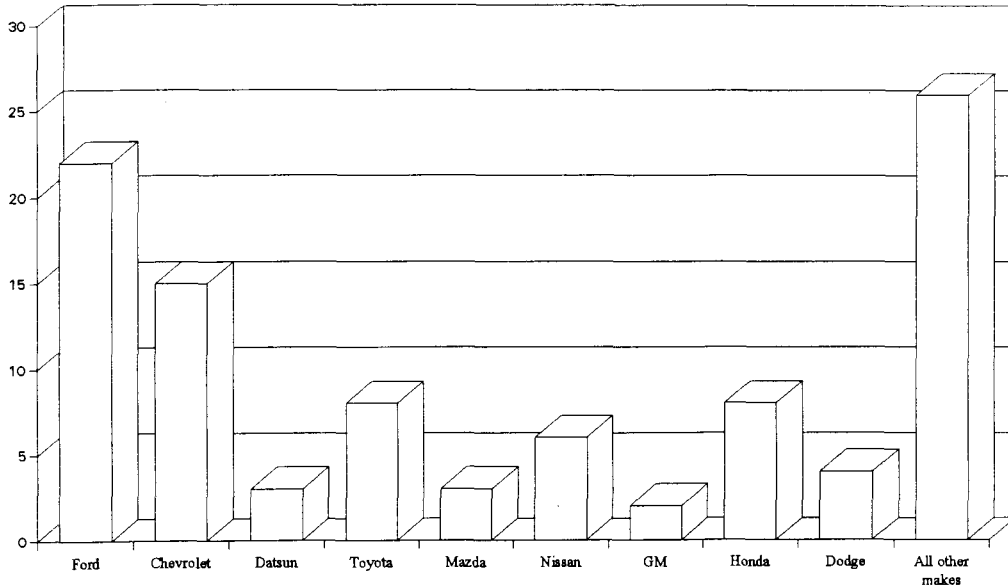
Figure 5.1: A Flow Diagram of Auto Theft Case Dispositions

506 Thefts ⇒ 81 Suspects ⇒ 40 Arrested ⇒ 34 Charged ⇒ 16 Convicted (1 acquitted, 5 pending at time of survey, others dispositions unknown to victims)
--

Consistent with the findings of other studies of auto theft in Canada (Morrison, 1991; Ogrodnik and Paiement, 1992), roughly 20% of the vehicles in this sample were stolen with the owner’s keys, most often because they were left in the ignition or had been hidden in or

on the vehicle. Figure 5.2 shows the proportions of vehicles stolen with the owner's keys in this sample aggregated by make.

Figure 5.2: Proportion of Vehicle Makes Stolen with Owners' Keys



The proportion of vehicles stolen with the owner's keys varies significantly by make, and supports the contention of interviewed offenders that the door and ignition locks on domestic makes are more difficult to defeat. This finding also suggests that efforts to motivate owners to take better care of their keys are likely to have a greater impact on the theft of domestic makes.

Fewer than 8% of the victims in our sample had employed any post-factory anti-theft devices. Some 7% of the victims claimed they had alarms on their cars, but it could not be

determined if these devices were passive, or otherwise activated at the time of theft.³⁰ Other types of anti-theft devices such as steering wheel locks, fuel cut-off and ignition disabling devices were collectively employed by less than 1% of the sample. Even after having been victimized, fewer than 13% of the respondents said they took any subsequent action to improve the protection of their vehicles. Of the few who said that they did take some new form of preventive action, half merely indicated that they began to lock the doors on their cars.

Nearly a quarter of the respondents had previously been a victim of auto theft (60% of which took place in the last three years).³¹ Repeat victimization was not restricted to auto theft. The same respondents reporting multiple auto theft victimization in this sample also reported multiple victimization in other crime categories. For example, respondents who reported two or more previous auto theft victimizations, also reporting being a victim of two or more burglaries, thefts and/or assaults. In no case did a respondent claiming two or more victimizations of any crime we inquired about (assault, burglary, thefts from auto, other thefts), likewise report fewer than two auto theft victimizations. The number of repeat victims in this sample was too small for more rigorous statistical analysis. Nevertheless, the crime prevention potential of repeat victim-focused efforts would appear to be substantial (See, Farrell and Pease, 1993).

³⁰ Alarm quality varies greatly, and the survey instrument should be modified for future use to determine the kind of alarm employed. A "passive" alarm is automatically activated when the engine is shut-off. An "active" alarm (or other anti-theft device) requires the owner to "activate" the alarm manually. Insurance companies offering premium discounts for owners employing anti-theft devices typically offer larger discounts for "passive" systems.

³¹ A number of the offenders interviewed for this study indicated that they had stolen the same vehicle more than once. One offenders said he stolen a neighbor's Honda Civic *four* times. Thus repeat auto theft

Auto theft patterns identified in the survey resemble those found elsewhere with respect to favored place and time of day for this activity (Hope, 1987; Saville and Murdie, 1988; Webb and Laycock, 1992). Sixty-three percent of vehicle thefts in the sample took place at the owner's home site, and 70% of all vehicle thefts were perpetrated at night, though not always under cover of darkness: 80% percent of the victims in this survey thought their vehicles were parked in "well lit" or "moderately well lit" places at the time of theft. Vehicles parked on the street at the home site were most vulnerable to theft (36%) followed by driveways (20%), underground parking (16%) and ground-level parking (11%).³²

Large parking lots were the second most favored location for perpetrating auto theft; 40% of the respondents said their cars were stolen from parking lots with a hundred or more spots, 12% of which had attendants. Including the home site, victimized autos were typically parked in open locations easily visible to passers-by. As would be predicted by routine activity (Felson, 1987) and pattern (Brantingham and Brantingham, 1993) theories, "high" to "fairly high" levels of vehicular traffic both during the day and at night were noted by victims as a feature of the theft location.

Approximately 90% of the victims' vehicles were recovered damaged, some so extensively that a third of the respondents believed their vehicles would never again operate as it had prior to the theft. Some victims expressed distress about the shortened life span of

victimization is likely when a theft vulnerable vehicle remains in an offender's awareness space. Not unlike sport fishers, car thieves return to the very spots there they have previously landed a catch.

³² It is unknown if these percentages simply reflect the usual distribution of parked cars in the nighttime; however, they would not appear to be indicative of the usual daytime distribution.

the vehicle or about engine and drive train damage that would not be covered by insurance when it would evidence itself later on.

The Insurance Corporation of British Columbia estimated the average dollar loss per theft claim for recovered vehicles in 1992 to be around \$3600, divided equally for parts and labor. The average claim undoubtedly involves a week or more for repairs, and fewer than a quarter of the respondents indicated the availability of a second auto to use while their vehicles were being repaired. Only 5% of the victims said they were provided with a "loaner" to use while their recovered autos were being repaired. The remaining 70% of victims were burdened with finding alternative transportation. Taken together, these inconveniences probably resulted in missed work and reduced access to various consumer and recreational pursuits, factors to be considered in a comprehensive assessment of the cost of auto theft (Field, 1993).

Summary

Three findings in particular emerged from the victimization survey that suggest where the Committee might be well advised to focus preventive efforts. Firstly, as suggested by interviewed criminal justice personnel, older, Japanese manufactured automobiles appear to be disproportionately at risk of being stolen. If the theft competence of young persons is restricted to a few makes and models, it helps explain why vehicles are often stolen from well lit parking lots -- offenders seek out locations where they are most likely to find the cars they know how to steal, and well lit venues assist them in this task. Ongoing assessment of the distribution of auto theft location and recovery locations would assist the police in

deciding where and how to deploy resources most prudently. If the model specific theft vulnerability of certain makes and models witnessed in this survey were corroborated by other aspects of the research, it would suggest the usefulness of focusing prevention efforts on the owners of those vehicles most at risk of theft. This kind of strategic effort would realize greater cost-effectiveness.

Secondly, the small number of car owners employing anti-theft devices and the high incidence of repeat victimization likewise suggest the need to focus auto theft prevention effort in these areas. ICBC could provide incentives for car owners to install or employ a multitude of inexpensive, anti-theft devices, especially after having been victimized as this seems to be a good predictor of future victimization (e.g., Farrell and Pease, 1993).

Thirdly, almost 1 in 5 vehicles were stolen with the owners' keys. British Columbian motorists had absorbed \$42 million in auto theft losses in 1992 (reflected in a 19% increase in insurance premiums from the previous year). Vehicles stolen with the owners' keys are damaged at least as frequently and severely as those stolen through forceful means. We therefore incurred roughly \$8 million in losses that year because a goodly number of motorists did not take care of their car keys. These losses are not restricted to part repair and replacement costs. Each episode of careless key guardianship harbors the potential for catastrophic loss: *A young man with little driving experience is eager to impress his friends. Shoplifting just doesn't have the thrill it once did. Ah, there is a car left running in front of the 7-11. In he jumps and off he goes. Tires screeching, adrenaline pumping, 2000 pounds of steel, and we are all at the mercy of this young thrill-seeker's compromised judgment.*

Opportunities like this are intolerable, and it is incumbent upon insurance providers to address this aspect of auto theft.

Situational crime prevention and POP approaches encourage police to conceive of their crime fighting task in the strategic ways briefly outlined above. Specific auto theft recommendations growing out of the findings of this victimization survey are discussed more fully in Chapter 10.

Chapter 6

OFFENDER INTERVIEWS

Police have made little use of a rich source of data for helping them analyze problems:

In exploring a problem, we tend to examine it from numerous perspectives before even considering - if we ever do - making direct inquiries of *those who appear to be causing the problem* [author's italics]. The adversarial relationship obviously gets in the way, as does police skepticism about any contribution that the alleged wrongdoers can make (Goldstein, 1990:87).

In the formative stages of this project, several Chiefs had the opportunity to view a videotaped interview with a prolific adult auto thief who described his various *modus operandi* and detailed the vulnerabilities in the vehicle registration system. The Chiefs found the video instructive and thought the auto theft study should likewise incorporate interviews with auto theft offenders from whom we could learn about this activity and how best to prevent it.

When the time came to interview offenders, CLEU had just completed its investigation of organized auto theft rings operating in British Columbia and had made several recommendations intended to curb the activities of "professional" auto thieves. Part of the motivation to undertake this study came from the concerns the Chiefs had about youthful offenders. Believing that we could not identify additional preventive features regarding profit motivated auto theft committed by adults, the Committee decided to forego interviewing adult offenders and instead focus our efforts on youthful "joyriders" believed to

be responsible for the vast majority of auto thefts in British Columbia.³³ Committee members believed that any attempt to identify strategies for reducing auto theft would necessarily have to include offenders' points of view.

Interview Protocol and Sampling Methodology

In an effort to better understand the situational and motivational characteristics of young peoples' auto theft activities, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 31 incarcerated teenage males claiming various levels of involvement in auto theft from three different regions of the province. Offender interview protocol used in several studies on "joyriding" in England and Wales (See, e.g., McCullough, Schmidt and Lockhart, 1990; Smyth, 1990; Spencer, 1991; Gulliver, 1991; Gow and Peggrem, 1991) informed the development of the offender interview protocol (Appendix B), as did the interviews held with criminal justice agency personnel discussed in Chapter 4. Interviews, conducted in March of 1993, took approximately one and a half hours to complete and explored:

- (1) Family characteristics - structure, routine, civility, rules, discipline;
- (2) Employment - job history, attitudes about work and wages, future plans;
- (3) School - involvement, achievement, likes and dislikes, self-esteem, future plans;
- (4) Recreation and friends - routine activities, places frequented, geographic range of friends;

³³ This decision was perhaps not made explicit enough during Committee meetings. When the research was complete and the Committee met to discuss recommendations, a Committee member working as a Special Investigator for the ICBC expressed his confusion about the mandate of the Committee being focused on the "young offender", even after it was reiterated that the Committee stood to gain little from interviewing adult offenders.

- (5) Knowledge and involvement in auto theft - recruitment into auto theft, motivations, offending range, targets, model specific theft techniques; and
- (6) Deterrence - anti-theft devices, attitudes about offending and the criminal justice system.

Several factors inhibited our ability to obtain a random sample of offenders. Firstly, very few persons are incarcerated for auto theft.³⁴ Given this low incarceration rate, it is unlikely that three or more auto thieves would be incarcerated anywhere in the province on any given day. Secondly, persons whose auto theft activity is known are not readily identifiable in corrections files. Few persons are observed actually stealing automobiles. When apprehended, the driver of a stolen automobile -- if charged at all -- is typically charged with being in possession of stolen property under or over \$1000 depending on the assessed value of the automobile. This information is not available in electronic format; therefore, identifying persons whose auto stealing activity is recorded in corrections files requires one to manually peruse files in order to find auto theft incidents.

One of the terms of agreement stipulated by the Corrections Branch was that the research not involve "substantial time commitments" by corrections personnel. Conducting a manual search of offender files to identify auto theft offenders with which to build a sampling frame was deemed unfeasible by Corrections Branch personnel. Corrections personnel instead suggested that the research team coordinate with various probation offices to secure a sample of young offenders on probation for stealing autos. Having been appraised during the interviews held with youth probation officers that many young

³⁴ Only 38 persons (young offenders and adults) were incarcerated for auto theft in British Columbia during the entire year of 1991 (Police Services, Ministry of Attorney General, 1992).

offenders had problems keeping appointments for which revocation could result, we concluded that few probationers (as well as their parents/guardians) would agree to being interviewed or otherwise show up at the agreed upon time, and instead decided to seek a sample from amongst an incarcerated population. Open custody camps and closed detention centres were suggested to us by probation personnel.

Correctional staff at the institutions identified below were contacted and asked to assist in obtaining a sample of residents who were involved in auto theft prior to their incarceration, regardless of the offense for which they were currently incarcerated. They solicited residents whose auto theft activities were known, and posted notices which I had drafted regarding the research aims. They also obtained the parental/guardian consent of participants and had those willing to be interviewed sign consent forms as required by the University's Ethics Committee. We used these interviews to ferret out major consistencies in offenders' perceptions and motivations, and were less concerned with minor variations given the relatively small sample. In order to provide the Committee with a wider view of motivations for theft in different regions in the province, interviews were conducted at the locations identified in Table 6.1.

Table 6.1: Locations of Interviewed Auto Theft Offenders

Lower Mainland and Fraser Valley Regions	Interior & Northern Regions	Vancouver Island Region
1.) Willingdon YDC Burnaby (N=8) 2.) Center Creek Camp Chilliwack (N=6)	1.) High Valley Camp Logan Lake (N=5)	1.) Victoria YDC (N=6) 2.) Lakeview Camp Campbell River (N=6)

Findings

Family Characteristics

The average age of offenders in this sample was 16. About a quarter of the sample had no siblings; and 32% lived in female-headed households. Ten percent indicated that their mothers stayed at home as full-time housemothers. About 40% percent described their family's financial situation as "comfortable" or "stable". Another 10% said they were "well-off" or "wealthy", while slightly more than a quarter of the respondents said their family was "struggling" or "poor". Most of the offenders indicated that their parents are employed in blue collar occupations, and many described varied and sporadic work histories for both their mothers and fathers. A quarter of the sample indicated that their fathers had been unemployed at least once in the last three years, 16% had been unemployed two or more times during that period. Frequent house moves are also a common characteristic of the sample - more than 60% had moved six or more times since birth.

Slightly more than half said they got along with their parents most of the time, and 45% indicated that they like living at home. Most were expected to do some household chores. About half said they had curfews on both weeknights and weekends, but most did not abide by those curfews. About a third described the rules at home as "strict". Most receive some type of punishment for breaking household rules; a third said they are routinely subject to beatings with closed fists and/or being kicked or struck with belts or other hard objects. Most respondents indicated they leave the house when grounded by their parents.

Work history/school/future plans

Due to their ages, most of the respondents had few job experiences. During the interviews conducted last summer with various personnel in the criminal justice system, several police and youth probation officers voiced the belief that young offenders think the unskilled jobs available to them are not worth having and turn instead to crime as a source of income. This belief found support in the interviews: More than half of the sample reported

having no legitimate source of income (another 10% worked only seasonally), yet the mean figure for reported monthly spending was roughly \$1750. A third of the sample consider \$7 an hour too low a wage to work for, and another third said they would not work for minimum wage.

While nearly all the respondents said they plan to finish high school, most voiced low levels of interest in school achievement and involvement in school-sponsored activities like sports and clubs (even amongst the 25% who said they plan to attend college/university). On average, respondents skipped school nine days a month. The vast majority said they dislike school and their teachers. About half thought their teachers disliked them personally; however, this did not appear to adversely affect their self-esteem: three quarters of the respondents said their peers look up to them for advice (albeit, often times for criminal advice), and almost 40% believed they were more knowledgeable than their peers about things in general.

It was suggested in the interviews held with youth probation officers that many of today's youthful offenders hold fatalistic and/or unrealistic expectations about their futures. These expectations are thought to lead young people to pursue hedonistic lifestyles and dissuade them from developing self-discipline and a good work ethic. I found only partial support for the fatalistic outlook thesis. Rather, many in the sample appear to be optimistically drifting through adolescence: Forty-five percent of the sample thought they would have it "easier" or "about the same" as their parent's generation; as many planned to begin working full-time in a semi-skilled job directly after high-school. Most believed their financial prospects are good even with little or no post-secondary education: asked how old they thought they would be when they could afford to purchase their first home, 55% thought they would do so before age 26, at an anticipated medium cost of \$250,000; however, few could say from where the down payments for these quarter million dollar homes would come, save a few "jokes" about financing via a crime spree.

Recreation and Friends

The most prevalent “recreational” activity reported by offenders was “hanging-out” with friends, and using drugs and alcohol. Fifty-five percent of the respondents said they used hallucinogens at least once a month, 23% said they did so between twelve and twenty times a month. Fifty-eight percent said they drank to intoxication at least twice a week, 20% did so five to seven times a week. This latter 20% may well be on their way to severe adult drinking problems. On average, respondents used cocaine five times a month and marijuana six times a week. Offenders estimated spending an average of \$615 a month on drugs and alcohol. More than half the respondents indicated that they were motivated to steal cars when they were high on drugs and alcohol.

Many of the offenders seem to derive status from having a geographically expansive friendship network, much of which revolves around criminal activities. Offenders claim to know an average of over 200 persons by name, dispersed throughout several cities. The data bear moderate support for the notion that high involvement auto offending is in part a function of the proportion of male friends; however, the desire to impress female peers by stealing cars is also a source of motivation for many offenders.

Most of the offenders spend a considerable amount of time hanging around shopping malls. A few were cognizant of the effect frequent exposure to consumer goods played in motivating them to commit crime. Said one 14 year old respondent: “I go to a mall almost every day and see stuff I want to buy ... I do crime in order to buy nice stuff”.

For most offenders in the sample, auto theft is a thrill-seeking behavior from which they derive an “adrenaline rush” unmatched by legitimate thrill activities like skiing or snow

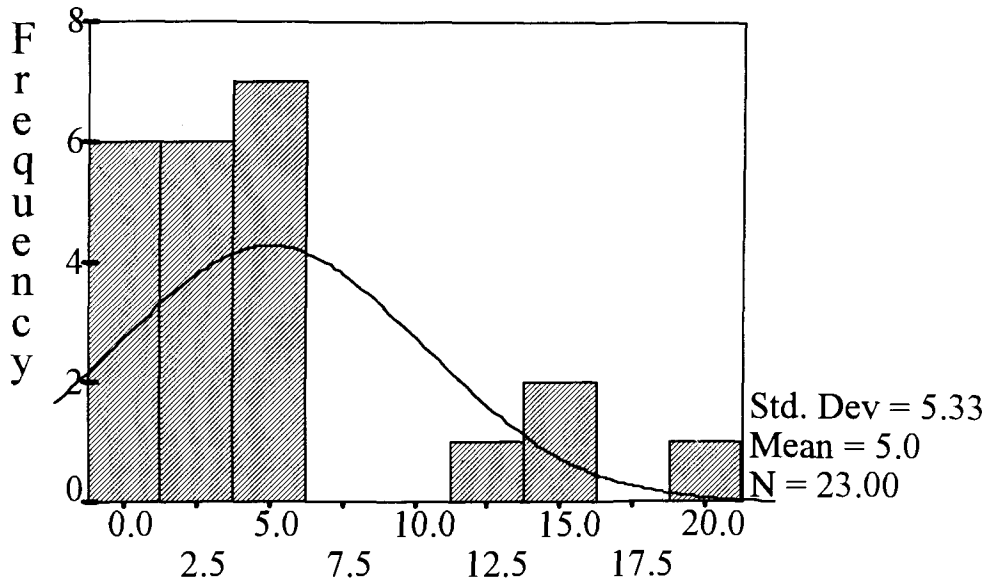
boarding. "I got hooked on the thrill", said one sixteen year old respondent reflecting on his commitment to auto theft. Seventy one percent of the respondents described themselves as thrill-seekers. The appeal of auto theft in this respect appears threefold:(1) driving fast and recklessly;(2) the prospect of getting caught; and (3) the prospect of getting into a police pursuit. Slightly more than half the respondents said they "like" to get into police pursuits (on average, they claimed to have been involved in eight pursuits); three quarters indicated that they were confident that they could evade police apprehension in a pursuit.

Auto Theft Involvement

Offenders with varying involvement in auto theft were interviewed. The most prolific claimed to have taken 500 cars over the last 3 years; the least active offender said he took three in his life. For the most part, observed differences in the level of auto theft involvement among regions appear to be a function of urban versus rural living. The lack of anonymity perceived by small town delinquents appears to be a major deterrent. All of the low-involvement offenders in this sample lived in small cities and towns in the Interior or Northern regions of the province. The auto stealing they described was very opportunistic: they took vehicles left running in driveways on cold winter mornings. These offenders were inhibited both by a limited local street network and by the perceived likelihood of being caught if they drove the stolen car through town where residents know each others' vehicles.

Figure 6.1 is a histogram of the self-reported weekly auto stealing for respondents able to provide such estimates.

Figure 6.1: Histogram of Offenders' Weekly Auto Stealing



Offenders reported having been apprehended an average of 3 times. On average, offenders reported stealing five vehicles per week prior to being incarcerated. Younger offenders said they sought older Japanese vehicles because they are easy to steal -- scissors or a screwdriver is all that is needed to steal many older Japanese makes. Domestic models and Japanese imports manufactured after 1991 usually require the use of a dent-puller to defeat the ignition lock.

Ford Mustangs, Chevy IROC Camaros, Volkswagon GTIs, and later year Hondas and Acuras are favorite targets for the resale and chopping markets. Four-wheel drive vehicles are sought for their off-road recreational value, or to provide the thief with a superior

getaway vehicle. Aspects of model-specific theft patterns explained by the “car crime culture” operating in British Columbia are more fully discussed in Chapter 9.

On average, offenders in this sample stole their first vehicle at age 13 and a half, and were passengers in stolen cars an average of two and a half times prior to their first theft. Twenty-three percent identified auto theft as a “starter crime” leading to their involvement in other crimes. Sixteen percent indicated that they had curtailed burglary in favor of auto theft in the last year as “judges are getting tougher on B&Es.” Several articulated a perception that they stood less chance of being incarcerated for auto theft. Said one fifteen year-old respondent from Surrey:

I sold cars and told my friends they were stupid for doing robberies ... I'd make \$500 - \$2000 a pop; they got chump change ... If I get caught I may get a month or two, they're gonna get eighteen.

Challinger's (1987) threefold classification of auto theft motivation for: (1) recreation (joyriding, and status seeking); (2) transportation (temporary or extended use, or for use in other crimes); and (3) profit (“stripping”, “chopping”, “retagging” or “resale” and insurance fraud) generally describes the different motivations for theft found for this sample of young offenders. Still, a slightly different typology covers British Columbia's high-involvement offenders somewhat more clearly. There was some overlap in motivation categories described by respondents in this sample: Joyriding and transportation-motivated offenders sometimes “stripped” selected parts from the automobiles they stole. Offenders steal automobiles for transportation to use in other crimes harboring a profit motive. For example, roughly a third of the sample said they stole vehicles to use in a robbery, and 61% said they did so to commit either a burglary or a smash & grab. Profit motivated offenders engaged in the systematic theft of vehicles for the “chopping” and “resale” markets often

stole vehicles for mere transportation. Figure 6.2 sets out the typology developed to describe the three most prevalent frequent offender types encountered in this sample:

Figure 6.2: Frequent Auto Theft Offender Typologies

Acting out joy rider	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• most emotionally disturbed of the offenders interviewed - likes to “shock” & intimidate peers by convincing them he is crazy• engages in outrageous driving stunts - dangerous to pursue - steals cars to intentionally “trash” them• vents anger via car - responsible for large proportion of the totaled and burned cars• most committed to crime - irrational, morally undeveloped• least likely to be deterred - doesn’t care what happens
Thrill-seeker	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• heavily into drugs - doing crime is a way to finance the habit - entices others to feel the “rush” of doing crime, notably B&E and auto theft• engages in car stunts and willful damage to cars, but also steals them for transportation and to use in other crimes• steals parts for sale in a loosely structured friendship network• likely to look for the “rush” elsewhere if autos become difficult to steal - “rush” might be legitimately substituted
Instrumental Offender	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• doing auto theft for the money - most active of the offenders (steals 5 or more cars a week) but the smallest proportion of the sample - connected to organized theft rings• rational, intelligent - does crimes with least risk - got into auto theft from burglary - thinks about outcomes• doing crime while young offender status affords them lenient treatment—indicate that they will quit crime at age eighteen

Seventy-one percent of the sample cited joyriding as the theft motivation for at least half their thefts. One variant of joyriding often incorporates deliberate destruction of the vehicles stolen - 68% indicated that they had stolen vehicles for the express purpose of "trashing" them. Profit-motivated auto stealing in this sample was evidenced in three areas: (1) vehicle acquisition for an adult-run theft ring;³⁵ (2) theft for use in other crimes (notably burglary and smash-and-grabs); and (3) haphazard stripping of parts for which a ready market existed. Instrumental offenders claiming to have stolen vehicles for the resale and chopping markets were responsible for a disproportionate number of thefts.

In stark contrast with the acting-out joyrider and thrill-seeker, instrumental offenders expressed little interest in adrenaline producing behavior. They took precautions to avoid police and usually worked alone. They possessed a reflective, business-like attitude about their crime of choice and this is what probably enabled them to find work with organized theft rings.

Roughly a third of the offenders thought underground parking lots the best place to steal vehicles, and another 20% mentioned car dealerships as easy targets due to the careless manner in which keys are handled by employees. Mall parking lots were also mentioned as prime "hunting grounds". This is interesting in view of what the victimization survey data tell us about where cars are actually stolen. It may represent another example of the difference between rationally articulated target hunting areas and actual target hunting areas that has been noted in the research on burglary (See, e.g., Reppetto, 1974; Brantingham and Brantingham, 1978; Maguire, 1982; Rengert and Wasilchick, 1985; Cromwell, et al., 1991).

³⁵ Less than a third of this sample of repeat offenders reported having ever stolen a vehicle for a theft ring.

Nearly two-thirds of the offenders (23 of 31) interviewed in this part of the study could provide confident estimates of the number of vehicles they were stealing per week on average over the course of the year prior to being incarcerated (refer to Figure 6.1). Excluding the three most prolific (and four offenders expressing minimal auto theft involvement) auto thieves in this sample, the remaining 16 offenders took an average of 2.8 ($\sigma = 1.82$) vehicles a week, for a yearly total of 146 vehicles per offender. These self-reported figures are not at odds with other yearly auto stealing figures reported by high involvement offenders (e.g., Wilson and Abrahamse, 1992). Even allowing for a degree of bragging, if the total number of autos reported stolen by this small sample of 16 juveniles were halved, it would still account for approximately 7% of the auto thefts known to police in British Columbia in 1992, or roughly \$3 million in direct costs.

Deterrence

Offenders' perceptions of deterrence was gauged in two areas - the prospects of target hardening and more generally how they view the criminal justice system's response to their offending. Notwithstanding the possibility of functional displacement in the form of "carjacking", or displacement to less protected vehicles, target-hardening appears, on the basis of interviews with these offenders, the best prospect for reducing auto theft. Three quarters of the offenders said they avoid cars equipped with alarms and flee if an alarm goes off while attempting to steal a car. Forty percent of the offenders thought an alarm the best anti-theft device; several mentioned the talking variety as particularly worrisome. Few offenders have encountered the "Club" or similar steering wheel lock. Nonetheless, almost two thirds said they would avoid a car whose steering wheel was locked by such a device.

The findings offer little encouragement for the deterrent value of the Combat Auto Theft (CAT) sticker program. The CAT sticker program attempts to assist police in the identification of stolen autos by having owners who do not routinely operate their vehicles between the hours of 1:00 and 5:00 AM place a brightly colored sticker on the inside of the rear window where it is visible to patrolling police officers. Among other things, the sticker grants police blanket permission to stop and search a vehicle bearing this sticker whenever it is observed in operation during the proscribed hours. Only three offenders correctly identifying a CAT sticker said they would avoid a car so marked.

Most of the offenders believed the sticker indicated the car was equipped with an alarm (presumably, three quarters of these young offenders would avoid cars marked with CAT stickers in order to avoid the assumed alarms). The rest of the offenders did not recognize the CAT sticker as a police signaling device and said the presence of the sticker on a car would not influence their auto stealing decisions. Forty percent of the offenders thought an alarm the best anti-theft device, several mentioned the talking "Viper" model specifically. Because the majority of offenders believe the CAT sticker indicative of an alarmed car that most said they would avoid, it may be advantageous for the true nature of the CAT sticker to remain obscure. If more offenders knew what the sticker signifies, they might be more inclined to promptly peel them off once they gain entry to a vehicle so marked.

Offenders Thoughts on the System's Response

The deterrent value of existing sanctions are zealously assailed by offenders; they are confident about prevailing at nearly every stage of the process. Three quarters of the

offenders were confident about evading the police in a pursuit. "We can drive anyway we want ... up on the sidewalk, down a one way street, cops have to obey the rules ... police can't wreck cars so they won't chase you during the day", said the most prolific car thief in the sample, who also boasted of being in more than twenty police pursuits. Another remarked that "it's easy to get away from cops on foot ... and they can't use dogs."

More than half were confident of prevailing in court once charged, and almost 60% percent said they did not worry about being punished by the court, although those that did identify the prospect of receiving a lengthy term of incarceration believed the court had no other choice given their habitual offending and exhaustion of lesser alternatives. Offenders were most vehement about the uselessness of probation.³⁶ Virtually all the offenders characterized it as a "joke". They didn't abide by the conditions, especially the curfew imposed, and no one ever checked up on them: "It's a joke! I'm going up for breach for the first time since age twelve ... I never obeyed", retorted a seventeen year old from White Rock.

Asked to reflect on his involvement in auto theft, a fifteen year old said: "I think it's pretty much worth it - I've only spent two and a half months in jail and I have gotten away with hundreds [of auto thefts]." In response to being asked whether he thought what has happening to him was fair, a fourteen year-old from Victoria remarked: "I lucked out. I only got nine months and I even killed someone [in a high speed chase]."

Many respondents identified the leniency of the juvenile system as a factor in their offending, though several expressed fatalistic views about the prospect of a reformed, more punitive criminal justice system making a difference. While several offenders displayed an obvious lack of moral development, for example indicating that they thought it was great that lawyers work to get them off even when they committed the offense charged, the majority

³⁶ This attitude may be restricted to the repeat, multiple offense young offenders interviewed. We were not able to gauge how youth with infrequent contact with police and probation view the justice system's response to their delinquency.

possessed a sense of the unique position in which the adolescent finds himself in Western society. Many also hinted that they were involved in crime because they could do so without much repercussion:

Q: Did you ever worry about getting caught?

A: "No, I was so young ... its no big deal, I was let off easy ... I got nine days open custody for robbery" (a 12 year old from Burnaby).

Q: Did you ever think about getting punished by the court?

A: "No, it was worth the risk ... nothing happens ... you get community hours or probation ... I never abide by my curfew" (17 year old from Surrey).

Q: What do you think about getting probation?

A: "It's a joke ... for four car thefts, a B&E and three breaches, I got seven days in closed custody, most charges were dropped. The juvenile system doesn't scare anyone, it just bores people to death ... coming in here [Willingdon YDC] means nothing to me (17 year old from Saanich).

"No one is impressed by a short time in jail", remarked a thirteen year old from James Bay in Victoria, "If I was looking at losing my freedom I'd stop ... if I was slammed hard the first time I would have knocked it off." Paradoxically, in one breath many young offenders will assert that they did not consider the consequences of their actions, but this appears to be mostly situational. Given enough time to reflect on their behavior, it becomes evident that many offenders weigh the costs and benefits of their actions and conclude that crime is worth pursuing so long as their young offender status insulates them from any meaningful sanction.

Summary

Having established that the incidence of auto theft in British Columbia is principally attributable to youthful offenders seeking vehicles for short term purposes, it would also appear that a relatively small number of youth are disproportionately responsible for a large volume of theft. Even allowing for considerable over-estimation by respondents, the findings suggest that the most prolific auto thieves in British Columbia are of the repeat multiple-offense variety interviewed in this component of the study.

Because of the difficulties involved in sampling from across a wide range of young people whose auto stealing activities have come to the attention of the police, the Committee was left sampling a number of offenders who were incarcerated. While attempts were made to interview a number of young offenders whose professed involvement in auto theft was minimal in an effort to explore differences between them and more highly committed offenders, the views expressed by many of the offenders in this sample reflect the most hardened outlook.

As committed to crime as this group expressed itself to be, few of the offenders demonstrated much sophistication or competence regarding auto theft techniques. Most of the auto stealing they described was make and model-specific, and involved brute force oriented lock defeating activities -- most offenders simply jammed a pair of scissors or a screw driver into key slots and "reefed" them. As witnessed in the victimization survey, Japanese vehicles, particularly those manufactured prior to 1986, are preferred by most offenders. Many wanted to steal newer, sportier cars, but most of these vehicles are "too hard" to steal, and joyriding youth have to settle for eight year old Datsuns. Make and

model-specific theft patterns suggest the usefulness of make and model focused preventive efforts. This aspect of prevention and the prospect of target displacement are discussed in Chapter 9.

Chapter 7

SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENT SURVEY

We need to know a good bit about the motivations, perceptions and offending patterns of persons engaged in auto theft in order identify potential strategies for reducing its occurrence in British Columbia. Although the interviews we conducted with convicted auto thieves provided invaluable information about the offending patterns and motivations of young persons whose auto theft involvement had been previously identified by the criminal justice system, existing data on auto theft in British Columbia provides little information that would permit us to estimate the prevalence of auto theft among this age cohort. In an effort to better document auto theft knowledge and involvement among teenagers in British Columbia, we administered a self-report survey to 1254 students attending eight different senior secondary schools in two regions of the province, seeking information similar to that obtained in the offender interviews.

Goldstein (1990) notes the role universities have to play in assisting police in their problem-solving endeavors. This component of the research made use of university students enrolled in a third year crime prevention course being taught in the School of Criminology at Simon Fraser University. Students worked with the project's research team to administer the school survey, and to code and analyze the data using SPSS. In so doing, students were provided an opportunity to enrich their educations by engaging in research in the "real world". Students were assigned to one of two groups whose focus was either grade 8 or

grade 11 student samples. The reports they produced constituted a major evaluative component of their course mark, and informed the recommendations made by the Committee.³⁷

Survey Instrument and Sampling Methodology

Self-report surveys attempt to measure delinquency and criminality that would otherwise go undetected. Their use in criminological research, especially among high school students, is widely accepted (Hindelang, Hirschi and Weiss, 1979). We originally hoped to administer a self-report survey covering all the issues asked in the offender interviews, but the survey instrument proved too lengthy for use in the schools and we had to curtail its scope.

The survey instrument (Appendix C) contained 108 items. A tick box format was used to ensure easy completion; open-ended questions were kept to a minimum. The survey sought to gather information in the following six topical areas believed to be relevant to developing auto theft reduction strategies:

- Respondent demographics;
- Preferred and routine activities;

³⁷ Teachers in one municipality in which the school survey was to be administered were engaged in instruction-only job action. There were indications that we would not be able to complete this aspect of the research before the end of the school year if the labor dispute could not be resolved. Because the University's Ethics Committee required that we obtain parental/guardian written consent forms, we were required to attend over 100 classrooms to both explain the research aims and disseminate parental/guardian consent forms, and then return to administer the survey. Logistically, it would have been impossible to complete this vital component of the research without the assistance of these students. RCMP School Liaison Officers (SLO) greatly facilitated the research as well. Given their job action, I believe Burnaby teachers agreed to let us administer these surveys during their class time largely because the initial requests came from SLOs with whom teachers had a good rapport. Surveys were completed just two weeks prior to the end of classes.

- Auto theft involvement and/or perceptions of peer involvement;
- Motivations and/or perceived motivations for peer auto stealing;
- Knowledge and perceptions of auto theft locations; and
- Perceptions of various auto theft reduction strategies.

Since we were interested in comparing the activities and perceptions of two age groups -- those not old enough to legally operate an automobile and those who were -- we targeted grade 8 (ages 13 -14) and grade 11 students (ages 16 - 17) attending senior secondary schools in different regions of the province.

Administration of the school survey proved to be the most politically contentious issue of the study. Members of the Auto Theft Study Committee noted the criticism logged against the Vancouver School Board in 1991 after its approval of a survey of high school students containing questions about their sexual attitudes and activities. Since we intended to ask students to report on their involvement in auto crime, the Committee decided to have the Chief in Saanich, and the Officer in Charge (OIC) in Burnaby and Kelowna meet with the School Board Superintendents in their respective municipalities to discuss the Committee's desire to survey high school students in their school districts. Police personnel obtained approval to conduct the survey in Burnaby and Kelowna; however, the Superintendent of the School Board governing Saanich declined to allow the survey to be administered there, citing reservations about parental reaction to a survey asking students about their involvement in crime.

Random sampling is not practical in a school setting because students are attending classes during scheduled blocks of time. Whenever possible, classes of required subjects for that grade level were selected in an effort to sample “modal” students versus those enrolled in either advanced or remedial classes. A total of 1254 surveys were completed (935 in Burnaby and 319 in Kelowna). A non-random sample of grade 8 and grade 11 students was drawn from all five Burnaby High Schools, and two high schools in Kelowna which included 753 respondents age 12 to 15, and 494 age 16 or older.³⁸

Findings

About 5% of the student sample reported having stolen at least one auto in the previous year; 12% said they had been a passenger in a stolen car at least once during the same period. Self-reported auto stealing and riding varied widely among the eight schools surveyed. Figure 7.1 shows the proportion of students reporting their involvement in both auto stealing and riding for each of the schools sampled.

The proportion of respondents reporting having stolen at least one auto in the previous twelve months ranged between 3% and 9%, while self-reported stolen auto ridership varied between 8% and 17% among the eight schools. Curiously, percentages of stealing and riding do not consistently correspond to one another across the schools. For example, in one municipality, the school with the lowest self-reported rate of auto stealing had the second highest rate of self-reported ridership. It would appear that juveniles are riding in cars stolen by people who are not attending their particular schools.

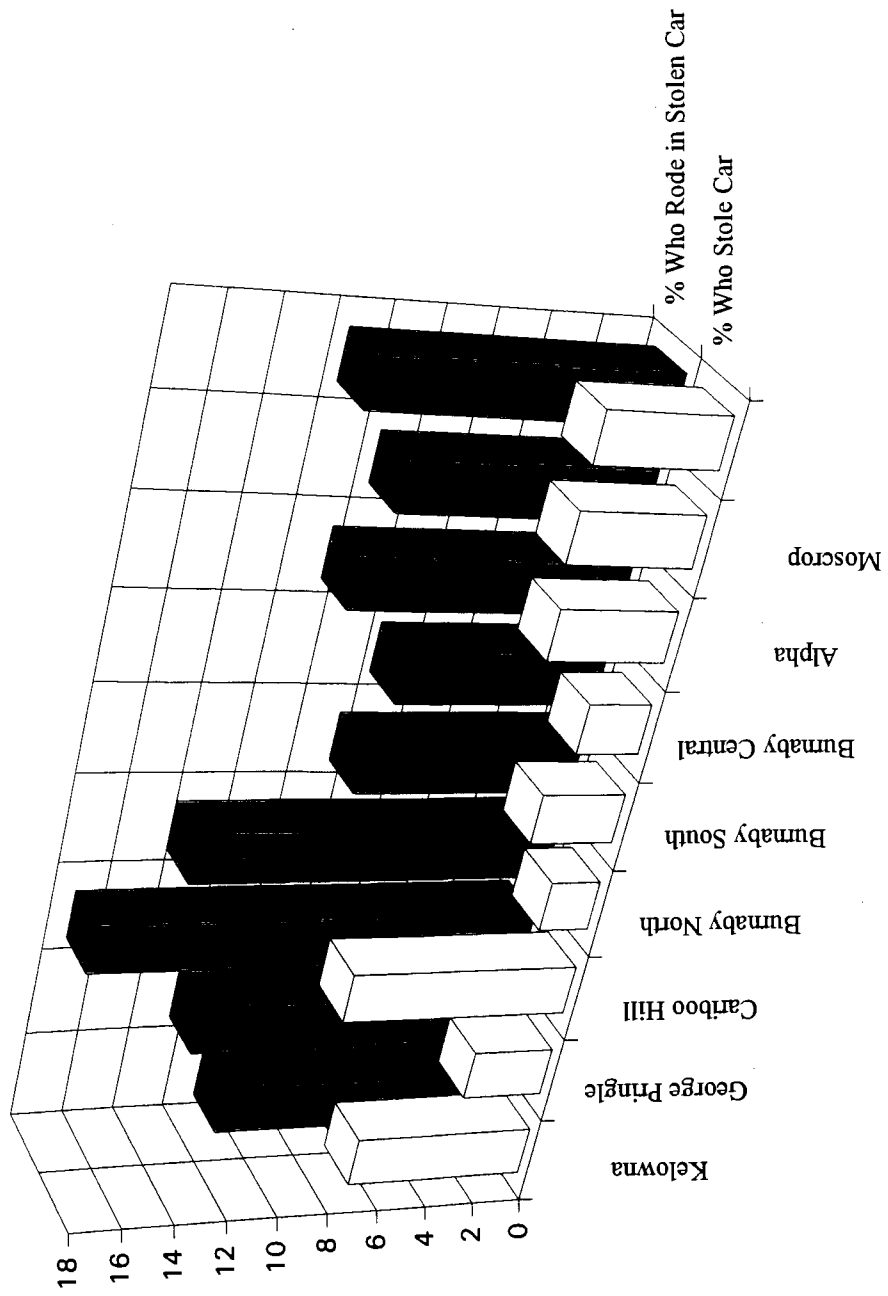
³⁸ RCMP personnel in Kelowna were asked to select one school in an area of the city experiencing a high level of auto theft and one in an area experiencing a low level; they selected Kelowna Senior Secondary and George Pringle respectively.

Similar inconsistencies were observed for the younger, non-licensed respondents whose routine activities one would expect to take place in a limited range predominately covered by walking or bicycling (e.g., Brantingham and Brantingham, 1981). This suggests that at least among deviant youth, friendship networks may extend well beyond school “catchment areas”. Other evidence of a geographically dispersed friendship network comes from the victimization survey: fewer than half (48%) of the recovered vehicles were recovered in the same municipality where they were stolen.

Typical gender differences in self-reported delinquency were evident in the student sample. Female respondents were half as likely as males to report involvement in either car stealing or riding. While 74% of the male auto stealer said the vehicles they stole belonged to strangers, only 36% of the female auto stealers thieves said they victimized strangers. More than a quarter of the sample indicated that one or more of their close friends had stolen a car.

Since the BCACP Committee was interested in learning how youths involved in car crime might differ from their more law abiding peers, these groups were separated for some portions of the analysis. I thought it reasonable to include respondents who reported stealing one or more autos during the past twelve months and/or those who reported riding in stolen autos two or more times during the same period in the “involved” category. I believe repeat passengers are sufficiently associated with car stealers to warrant their inclusion in this category, and will refer to this combination of activity as *car crime involvement*.

Figure 7.1: Proportion of Students Reporting Auto Theft Involvement

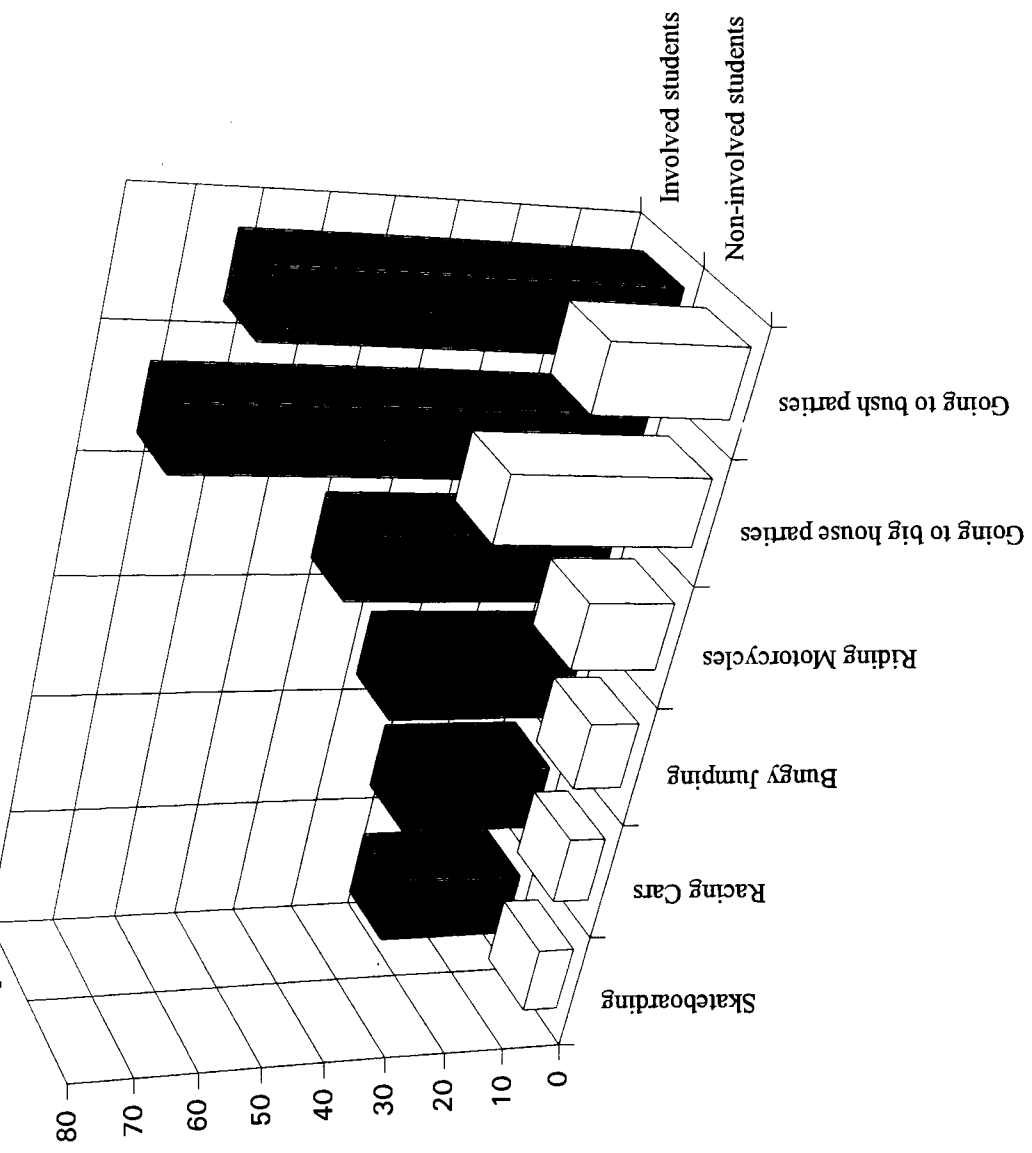


The secondary school survey contained several questions that, taken together, provide a rough measure of socio-economic status. Students involved in car crime do not differ from non-involved students with respect to the number of people living in the home, number of autos owned by the family, type of home lived in, or work status of parents. Except for a 10% higher involvement among respondents not yet old enough to drive legally, I found little evidence that car crime involved individuals have less access to legitimate sources of transportation than do non-involved individuals. In fact, the opposite appears to be true. While 54% of the licensed, non-involved students reported living in households owning three or more vehicles, 61% of the car crime involved respondents reported likewise. Of course I do not know whether the parents of involved youth restrict their children's access to family owned vehicles more so than do the parents of non-involved youth; however, there are other indications that car crime involved students have greater access to legitimate sources of transportation. Car crime involved youth age sixteen or older were more than twice as likely to report personally owning a vehicle as were non-involved youth.

The literature on auto theft motivation notes a thrill-seeking motive for many of the young persons involved in this activity. The survey sought to identify this characteristic by asking respondents to indicate the activities they like doing. areas). The responses of car crime involved and non-involved students is presented in Figure 7.2.

The thrill-seeking activities preferred by involved students closely resemble those mentioned by incarcerated offenders. This tendency may partially explain the high level of willful damage inflicted on stolen autos. Car crime involved students also reported higher usage of alcohol and drugs than did their non-involved peers. In response to the open-ended

Figure 7.2: Proportion of Students Indicating Their Desire to Engage in Thrill Seeking Activities



question, “What do you do that is the most fun on weekends?”, nearly a quarter of the car crime involved group made comments about “getting high” or “partying”; none of the non-involved students responded likewise.

Student respondents were asked to indicate why they thought young persons steal cars. Table 7.3 depicts the proportions of the involved and non-involved respondent groups identifying particular stated motives for car theft. These choices were developed from a review of the literature on auto theft committed by youth as well as the interviews held with criminal justice personnel discussed earlier.

Students involved in auto theft identified mall parking lots and out of view residential areas as preferred locations for car stealing. Respondents were provided a list of potential auto theft reduction strategies and asked to indicate whether or not they thought the activity would work. Half of the involved student group identified target hardening devices as useful deterrents for auto theft; however, respondents involved in auto theft are less optimistic about the prospects for reducing its occurrence than are their non-involved peers.

Table 7.3: Sources of Motivation for Students’ Auto Stealing

MOTIVATION FOR THEFT	INVOLVED (N =109)	NON-INVOLVED (N =1145)
FOR FUN	80%	73%
TO GET SOMEWHERE ON TIME	10%	6%
TO STEAL THINGS (PARTS OR GOODS) FOR THEMSELVES	50%	52%
TO STEAL THINGS (PARTS OR GOODS) TO SELL	73%	68%
FOR THE CHALLENGE	22%	50%
TO GET SOMEWHERE FUN (WHEN OTHER MEANS ARE UNAVAILABLE)	36%	32%
TO GET SOMEWHERE BUSES DON'T GO	13%	7%

TO SHOW OFF	48%	71%
JUST TO DO WHAT THEIR FRIENDS DO	26%	52%
TO GET A CAR FOR ANOTHER TYPE OF CRIME	34%	20%

Summary

Self-report surveys are not routinely administered to young people in Canada. As a result, the committee sought to undertake a survey of secondary school students in order to learn more about their knowledge of, and attitudes about auto theft. The results suggest that young people attach little moral culpability to this activity. The majority of car crime involved students indicated that they stole cars for “fun”, and few are inclined to differentiate between peers who steal cars and those who do not. Assuming similar levels of auto stealing across the province, the 5% of students who indicated having stolen one or two cars in the past year account for roughly 1/3 of the all vehicles stolen. Unlike the high-involvement offenders interviewed, many of these low-involvement students might be dissuaded by low-level police responses. This finding led the Committee to recommend police cautioning schemes like those used in England and Wales.

The survey results also identified the relative levels of students’ car crime involvement by school. Police School Liaison personnel can use this information to target high-involvement schools for special attention and programming, and can feed this information back into crime prevention activities taking place in high-involvement school catchment areas.

Chapter 8

ANALYSIS OF INSURANCE & POLICE DATA

Insurance industry-supported organizations such as the Highway Loss Data Institute (HLDI) in the U.S., and the National Roads and Motorists' Association (NRMA) in Australia have for several years published reports highlighting the relative rates of theft by vehicle make and model. Theft risk rates are likewise produced by the U.S. National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA); and the Swedish Research Committee for Automobile Repairs.

Only recently, however, has attention been paid to the differential risk of theft by make and model in criminological literature. Houghton (1992) produced an auto theft index for the fleet of registered vehicles in England and Wales. In the U.S., Clarke and Harris (1992b) developed theft rate indices for three sources of auto theft motivation - temporary use, permanent retention and stripping. The auto theft study undertaken by the BCACP included an analysis of police and insurance data in an effort to determine the relative risk of theft for different makes and models of vehicles in British Columbia.

Data Sources

Automobile registration and insurance in British Columbia are handled by the Insurance Corporation of British Columbia (ICBC), a quasi-public, monopoly Crown Corporation owned by the provincial government. Approximately 1.8 million vehicles were

registered with ICBC in 1992; slightly more than 13,000 motor vehicles theft claims were filed with the Corporation that year. Of these, approximately 7000 claims were filed for passenger vehicle thefts in the 32 municipalities and townships whose Chief Constables or RCMP Officers in Charge share membership in the BCACP.

Theft risk rates were calculated for passenger vehicle thefts in these 32 municipalities using insurance fleet population counts that include approximately 3/4 of the total number of vehicles registered in British Columbia. Police data compiled by the RCMP in the Police Information and Retrieval System (PIRS) included over 24,000 automobile thefts and attempted thefts reported to the police province-wide in 1991.³⁹ Two features account for the disparities in these data sources. Whereas PIRS data includes attempted auto thefts, ICBC loss type coding guidelines require that a vehicle has to have been moved in order to be coded as a theft loss. Attempted theft claims are categorized as vandalism and are therefore not included in ICBC auto theft data. In addition, approximately 27% of the vehicles registered with ICBC lack comprehensive coverage, and the theft of these vehicles will not be reported to the Corporation. Despite the disparities in the data sources (24,000 vs. 7000 thefts), the relative risk of theft derived from them match closely when rank ordered. Theft rates for the two data sets have a correlation coefficient of .87. Figure 8.1 shows the rates of theft per 1000 registered vehicles for both PIRS and ICBC data for the 30 most numerous makes in the fleet.

³⁹ PIRS data for 1992 were not available at the time of our analysis; however, the total motor vehicle theft differ by fewer than 150 vehicles for the years in question - 24,416 motor vehicle thefts (including attempted thefts) were reported to the police in 1991, 24,268 in 1992.

Houghton (1992) compiled a *Car Theft Index for England and Wales*, in which he opted not to express the relative risk of theft amongst registered vehicles in the fleet there as ratios, but rather produced an ordinal ranking of models into high, medium and low risk categories because of the sampling errors involved. Houghton (1992:30) contends that “only those vehicles categories whose ranges did not overlap could be said to be significantly different.”

The sample for which theft risk rates are calculated in this chapter represent the population of registered vehicles in the 32 municipalities whose Chief Constables share membership in the BCACP. The ratios used to describe relative theft risk among the “fleet” of vehicles in these municipalities are likewise subject to a margin of error. Descriptive statistics are used to demonstrate the variation, and more fittingly, the make and model-specific concentrations of theft risk amongst vehicles in this sample; however, I do not invoke the term “statistically significant” to any of these measures. Relative risks of theft for a given parameter (e.g., make, model, body style, color, year of manufacture, etc.) are expressed as a ratio for the sake of comparison.

Theft Risk Rates

Theft rate calculations in this section utilize data obtained from ICBC. Whereas the Highway Loss Data Institute excludes from its theft rate calculation models with total fleet counts less than 5000, this threshold would exclude too many vehicles from this analysis in British Columbia and obscure rather than elucidate potential regional auto theft patterns. For example, there were 1357 Toyota Van LE (two wheel drive type) registered in the province in 1992; 1 in 10 were reported stolen that year, a rate twenty times greater than the fleet

average. Were this model excluded on the basis of its relatively small fleet count, I would be at a loss to explain why a particular model is seemingly so popular with auto thieves in British Columbia. I selected vehicles whose body styles designate them as passenger vehicles⁴⁰ and aggregated them by make, excluding those makes with fewer than five thefts in 1992. The remaining 1.08 million vehicles consisted of 1333 different model designations. Of these, 131 models had fleet counts greater than 2000, while only 46 had fleet counts greater than 5000.

We had learned from the interviews I conducted with criminal justice personnel, from the victimization survey and from the interviews held with offenders that Japanese import vehicles were disproportionately sought after as targets for auto theft. Table 8.1 shows the rank ordering (worst to best) of automobile theft rates per 1000 vehicles registered in 1992 for *makes* having fleet counts greater than 2000 units.

⁴⁰ Passenger vehicles include the following body styles: two and four door convertibles, station wagons, coupes, fastbacks, hardtops, sedans; three door hatchbacks, dual purposes vehicles (which include mini vans such as the Dodge Caravan and Mazda MVP); and pickup trucks and vans with a gross weight under 5000 pounds.

Figure 8.1: Auto Theft Rates per 1000 Registered Vehicles

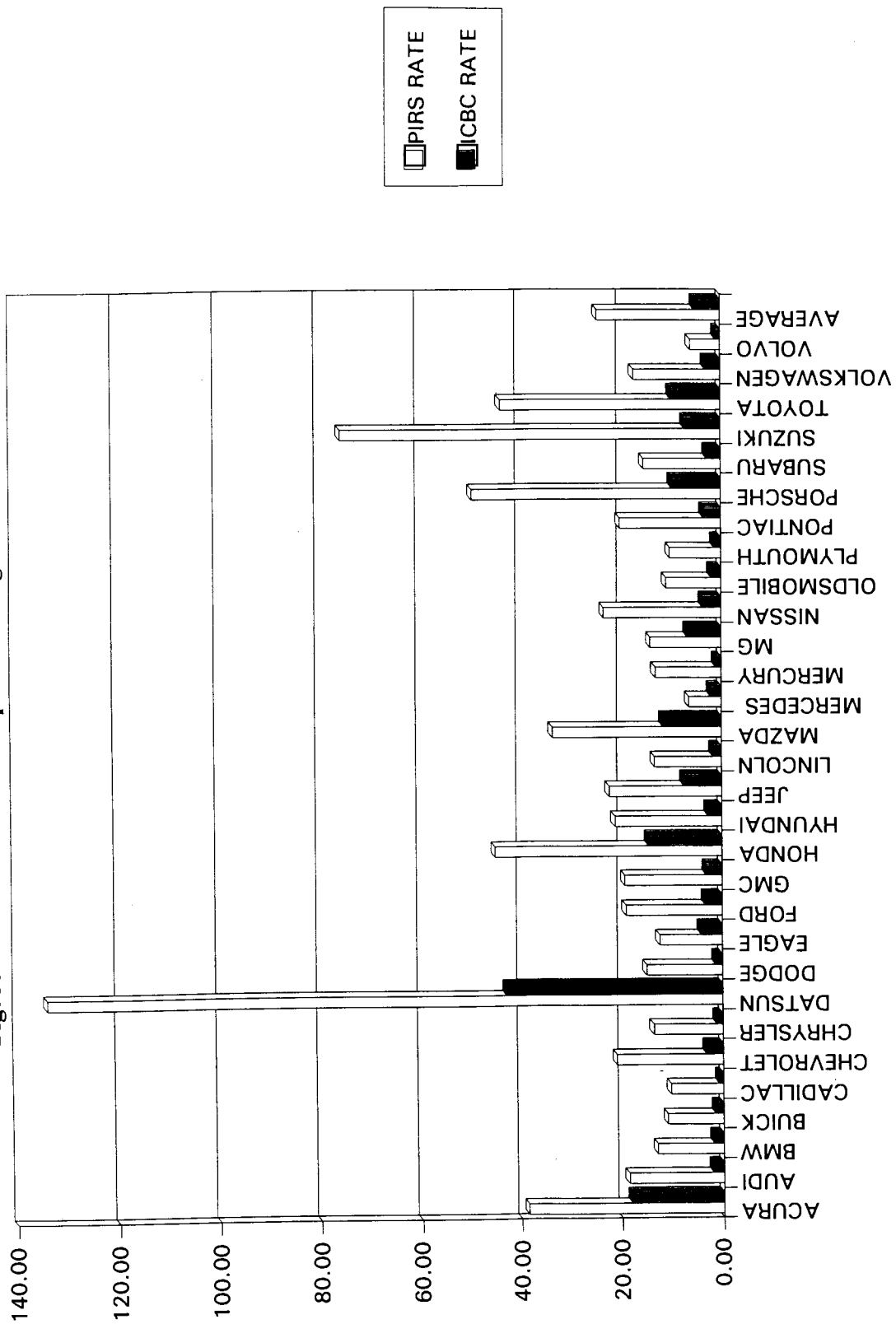


Table 8.1: Rank Order of Vehicle *Makes* Disproportionately at-risk of Theft in British Columbia - Fleet Counts > 2000 (1992 ICBC Data)

MAKE	FLEET	STOLEN	RATE*
1. DATSUN	19431	858	44.16
2. ACURA	6430	124	19.28
3. HONDA	72295	1089	15.06
4. MAZDA	35005	469	13.40
5. TOYOTA	91398	1004	10.98
6. SUZUKI	4443	43	9.68
7. JEEP	11917	113	9.48
8. MERCEDES BENZ	3444	25	7.26
FLEET AVERAGE			6.63
9. SUBARU	2633	17	6.46
10. NISSAN	26725	123	4.60
11. PONTIAC	53826	241	4.48
12. VOLKSWAGEN	32859	146	4.44
13. FORD	170259	736	4.32
14. CHEVROLET	137657	589	4.28
15. GMC	55597	224	4.03
16. LINCOLN	2001	8	4.00
17. AUDI	2716	10	3.68
18. BMW	5466	18	3.29
19. HYUNDAI	12486	39	3.12
20. CADILLAC	3953	10	2.53
21. OLDSMOBILE	33151	81	2.44
22. BUICK	23278	44	1.89
23. MERCURY	20228	37	1.83
24. DODGE	54454	98	1.80
25. CHRYSLER	17621	30	1.70
26. PLYMOUTH	35760	55	1.54
27. VOLVO	11953	16	1.34

* Rate per 1000 registered vehicles

As can be seen in Table 8.1 above, Datsun vehicles were stolen at a rate 6.5 times greater than average, and nearly three times greater than the second most at-risk make, Toyota. At the other end of the scale, Cadillac, some models of which rank among the highest for theft risk in some U.S. metropolitan areas (HLDI, 1990; Clarke and Harris

1992b), was among the least at-risk makes in British Columbia. Japanese imports constitute eight of the ten vehicle makes most at-risk of being stolen. The higher rates of theft for these models is consistent with the stated theft preferences of the offenders I interviewed.

Table 8.2 shows the greater variation in theft risk rates when vehicles are aggregated by *model*. Omitting models with relatively small fleet counts, as does the HLDI for its theft risk ratings, would obscure evidence of auto offender search patterns. I take the high rate of theft among models with small fleet counts to be indicative of very selective target searches by offenders whose auto stealing skills are limited to specific models. Models most at-risk of theft (e.g., Datsun 200SX, Toyota Cargo Van) were identified as the “easiest” to steal by the offenders I interviewed. Several offenders identified these models as “training aids,” by which they meant vehicles they sought out when beginning their auto stealing activities. This seems especially relevant given other findings, in particular the fact that 80% of the thefts reported in the victimization survey occurred in “well-lit” locations. Semi-skilled, model-specific juvenile auto thieves increase their chances of finding the relatively scarce vehicle models sought when they go looking in large parking lots under good lighting where their quarry is most numerous and visible.

As shown in Table 8.2, the fleet counts of some of the most disproportionately stolen models are relatively small. Figure 8.2 demonstrates the skewness in *make* and *model* aggregated theft counts. Extended searches by profit motivated offenders seeking specific *models* for the resale and parts markets are to be expected; however, notwithstanding their preference for sporty models, if the majority of juvenile auto stealing was merely a function

of opportunity, we would expect to observe a more normal distribution of vehicle thefts amongst the population fleet.

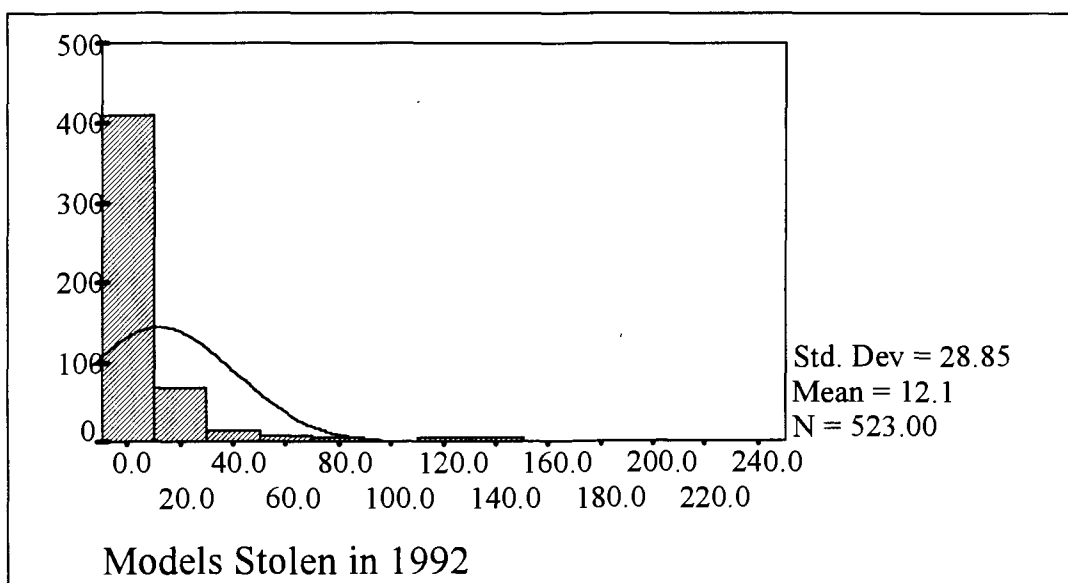
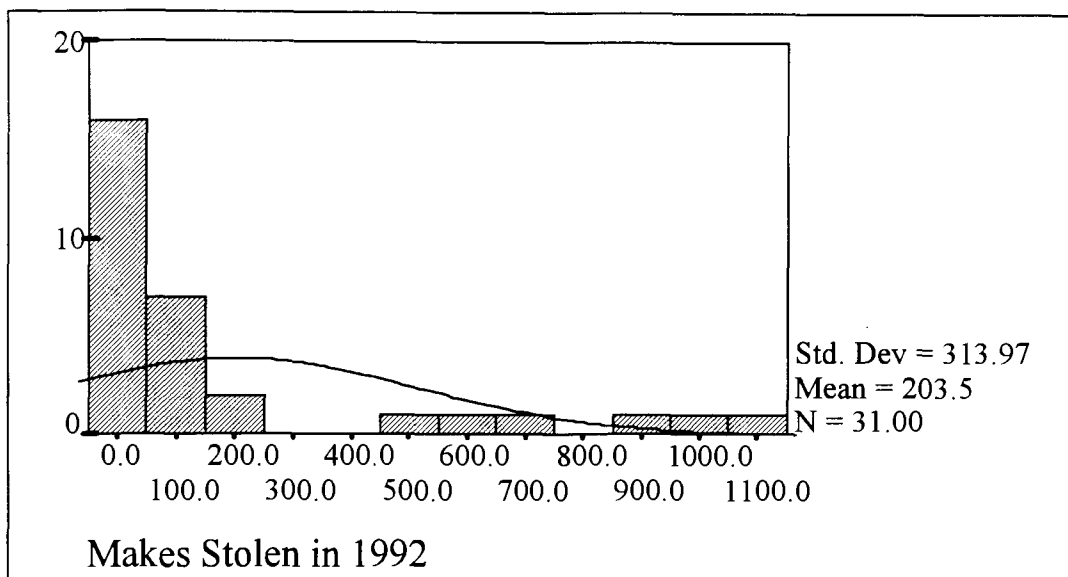
Table 8.2: Rank Order of Vehicle Models Disproportionately at-risk of Theft in British Columbia - Fleet Counts > 200 (1992 ICBC Data)

	MAKE	MODEL	FLEET	STOLEN	RATE*
1.	TOYOTA	CARGO VAN	966	119	123.19
2.	TOYOTA	VAN LE	1432	154	107.54
3.	TOYOTA	VAN DE	210	20	95.24
4.	DATSUN	280Z	1816	172	94.71
5.	DATSUN	200 SX	1880	174	92.55
6.	TOYOTA	MR2	614	48	78.18
7.	DATSUN	210	3465	197	56.85
8.	DATSUN	240Z	381	20	52.49
9.	HONDA	PRELUDE	8239	400	48.55
10.	MAZDA	RX7	3405	136	39.94
11.	DATSUN	510	2696	110	40.80
12.	DATSUN	710	656	24	36.59
13.	DATSUN	310	839	27	32.18
14.	JEEP	YJ	683	21	30.74
15.	PLYMOUTH	LASER	213	5	23.47
16.	ACURA	INTEGRA	5162	111	21.50
			FLEET	AVERAGE	6.63

*Rate per 1000 registered vehicles

The passenger vehicle fleet was comprised of 14 body styles. Of these, two door coupes, two door sedans and three door hatchbacks were stolen at rates disproportionate to their fleet population counts. Figures 8.3 shows the proportions of the 14 passenger vehicle body styles for both the fleet of vehicles and vehicles stolen in 1992.

Figure 8.2: Histograms of Stolen Vehicle Counts Aggregated by Make and Model (1992 ICBC Data)



Consistent with other findings (Clarke and Harris, 1992b), the number of four door station wagons stolen was much lower than their fleet proportions. Black and red vehicles were disproportionately stolen; brown automobiles appeared to be the least desirable to

thieves in relation to their fleet proportion, followed by green. This color preference appears to be largely a function of sought after body styles -- joyriders like to steal two door coupes and hatchbacks, and these body styles are disproportionately painted black and red.

Theft Variation by Year of Manufacture

Perhaps the findings with the most important preventive implications were those regarding theft rates as a function of vehicle age. The auto theft problem in British Columbia is largely attributable to the vulnerability of both door and ignition locks of Japanese vehicles manufactured six to ten years ago, depending on make. Figure 8.4 depicts the relative theft rates for selected *makes*⁴¹ by year of manufacture. Relative theft rates per 1000 registered vehicles were calculated for each year of manufacture for the selected makes. These rates are relatively invariant for Ford and Chevrolet, both domestic makes. By way of contrast, Japanese makes exhibit considerable variation in theft risk rates by year of manufacture. Theft rates generally declined for all more recently manufactured vehicles.

⁴¹ Datsun, the most at-risk makes was excluded because its high theft rate changes the scale of the graph and obscures observable yearly fluctuations for all other makes.

Figure 8.3: Theft Rates Aggregated by Body Style

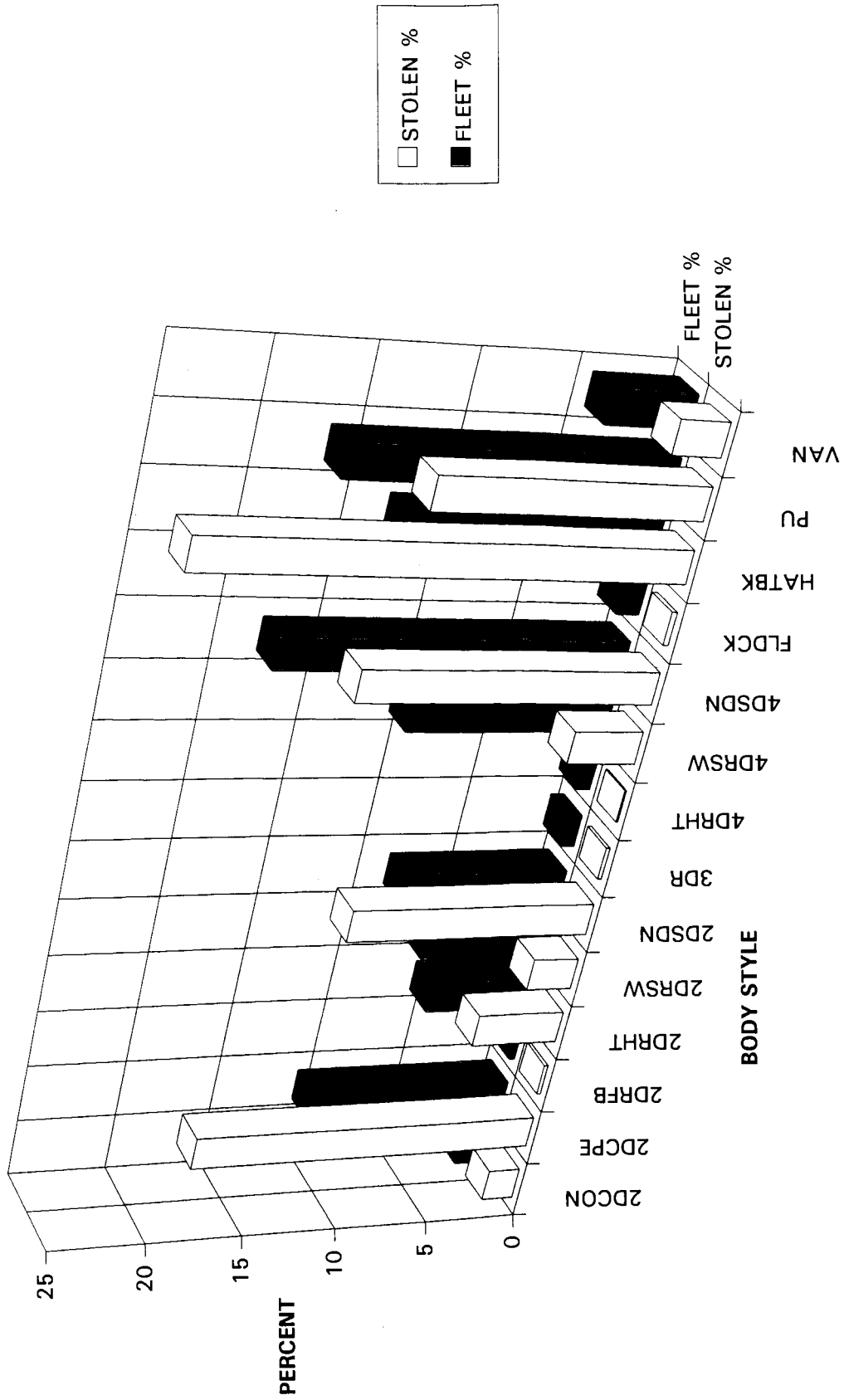
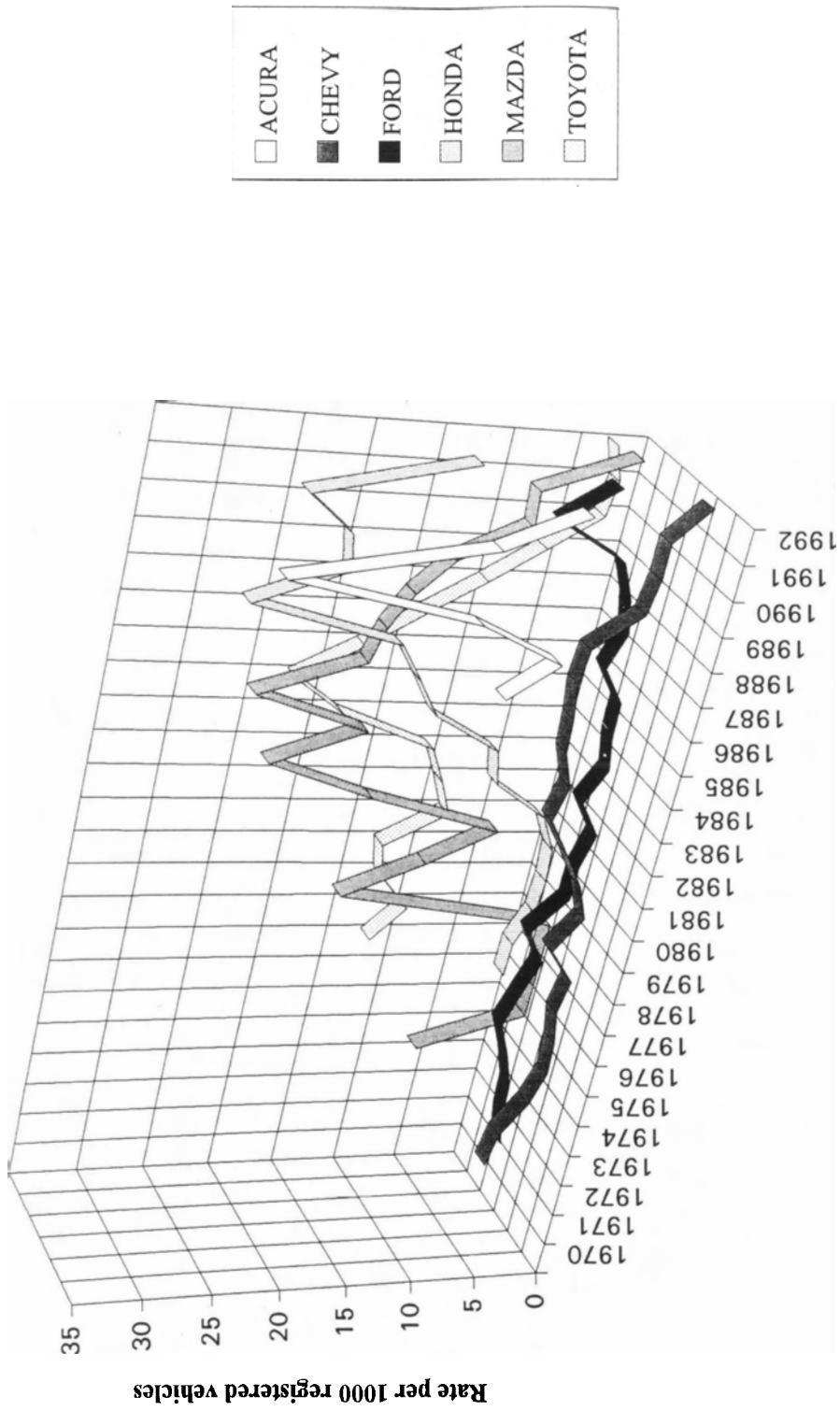


Figure 8.4: Variations in Theft Rates by Year of Manufacture for Selected Makes



There are several plausible explanations for the patterns observed. First, the material and design of ignition locks may vary by year. The spikes observed in the theft rates for each make may signal design and material changes in the ignition lock apparatus for those years of manufacture. Karmen (1981) found that the disproportionate theft of Ford vehicles in the U.S. between 1969 and 1974 was attributable to substandard ignition locks; upgraded in the following year, the theft rate for Ford vehicles declined 25%.⁴²

Southall and Ekblom (1985) note that ignition lock vulnerability can increase significantly even within the first two years of operation due to wear, and there is evidence that these subtle changes in theft vulnerability are perceived by offenders. For example, offenders I interviewed told me that both door and ignition locks in Hondas and Acuras manufactured after 1991 were harder to defeat. The observed rates of theft for these makes reflect theft vulnerability perceptions voiced by interviewed offenders.

Consumer testing organizations that report results in magazines such as *Consumer Reports* in the U.S., and *Which?* in the U.K. periodically test vehicle vulnerability to theft, as does the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration and Swedish Research Committee for Automobile Repairs; however, these agencies only test newly manufactured vehicles.

⁴² Efforts were made to secure data with which to access yearly changes in materials used in lock mechanisms for different vehicle makes; none was obtained. It is also possible that the low rate of auto theft in Japan gave auto manufacturers there little reason to equip vehicles with sturdy locks. One auto theft investigator I interviewed told me that Toyota produced only 50 key codes during its first five years of manufacture for export. Public Relations personnel at Toyota Canada were unable to verify this assertion; however, I have found that the keys to my 1985 Toyota pickup will start the same models of similar year pickups. Several of the interviewed offenders indicated that they collect keys for trying on vehicles they want to steal. Offenders get familiar with key configurations for various makes for a range of years. One offender I interviewed told me the exact year and model of my vehicle just by looking at my key! In addition, this age- theft vulnerability factor does not appear to be influenced by U. S. legislation enacted in 1973 that compelled auto manufacturers to equip their cars with steering column locks. The most theft vulnerable vehicles in this sample were manufactured after 1973, and therefore equipped with these locks.

While it would be possible to obtain such information on the theft vulnerability of older vehicles (e.g., the average time needed to defeat locks by similar means on various makes and models), there would be little utility in doing so. The subjective states of mind of offenders, formed through their involvement in the car crime culture, -- discussed more fully in Chapter 9 -- predisposes them to selecting specific makes and models of specific years of manufacture for theft. From the viewpoint of identifying potential strategies for preventing auto theft, actual rates of theft provide a sufficient reference point for identifying vehicles disproportionately at-risk.

Spatial Distributions of Automobile Thefts

Houghton (1992) suggests that the higher rate of theft for older automobiles witnessed in England and Wales may be a function of their being operated and parked in generally less secure areas or being less guarded against theft by their owners. The median year of manufacture for vehicles in the victimization survey is 1983. I used this year to dichotomize the sample into older (pre-1983) and newer (1983-93) vehicle groupings. Table 8.3 shows differences in three guardianship features among these two vehicle year groupings. As can be seen in this table, evidence of lesser vehicle guardianship for older vehicles is mixed. Almost twice as many owners of newer cars stolen in this sample left their keys either in the ignition, or hidden somewhere in or on their vehicles.

Table 8.3: Comparison of Guardianship Features Observed for Older and Newer Vehicles - BCACP Victimization Survey

Guardianship Feature	Older Vehicles (pre-1983)	Newer Vehicles (1983-93)
Parked on the street	40%	33%
Doors unlocked	13%	5%
Keys left in vehicle	14%	26%

In an effort to explore the spatial distribution of this crime, the locations of auto thefts and attempted thefts reported to the Burnaby RCMP in 1991 were plotted on a map of this city.⁴³ There appears to be no discernible difference in the spatial distribution of reported theft location for the most at-risk vehicles, pre-1986 Japanese imports, when compared to that of other makes for all years of manufacture. This is true also for spatial distributions plotted for all vehicles manufactured prior to 1986 verses those manufactured in the years 1986-93.⁴⁴

When appraised of the model-specific auto theft trends observed in British Columbia, Clarke (1994) suggested that the disproportionate theft of older Japanese vehicles could likely be explained by the age of registered owners. Because most auto theft is committed by young offenders, it is reasonable to assume that automobiles owned by teenagers are at greater risk of theft if only because the routine activities of this age group subject their

⁴³ Burnaby is a city of 36 square miles just East of Vancouver comprised of a population of about 160,000. The detachment's sworn personnel strength is the second largest in the RCMP. The Trans-Canada Highway, used by Vancouver city commuters, dissects the city into North and South areas. The municipality is home to major retail outlets Eaton Center and Metrotown whose combined parking facilities exceed 12,000 spots.

⁴⁴ The distribution of non-stolen vehicles was not assessed in this study, and as such, cannot be compared to the observed distribution of stolen autos. Further study is need to more fully assess variations in the distribution of auto theft across many years of vehicle manufacture.

vehicles to greater concentrations of young people's activities, (e.g., they are driven to parties where young persons might be inclined to steal them for transportation home or to other locations).

Guided by this theoretical orientation, we would generally expect to witness a positive linear relationship between the age of the owner and year of vehicle manufacture.⁴⁵ Unfortunately, ICBC data did not contain the age of registered owner with which to explore this aspect of vehicle theft. It would not be unreasonable, however, to expect the proposed relationship to evidence itself in the victimization data we collected. Because they have been identified as high risk vehicles in several components of the study, I grouped Japanese and non-Japanese makes and dichotomized them into pre-1986 and 1986 and newer vehicles for the sake of comparing the ages of their registered owners. Table 8.4 compares the average age of owners of Japanese and non-Japanese vehicles manufactured prior to 1986 and during the period 1986-93 as reported in the victimization survey.

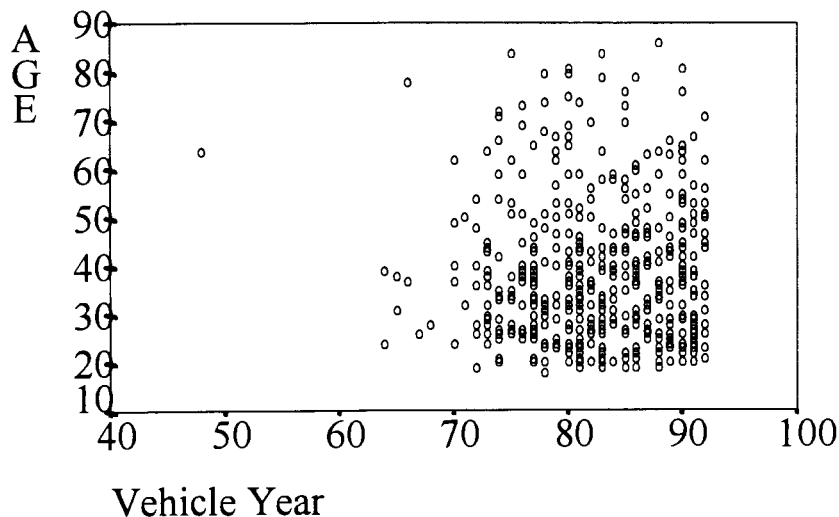
Table 8.4: Comparison of Average Owner Age and Vehicle Make and Year of Manufacture

Vehicle Category	Mean Age of Owner	Standard Deviation	Number of Observations
Japanese vehicles manufactured prior to 1986	38	14.4	193
Japanese vehicles manufactured 1986-93	40.3	14.6	89
Non-Japanese vehicles manufactured < 1986	39.8	15.6	119
Non-Japanese vehicles manufactured 1986-93	36	13.3	96

⁴⁵ This is to be expected at least for vehicles manufactured in the past twenty years, older models might be collectors owned by older persons.

I also produced a scatterplot of owner and vehicle age thinking that there may exist some parabolic relationship given the relative importance different age groups attach to new car ownership. As can be seen in Figure 8.5, there appears to be no relationship between owner and vehicle age at least among this sample of auto theft victims.

Figure 8.5: Scatterplot of Vehicle and Owner Age - Victimization Survey



Unrecovered Vehicles

Fewer than 600 of the nearly 7000 passenger automobiles reported stolen to ICBC in the 32 participating municipalities went unrecovered in 1992. The majority of these unrecovered vehicles were manufactured prior to 1986. Model types cannot be determined for the most commonly unrecovered vehicles as they are categorized in insurance data in

broad body style descriptions (e.g., “Ford Other Type 2WHDR”). Table 8.6 shows the rank order of identifiable models unrecovered in 1992.

Table 8.6: Rank Order of Models Unrecovered in 1992

MAKE	MODEL	NUMBER UNRECOVERED	MEAN YEAR OF MANUFACTURE
1.) Chevrolet	Camaro	40	1981
2.) Ford	Mustang	34	1987
3.) Honda	Civic	16	1986
4.) Toyota	Corolla	11	1979
5.) Volkswagen	Rabbit	11	1979
6.) Chevrolet	Corvette	10	1975

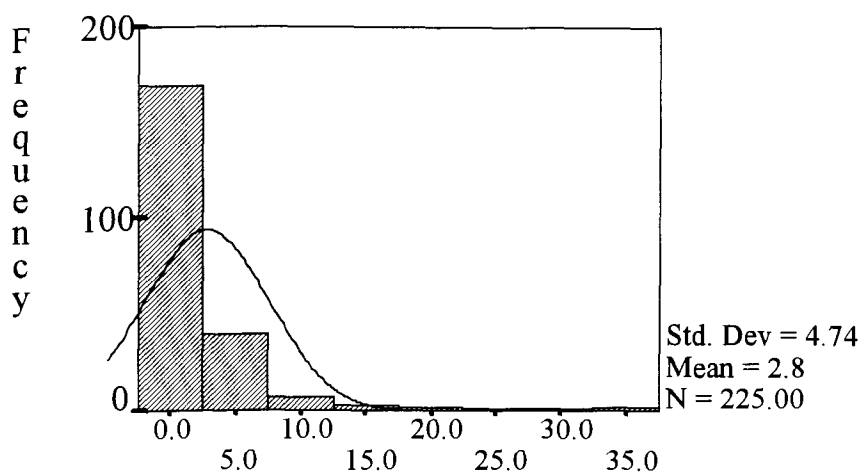
* Aggregated models

Make and model distributions of unrecovered vehicles suggest that “professional” auto theft is rare in British Columbia. Unrecovered theft counts for expensive makes such as Mercedes Benz, BMW and Porsche -- identified as favored targets for professional auto thieves in some studies (Clarke and Harris, 1992b) -- are insignificant in British Columbia. Only 31 of these makes went unrecovered in 1992, and they were older vehicles with little resale value.⁴⁶ Unrecovered vehicle models are widely dispersed across the fleet of registered vehicles. If professional auto theft rings were operating in any significant way in the province, we would expect to find more recently manufactured vehicles with greater resale potential going unrecovered as well as a greater concentration of victimized makes and models. Because professional theft rings most often target certain makes and models, we would also expect to witness skewed count distributions of unrecovered theft frequencies for makes and models sought by professionals. The variance in model aggregated theft counts

⁴⁶ The mean year of manufacture for unrecovered Mercedes Benz was 1980 (N=12); BMW, 1981 (N=6) and Porsche, 1979 (N=13).

(measured by the standard deviation) is six times greater for vehicles recovered in 1992 than for those unrecovered. Cognizant that 20% of the thefts in the victimization survey entailed vehicles stolen with the owner's keys, I take the lesser variance witnessed for unrecovered vehicles as an indication of the greater opportunistic nature of thefts of vehicles not subsequently recovered.

Figure 8.7: Histogram of Models Unrecovered in 1992



As depicted in Table 8.6, only three identifiable models experienced unrecovered theft counts greater than 11, and these model designations aggregated all derivations of the stipulated model. For example, ten different Honda Civic model derivations were registered in British Columbia in 1992. The theft rates per 1000 for these ranged from a low of 2.04 for the “Civic - Two Wheel Drive”, to a high of 58.82 for the “Civic - CRX Si”. Insurance fraud and joyriders’ dumping of stolen vehicles in remote areas are the most likely explanations for the observed patterns in unrecovered stolen vehicles in British Columbia.⁴⁷

⁴⁷ ICBC Special Investigators estimate that about 20% of unrecovered auto thefts represent fraudulent claims. Although I could not corroborate this percentage, several interviewed offenders said they had stolen cars for

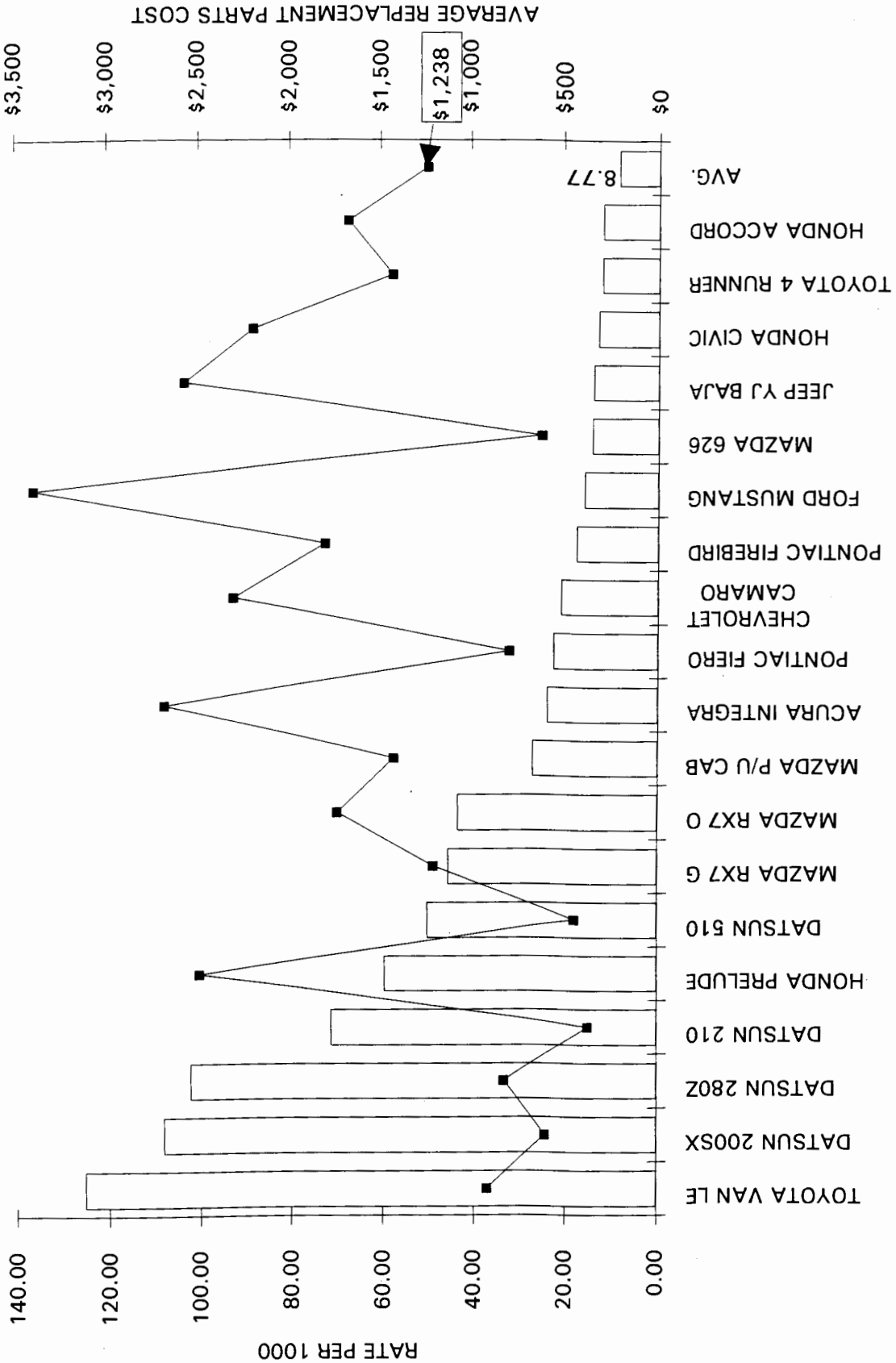
Regional Variation in Vehicle Theft Rates

The rarity of theft and sheer variety of vehicles in the registered fleet made micro-spatial analysis of auto theft risk unfeasible. There were a total of 1333 models in the fleet of registered vehicles in British Columbia, 532 of which experienced at least one theft in 1992. When disaggregated by the most telling measure of theft vulnerability, year of manufacture, the number of vehicle derivations result in cell counts too small for meaningful statistical analysis of relative risk rates, even for the most frequently stolen *models*. For example, there were only three white 1986 Datsun B210 3-door hatchbacks registered in Burnaby in 1992.

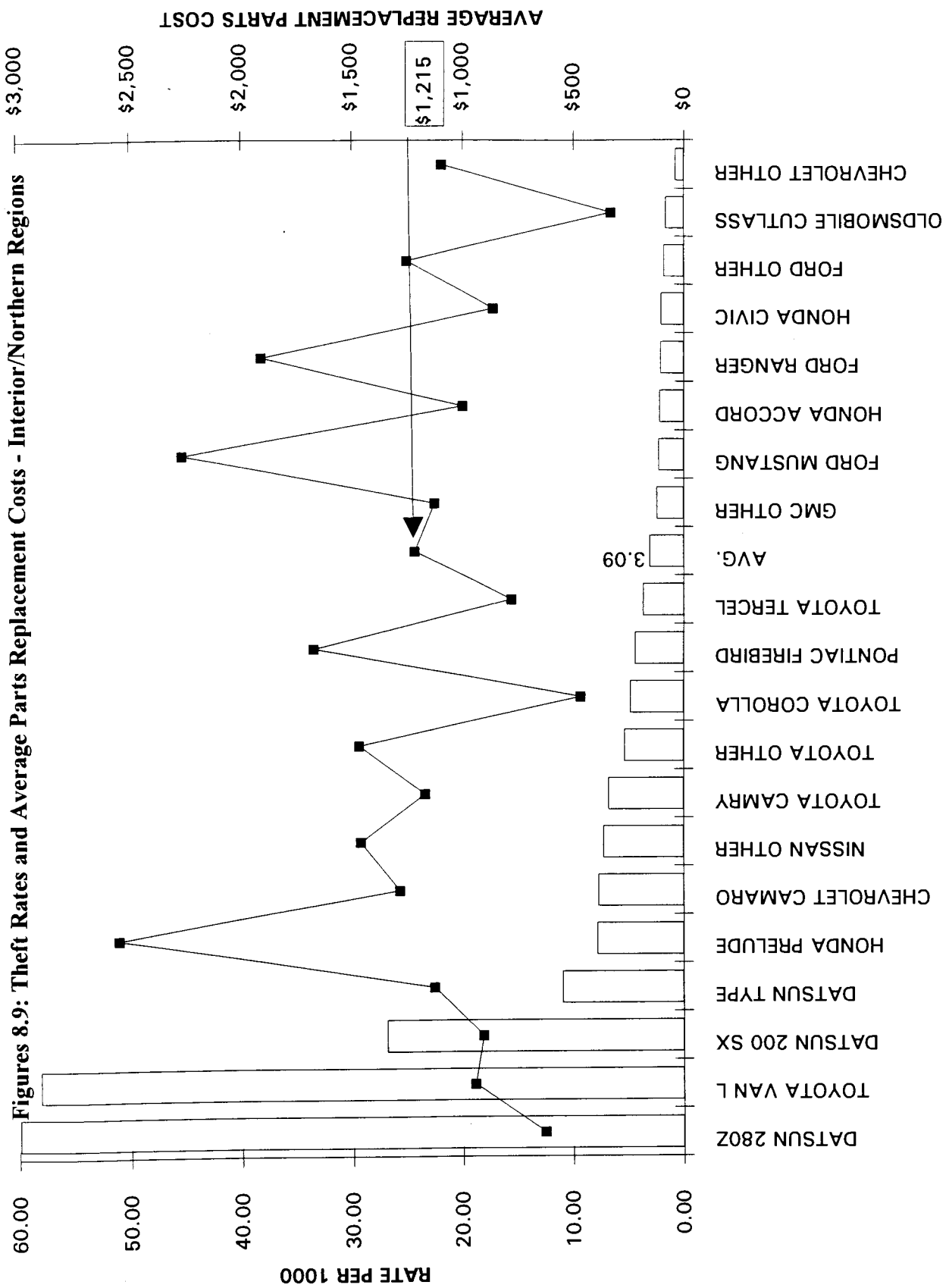
Aggregating vehicles by *make* obscures the multitude of differences that exist within make classifications, differences that greatly influence the rational choices of offenders. From a joyrider's perspective, a Ford Crown Victoria station wagon has little appeal; in contrast, a Ford 5.0 Liter Mustang has great allure. Bearing these limitations in mind, I analyzed thefts rates in three regions of the province -- the Lower Mainland, the Interior and Northern Regions, and Vancouver Island. Figures 8.8, 8.9 and 8.10 show the theft rates and average parts replacement costs for the most frequently stolen models in each of the three regions.

people who paid to have the vehicles taken into the bush and dumped. I recently encountered three gutted (i.e., stripped and abandoned) cars on a single fire access road on the west bank of Harrison Lake. It is likely that many such vehicles, categorized as "unrecovered", could be found adjacent to the hundreds of fire access and logging roads throughout British Columbia.

Figures 8.8: Theft Rates and Average Parts Replacement Costs - Lower Mainland

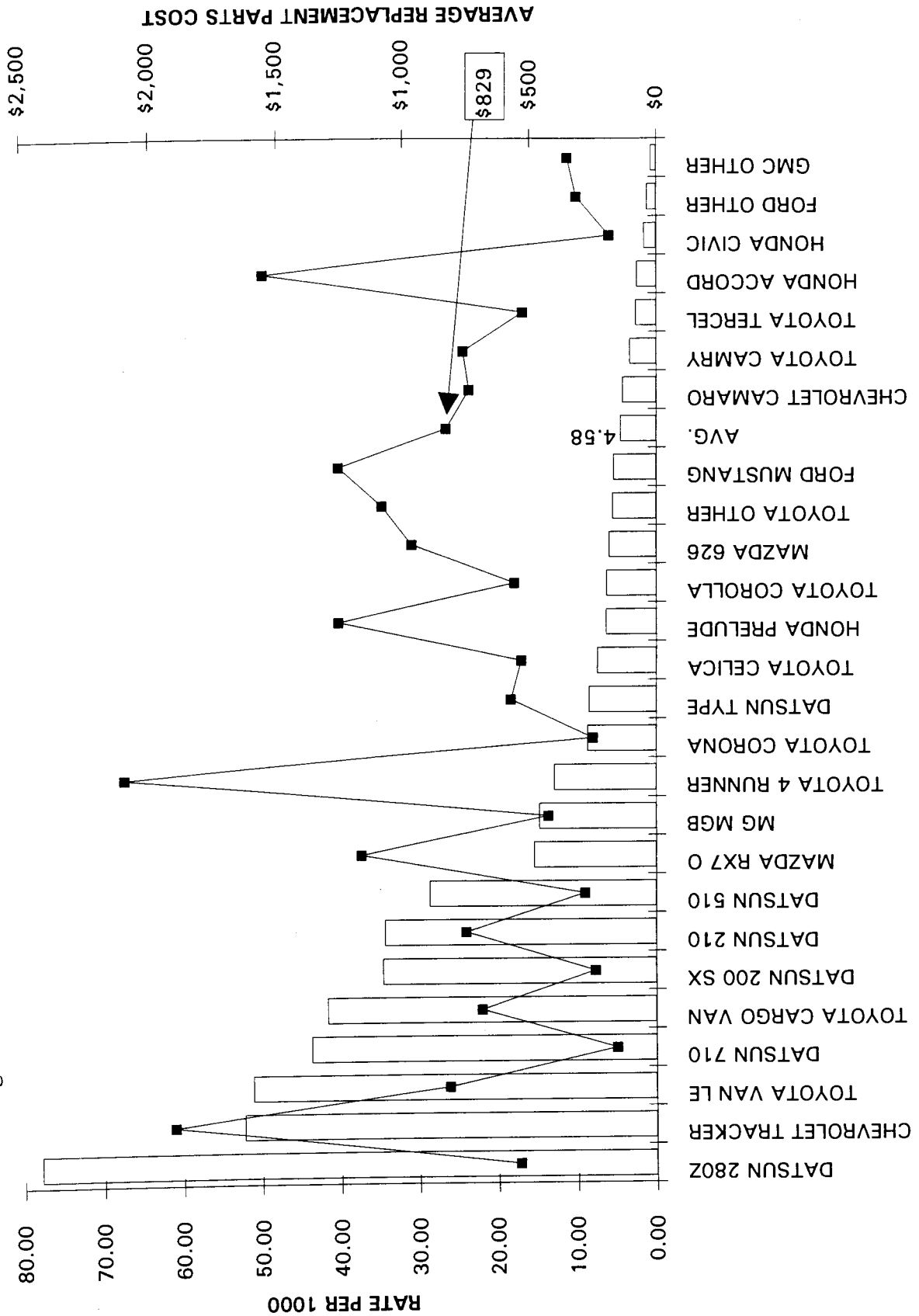


* Fleet Populations > 1000



* All models stolen

Figures 8.10: Theft Rates and Average Parts Replacement Costs - Vancouver Island



* All models stolen

At the model level of analysis the patterns of theft in the three regions are somewhat different. Only three models were among the top ten by theft rate in all three regions: Toyota Van LE, a utility vehicle; Datsun 200 SX, a sporty hatchback last produced in 1988; and Datsun 280Z, a two-door sports coupe last produced 1983. No domestic model was among the top ten by theft rate in the Lower Mainland Region, although Pontiac Fiero and Chevrolet Camaro ranked 11th and 12th respectively. The ten models with highest theft rates in the Lower Mainland were all Japanese models: four of the top ten carried the old Datsun name plate. Nine of the ten models with the highest theft rates in the Interior Region were Japanese makes.

Only one domestic model, the Chevrolet Camaro, was among the top ten models by theft rate in the Interior Region. On Vancouver Island, eight of the ten highest theft rate models were Japanese makes: five of these were Datsuns. The one domestic model in the top ten on Vancouver Island was the Chevrolet Tracker, a small, Japanese-built four-wheel drive jeep-like vehicle. The other high rate model on the Island was the MGB, a classic English sports car long out of production.⁴⁸

Average replacement parts costs were calculated by summing the total parts replacement costs for a given model and dividing that number by the number of recovered stolen vehicles in that aggregated model category. Again, average replacement parts costs do not distinguish between parts replaced due to damage or to parts stripped. These measures

⁴⁸ The problem of small cell counts is evident in the Island and Interior/Northern regional analysis. Six of the ten rates reported for Vancouver Island contain models whose total theft counts in 1992 include five to eight vehicles (theft counts less than five were excluded from the analysis). In the Interior/Northern Region, five of the ten most at-risk vehicles had total theft counts between five and nine.

can be taken as a crude indicator of the relative desirability of vehicles for the stripping and chopping markets.

The picture these data present is corroborated by what interviewed offenders told me. Observed spikes correspond to models offenders sought for their: 1) 4X4 thrill potential (i.e., Jeep YJ, Ford Ranger, Toyota 4 Runner, and Chevrolet Tracker) whose high average replacement parts costs are likely attributable to damage sustained while driving off-road; 2) highly sellable parts “stripped” by youthful offenders (e.g., Honda Prelude⁴⁹ and Acura Integra); and 3) “chopping” and resale marketability (e.g., Chevrolet Camaro and Ford Mustang). Observed patterns are more fully explained by the car crime culture operating in British Columbia.

Summary

The analysis of police and ICBC data corroborated what was learned in the interviews held with criminal justice practitioners, the victimization and school surveys, and the interviews held with offenders: The vast majority of auto theft in British Columbia appears to be committed by youth interested in the temporary appropriation of vehicles for recreation and short-term transportation. Owing to their limited theft technique competence and expertise, most young offenders seek older Japanese vehicles for theft, because the door and ignition locks in these vehicles are particularly vulnerable to the kinds of brute-force, lock defeating techniques most young offenders employ.

⁴⁹ Prelude seats are sought as apartment furniture; they are set in crudely constructed wooden frames and apparently provide good lower back support during the many hours some offenders spend playing Sega's Mortal Kombat.

The model-specific nature of theft patterns in British Columbia suggest the potential of preventive action focused on this segment of the vehicle fleet⁵⁰. Model specific theft vulnerability has only recently drawn the attention of criminological inquiry (e.g., Clarke and Harris, 1992b; Houghton, 1992), and the findings of this study represent the first, tending to show disproportionate theft vulnerability for the entire fleet of Japanese manufactured vehicles. The existence of a quasi-public insurance company in British Columbia (ICBC), provided the Committee with a source of data not available in many other jurisdictions. Studies seeking to explore the relative risk of theft amongst the fleet of vehicles are more difficult to conduct in the U.S. given the competitive interest private insurance companies have in keeping their loss figures a private matter.

⁵⁰ These strategies are discussed in Chapter 10; the possibility of auto theft displacement is discussed in Chapter 9.

Chapter 9

CAR CRIME CULTURE IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

The model-specific theft rate analysis described in the previous chapter relies on auto theft claims reported to ICBC in a single year. Multiple year data are needed to more fully explore the emergence of these patterns. Likewise, little longitudinal data are examined in other components of the study that would shed light on how Japanese vehicles became the targets of choice. As measured in the school survey, young peoples' nonchalant attitudes toward the auto stealing activities of peers, provides a snap shot of their views at time *t*. We cannot extrapolate back to how their views have been shaped. During the interviews I conducted with offenders, I sought to learn how they became involved in auto stealing over time. What follows is an attempt to outline certain aspects of the "car crime culture" (Gow and Peggrem, 1991; Clarke and Harris, 1992a) in British Columbia gleaned from these interviews. I think this car crime culture partially explains the rapid increase in auto theft in British Columbia that began in the latter part of 1989.

For the majority of the offenders interviewed, auto theft appears to be an activity incorporated into lives organized around pronounced thrill-seeking, a continual search for "the rush", by which they meant the physiological affect of fear induced adrenaline. Many offenders described thrill-seeking motivated auto theft as an extension of psychoactive drug use. Often the two activities are pursued simultaneously: "I love to drive when I'm trippin' on acid," is how one offender put it. While many offenders said the adrenaline rush they

received from these activities did not lessen over time with repeated activities, an equal number described a state of diminishing returns on successive outings and said this led them to seek higher levels of excitement over time. I think this partially explains the rise in destructive joyriding that began about three years ago. Thrill-seeking joyriders got bored with merely driving stolen cars. They started to perform car stunts and engaged in coordinated pack stealing whereby five and six friends would steal different cars at roughly the same time and convene at remote locations to hold demolition derbies. This would tend to push up the auto theft rate for two reasons that relate to the car crime culture operating here.

Firstly, many of the older, theft-vulnerable Japanese models (most notably Datsuns) stolen for thrill-seeking activities are totaled when stolen and are written off by ICBC. Whereas less destructive forms of joyriding do not generally remove vehicles from the fleet, destructive forms do, and the pool of easily stolen vehicles declines. While this would tend to reduce overall opportunities for vehicle theft, destructive, thrill-seeking joyriders are sufficiently motivated both to extend their searches for the models thought to be the easiest to steal, and to extend their knowledge of model-specific theft techniques. Both extensions serve to enlarge the pool of models targeted by thieves.

Secondly, while three or more juveniles might typically go along as passengers in more innocuous forms of joyriding, destruction motivated joyriding requires more cars as they are quickly disabled during rough driving and crashes. The desire to engage in destructive joyriding appears to reduce the ratio of drivers to passengers, prompting larger groups of auto stealing youth (driver and multiple passengers) to break into smaller groups

consisting of a driver and single passenger, and increases the total number of vehicles being sought. This change apparently expands the pool of technically competent thieves who in turn educate their friends about how to steal a limited pool of vehicle models manufactured over a limited number of years.

Both the knowledge of theft techniques (limited as they are) and the number of young people motivated to engage in thrilling, destructive joyriding appears to have grown substantially between 1989 and 1992. The multiple year insurance data needed to assess this hypothesized exponential growth in model-specific theft competence amongst British Columbian teenagers are not yet available. When they become available, I expect to observe a fairly rapid increase in the theft rates of certain older Japanese models (Datsun 280Z, 200SX; Toyota Cargo Van, Corolla and Tercel, manufactured between say, 1973 and 1988 depending on make) while others stayed relatively stable during the same period. I would also expect the data to show an increase in the number of these vehicles being written off. Shortly thereafter, theft rates should increase more gradually for a larger number of models (especially within certain make groupings) as the spread of technical skills expanded the car crime culture.

As the theft of older Japanese vehicles became more commonplace, little status is attached to the ability to steal them. The first wave of thrill-seeking joyriders had to differentiate themselves from the less skilled recent recruits. "I stole them when I was eleven," said one 17 year old offender when asked about the attractiveness of Datsuns. Older, more accomplished offenders derive status from their role as "technical advisors" to neophytes. At the same time, this advisor role leads older offenders to seek greater technical

competence in stealing cars and greater proficiency with an increasing number of auto theft tools.

For example, the ignition locks of older Japanese vehicles are typically defeated with either a “close-cousin” key (a key of similar topology accepted by the worn discs in an ignition lock) or a pair of barber scissors. When inserted forcefully, scissors will slice through the soft metal of the ignition lock barrel and work the lock mechanism as would the key. By contrast, domestic vehicles usually require the auto thief to first remove the keyhole plate, (referred to as a “butterfly” lock) before employing a dent-puller which is screwed into the ignition lock. The lead weight on the dent-puller is then thrown in order to dislodge the lock barrel from the cylinder. Once out, a screwdriver is inserted down the cylinder into a groove that under normal use accepts the end of the lock assembly after the topology of the key has properly set the lock’s internal disks.

In the car crime culture, any twelve year old can steal older Japanese makes; “good” thieves can steal domestic models, “really good” thieves can steal the most recently manufactured domestic models, and the “best” can steal high-priced German manufactured autos - BMWs, Mercedes and Porsches. Status seeking prompts offenders to progress to makes, models (and model years) whose theft requires more skill and the use of more specialized instruments. Even those not associated with a professional theft ring like to practice on the kinds of vehicles sought by professionals for the status that accrues from demonstrating their auto stealing prowess. This hierarchy of skill related status seeking serves to extend the pool of vehicles sought by thieves.

Seasoned offenders become acutely aware of police suspicions with respect to makes, models and model years. The offenders I interviewed talked about certain models being "heated-out," by which they meant stolen frequently enough to draw the constant attention of police patrols. While about 60% of the sample said they liked being pursued by the police, those with one or two previous court appearances said they began to think about the possibility of landing in jail, and this motivated them to avoid models that might attract police attention.

The desire to avoid apprehension also serves to widen the pool of sought after models. Being quite cognizant of the volatile political climate surrounding the issue of police pursuits, repeat offenders say they are prepared to attempt to outrun police. The offenders I interviewed claimed they had been in an average of five police pursuits, half of which ended in apprehensions. In order to increase their chances of successfully evading police, high involvement offenders began to steal vehicles that had better performance and better potential for eluding police in a pursuit. The evasion strategies opted for by the most active offenders in the sample included exploiting police officers' inhibitions about taking their cruisers off-road. These offenders' vehicles of choice became, quite naturally, those with good off-road characteristics -- 4X4 pick-ups or utility vehicles.

More general thrill-seeking motives also appear to have expanded the pool of desirable vehicles into the 4X4 categories. The subset of diminishing thrill joyriders were drawn to this class of vehicle to keep stimulation levels high. Many areas of British Columbia are mountainous, and the logging and fire roads that traverse the landscape provide ample opportunity for exciting driving. Susceptible as they are to the images of

larger pop culture, I anticipate this group of offenders to look for the “rush” through the recently expanded pool of vehicles equipped with dual airbags -- taking these vehicles for the express purpose of driving them into fixed objects as featured in a popular music video.

Summary

Multiple year insurance data are needed to further explore target choice aspects of the car crime culture theorized here. Unfortunately, they were not available at the time of this writing, but is being sought for subsequent analysis. Based on the interviews I conducted with juvenile offenders, I have attempted to piece together the “choice structuring properties”⁵¹ guiding their rational auto stealing choices. The limited target choice aspect of the car crime culture draws further support from the highly skewed make and model-specific vehicle theft distributions observed in 1992.

I have suggested that some forms of target choice displacement is currently being driven by the status seeking motives of young auto thieves, and that a proportion of this displacement is “malign” (i.e., that it entails an escalation of the cost of auto theft because a gradually increasing number of vehicles of greater value are being stolen by persons seeking to demonstrate their greater technical skill, a portion of which experience more costly damage). There is also good reason to believe that large scale target displacement would not materialize if steps were taken to better protect automobiles most at-risk (older Japanese

⁵¹ Cornish and Clarke (1987:935) define these as properties of offenses (such as type and amount of pay-off, perceived risk, skills needed and so on) which are perceived by the offender as being especially salient to his or her goals, motives, experience, abilities, expertise and preferences. Such properties provide a basis for selecting among alternative courses of action and hence, effectively structure the offender's choice.

manufactured vehicles, previously stolen vehicles, and vehicles whose owners leave their keys in them).

Results from the high school student survey suggest that about a third of auto thefts are perpetrated by young persons who stole no more than one or two vehicles. Although we did not ask them about the make or model of automobiles they stole, it is reasonable to assume that young persons with limited experience and theft technique competence could successfully steal anything but the most theft vulnerable vehicles. If automobiles most at-risk of theft were equipped with even the most unsophisticated anti-theft devices, many first timers would not be provided the opportunity to experience the "thrill" they seek from this activity. It would be naive to assume that most young people would devote more time to their homework assignments as a result; however, some in this category would undoubtedly lose interest in stealing cars if they were unsuccessful during their first few outings.

Of course, we cannot predict how youth thrill-seeking will be expressed if denied the automobile. It is also possible that a most undesirable type of functional displacement in the form of "carjacking" might result from widespread target hardening efforts amongst the fleet of theft vulnerable vehicles. It is unclear if the increased attention being paid to this crime by the U.S. media reflects actual increases, or a type of moral panic. In any event, the models and ages of vehicles most frequently stolen in British Columbia, suggest that persons of moderate income are disproportionately victimized by this crime in British Columbia, and any target displacement resulting from target hardening efforts to better protect those vehicles most at-risk of theft would be benign in this respect, especially in light of increasing deductibles.

Chapter 10

BCACP AUTO THEFT STUDY RECOMMENDATIONS

Situational crime prevention and problem-oriented policing seek to have police place greater emphasis on the role of research when attempting to solve the problem that confront their organizations. To a much greater extent than has been the case with community policing approaches, POP field experiments have demonstrated a commitment to the systematic assessment of the multitude of problems with which the police must deal. Most of these efforts have, however, been focused on neighborhood level or municipal-level problems.

The impetus for the undertaking described in this thesis was a realization shared by a number of senior police administrators in British Columbia that the growing auto theft problem cut across jurisdictional boundaries and that the police response to this crime was inadequate. This group of Chiefs took steps to enlist the assistance of persons with considerable research skills in order to more rigorously study as many features of this problem as feasible. The subsequent formation of the BCACP Auto Theft Committee signalled the Chiefs' willingness to experiment with a variant of POP that engages senior police administrators and others in the search for strategies thought likely to reduce auto theft in British Columbia. The Committee endeavored to draft recommendations that could be endorsed by the BCACP Executive.

Based on the results of the study, the Auto Theft Committee recommended several approaches for reducing automobile theft. Although professional auto thieves can cause substantial dollar losses, they steal relatively few cars. In recent years, and particularly during the recent rapid escalation in reported auto thefts, something approaching 95% of all vehicles reported stolen in British Columbia have been recovered.

Thus, just as order maintenance and minor criminal problems dominate police calls for service generally, joyriding and attendant problems of dangerous driving and vehicle damage dominate the problem of auto theft in British Columbia. Moreover, the Coordinated Law Enforcement Unit has recently conducted a specialized study of professional auto theft and has recommended a number of strategic and tactical actions to address this aspect of auto theft. The focus in this set of recommendations is on juveniles offenders who account for a substantial proportion of the auto theft problem.

Automobile theft is not committed by just one category of offender or in one set of circumstances. Any successful approach to reducing auto theft requires a series of actions, each of which may have an impact on one part of the auto theft problem. Reducing auto theft in a substantial way requires the implementation of a range of approaches. For instance, one time offenders who account for perhaps a third of auto thefts might best be targeted through primary prevention strategies, school liaison programs, and civil actions such as police letters being sent home describing situations in which charges have not been laid or the establishment in law of parental liability for damages incurred in the course of any auto theft. Occasional offenders might be better targeted through police cautioning schemes

and prosecutions. High frequency offenders pose different problems that essentially fall into the extremes of justice system capabilities.

At one end, the focus should be on reducing situational opportunities for auto theft. At the other end, the focus should be on criminal sanctions that address the high frequency offender's motivation: Thrill seekers might be subjected to sanctions that carry few thrills: closely monitored community work or extended house arrest with electronic monitoring, for instance. Instrumental offenders might best be targeted with fines and actions for forfeiture of criminal proceeds. 'Acting out' joyriders might best be sentenced with incapacitation in mind.

The recommendations cover actions which could be undertaken by the police, the Attorney General, the Insurance Corporation of British Columbia, other organizations and individual municipalities as well as some which would have to be undertaken jointly, in partnership arrangements, between different agencies and organizations.

The recommendations outlined below are directed at changing:

- Offender motivation
- Vehicle risk characteristics
- Auto theft events
- The criminal justice system's response to auto thefts⁵²

⁵² The Auto Theft Committee convened in August 1993 to draft recommendations to be endorsed by the Executive of the BCACP with the concurrence of its full membership. Committee participants could not agree to the wording of such recommendations, and after four hours, adjourned. The Committee Chairman extended his full confidence to Professors Pat and Paul Brantingham for formulating the study's recommendations, which they did with the project's initiator, Donald Render, and myself. These recommendations are reproduced here in point form mostly because embedding them in prose would render their strategic objectives less explicit than originally intended.

Police Directed Action

- ◇ Where numbers warrant, consider auto theft a high priority crime and allocate staff accordingly.
- ◇ Add to force crime prevention strategies the identification of areas with high concentrations of targets. Use school liaison programs and Block Watch programs to provide specific information about local risks and to suggest means of reducing auto theft in these areas.
- ◇ Using both police and other municipal government resources, make direct contact with owners of properties experiencing high risk or high actual rates of auto theft (e.g., parking lots, malls, apartments) in order to provide them with specific information about risk factors and means of reducing those risks.
- ◇ Work with victim assistance programs to provide direct information about how to reduce the risk of a repeat auto theft. Repeat victimization is a major problem for one in five auto theft victims.
- ◇ Develop local crime analysis capability to identify high risk vehicles and high risk locations in particular communities. This may require the assignment of crime analysis specialists, the acquisition of computer hardware and the acquisition of computer software. It is likely to require:
 - upgrades to extant police data systems;
 - development of the capacity to utilize ICBC risk and fleet count data;
 - development of the ability to track both theft and recovery locations;
 - improvement in the ability to differentiate actual thefts from attempted thefts in police files to facilitate site specific spatial analyses and identify characteristics of attempted auto theft locations compared with completed theft locations.
- ◇ Develop local analytic capacity to determine what local auto theft patterns are (where, when, what, how often, probable suspects?) and allocate personnel to actually do analysis and disseminate results.
- ◇ Develop local crime analysis techniques designed to aid operational policing in addressing auto theft problems in “hot spots”.

Vehicles

- ◇ Support CLEU recommendations regarding oversight of the vehicle salvage industry, VIN flagging, and more stringent registration procedures.
- ◇ Direct crime prevention units to focus some resources (community publicity, contact high-risk car owners) and provide prevention tips. Examples of resource direction could include:
 - Crime Prevention Units should urge Block Watch participants to focus on auto theft in high risk areas;
 - CPU's should encourage some *cocooning*⁵³ on high risk vehicles in high risk areas;
 - CPU's should conduct item marking campaigns for high-risk car parts (e.g., seats and mag wheels) to discourage theft and facilitate future identification and recovery when thefts occur.

Events

- ◇ Disseminate information about auto theft patterns within the community utilizing media and other resources emphasizing
 - where
 - when
 - which cars are at most risk
 - characteristics of persons to be on the look out for
- ◇ Provide owners, operators and private security personnel at major private premises parking facilities (e.g., malls, large parkades) with lists of stolen vehicles to be on the look out for and with information on car theft patterns.
- ◇ Feed auto theft risk information back to all police personnel, with special attention to patrol and traffic divisions.
- ◇ Disseminate auto theft analysis information to municipal planners and other municipal officials as appropriate.

⁵³ "Cocooning" is an English developed strategy that gets a block watch to be especially vigilant and to pay special attention to premises that have experienced a break in during a high repeat risk period some time after the initial burglary. This tactic has had powerful impact in reducing repeat victimization.

- ◇ Consider the use of Victim Service volunteers for information dissemination, especially on prevention strategies and tactics to victims and potential high risk vehicle owners, and to owners in high risk parts of the city - persons who live, work or spend lots of time in high-risk areas.

Provincial Government Action

Offenders

- ◇ Consider legislation to make parents of juveniles who steal and damage cars *civilly* liable to the vehicle owner and ICBC or other comprehensive insurers.
- ◇ The problem of immunity of passengers needs to be addressed:
 - Consider civil action in the form of notification sent home to parents indicating that their child has been found riding in a stolen automobile, enact enabling legislation as required;
 - Consider adoption of a police cautioning scheme⁵⁴ as used in England and Wales;
 - Seek modification of Criminal Code to create a separate summary conviction offense of being found in a stolen car.

Vehicles

- ◇ Adopt CLEU recommendations regarding oversight of vehicle salvage industry, VIN flagging, and more stringent registration procedures. Adopt enabling legislation as required.
- ◇ Consider legislation to require car dealers to disclose recent data on car theft risk by make, model and age to buyers of both new and used cars.
- ◇ Communicate known information on car theft risks to automobile manufacturers.
- ◇ Consider ways to compel owners of high-risk autos to retro-fit new anti-theft hardware on their automobiles.

⁵⁴ The police cautioning scheme is a police operated diversion of first time and occasional juvenile offenders which keeps them out of juvenile court but subjects them to a period of police operated supervision. It appears to be successful in dealing with many first time offenders.

Justice System

- ◇ Develop joint mutual training courses for Crown counsel and police covering the character of the auto theft problem and the nature of auto theft events, the evidentiary and public interest requirements for laying charges, and coordination procedures for handling auto theft prosecutions.
- ◇ Consider better ways to track the case dispositions for auto theft offenders and make this information available to all levels of the justice system. At present, most accused auto thieves are processed under common theft or possession of stolen property provisions of the Criminal Code and are not readily identifiable as auto thieves in Crown counsel, legal aid or judicial information systems. This means that it is difficult and expensive to track case disposition patterns for this offense.
- ◇ Consider introducing a crime trends information component into judicial conference proceedings to appraise the judiciary of developing problem areas.
- ◇ Consider development and enabling of new procedures for dealing with sanctioning auto theft as supplements to traditional criminal prosecution:
 - Civil notification of problem behavior to parents;
 - Civil liability of parents;
 - Liability of parents for any restitution order made against juvenile.

Insurance Corporation of British Columbia

- ◇ Take actuarial approach to rate setting for theft coverage:
 - high-risk areas
 - high-risk vehicles
 - repeat victims
 - premium discounts for persons who take affirmative preventive steps
- ◇ Develop computing capacity to calculate and publicize car theft risk rates. (Fleet counts, theft reports, damage reports, fraud reports) A routine report similar to the Uniform Crime Reports should be issued periodically.
- ◇ Make data sets available to individual municipalities for police crime prevention planning purposes (especially fleet counts and theft counts).

Car Manufacturers

- ◇ Be aware of the “half-life” of anti-theft technologies and make a commitment to continual research and development to implement new anti-theft prevention technologies.

Others

- ◇ Western Development & Diversification fund should consider giving priority to loans to firms trying to develop plausible, inexpensive anti-theft add-on technologies (not more alarms!).

- ◇ Owners of high-risk parking facilities should be required to take reasonable preventive and security steps to protect patrons' vehicles:

- Security for cars parked at those facilities;
- Check for stolen vehicles stashed on premises (e.g., especially in large malls, underground parking facilities with public access).

To implement the recommendations approved by the British Columbia Association of Chiefs of Police, the Auto Theft Committee recommended:

- ◇ The formation of a Program Action Committee made up of representatives from the British Columbia Association of Chiefs of Police, from the Ministry of the Attorney General of British Columbia, and from the Insurance Corporation of British Columbia together with representatives of other selected organizations.
- ◇ Such a committee would facilitate the interactions and information exchanges necessary to implement accepted recommendations and would be able to formulate additional approaches. Such a committee could also keep a record of how recommendations are implemented.

We further recommended that the BCACP address other crime problems in a similar manner if implementation of approaches to reducing auto theft proves successful. We noted

that British Columbia has the opportunity to lead Canada in senior level operational problem solving.

No crime problem has a single cause or a single solution. All problem solving involves open study and problem investigation. All crime reduction approaches require joint partnerships among many agencies. Police, however, will continue to stand at the centre of problem identification and analysis and therefore be in the best position to make recommendations for change.

Chapter 11

DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

Problem-oriented policing is not a fixed concept, but a set of ideas with some structure that has to be fleshed out.

Herman Goldstein, 1992⁵⁵

The auto theft study undertaken by the BCACP is perhaps the most comprehensive effort to date, and constitutes a significant contribution to criminological literature on a topic that has been understudied. It likewise extends the case study literature in the areas of situational crime prevention and POP. The overall research strategy of this project sought to triangulate information from many sources in order to identify strategies likely to reduce the incidence of automobile theft. Police initiated efforts to reduce auto theft in British Columbia have resulted in a number of recently announced policy initiatives aimed at both the youthful joyrider and the professional auto thief. As a result of the professional auto theft focused investigations undertaken by CLEU, the Minister of Transportation and Highways in British Columbia recently announced that the ministry and ICBC would start work immediately on the following initiatives:

- ◇ Maintaining a record of Vehicle Identification Numbers from decommissioned vehicles;
- ◇ Promote the establishment of a universal vehicle registration system in cooperation with other provinces and states;

⁵⁵ Excerpt from his opening remarks at the Second National Problem-Oriented Policing Conference - San Diego.

- ◇ Introduce pre-registration inspections for vehicles entering British Columbia;
- ◇ Revise safety inspections for rebuilt or constructed vehicles;
- ◇ Establish stricter standards in all sectors of the automotive industry;
- ◇ Establish “Codes of Practices” legislation for the automotive industry;
- ◇ Explore the linkage of police accident reports and the vehicle registration database (Ministry of Transportation and Highways, 1994).

In response to the growing problem of auto theft underscored by both the adult focused CLEU investigations and the juvenile focused BCACP Auto Theft Study, ICBC formed a Claims Loss Prevention Section in July 1992. The mandate of this section is to work with the police community and others to reduce losses attributable to auto crimes (theft of, theft from, hit and run and vandalism). As a result of the CLEU investigation, this section of ICBC is currently working with the police community to enact subrogation legislation for recovering auto theft losses and to have victim impact statement read in court when an individual is convicted of auto theft.

As outlined above, the kinds of strategies being pursued to counteract professional auto theft are relatively straightforward. They entail more stringent vehicle registration procedures and regulation of the used parts and salvage industries. Our analyses suggest that the number of automobiles lost to professional thieves in British Columbia constitutes less than 10% of the incidence of auto theft (and 25% of total auto theft losses). Although they target a small proportion of the overall auto theft problem in British Columbia, these initiatives will likely prevent an increase in profit motivated theft anticipated by the maturation of the car crime culture described in Chapter 9. The much more intractable problem is young people’s involvement in this crime.

Self-report data indicating the proportion and frequency of youthful auto stealing did not exist in British Columbia prior to being collected for our study, and we therefore have no baseline data with which to compare what was uncovered in the secondary school student survey. Nonetheless, the increase in auto theft during the past five years suggests that the number of young people being exposed to, and experimenting with, auto theft expanded considerably. Of course, the vast majority of these young people will not pursue this activity in adulthood; however, a goodly portion of young offenders similar to those I interviewed will, and the strategies outlined above will frustrate the instrumental offender's commitment to this crime.

I am less confident about the success potential of preventative measures that seek to usurp young people's thrill-seeking motives. McCullough et al.(1990) underscore the futility of a "get tough" approach to young people's auto stealing, noting that in 1987, extra-legal paramilitary organizations carried out 60 punishment beatings and 124 punishment shootings on "joyriding" youth in Northern Ireland. This severe response had no appreciable effect on this activity.

Program Action Committee

As recommended in the Auto Theft Study Committee's Summary Report, a Program Action Committee was formed at the conclusion of the study. Comprised of a municipal police Chief Constable, two RCMP OICs, personnel from ICBC's Traffic Safety Education and Claims Loss Prevention Sections and myself, this committee reviewed the study's recommendations with an aim toward ferreting out a manageable number of global recommendations for reducing auto theft, and then working out the specifics of

implementing them. At its February 1994 meeting, the full membership of the BCACP endorsed without discussion, 13 recommendations (Appendix D) put forth by the Program Action Committee.⁵⁶ This committee has met four times to date, and is presently working to implement these recommendations.

ICBC has incorporated what was learned in this study into its rate setting policy. The corporation has introduced a \$50 reimbursement for comprehensive claim deductibles provided that the victimized vehicle was equipped with an approved anti-theft device. It is considering other financial incentives to induce owners to better protect their vehicles against theft including an actuarial approach. In this type of arrangement, comprehensive coverage insurance premium costs are incurred in proportion to the risk of theft associated with a given vehicle model.

The corporation has moved quickly to incorporate what was learned in the study into its public education literature. For example, it has begun publishing a publicly disseminated pamphlet entitled "How to Buy a Better Auto" that considers the risk of theft associated with the fleet of passenger model vehicles.⁵⁷ In May of 1994, it introduced a number of pamphlets informing policy holders how to better protect their vehicles from theft that incorporate specific information about offender motivations and site-specific characteristics of the auto theft event learned in the study. ICBC is considering ways to notify owners of vehicles most at-risk of theft about what they can do to better protect their vehicles, and is

⁵⁶ BCACP President, RCMP Superintendent Bruce Giesbrecht, told me that although a study of this nature had never before been undertaken by this organization, he anticipated some discussion on the proposed recommendations. According to him, the lack of discussion was a testament to how well the research was received by the membership.

likewise looking at ways to respond to what was learned about repeat victimization. Decisions have not yet been made, but members of the Action Committee discussed the possibility of providing insurance adjusters special training so they can conduct auto theft security surveys with persons making a theft claim in order to reduce the chance of their being victimized again.

Case studies of POP have noted the normative role played by police personnel in orchestrating and coordinating the activities of other agencies (private, public and quasi-public) relative to some problem (e.g., Hope, 1993). One of the most significant results of the study is ICBC's emerging normative role in auto theft prevention efforts. Personnel in the Corporation's Traffic Safety Education Section have successfully negotiated with police agencies in the lower mainland to have police personnel seconded to the British Columbia Police Commission to begin planning a Joint Summit Conference. This conference is to be hosted by the Premier with a view toward bringing together the Judiciary, Crown Counsel, Legislators and Police to cover the character of the auto theft problem in British Columbia.

Thesis Implications

In the year preceding the formation of the Auto Theft Committee, police in several RCMP detachments had formed special task forces in response to auto theft increases being experienced in their respective jurisdictions. These task forces were orientated toward apprehension in the hope that criminal prosecution would deter auto stealing youth. A

⁵⁷ Theft risk ratings reported in this publication rely on figures supplied by the Sweden-based Research Committee for Automobile Repairs; it does not utilize theft risk rates specific to British Columbia. Additionally, these ratings are only supplied for newly manufactured vehicles.

RCMP memorandum documenting the activities of one of these noted that members working on the task force "had the feeling that [they] were taking a concerted proactive role in fighting crime instead of a reactive role." Unfortunately, the desired results were not realized; better than 90% of the young offenders charged by the members of this task force were apprehended for subsequent auto thefts within six months of their apprehension by task force members.

No doubt police officials are often heard expressing their displeasure with what they view as a lack of general deterrence afforded by "lax" prosecutorial and sentencing patterns; however, their efforts in establishing the partnerships necessary to sponsor a project of the nature and magnitude of the BCACP Auto Theft Study constitutes the kinds of activities advocated by community and problem-oriented policing reforms. In the past, the BCACP has functioned largely as the official voice of police administrators in the province, providing opinions on pending legislation and advocating for desired political changes. While members of the BCACP presently work in conjunction with ICBC personnel on a number of traffic safety initiatives, little in this organization's past experience gave its members reason to consider the role of research in policing.⁵⁸

It is often noted in the police reform literature (Goldstein, 1990; Manning, 1992; Braiden, 1990; Murphy, 1988) that while police agencies display vivacious appetites for collecting crime information, they rarely analyze it.⁵⁹ This institutional tendency was confronted when the time came to analyze auto theft data in police databases. I held

⁵⁸ When talking with one Chief about how the study represents a departure from the past practices of the BCACP, he indicated that the membership used to think of the organization as little more than a social club.

⁵⁹ The same could be said about many large bureaucracies.

meetings with members of the RCMP's "E" Division Informatics Section to establish a protocol for the data needed from police files. I was told that our "non-operational" request was a low priority, and that it would take three to six months to receive the data requested. The Chairman of the BCACP Auto Theft Committee made a special request for this data to be released to the research team that was ultimately approved in Ottawa within one week.

This course of events is notable for two reasons. Having senior police administrators involved in a research intense undertaking of this nature exposes them to the need to do more than archive the reams of data their agencies typically collect. At the onset of this project, I had hoped that police personnel from various municipal departments and RCMP detachments would be freed of their regular duties so that they could take part in the various research components of this study as would be anticipated by an action research approach. Although this did not happen, the process involved in this project's unfolding will hopefully go a long way toward dislodging the tendency of police personnel to view doing research as beyond their technical ability⁶⁰, and have them reconsider their commitment to apprehension oriented, "crime control" policing.

Reiss (1992) asserts that research and development units are the major sections within organizations that seek to shape their transactions with both the internal and external environment. He further notes that police agencies rarely undertake research that might lead to some form of useful intervention. This is unfortunate, Reiss asserts, because "adaptive organizations generally rely on research and development as a core technology either to

⁶⁰ Police administrators are not accustomed to the idea of conducting rigorous research into the problems they face. During one committee meeting, a senior police executive made the following comment in response to university personnel inquiring as to how the committee would like to go about developing research tasks: "Well, I don't know, I was thinking well, you're the experts and you're giving us advice. I don't know."

solve problems falling within the organization's mandate or to adapt the organization to its changing environment" (Reiss, 1992:86).

Goldstein (1990:161) also discusses the need for police to expand their research capabilities, noting that they have spent a "shamefully small" percentage of their total budgets on research, most of which is devoted to analyzing their own operations. The historical development of American police (reviewed in Chapter 1) serves to explain part of the reason why police research to date has been disproportionately concerned with internal efficiency. Goldstein also suggests that "undisciplined" use of data by police administrators in the past has led the public to dismiss facts presented by the police suspecting that they were intended to support some deeply embedded police "value" (Goldstein, 1990:89).⁶¹ He further notes that a number of considerations will affect the types of research in which police can realistically expect to engage:

- Severe constraints on time and cost. Police agencies do not have the resources to conduct lengthy studies. Furthermore, problems and the environment affecting them (e.g., the law) can change rapidly, with the potential that prolonged inquiries may become irrelevant;
- Uncertainties at the outset about the kind of data and knowledge required to formulate effective strategies. One starts with questions and seeks data to answer them (as distinct from starting with a set of data and answering questions put to the data). Sufficient flexibility must be maintained to develop the study as it moves along.
- The aversion of the police -- like most others -- to long reports and quantitative data. If the results of the effort are to be useful, they must be communicated clearly and concisely (Goldstein, 1990:90).

⁶¹ Police members of the Auto Theft Committee voiced their sensitivity to this issue during our initial meetings. Most wanted to downplay their involvement in the study fearing that its findings might be suspect for that reason. One Chief in particular, was eager to have press coverage of the study's recommendations stress the involvement of University Professors.

The Auto Theft Study confronted each of the reservations noted above. Members of the BCACP sought the participation of insurance personnel and criminology faculty in order to secure funding and research competence. The project entailed a considerable amount of field work and took two and a half years to complete. Efforts were made to present the findings as succinctly as possible and to limit the number of recommendation to those harboring the greatest potential to reduce auto theft. The study also provided “stakeholders” with what they sought: ICBC received a commitment from a body of senior police executives who indicated their intention to push for changes to make auto theft a policing priority, including proposals to amend the Young Offenders Act (refer to Chapter 10); the police received a commitment from insurance personnel that funds would be made available for implementing the study’s recommendations; and university personnel received an opportunity to engaged in research concerning a costly crime that has been traditionally understudied. It also provided criminology students the opportunity to engage in research in the “real world”.

Almost twenty-five years ago, Bittner (1970) observed that overcoming the crudeness that presently invests much of the work police do will have less to do with putting the external resources of scholarship at the disposal of the police than with discovering the good qualities of police work that already exist in the skills of some of its individual practitioners. In this respect, the Auto Theft Study should have made greater use of police practitioners during the course of this project so that they could have developed the kinds of technical skills needed to conduct research of this nature.

Juxtaposed against the objectives of action research outlined in Chapter 3, this undertaking embraced a bastardized form of action research, one in which university participants performed too much of the technical work required to better understand auto theft patterns in British Columbia, and utilized police participants as mere conduits for facilitating the research. The need to involve police personnel from all ranks in conducting research is paramount. How else will they learn the nuts and bolts of doing it?

Personal computer technology is rapidly revolutionizing our ability to analyze social phenomena. Goldstein (1977, 1979) notes that police in the professional era have tended to view technology as a panacea for controlling crime. He labels this tendency, among others, as the “means over ends syndrome”. Cognizant of the aims of his criticism, I believe that together with the changing climate of police management posture (i.e., one that seeks to provide rank and file personnel with greater opportunities for self-actualization), technological innovations in computer hardware and the availability of software enabling persons with limited computer competence⁶² to conduct sophisticated types of crime analysis, is converging in such a way as to catapult the police into true professional status.⁶³

I am presently working with ICBC Systems and police Informatics personnel to ascertain necessary computer hardware and software needs to enable these groups to transfer

⁶² My own computing experiences lead me to this conclusion. Prior to working on this project, I was computer illiterate. To me, computers were nothing more than powerful typewriters. In the span of a few weeks, I was using the Windows version of SPSS to manipulate massive data files (45 megabytes) with over 630,000 records containing information on 1.8 million vehicles. This feat is not, in itself, remarkable, but the fact that I was able to accomplish the required data manipulation tasks while I remained marginally literate, is. I mention this because it means that others can also perform relatively sophisticated types of analyses with marginal computing skills given the kinds of user-friendly software packages available today.

⁶³ See, Blau and Scott, 1962; Niederhoffer, 1967; Blumberg, 1979; Stichcombe, 1980; and Steinman, 1984, for typical features of professional status.

and analyze auto theft data outlined in the police recommendations section of Chapter 10. It is hoped that crime analysis personnel in the various departments and detachments will be able to make use of the rapid improvements in PC software to greatly enhance their ability to conduct the type of micro-spatial auto crime analyses recommended.

Should the BCACP adopt the recommendation of the Auto Theft Committee and employ this variant of POP when attempting to resolve other problem that confront them, greater emphasis should be placed on the “co-learning” relationship that should characterize the participation of university personnel and lay people⁶⁴ in an action research arrangement. The overriding goal of university personnel in these types of research arrangements should be to educate police practitioners so they can “go it alone” when dealing with problems arising subsequent to the joint effort.

The greatest shortcoming of the thesis stems from the fact that it cannot consider what impact the efforts of the Auto Theft Committee will have on the incidence of auto theft in British Columbia. Implementation efforts derived from the recommendations put forth by the Committee are just now getting underway. It will be a year or two before the efficacy of the those recommendations and their implementation can be it assessed.

Conclusion

The BCACP study’s focus on youthful offenders stresses the need for police to collect more detailed information about auto theft and develop more robust methods for analyzing patterns and trends to assist police in early pattern identification and intervention.

⁶⁴ That is, lay people with respect to their competence to choose appropriate research methodologies for exploring some phenomenon of interest.

The effort likewise signals a break in the noted tendency of police personnel to downplay the salience of juvenile perpetrated auto theft for temporary appropriation of vehicles by juveniles *vis a vis* theft by “professionals” (Clarke and Harris, 1992a:4-5). Additionally, the project constitutes what is perhaps the most comprehensive study of auto theft yet conducted, and is significant in its own right for that reason alone.

Prior to the study, ICBC literature made available to the public suggested that the risk of auto theft did not vary by make and model, but we found that this risk varies greatly. Literature documenting model-specific theft risk rates has shown highly skewed distributions in Britain and Wales (Houghton, 1992), and in selected U.S. cities (HDLI, 1990).⁶⁵ The BCACP study provides the first indication that the entire fleet of vehicles manufactured under Japanese name plates (except for expensive Lexus and Infinity models) are disproportionately at-risk of theft in British Columbia. In the near term, expanded use of after market theft prevention devices appears to offer the most immediate prospects for preventive gains. The results of our study suggest that car owners need to protect their vehicles differentially: A sixty dollar steering wheel lock bar may suffice for the owners of ten year old Datsuns and Toyotas sought by opportunistic thrill-seekers; owners of Ford 5.0 Liter Mustangs would be well advised to layer anti-theft technologies -- adopting an after-market steering wheel bar lock for its high visibility, as well as equipping the vehicle with an alarm and a fuel cut-off switch.

⁶⁵ For example, in Los Angeles, the theft rate per 1000 registered vehicles for the Volkswagen Jetta (model years 1987-90) was 142.9 vs. the metropolitan area average of 15.4 (HDLI, 1990). Houghton (1992) identifies certain sporty Ford models (Capri, Cortina and Escort) to be much more at risk of theft in Britain and Wales.

Offender target choice in British Columbia appears to be make, model and especially model year specific; these factors will inform the choice of anti-theft technologies to best employ. To this end, ICBC is taking responsibility for incorporating what has been learned into its existing public education programs, and is developing mechanisms for periodically determining fleet theft risk rates and informing policyholders of the results. ICBC is also exploring possible financial incentives in the form of adjusted insurance rates and deductible amounts that will lead policy holders to take affirmative actions to better protect their automobiles.

Aspects of the car crime culture identified in Chapter 9 give reason to believe that the selective installation of anti-theft technologies by owners of vehicles most at-risk of theft will not result in widespread target displacement. Better key security would considerably reduce province-wide auto theft opportunities. Regarding vehicles stolen by forceful means, even the most prolific young offenders interviewed restricted their theft activities to a very limited pool of vehicles requiring little theft technique competence. Relatively few offenders are skillful or expressed interest in becoming skillful at stealing non-Japanese vehicles (including encumbering themselves with dent-pullers and other tools necessary for committing such theft). The vast majority of the offenders we interviewed said they avoid cars equipped with anti-theft devices of any sort.

Auto theft is widespread because the majority of young people in British Columbia, for whom the automobile represents the quintessential 'vehicle' to increased freedom, attach no moral culpability to stealing cars for "fun", and the theft of certain models requires the auto thief to exercise no more sophistication than jamming scissors into the ignition. Of

course, there is no way of predicting what “thrill-seeking” activities youth would engage in if automobiles became more difficult to steal; however, several of the interviewed offenders described stolen auto availability as an anonymity-induced incentive to commit other crimes, and the diffusion effects (Clarke and Weisburd, 1994) of auto theft reduction efforts merit research.

Although it was not fully operational in the present study, the “top-end” variant of the POP model and its attendant action research methodology holds out the potential for more effective police problem solving as well as being an appropriate model for studying problem-solving processes. The study undertaken by the BCACP represents a first attempt in British Columbia to engage senior administrators in a variant of problem-oriented policing focused on a serious province-wide problem. This effort required the cooperation of a wide variety of public and quasi-public agencies in the search for potential strategies for reducing the growing problem of auto theft. The process has been favorably received by the police community in British Columbia, and serves as a model for collective crime prevention action involving multiple levels of governmental and quasi-public agencies. The results of this effort are due to be published this Fall in *Crime Prevention Studies* Volume 3, whose target market is mixed equally among practitioners and academics interested in situational crime prevention.

Even if the proposed changes are enacted, it will be some time before their impact can be measured. Having functioned as the principal field researcher for this study, I agree with Clarke and Harris’ (1992a:3) contention that “there is greater scope for increasing the difficulties of auto theft than for increasing the [offender] risks or reducing motivation”. A

commitment on the part of automobile manufacturers to make anti-theft technology a manufacturing priority remains the best prospect for long term reductions in this crime (Brill, 1982; Clarke and Harris, 1992a). In the interim, research is needed to evaluate the efficacy of various anti-theft devices widely available today.

Finally, Clarke and Harris (1992a:45) note that a more complete “understanding of auto theft will not necessarily enlarge policy options”. Perhaps the main value of studies like this derive from the processes involved as they unfold. Recognizing the shortcomings of the existing police response to the problem of auto theft, and their own research limitations, police leaders in British Columbia sought to make better use of the resources available to them. The end result is an improved relationship between the police, insurance and academic communities in British Columbia and commitments on the part of all to work jointly in the future in the promotion of crime prevention efforts.

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APPENDIX "A"

VICTIMIZATION SURVEY

SECTION I: TYPE OF VEHICLE

71 items ~ 20 mins.

First, I would like to ask you some questions about the vehicle that was stolen. You may have already given this information to a police officer at the time you reported the theft, but we would like to get this information from you once again, for the purpose of this study. If you have had more than one vehicle stolen, please refer to the most recent auto theft when answering the questions.

1. What is the make of the vehicle that was stolen? _____

2. What model? _____

3. What year? _____

4. What colour? _____

5. What kind of transmission does this vehicle have?

1. automatic transmission 2. standard/manual 3. other _____
(specify)

6. How would you describe the vehicle's body type? Is it a.... **READ LIST. CIRCLE ONLY ONE.**

1. 2 door sedan 2. four door sedan 3. 2 door sports coupe 4. 3 door hatchback
5. station wagon 6. mini van 7. truck 8. jeep
9. other _____ (specify)

b.) Is this vehicle a convertible? yes no

7. Based on appearance, what condition was this vehicle in when stolen? Was it...? **READ LIST. CIRCLE ONLY ONE.**

1. new/looks brand new 2. good condition 3. fairly good condition
4. poor condition 5. very poor condition

8. Were there any visible signs of wear, damage or disrepair on the vehicle at the time it was stolen?

1. yes **ASK QUESTION 9**
2. no **SKIP TO QUESTION 10**

9. What were they? **DO NOT READ LIST. CIRCLE ALL MENTIONED.**

1. dents 2. scratches 3. rust 4. needs painting
5. cracked/broken windshield/window 6. broken headlight/taillight
9. other _____ (specify)

10. How many passengers can this vehicle carry, including the driver? _____ people.

11. Are there any optional or custom accessories on the vehicle that would make it stand out?

1. yes **ASK QUESTION 12**
2. no **SKIP TO QUESTION 13**

12. What are they? **PROMPT. CIRCLE ALL MENTIONED.**

1. special paint job 2. spoiler 3. leather seats 4. limited /special edition
5. mag wheels 6. high performance tires 7. pin stripping 8. fog lamps
9. air conditioning 10. stereo 99. other _____ (specify)

- 1. yes..... **ASK QUESTION 24 & 25**
- 2. no..... **SKIP TO QUESTION 26**
- 77. refused..... **SKIP TO QUESTION 26**
- 88. don't know..... **SKIP TO QUESTION 26**

24. What parts of the vehicle were damaged while it was stolen? PROMPT. CIRCLE ALL MENTIONED.

- 1. dead battery 2. ignition 3. clutch 4. transmission 5. under carriage
- 6. door locks 7. dashboard 8. seats 9. steering wheel 10. steering column
- 11. body 77. refused 88. don't know 99.

other _____ (specify)

25. Do you feel that the vehicle has been permanently damaged?

- 1. yes 2. no 77. refused 88. don't know

26. Were any parts removed from your vehicle while it was stolen?

- 1. yes..... **ASK QUESTION 27**
- 2. no..... **SKIP TO QUESTION 28**
- 77. refused..... **SKIP TO QUESTION 28**
- 88. don't know.. **SKIP TO QUESTION 28**

27. What parts were removed? PROMPT. CIRCLE ALL MENTIONED.

- 1. stereo 2. wheels/tires 3. doors 4. seats 5. steering wheel 6. battery
- 7. engine parts 8. hub caps 9. hood 10. battery 11. gear shifter knob
- 12. ignition
- 77. refused 88. don't know 99. other

_____ (specify)

28. What was the total cost (in dollars) of the theft including both damaged and stolen parts?

\$ _____

29. Do you have any idea who stole your vehicle?

- 1. yes..... **ASK QUESTION 30**
- 2. no..... **SKIP TO SECTION III (MIDDLE OF NEXT PAGE)**

30. Was this person, or personsREAD LIST. CIRCLE ONLY ONE.

- 1. a stranger
- 2. someone you know
- 3. a family member
- 77. refused

31. Approximately how old is this person or group of persons? _____ years.

32. Has an arrest been made for the theft of your vehicle?

- 1. yes..... **ASK QUESTION 33**
- 2. no..... **SKIP TO SECTION III (BELOW)**
- 77. refused **SKIP TO SECTION III (BELOW)**
- 88. don't know **SKIP TO SECTION III (BELOW)**

33. Has anyone been charged with the theft of your vehicle?

- 1. yes..... ASK QUESTION 34
- 2. no..... SKIP TO SECTION III (BELOW)
- 77. refused SKIP TO SECTION III (BELOW)
- 88. don't know SKIP TO SECTION III (BELOW)

34. Have/has the person(s) charged**READ CIRCLE ONLY ONE**

- 1. not had the case heard in court yet?
- 2. been found not guilty
- 3. been convicted
- 77. refused
- 88. don't know

SECTION III: SECURITY

INTERVIEWER: IF VEHICLE HAS NOT BEEN RECOVERED-SKIP TO QUESTION 41.

ASK THESE QUESTIONS ONLY IF THE VEHICLE HAS BEEN RECOVERED:

35. How did the thief get into your vehicle? **DO NOT READ LIST. CIRCLE ONLY ONE**

- 1. slim jim
- 2. broke window
- 3. broke door lock
- 4. used a coat hanger
- 5. window was open
- 6. door was unlocked
- 77. refused
- 88. don't know
- 99. other _____ (specify)

36. How did the thief start the vehicle? **DO NOT READ LIST. CIRCLE ONLY ONE.**

- 1. used key..... ASK QUESTION 37
- 2. broke through the steering column..... SKIP TO QUESTION 38
- 3. broke ignition lock with screwdriver.... SKIP TO QUESTION 38
- 4. broke ignition lock with scissors..... SKIP TO QUESTION 38
- 5. pulled out ignition lock..... SKIP TO QUESTION 38
- 6. hot wired the ignition..... SKIP TO QUESTION 38
- 77. refused..... SKIP TO QUESTION 38
- 88. don't know..... SKIP TO QUESTION 38
- 99. other _____ (specify) SKIP TO QUESTION 38

37. How did the thief obtain the key? **DO NOT READ LIST. CIRCLE ONLY ONE**

- 1. key was left in ignition or in the vehicle
- 2. key was hidden on vehicle. Where _____
- 3. key was lost?
- 4. key was stolen previously?
- 77. refused
- 88. don't know
- 99. other _____ (specify)

RECOVERED VEHICLE QUESTIONS CONTINUED:

38. What valuables, if any, were taken from inside the vehicle or trunk during the theft? DO NOT READ LIST. CIRCLE ALL MENTIONED.

1. none 2. stereo 3. cassettes/cd's 4. money 5. wallet/briefcase/purse
6. cellular phone 7. registration/ownership papers 8. clothing 9. sports equipment
77. refused 88. don't know 99. other
_____ (specify)

39. Were any of the items stolen visible from outside the vehicle?

1. yes 2. no 77. refused 88. don't know

40. Did you or someone else in your household file a house insurance claim for these items?

1. yes 2. no 3. plan to but haven't yet 4. didn't know I could
77. refused 88. don't know

41. What, if any, anti-theft devices were there on the vehicle? DO NOT READ LIST. CIRCLE ALL MENTIONED.

1. none
2. audible alarm
3. steering wheel lock
4. ignition disable switch
5. fuel cut off mechanism
77. refused
88. don't know
99. other _____ (specify)

SECTION IV: SITE OF THE THEFT

42. Was the vehicle stolen during daylight hours, or after dark.?

1. daylight hours 2. after dark 77. refused 88. don't know

43. Where was your vehicle parked when it was stolen? For example, was the vehicle stolen from your home?

1. parked at home..... **ASK QUESTIONS 44 THROUGH 55**
2. parked while visiting someone else's home.. **ASK QUESTIONS 44 THROUGH 55**

3. parked at work **ASK QUESTIONS 56 THROUGH 65**
4. parked at shopping location..... **ASK QUESTIONS 56 THROUGH 65**
5. parked while at a restaurant/bar..... **ASK QUESTIONS 56 THROUGH 65**
6. parked while at a theatre..... **ASK QUESTIONS 56 THROUGH 65**
7. school..... **ASK QUESTIONS 56 THROUGH 65**

77. refused..... **SKIP TO QUESTION 66**
88. don't know..... **SKIP TO QUESTION 66**

99. other _____ (specify) **-ASK QUESTIONS 56 THROUGH 65**

ASK THESE QUESTIONS IF THE VEHICLE WAS STOLEN FROM THE VICTIM'S HOME OR WHILE THE VICTIM WAS VISITING SOMEONE ELSE'S HOME.

IF THE VEHICLE WAS STOLEN FROM THE VICTIM'S HOME, PHRASE THE QUESTIONS SO THEY REFER TO THE VICTIM'S HOME

IF THE VEHICLE WAS STOLEN WHILE THE VICTIM WAS VISITING SOMEONE ELSE'S HOME, PHRASE THE QUESTIONS DO THEY REFER TO THE HOME THEY WERE VISITING.

44. Which of the following best describes the type of home you live in/the home you were visiting? Was it a..... READ LIST. CIRCLE ONLY ONE.

1. detached house
2. apartment
3. townhouse
4. condominium
9. other _____ (specify)

THEFT FROM HOME QUESTIONS CONTINUED:

45. Where was the vehicle parked when it was stolen? Was it in a..... READ LIST. CIRCLE ONLY ONE.

1. private garage
2. driveway at front of home
3. driveway at back of home
4. laneway
5. on the street
6. ground level parking lot
7. underground parking lot
9. other _____ (specify)

46. How would you describe the light around the vehicle at the time you parked? Was the vehicle parked in a.....READ LIST. CIRCLE ONLY ONE.

1. very bright/well lit location
2. moderately bright/ moderately well lit location
3. dim/poorly lit location
4. dark location
77. refused
88. don't know

47. And what would the light around the car have been like at the time the vehicle was stolen? Was the vehicle in a..... READ LIST. CIRCLE ONLY ONE.

1. very bright/well lit location
2. moderately bright/ moderately well lit location
3. dim/poorly lit location
4. dark location
77. refused
88. don't know/don't remember

48. How visible was your vehicle to passers-by from the location in which it was parked? Was it..... READ LIST. CIRCLE ONLY ONE.

1. in a highly visible, open location
2. in a fairly visible, open location,

- 3. in a fairly secluded, inconspicuous location
- 4. in a very secluded, inconspicuous location
- 77. refused
- 88. don't know/don't remember

49. What factors, if any, might have affected how easy, or how difficult it was for other people to see your vehicle while it was parked?

INTERVIEWER: IF THE RESPONDENT IS UNABLE TO ANSWER THIS QUESTION, ASK :

For example, were there any lights, trees, or buildings around the vehicle that might have made it easier, or more difficult, to see the vehicle ?

50. Approximately how many other parked cars were visible from the location in which your vehicle was parked? Were there..... **READ LIST. CIRCLE ONLY ONE**

- 1. 5 or fewer
- 2. 6-10
- 3. 11-25
- 4. 26-50
- 5. 51-100
- 6. 101-200
- 7. more than 200
- 77. refused
- 88. don't know

51. In general, how much traffic is there on the street on which you live/the person you were visiting lives? Is it....**READ LIST. CIRCLE ONLY ONE.**

- 1. a busy street both during the day and at night
- 2. a busy street during the day but fairly quiet at night
- 3. a quiet street both during the day and at night
- 77. refused
- 88. don't know

52. What is the name of the main road nearest to your home/the home you were visiting?

53. Under normal driving conditions, how many minutes does it take you to drive to that road from your home/the home you were visiting? _____

54. Under normal driving conditions, how many minutes does it take you to drive to the nearest junior secondary or senior secondary school from your home/the home you were visiting? _____
don't know

55. Under normal driving conditions, how many minutes does it take you to drive to the nearest commercial business from your home/the home you were visiting? _____ don't know

ASK THESE QUESTIONS IF THE VEHICLE WAS STOLEN FROM WORK, SHOPPING, ENTERTAINMENT, SCHOOL, OR OTHER LOCATION:

56. Where was the vehicle parked when it was stolen?READ LIST. CIRCLE ONLY ONE.

- 1. outdoor ground level parking lot..... ASK QUESTIONS 57 THROUGH 61
- 2. underground/multilevel/covered parking lot.... ASK QUESTIONS 57 THROUGH 61
- 3. street.....SKIP TO QUESTION 62
- 4. lane..... SKIP TO QUESTION 62
- 9. other _____(specify) -SKIP TO QUESTION 62

57. (IF PARKED IN A PARKING LOT) How full was the parking lot when you parked your vehicle? Was it...READ LIST. CIRCLE ONLY ONE.

- 1. full/almost full
 - 2. fairly full
 - 3. about half full
 - 4. fairly empty
 - 5. empty/almost empty
 - 77. refused
 - 88. don't know
- b.) How many cars can this parking lot hold?:
- 1. 300 or more
 - 2. 100 - 299
 - 3. 50 - 99
 - 4. 25 - 49
 - 5. less than 25
 - 77. refused
 - 88. don't know

58. (IF PARKED IN A PARKING LOT) How full was the parking lot when you returned and found the vehicle missing? Was it...READ LIST. CIRCLE ONLY ONE.

- 1. full/almost full
- 2. fairly full
- 3. about half full
- 4. fairly empty
- 5. empty/almost empty
- 77. refused
- 88. don't know

59. Does the parking lot have an attendant?

- 1. yes..... ASK QUESTION 60
- 2. no..... SKIP TO QUESTION 61
- 3. don't know/don't remember..... SKIP TO QUESTION 61

60. On the day that your vehicle was stolen, was the attendant visible from where you parked?

- 1. yes
- 2. no
- 8. don't know/don't remember

QUESTIONS ABOUT VEHICLES STOLEN FROM WORK, SHOPPING, ENTERTAINMENT, SCHOOL, OR OTHER LOCATIONS CONTINUED:

61. If you received a parking stub or ticket on the day your vehicle was stolen, where did you leave it? Was it...READ LIST. CIRCLE ONLY ONE.

- 1. on the dashboard
- 2. in the glove compartment
- 3. elsewhere inside the vehicle (unspecified)

- 4. did you take it with you
- 8. don't remember/don't know
- 9. other _____ (specify)

62. How would you describe the light around your vehicle when you parked? In other words, when you parked your vehicle? Was it in a.....**READ LIST. CIRCLE ONLY ONE.**

- 1. very bright/well lit location
- 2. moderately bright/moderately well lit location
- 3. dim/poorly lit location
- 4. dark location
- 77. refused
- 88. don't know

63. How would you describe the light around the parking spot when you returned and found the vehicle missing? Was it **READ LIST. CIRCLE ONLY ONE.**

- 1. very bright/well lit location
- 2. moderately bright/moderately well lit location
- 3. dim/poorly lit location
- 4. dark location
- 77. refused
- 88. don't know

64. How visible was your vehicle to passers-by from the location in which it was parked? Was it..... **READ LIST. CIRCLE ONLY ONE.**

- 1. in a highly visible, open location
- 2. in a fairly visible, open location,
- BOTH**
- 3. in a fairly secluded, inconspicuous location
- 4. in a very secluded, inconspicuous location
- traffic
- 77. refused
- traffic
- 88. don't know
- low vehicle traffic
- vehicle traffic

b.) How would you describe the amount of pedestrian and vehicle traffic around this location? **CIRCLE FOR**

- | | |
|------------------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. high pedestrian traffic | 1. high vehicle |
| 2. fairly high pedestrian traffic | 2. fairly high vehicle |
| 3. somewhat low pedestrian traffic | 3. somewhat |
| 4. low level of pedestrian traffic | 4. low level of |
| 77. refused | 77. refused |
| 88. don't know | 88. don't know |

65. What factors, if any, might have affected how easy or how difficult it was for other people to see your vehicle from where it was parked?

INTERVIEWER: IF THE RESPONDENT IS UNABLE TO ANSWER THIS QUESTION, ASK :

For example, were there any trees, buildings, corners, windows or lights around the vehicle that may have made it easier or more difficult to see your vehicle?

a break-in to your home.....	no	yes.....How many times _____
another form of theft	no	yes.....How many times _____
an assault.....	no	yes.....How many times _____
an robbery/purse-snatching.....	no	yes.....How many times _____

SECTION VI: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

75. In what year were you born? _____

76. What type of employment do you have? **READ LIST. CIRCLE ALL THAT APPLY.**

- 1. full-time
- 2. part-time
- 3. self-employed
- 4. homemaker
- 5. full-time student
- 6. part-time student
- 7. none
- 77. refused
- 99. other _____ (specify)

77. INTERVIEWER, RECORD VICTIM'S GENDER

- 1. male
- 2. female

THAT CONCLUDES THE INTERVIEW. I WOULD LIKE TO THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND COOPERATION. AGAIN THIS INFORMATION WILL BE USED TO HELP THE CHIEFS OF POLICE IN OUR PROVINCE FIND WAYS TO TRY TO REDUCE THE AUTO THEFT PROBLEM.

APPENDIX "B"

OFFENDER INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Auto Theft Offender Interview

V.) KNOWLEDGE & INVOLVEMENT IN CAR CRIME

When, how, why did you first get involved in AT?

Age of first experience

Passenger - # times before more active role?

Perceptions of getting caught

How did you learn the skills - ever see techniques on t.v.?

What kinds of cars did you usually take? why those?

Tools used? did you usually go prepared?

Models/makes easiest to steal?

Model that are the hardest?

Can you describe the context of what was happening at the time of theft - drugs and alcohol involved?

accomplices

Was your auto theft activity a continuation of theft from cars? main objective then? how did you off-load the stuff?

Describe what you felt when you were stealing a car: compare with legitimate thrill activities - e.g., skiing

Other activities for thrill? other criminal acts, why, why not?

When did you feel most eager for a car? Explain

How often did you take cars?

Total number of cars taken over what period of time?

Seasonal differences ?

Usual search behaviors - places - why those places?

Other types of searches - cruising for certain cars in neighborhoods?

Ever looking for cars to steal while in another car?

How widespread is the activity? how many people taking cars, how frequently/how many cars?

Did your feelings change as AT became a habitual activity -thrill decrease as profit motive increased?

Were you into B&Es? relationship between AT & B&E ever curtailed B&E ?why?

Was AT a "starter" crime for you? explain its relationship to other criminal activities

joyriding & transportation

What proportion of AT for transportation vs joyriding?

Ever steal cars to drive fast -wildly?

Ever to race others in other stolen cars?

Ever to intentionally damage?

Ever take them to cover long distances?

Ever steal to use car in other crimes? what?

Ever to move stolen property? what kind of vehicles for this?

Transportation needs? alternative transportation unavailable - buses quit running - would you be less inclined to steal if other transportation was available?

If other cars were available to you would you still steal cars?

theft for resale or chopping

Did you "graduate" from joyriding to theft for parts?

Ever take parts for upgrading your own or friend's vehicles?

Have you ever been involved in organized thefts?

Describe the system:

Body shops or tow companies involved?

How were you put in touch with the theft network?

Most \$ you made in a week doing this?

Ever steal for orders?

What proportion of your thefts were for chop shop?

VI.) DETERRENCE

target hardening

Alarms? what would you do if a car you wanted had one?

How can one defeat alarms? Differences?

Steering wheel locks - "club"? What would you do if you encountered one?

Auto Theft Offender Interview

I.) FAMILY CHARACTERISTICS

Age: Grade:

How many people live in your house?

Who lives with you at home

In how many residences have you lived since you were born?

How long have you lived in your present home?

Have you ever lived in a different city?

Have you ever lived in a different country?

In what country were you born?

What is the primary language spoken in your home?

Does your father (or your foster father) work?

What does he do? Full-time or Part-time?

Has he been unemployed at anytime in the past three years? # ?

What does your mother do? Has she been unemployed at anytime in the past three years? #?

How often do you do recreational activities with your family?

What kinds of things do you do with your family?

Do you enjoy spending time with your family?

Do you have a curfew on school nights?

Do you have a curfew on non-school nights?

Describe the rules in your family:.

What kinds of punishment do you get if you break the rules at home?

Have you ever runaway from home? If yes, how many times? How old were you when you *first* ran away from home? How long were you away? How old were you when you *last* ran away from home? How long were you away?

What chores do you do around the house on a regular basis?

Do you receive an allowance? If yes, how much is your allowance per week? \$ _____

On average, how much a month do you spend on the following items:

clothes/shoes; movies, concerts, dances
eating out; cigarettes; CDs tapes; alcoholic beverages; drugs; hotels

On what other things do you typically spend money, and how much a month?

Do you have a drivers license? Do you own a car? - make, model year ?

Do you have to pay for your own car insurance? How much \$ a year?

How many cars are there in your household?

Are you permitted to use the family car(s)?

What type of home does your family live in?

Do you like living at home?

II.) EMPLOYMENT

Do/did you have a job? What kind of job do you/have you done?

Hourly wage? \$ _____ per hr.

What do you think you should be earning an hour for doing your job? \$ _____ per hr.

What wage do you consider too low to work for? \$ _____ per hr.

What kind of jobs would you never consider doing and why not?

How many hours do/did you work a week? _____ hrs. # on weekend? _____ hrs.

Why did you get this job?

How many other jobs have you had?

Have you ever been fired from a job? # of times and why?

How much of your pay do/did you put into a savings account? For what are you saving money?

Do you give any money to your family? (for example, pay room and board) How much a month?

Auto Theft Offender Interview

III.) SCHOOL

What grade are you in?

Do you plan to finish high school?

What do you plan to do after high school?

If you plan to start working full-time right after high school, what kind of job do you plan to do?

If you plan to attend a college or a university, what is your main reason for wanting to attend?

What do you plan to study?

What do you want to do after graduating from college/university?

Do you belong to any clubs at school? Which?

Do you play any sports at school? Which?

Do you enjoy school?

In terms of knowledge, do you think you know more, less, or about the same as your classmates?

How do you usually get to school?

Do you ever skip school? # times a month?

What do you usually do when you skip?

Are there any weekdays when you do not have classes? What days?

In general, do you like your teachers?

In general, do you think your teachers like you?

Do you think education is important for your future?

IV.) RECREATION AND FRIENDS

What proportion of your friends are male?

How many close friends do you have?

How many people do you know by name?

What kind of things do you spend your free time at home doing?

Where do you go and spend your free time with friends?

When do you usually go home for the evening?

When you go out with friends, what transportation do you usually use?

What kinds of things do you like to do for fun?

Are there some things that you like to do for fun that some of your friends won't do?

Are there some things that your friends like to do for fun that you won't do?

Are there some activities you and your friends would like to do for fun but can't? What stops you from doing these things?

Thrillseeking:

Do you sometimes try to find things to do for thrills?

What kinds of things?

Do you like to drive fast?

What is the fastest you have ever driven a vehicle?

Have you ever played chicken with or drag raced against another driver?

Do you like to do things to shock your friends or others? What?

Do you sometimes compete with your friends about who can do the wildest stunt? What?

What is the most dangerous thing you've ever done?

Self-esteem & expectations

Do you think your friends look up to you for advice?

Would you say that most people you meet like you?

Do you think you can usually accomplish what you set out to accomplish?

What do you see yourself doing five years from now?

How old do you think you will be when you buy your first house?

How much do you think that house will cost?

From where will you get the downpayment? \$?

Do you plan to get married and have a family? Age at marriage? - when first child is born? #?

Do you think you will have it easier, harder, or about the same as your parents did? Why?

Auto Theft Offender Interview

Other anti-theft devices?

CAT sticker identification. What would you do if you saw one of these on a car's window?

How would you protect your car from theft?

criminal justice system

Ever caught? describe experience

Ever worry about getting caught? as passenger, as driver?

What do the police have to prove to get you?

Confident of beating the charge?

How many times did you get caught ?

How many of these times were you not charged?

Ever worry about getting punished by the court? why why not?

What kinds of things did your friends get when caught?

What do you think about getting probation? -\what was the most difficult provision of probation? what about curfew?

Do you think whats happening to you is fair? why - why not?

What do you think would stop people from stealing cars?

Will you do it again? what will you do differently?

APPENDIX “C”

SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENT SURVEY

THESE ARE GENERAL QUESTIONS TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT AUTO THEFT. WE WOULD LIKE YOU TO ANSWER THE QUESTIONS, BUT WANT TO LET YOU KNOW THAT ALL YOUR ANSWERS ARE SECRET. NO ONE WILL KNOW WHO FILLED IN WHICH QUESTIONNAIRE. YOU SHOULD FEEL FREE TO BE HONEST.

1.	Age	_____
2.	Sex	<input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female
3.	Grade	<input type="checkbox"/> 7 <input type="checkbox"/> 8 <input type="checkbox"/> 9 <input type="checkbox"/> 10 <input type="checkbox"/> 11 <input type="checkbox"/> 12
4.	School in grade 7.....	<input type="checkbox"/> Burnaby _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Outside Burnaby
5.	Number of people living in your home	<input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/> 6 <input type="checkbox"/> 7 <input type="checkbox"/> over 7
6.	Number of close friends	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/> over 5
7.	Other than your close friends how many people do you know by name?	<input type="checkbox"/> under 50 <input type="checkbox"/> 50 to 100 <input type="checkbox"/> over 100
8.	Do the adults in your family work?	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Full time <input type="checkbox"/> Part time
9.	Do you have a driving license?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
10	Do you personally have a car?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
11	How many cars (trucks or vans) does your family have?	<input type="checkbox"/> None <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> More than 2
12	What type of home does your family live in?	<input type="checkbox"/> Apartment building over 4 stories <input type="checkbox"/> Apartment building with 1,2,3, or 4 stories <input type="checkbox"/> Townhouse <input type="checkbox"/> Basement suite <input type="checkbox"/> Stand alone house <input type="checkbox"/> Mobile home <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____

Daily Activities

1.	Do you usually:	<input type="checkbox"/> Walk to school? <input type="checkbox"/> Ride a bus (or SkyTrain)? <input type="checkbox"/> Get dropped off by family? <input type="checkbox"/> Go by car with a friend or friends? <input type="checkbox"/> Go some other way? _____
2.	After school do you usually:	<input type="checkbox"/> Go to work? <input type="checkbox"/> Go home? <input type="checkbox"/> Go to a friend's home? <input type="checkbox"/> Go to a mall? <input type="checkbox"/> Go to corner stores or a fast food restaurant? <input type="checkbox"/> Go to other stores on a business street? <input type="checkbox"/> Go to community centres? <input type="checkbox"/> Go other places? _____
3.	What do you do that is the most fun on weekends? <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	
4.	Put a check mark next to the <u>all</u> the activities you really enjoy <u>doing</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> Racing on bikes <input type="checkbox"/> Skateboarding <input type="checkbox"/> Playing computer games <input type="checkbox"/> Running in formal race <input type="checkbox"/> Acting in plays <input type="checkbox"/> Playing chess <input type="checkbox"/> Exercising for fun <input type="checkbox"/> Skiing or snow boarding <input type="checkbox"/> Playing organized sports <input type="checkbox"/> Playing sports for fun <input type="checkbox"/> Racing cars <input type="checkbox"/> Fishing <input type="checkbox"/> Reading <input type="checkbox"/> Playing video games <input type="checkbox"/> Bungi jumping <input type="checkbox"/> Riding in friend's car <input type="checkbox"/> Riding in your own car or family car <input type="checkbox"/> Riding motorcycles or snowmobiles <input type="checkbox"/> Going to big house parties (100 or more people) <input type="checkbox"/> Going to bush parties <input type="checkbox"/> Another favorite activity _____

For each of the actions listed below check whether you think it will or will not work in reducing auto theft

	Will Work	Will Not Work	
1.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Car alarms
2.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Steering wheel ignition locks
3.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Metal steering wheel bars
4.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	More care by owner about car keys
5.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	CAT Stickers
6.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	More Police patrol
7.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	More security in parking lots
8.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	More residents who can see their car from inside their home
9.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	More people who can see their car while they are working
10.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	More people walking near cars
11.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Harder penalties -- more jail for young offenders
12.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Harder penalties -- more probation with community work
13.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	More chance of going to juvenile court if caught by police
14.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	More chance of going to adult court if caught by police
15.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Police being tougher on people your age generally
16.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Parents having stricter rules and punishing when rules are broken
17.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Curfew hours set for the city
18.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	More buses late at night
19.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	More buses during the day
20.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Cheaper taxis
21.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	More part time jobs for students
22.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	More non-classroom school or community centre activities
23.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	More parents giving rides
24.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	More parents letting their kids use the family car
25.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Cheaper cars so more kids can own their own car
26.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	More police crackdown on chop shops
27.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	More stopping of all kids in cars late at night
28.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	A clear car sticker saying the police can stop the car at night
29.	<input type="checkbox"/>		Other(s) _____ _____ _____

6.	<p>Why do you think people your age steal cars?</p> <p>(check <u>all</u> the reasons you think are important)</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> For fun <input type="checkbox"/> To get somewhere on time (work, school, home) <input type="checkbox"/> To steal things (parts or goods) from a car for themselves <input type="checkbox"/> To steal things (parts or goods) to sell <input type="checkbox"/> To answer a challenge or show what they can do <input type="checkbox"/> To get somewhere for fun when they or their friends don't have legal access to a car <input type="checkbox"/> To get somewhere where buses don't go <input type="checkbox"/> To show off <input type="checkbox"/> To just do what their friends do <input type="checkbox"/> To get a car for another crime
7.	<p>What percentage of the persons you know by name have stolen a car or truck in the last year? ____ percent (in round numbers)</p>	
8.	<p>Where do most cars get stolen?</p> <p>(Pick <u>all</u> the areas you think are major spots)</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Near the home of person stealing the car <input type="checkbox"/> Near secondary schools <input type="checkbox"/> Near primary schools <input type="checkbox"/> In malls or stores' <u>parking lots</u> <input type="checkbox"/> In <u>streets</u> near major shopping areas <input type="checkbox"/> Along major roads <u>not</u> in shopping areas <input type="checkbox"/> Along the street in out of view residential areas <input type="checkbox"/> Along the street in busy residential areas <input type="checkbox"/> In poor areas of Greater Vancouver <input type="checkbox"/> In rich areas of Greater Vancouver <input type="checkbox"/> In big parking garages in downtown Vancouver <input type="checkbox"/> Near popular bars <input type="checkbox"/> Near fast food restaurants <input type="checkbox"/> Near seniors residences <input type="checkbox"/> In apartment parking garages <input type="checkbox"/> In stand alone houses' garages <input type="checkbox"/> In parking in houses' car ports or driveways <input type="checkbox"/> In popular parks <input type="checkbox"/> In hidden areas in parks
9.	<p>Name three places in Burnaby where you think a lot of cars are stolen?</p> <p>1. _____</p> <p>2. _____</p> <p>3. _____</p>	

Auto Theft

1.	Have you ever stolen a car?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<p>If Yes, about how many times in the last year? ____</p> <p>If Yes, did you damage the car you stole?</p> <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes What type of damage? _____ _____ _____ <p>Was the last car you stole taken from:</p> <input type="checkbox"/> Someone in the family? <input type="checkbox"/> A neighbour? <input type="checkbox"/> Someone, besides a neighbour, you know? <input type="checkbox"/> A stranger? <p>How old were you for your first theft? ____</p>
2.	Have you ever ridden in a stolen car?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<p>If Yes, about how many times in the last year? ____</p>
3.	Have any of your close friends ever stolen a car?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
4.	Have any of the persons you know by name, other than your close friends, stolen a car?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
5.	Are people your age who steal cars like other people your age who don't steal cars?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<p>If No, how are they different?</p> _____ _____ _____ _____

APPENDIX "D"

ACTION COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

BCACP

AUTO THEFT STUDY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Recommendation #1:** That the BCACP membership consider Auto Theft as a high crime priority and where the numbers warrant special attention, consideration be given to allocating resources to that function full time.
- Recommendation #2** That the BCACP membership collaborate with ICBC to:
- (a) develop uniform auto theft related crime prevention strategies for presentations by Block Watch, School Liaison and Crime Prevention Officers and others to reduce thefts of motor vehicles.
 - (b) develop the ability to identify high risk areas, high risk vehicles and to track both theft and recovery locations.
- Recommendation #3:** That the BCACP membership, Municipal Government resources and ICBC make direct contact with owners of properties experiencing high risk or high actual rates of auto theft (e.g. parking lots, malls, apartments) in order to provide them with specific information about risk factors and means of reducing those risks.
- Recommendation #4** That the BCACP executive recommend to RCMP and Municipal Police Informatics policy centers, upgrades to existing police data systems to allow for:
- (a) local crime analysis capability to determine auto theft patterns (where, when, what, how often, probable suspects and recovery location).
- Recommendation #5:** That the BCACP executive develop a protocol (letter of understanding) with ICBC to utilize their risk and fleet count data.

BCACP

AUTO THEFT STUDY RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation #6: That the BCACP executive write a letter to the Attorney general supporting the C.L.E.U. and VIN Task Force recommendations regarding oversight of the vehicle salvage industry, VIN flagging and more stringent registration procedures.

Recommendation #7: (a) That the BCACP executive recommend to the Attorney General that Crown Counsel be required to enter Victim Impact statements to the Court from victims such as the general public and ICBC. In addition, BCACP membership should encourage the use of Victim Impact statements as part of their report to Crown Counsel.

(b) This BCACP membership is encouraged to use Victim Impact statements as part of their report to Crown Counsel.

Recommendation #8: That the BCACP executive recommend to the CACP and Minister of Justice, amendments to the Criminal Code to create a separate offence category for theft of motor vehicle and create a summary conviction offence of being found in a stolen motor vehicle.

Recommendation #9: That the BCACP membership recommend to ICBC that a Joint Summit Conference be developed and hosted by the Province, bringing together the Judiciary, Crown Counsel, Legislators and Police, covering the character, of the auto theft problem. This would include the social and financial implications, crime information trends and prosecution.

Recommendation #10: That the BCACP membership recommend to ICBC that they provide victims with crime prevention materials.

BCACP

AUTO THEFT STUDY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Recommendation #11: That the BCACP membership support ICBC initiatives such as seminars and group meetings for auto theft investigators, to educate and to create a greater awareness, and sharing of information.
- Recommendation #12: That the BCACP membership approve the formation of an Auto Crime Investigative/Prevention Committee upon termination of the BCACP Auto Theft Study Committee.
- Recommendation #13: That the BCACP executive recommend to the CACP to alert motor vehicle manufacturers on the "half-life" of anti-theft technologies and to make a commitment to continual research and development and to implement new anti-theft prevention technologies.