

Pressuring Others: Examining the Motivations Behind Deviant Instigation and the Strategies That Accompany Them

by

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Author's Declaration

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. This is a true copy of the thesis, including any required final revisions, as accepted by my examiners.

I understand that my dissertation may be made electronically available to the public.

Abstract

Research on the motivations behind peer pressure and deviance has been close to non-existent. This dissertation presents a mixed methods study that was conducted exploring the motivations and strategies behind deviant instigation. In phase one of this research, semi-structured interviews (n=40) were conducted with people who have encouraged others to either steal or use alcohol or drugs in a context that was against the law. Phase two of this research tested the main motivations and strategies resulting from phase one in an online survey (n=214) with people residing in Canada and the United States alongside a wide variety of acts and other possible motivations and strategies. Although multiple motivations and strategies were used by people pressuring others, a few consistently emerged. Specifically, the most common motivations for why people encouraged others to break the law included seeking an improved experience for themselves in the moment and wanting to help the other person. The most common strategy for enacting this pressure was providing reassurance (e.g., “You’ll be fine!”). This dissertation will discuss this research in depth as well future directions and implications.

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Table of Contents

Examining Committee Membership.....	ii
Author’s Declaration.....	iii
Abstract.....	iv
Acknowledgements.....	v
List of Figures.....	x
List of Tables.....	xi
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION	
Peer Influence vs. Peer Pressure.....	3
Research Questions.....	7
Rationale for Using Mixed Methods.....	8
Following Chapters.....	9
CHAPTER 2: THEORY AND LITERATURE	
Focusing on Instigators.....	10
Status.....	13
Power.....	16
Instrumental Purposes.....	19
Psychological Benefits.....	21
Insult.....	26
Doubt in Their Influence on Others.....	28
Peer Influence as a Myth.....	29
Compliance Gaining Strategies.....	30
CHAPTER 3: PHASE 1 METHODOLOGY	
Chapter Overview.....	37
Methodology.....	37
Pretesting.....	37
Sample Selection.....	39
Recruitment Challenges.....	44
Analysis.....	50
Authenticity and Trustworthiness.....	52

CHAPTER 4: PHASE 1 QUALITATIVE FINDINGS

The Sample.....	55
Alcohol and Marijuana Use.....	57
Motivations.....	57
Together is Better!.....	57
Let me Help You!.....	60
Strategies.....	63
You'll Be Fine!.....	64
Here's a Shot!.....	66
Theft.....	67
Motivations.....	67
I Can't do This Alone!.....	67
I Don't Want to Get Caught!.....	69
Strategies.....	71
Think of the Rewards!.....	71
You are Broke!.....	72
Common Underlying Themes.....	73
Motivations.....	73
Helping Myself vs. Others.....	73
Better Together.....	75
Lack of Power and Status Importance.....	75
Strategies.....	77
Providing Reassurance.....	77
Lack of Aggression.....	78
Roles.....	78
Comparing Motivations and Strategies.....	79

CHAPTER 5: PHASE 2 METHODOLOGY

Overview of Phase Two.....	80
Survey Questions.....	82
Pretesting.....	83

CHAPTER 6: PHASE 2 QUANTITATIVE FINDINGS

The Sample.....	85
Encouraging Illegal Acts.....	86
“I Have Encouraged an Illegal Act Before”.....	88
Type of Act.....	88
Motivations.....	88
Strategies.....	90
Most Effective Strategy.....	90
Breaking it Down Further.....	91
Substance Use.....	91
Stealing and Illegal Downloading.....	92
Speeding.....	92
“I Have Never Encouraged an Illegal Act Before”.....	93
Motivations.....	93
Main Motivation.....	94
Strategies.....	94
Most Effective Strategy.....	94
Hypothetical Phone Charger Theft.....	95
Discussion.....	95
Motivations.....	95
Strategies.....	98

CHAPTER 7: DISCUSSION

Together is Better!.....	101
Let me Help You!.....	104
You’ll Be Fine!.....	108
A Sociology of Instigators.....	111
Collective Effervescence.....	112
Interaction Rituals.....	114
Solidarity and Cohesion.....	115
The Current Research.....	116

Expanding the Sociology of Instigators.....	117
Implications.....	118
Ethical Considerations.....	120
Study Limitations.....	122
Strengths.....	127
Future Research Directions.....	129
Conclusion.....	132
References.....	133
Appendix A: Phase One Interview Schedule.....	150
Appendix B: Phase One Interview Screening Questions.....	154
Appendix C: Phase Two Questionnaire.....	155

List of Figures

Figure 1: Research Plan.....	8
Figure 2: An Expansion of the Sociology of Instigators	118

List of Tables

Table 1: Demographic Summary of Phase One.....	56
Table 2: Demographic Summary of Phase Two.....	85
Table 3: Summary of Phase Two Results.....	87

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Peer influence has been a popular topic in criminology for decades. Researchers have examined this in the context of drug use (Brauer, 2009), theft (Gallupe et al, 2016; 2019), online piracy (Morris and Higgins, 2010), bullying (Loke, Mak, & Wu, 2016), dining and dashing (Ryan & Gallupe, 2022), and a large variety of other crimes and deviant acts (e.g., drinking, fighting, jaywalking). The link between deviance and the deviance of one's peers is a well-established phenomenon (Matsueda & Anderson, 1998; Meldrum, Miller, & Flexon, 2013; Pratt et al., 2010), and some major theories in the field, such as social learning theory (Akers, 1979), use this association as its base. Outside of academia, peer pressure is discussed in the school systems, various media, and other groups. Some examples of this include television shows (e.g., "Fast Friends" episode of Full House, 1993), movies (e.g., The Breakfast Club, 1985), and the "Being You" badge program section from the Girl Guides of Canada (2019), often as an attempt to educate youth about peer pressure.

The problem is that the majority of the research and discussions on peer influence to date have focused on the person receiving or consuming the influence or pressure (the 'influencee'). This angle is important; we have gained insight and evidence supporting a link between how friends and peers act and the actions of an individual (e.g., Pratt et al., 2010). This is not limited to physical actions (e.g., spray painting a sign). This relationship can also shape peoples' perception and judgement (Jenness, 1932; Asch, 1955; Bond & Smith, 1996; Baron, Vandello & Brunzman, 1996; Bond 2005). This kind of research aims to answer questions about an individual's behaviour resulting from the impact of someone else. For example, in their research on dining and dashing, Ryan and Gallupe (2022) asked "Does associating with peers who dine and dash increase the likelihood of individuals doing it?" This has been valuable in that it has given scholars in this field important insight on peer influence dynamics. However, the dominant

focus of peer influence research has been too narrow and limited; by focusing on the influencer themselves, we hope to provide a more complete picture of peer influence processes.

Little research has focused on the influencer and the motivations that might drive their behaviours. Scholars have been highlighting gaps in peer influence research such as this for years (e.g., Bohns, 2016; Bohns, Newark, & Boothby, 2018; McGloin & Nguyen, 2012; McGloin & Thomas, 2019; Warr, 1996). However, very little research has addressed what motivates people to explicitly influence or pressure someone to commit crime, the only study published to date being Costello and Zozula's 2018 work. There is a small amount of research on this topic in other fields like healthcare (e.g., Rodin & Janis, 1982), but it has largely been ignored in the area of crime and deviance. Scholars have asked "how do peers impact someone's decision to offend," but they have failed to ask "what motivates a person to explicitly try to influence someone else's decision to offend?" Outside of academia, the onus has traditionally been placed on the person being influenced (e.g., "just say no") with less attention paid to attempting to stop the pressure from occurring in the first place by placing more attention on the influencer. The research I conducted for this dissertation, alongside scholars like Costello and Zozula, starts to address this particular gap.

Now is the time to push the field to address gaps like this. Supporting this idea, McGloin and Thomas (2019) reviewed the research and theoretical advancements that have taken place on the topic of peer influence in criminology. They argue that we should shift our focus to mechanisms, processes, and other deeper questions (p. 254) and away from the typical question of whether having deviant peers influences the likelihood of offending. Further, scholars have made a more direct call for the research I have conducted:

It is, we think, more interesting to ask why peers would pressure their friends into deviant behaviour like this when they clearly do not want to join in.

Although we did not explicitly ask our respondents to report on their motivations for trying to influence their peers' behaviour, we think it will be important for future research to do so, in part to try to understand these motivations (Costello & Hope, 2016, p. 40).

Additionally, authors have openly encouraged scholars to consider and use ideas from other disciplines to move forward with our understanding of peer influence (McGloin & Thomas, 2019, p. 255). In this spirit, I draw on the psychology and criminology literatures in this dissertation to address the question of if and why people are motivated to pressure others to commit deviant and/or criminal activities.

Peer Influence vs Peer Pressure

There are different ways that people can influence others. Hoeben and Thomas (2019, p. 767) discuss how people can influence others in a passive way. For example, if a person has a reputation for getting away with criminal acts, just being around them can alter others' perception of acts they may be considering participating in. Individuals might also take a more active role in peer influence, such as explicitly encouraging someone to participate or decreasing the perception of risks associated with crime and increasing the perception of benefits through conversation (e.g., "There is no way you're going to get caught. No one is around") (p. 768).

Some traditional criminological theories and scholars have claimed that the power of influence comes mostly from implicit, subtle acts and words. For example, although Akers (2009 p. 66) acknowledges that overt pressure most likely does play a role in the delinquency of others, overt forms of pressure (e.g., "Just do it already!") is not nearly as important or effective as the long-term learning that takes place through interacting with others who may be talking about criminal acts casually in conversation or modelling the behaviour.

This leads to a broader discussion on the differentiation between peer influence and peer pressure. Peer pressure can be understood as working under the larger umbrella of peer

influence. This form of peer influence tends to be the more direct influence attempts discussed above (e.g., “Take this drug”). However, peer influence as a whole is bigger than this and can include other forms of influence such as imitating what you see and hear others do. For example, Harakeh and Vollebergh (2012) conducted an experiment where some participants were directly pressured to smoke (e.g., offered a cigarette), and some were only exposed to a confederate (an actor working in the experiment) smoking. They found that the peer influence (confederate smoking) predicted participant smoking behaviour, but the act of offering a cigarette to them through direct pressure did not (p. 223). This suggests, as Akers (2009) has pointed out already, that direct peer pressure tends to take a back seat when it comes to peer interactions.

Peer pressure also has varying degrees. On one end of the spectrum, you have smaller gestures or statements such as a finger point to do something or a statement like “I am having a shot of tequila. You should think about doing it with me” that may not even be intended to make the other person feel uncomfortable. On the other end of the spectrum, there are more direct, forceful actions and statements. Some examples of this may be physically pushing someone towards the bar at a club or actively threatening to punish them if the person does not do something; “You better spray paint that sign, or we can’t be friends anymore”. Then you have the in-between actions and statements that may include things such as physically handing someone a bottle of beer even after they have said no or saying something along the lines of “Come on. Just do it. It will be so fun”.

However, it is also important to acknowledge that the weight of actions or statements may also be context dependent. A casual point of the finger to a bottle of beer with the intention of getting someone to drink it may be perceived as a small gesture of asking if they would like to drink, or it may be perceived as an order with serious consequences attached if they do not do it.

Multiple factors may play into this dynamic including what the relationship of these people are, their age, the presence of others, status, perceived authority, etc.

Complicating matters, the existence of peer pressure and peer influence in general is not always a negative thing. When someone exerts peer pressure or is perceived as a behavioural model, it does not mean that they are always exerting pressure to do things that are deviant or against the law. There are circumstances where peer pressure can result in a positive outcome. Consider a person encouraging their friend to study for an upcoming test they must pass or trying to persuade them to stop smoking for their health. These acts are still peer pressure but are generally considered socially acceptable. Scholars have discussed the positive side of peer pressure and how society can harness it for positive ends (e.g., Rosenberg, 2013), like staying in school, ending a toxic relationship, or seeking therapy (Costello & Zozula, 2018).

Despite this, overt peer pressure to do things that are deviant or against the law exists. It is probably what is first thought of by many when the concept of peer pressure is brought up in conversation. It is a common experience throughout life and might play a larger role in peer interactions than what has been portrayed in the literature to date. The research included in this dissertation focuses on these instances of peer pressure; the situations that arise where someone is being pressured to do something commonly considered to be deviant. I am referring to both small acts (e.g., drinking underage) and more serious crimes. People can pressure others to steal, damage property, and seriously hurt other people, especially if they are viewed as a leader in a group. As an example, consider the famous shock experiment conducted by Stanley Milgram (1963; 1974) which was created to explore why people were willing to follow authority figures and kill so many people during WWII in Nazi Germany. In this experiment, Milgram recruited 40 individuals who were then asked to administer increasingly powerful electric shocks to

someone else in a different room every time that person got an answer wrong to a series of questions that were asked. 65% of study participants went through the full scenario, administering the highest voltage to the person in the other room (Milgram, 1963, p. 376).

Milgram's pursuit was for research and did not result in a person actually getting shocked, but what about the people who pressure others to do illegal, deviant, and/or harmful acts in the general population? It is valuable to gain an understanding of why someone might be motivated to pressure others to do these things for multiple reasons. First, this direct pressure may be frequently intertwined with passive influence (e.g., behavioural models) that is claimed to be the main form of peer influence (Akers, 2009). Second, we know little about why some people feel as though they need others to participate in deviant acts because this not only applies to criminal behaviour but other scenarios as well (e.g., "Come on. You have to have this shot. It's just vodka. Don't be a baby!"); understanding these motivations is critical if effective interventions are to be designed. Third, even in a scenario where direct peer pressure does not successfully make someone commit a crime, the pressure itself might still make an uncomfortable environment for the person on the receiving end (e.g., feeling humiliated, exhausted, annoyed, trapped) which could lead to a variety of different problems all together (e.g., isolation). In Milgram's study, he reported that participants experienced a range of emotional turbulence; participants being asked to administer the shocks exhibited stuttering, increased sweating, and "nervous laughter" (Milgram, 1963, p. 371).

The literature has mostly focused on behaviours that are a product of peer influence, but do not take into consideration the impact peer influence or pressure might have on someone's mental or physical wellness. For these reasons, regardless of whether direct and/or intentional peer pressure leads to a higher likelihood of someone else committing a crime, it is important to

learn why people pressure others in the first place which is what my research has attempted to address.

Research Questions

This research will be conducted over the course of two phases. The first phase is inductive in nature, while the second is deductive, testing the explanatory concepts that are derived from phase one. The proposed research questions for each are outlined below. Questions one and two were addressed during phase one of this research and question three was addressed during phase two.

#1: What motivates someone to actively try to persuade others to commit deviant acts?

This question is centered around the phenomenon of people actively pressuring or trying to influence another person. Research to date has deeply explored how people are influenced by their peers to commit a crime, but not really what motivates someone to be a deviant influencer. This question was explored through a series of interviews.

#2: What strategies do people use when trying to persuade others to commit deviant acts?

Which of these strategies do instigators perceive to be the most effective?

These questions relate to the thought processes that might be taking place during the persuasion or pressure process. Like the first research question, these questions were analyzed through a series of interviews.

#3: Are the common motivations and strategies found in phase one of this research also found to be prevalent when tested within a larger sample?

The goal of phase two of this research was to operationalize the most prominent explanatory concepts derived from phase one and test them within a larger, more generalizable sample.

Rationale for Using Mixed Methods

This study is a cross-sectional exploratory sequential design. See below for a diagram of this.

Figure 1. Research Plan



A mixed methods design is appropriate for exploring and testing the topic of motivation and peer pressure. In this study, mixed methods will be defined as the inclusion and integration of both qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis. By collecting qualitative data prior to quantitative data through an exploratory sequential design (Creswell, 2015, p. 6) we can first gain a deeper understanding of what might motivate people to instigate deviant acts by others, as quantitative work is not suited to address this. This design is beneficial for building measurements for variables in the survey that took place in the quantitative phase of the study. If the survey were to be created without prior exploration, then the survey measures might not accurately represent the main reasons people may be motivated to persuade others in deviant processes.

In addition to its appropriateness for this particular research topic, a mixed methods approach allows the researcher to account for weaknesses present in quantitative and qualitative studies. In relation to the peer influence literature, Costello and Zozula (2018) directly state that the lack of progress in peer influence research to date may be partially due to researchers' overreliance on using only quantitative methods (p. 94). Quantitative studies cannot generally provide the sort of deep explanation that qualitative studies can and may not take context into consideration to the same degree (Creswell, 2015, p. 5). Some disadvantages for many

qualitative studies include the inability to generalize and the inclusion of a small set of people. A mixed methods approach accounts for these issues and allows the researcher to compare overall results found in both kinds of designs for a better understanding of the phenomenon.

Following Chapters

The rest of this dissertation will proceed as follows. Chapter two will explore the potential theoretical explanations for why someone may directly encourage or pressure another person to do something against the law along with previous relevant literature in the field related to this. Chapter three will describe the methodology followed for phase one of this research. Phase one involves an analysis of 40 semi-structured interviews that took place with people who acknowledge that they have pressured others to either use alcohol or other drugs in an illegal context or steal and focuses on the motivations behind these acts of pressure. Chapter four will walk through the findings of the interviews conducted and analyzed in phase one of this research.

Chapter five will discuss the methodology followed for phase two of this research, an online cross-national survey (n=214) that was conducted on the motivations and peer pressure strategies that were found to be commonly mentioned in the interviews conducted in phase one. Following this, chapter six will discuss the results and findings of this survey. Chapter seven will then lead us into a discussion of the research and findings. Here we will also cover study limitations, implications, suggestions for future research in this area, and more. From here, this dissertation will conclude with a summary of this research.

CHAPTER 2: THEORY AND LITERATURE

In this section I will discuss possible reasons for why individuals might be driven to pressure others and research that has been conducted related to this topic.

Focusing on Instigators

At its base, this dissertation is focused on the influencers/instigators in peer groups. There have been some studies to date that have touched on this topic, but they vary greatly and mostly ignore the main question of this current project, which is based on the motivating factors behind deviant instigation. This section will review some of the studies related to this topic.

The only study to date that directly examines the motivations behind peer influence in general (for both positive and negative acts) for instigators is by Costello and Zozula (2018). They asked a sample of undergraduate students (n=131) to write about a time where they influenced someone to do something “negative” (e.g., drink alcohol, do a dangerous stunt) and a time where they influenced someone to do something “positive” (e.g., go to therapy) (p. 101). In relation to “negative” acts, the most common motivation (18%) was doing it for their own benefit or amusement, followed by wanting someone to do the activity with them (11%) (p. 102).

Although they have examined the motivations behind deviant instigation, there is a lot of work to still be done. Costello and Zozula (2018) laid valuable groundwork for this area of research but it is yet to be explored in broader samples. The research presented in this dissertation not only tests their findings but is a substantial expansion of this work allowing for deeper conversations and theorizing on the psychological and sociological fronts.

Looking at other related research, there are a handful of studies that claim it is important to pay attention to different roles in the offending process, including those who initially instigate criminal activities. These scholars suggest that it is important to conduct research on instigators because they can act as entry points to crime for people who have never offended before, they

hold delinquent groups together, and they might make crime attempts more successful when they are present. For example, Alberts et al. (1992) explored how adolescents responded to different offers to do drugs or drink alcohol. Through 69 narrative interviews with high school students (p. 207), they found that people were more likely to accept an offer if pressure was applied, and that they experienced more pressure from family and friends than from other people (p. 222).

In another study, Lantz and Hutchison (2015) examined co-offending group dynamics. The researchers analyzed data from 270 sentenced burglars and found that larger co-offending groups were more likely to keep offending over longer periods of time compared to smaller groups (p. 679); when important instigators in the group were arrested, there was a decrease in the number of group members who continued offending (p. 680). The authors suggest that this may be because the group no longer has someone instigating the crimes, the group may lose criminal capital, or because the arrest of the important member acts as a deterrent for the other group members (p. 681).

Other researchers, such as Morselli, Tremblay, and McCarthy (2006) explored the impact mentors have on a person's criminal success. They defined a mentor as someone involved in "teaching, advising, and sponsoring proteges" (p. 18). During their study, they analyzed survey data from 268 inmates from five federal prisons in Quebec (p. 26) and found that 39% of respondents claimed that a mentor introduced them to the criminal lifestyle (p. 26), 90% of mentors were male (p. 28), and 82% claimed they had a strong bond to their mentor (p. 29). They also found that the pressure from criminal mentors was higher among those people reporting lower levels of self-control and those who grew up with less supervision (e.g., both parents worked full time jobs) (p. 34). Mainly, they found that having a mentor increased criminal success through more networking opportunities and social capital (p. 34).

In a third study, Reiss (1988) discussed the relationship dynamics that can occur between co-offenders. Through reviewing literature on this topic, Reiss found that there is evidence that some offenders actively recruit accomplices, particularly recruiting those people with less offending experience than the recruiter (p. 148). Reiss points to the Peoria Juvenile Residential Burglary Study by the Peoria Crime Reduction Council (1979) as an example of a study that suggests this. In this study, 49% of the burglaries that involved multiple offenders included at least one offender who had been arrested before and at least one person who had not (Reiss, 1988, p. 148). Reiss noted that people may recruit accomplices because some crimes require specialized skills or more people to be successful (e.g., recruiting a getaway driver) (p. 152).

Focusing on leadership, Porter and Alison (2006) applied a leader behaviour scale to data from 105 group robbery cases (p. 257). The scale examined questions related to data on topics such as whether a certain member approached the robbery target first and whether someone made an order for someone else to approach the target. This scale identified potential leaders in 103 of the robbery groups (p. 252). They found that leaders giving direct verbal orders to members while the crime was being carried out was uncommon, highlighting the importance of actions (p. 260). They also found that in some cases when a person was supported by their friends, they acted more severely (e.g., bullying turned into a robbery) (p. 259).

Other scholars have pointed out that roles in co-offending may not be stable. Warr (1996) examined group dynamics and offending. Looking at data from the National Surveys of Youth (n=847) (p. 20), he found that instigators in events were older compared to other group members (p. 27), usually male (p. 29), reported more offences on average than other group members (were more experienced), and were usually reported to be close friends with respondents (p. 30). Warr noted that “pure instigators” (people who are always instigators) were rare at 18% of offenders.

Most offenders only joined in when an event was happening (31%) or shifted between instigator and joining roles (51%) (p. 31). This suggests that many offenders switch between instigator and follower roles depending on the scenario.

As one can see, the research that has been conducted to date that touches on influencers demonstrates that there does appear to be instigator roles in crime, that the people who play these roles may serve as an entry point for others, and that they might make crime attempts more successful through resources and networks. Because of this, it is important to focus some research efforts on instigators.

There are a variety of reasons why someone might choose to take on an instigator role or actively pressure someone to do something deviant or criminal. Some of the potential reasons outlined below include the desire for social status or power, the realization that they need help with an act (e.g., a getaway driver, someone who has experience), psychological benefits (e.g., feeling less responsible for harm caused), feeling insulted (e.g., receiving a rejection from someone after offering them a drink), and experiencing increased boldness to exert pressure or say what they want because they underestimate the likelihood of someone taking them seriously.

Status

One plausible explanation for why someone might choose to pressure others is because they believe that doing so would increase or maintain their social status in a group. This could be because the routes to gain status might be limited when we are younger and increase as we get older (e.g., getting a job), as Milner (2004) suggests. To clarify, if pathways to gaining social status are more limited during teen years and young adulthood, people might pressure others to participate in a crime to build social status because it is a pathway available to them at that time.

This would add to our understanding of why crime tends to climax in the teen and young adult years (see Hirschi & Gottfredson, 1983; Nagin & Land, 1993) as well.

The closest research on status and offending appears to be on bullying. The definition of ‘bullying’ has been controversial, but can be described as “overt verbal, physical, or technology-based [...] aggression that is persistently focused on a targeted person(s) over time” (Smith & Payne, 2022 p. 56). Examining the link between bullying, power (discussed more heavily in the following section), and social status, Vaillancourt, Hymel, and McDougall (2003) in a sample of grade six to ten students in Canada (n=555), found that a substantial number of bullies are perceived to be both powerful and popular. Bullies that are perceived to be more powerful are more popular, more liked, and more aggressive than less powerful bullies (pp. 158-168). Vaillancourt and Hymel found similar links between status and aggression in later work as well (2006).

Outside of Canada, Burns et al. (2008) explored why people bully others through a series of 51 interviews with grade seven students in Australia (p. 1704). They found that pressure to conform to their groups influenced individuals to initiate bullying behaviours (p. 1713). Bullying appeared to act as a mechanism for maintaining friendships and enhancing social status in their group and school environment (p. 1709). In another study, Perren and Alsaker (2006) explored bullying and friendships among young children in Switzerland (n=344) (p. 47). Compared to children viewed as not being involved with bullying (either as a bully or victim) and victims, bullies were found to be more aggressive, have more leadership skills, and spent more time with other bullies (pp. 49-50). They also found that despite having less prosocial attitudes, aggressive male children preferred to play with bullies than other children (p. 53). They also suggest that bullies appear to have larger social networks and status compared to victims (p. 53).

Analyzing roles taken on during the bullying process, Salmivalli et al. (1996) conducted a study with 573 6th grade children in Finland (p. 4). They found that males were more likely to be in reinforcer, assistant, and bullying roles compared to females (p. 5). Similar to the results of other studies (see Lagerspetz et al., 1982; though see Perren and Alsaker, 2006), bullies and victims appeared to have a low social status among their peers (low social acceptance, high social rejection). However, reinforcers were found to have high social status and overall popularity. More specifically, 39% of reinforcers and assistants were categorized as being popular compared to 10% of bullies (p. 10). Defenders of victims were found to be the group with the highest social status (43%).

Focusing more generally on aggression, Prinstein and Cillessen (2003) explored the relation between aggression and peer status in a sample of adolescents over the course of two studies (159 adolescents participated in both). Participants were asked to nominate peers on items such as people they “liked to spend time with the most”, spend time with the least, and thought were most or least popular (p. 318). They were also asked to nominate students who demonstrated overt aggression (e.g., hitting others), relational aggression (e.g., “who uses their friendships as a way of being mean to others”), and reputational aggression (e.g., spreading rumours about someone) (p. 318). They found that aggressive adolescents tended to have a high status but were not necessarily people that peers liked or accepted. More specifically, high levels of reputational aggression and relational aggression were associated with high popularity (p. 321). This is similar to a study of adolescents in Finland where Sijtsema et al. (2008) found bullying behaviour to be associated with higher prestige.

Examining social status from a different perspective, Gallupe, Bouchard, and Davies (2015) explored social status and delinquency in a sample of 1,514 people from the National

Longitudinal Study of Adolescent to Adult Health. They found that people who associated themselves with delinquent peers experienced an increase in social status, but directly participating in delinquent acts was associated with lower social status (p. 461). This suggests that people might be driven to instigate delinquency to increase their social status even when they do not have the intention of participating themselves.

In general, there is evidence to support the possibility that individuals might take on an instigator or influencer role because they perceive that role as being associated with holding higher social status than other roles or members in their peer group.

Power

A second reason why someone might directly try to influence or pressure others is to gain, hold on to, or demonstrate power. The idea of power can be complex and mean different things. Classical sociologists have defined power differently. In Weber's (1925) work as translated and discussed by Wallimann, Tatisis, and Zito (1977), power can be described as "any chance [...] to carry through one's own will (even against resistance)" (p. 234). This definition is similarly aligned with Parsons (1968) work where he defines it as "the probability within a social relationship of being able to secure one's own ends even against opposition" (p. 656). Defining power another way, Aron (1964) describes it as "the chance of obtaining the obedience of others to a particular command" (p. 101). Lastly, other scholars have viewed power as "the capacity to influence others" (Anderson & Galinsky, 2006, p. 512). Although different, all the above definitions tend to carry the similar theme of power being something that allows an individual to reach a goal despite potentially facing social resistance.

If power is a motivation behind deviant instigation, it is also possible that this drive takes different forms. For example, people may be motivated by the desire to demonstrate that they

have power to others. Alternatively, deviant instigation may be a result of having power. For example, Galinsky's work has shown that people with power may be more willing to take action in a situation and express personal attitudes that do not align with others in the moment (Galinsky et al., 2008, p. 1462). It is also important to note that power is not synonymous with status. Power involves having more control over an outcome than someone else whereas (perceived) status is associated with being (or the appearance of being) respected or liked (Fast, Halevy, & Galinsky, 2011, p. 391).

As Fast, Halevy, and Galinsky point out, a person can have power without having status, and status without having power, and various behaviours can be associated with this difference. To demonstrate this, they conducted an experiment with 213 undergraduate students (p. 393). These students were separated into different scenario groups. The participants in this study were given a list of 10 demeaning activities (e.g., "say I am filthy 5 times", "bark like a dog 3 times", "tell the experimenter 3 negative traits that you have", "tell the experimenter a funny joke", "clap your hands 50 times") and were told that they could decide which activities their partner would have to do in order to be eligible for a bonus \$50 draw (p. 392). They found that the group who had high power and low social status selected more demeaning activities compared to all other groups (p. 393). Considering this, it is possible that those who pressure others to offend or do something deviant might want power or feel like they have power in a scenario and are attempting to utilize it.

Looking more into how power may play a role in an instigator's mind, Raven (1993), based on French and Raven's (1959) bases of power, discussed a theoretical thought process model from the perspective of an influencer/instigator. The model suggests that when an individual decides to attempt to influence someone's behaviours, they first consider what powers

are available to them at the time, such as coercive power (e.g., “I will fire you if you don’t do this”), ability to offer rewards (e.g., “I will pay you if you do this”), power through legitimization (e.g., “I am the prime minister so you will do this”), power associated with having a network of people, being an expert (e.g., “I have a PhD so you should do this”), or informational power (e.g., “I have information you want, so you should do this for me”) (Raven, 1993, p. 234-5). From this perspective, Raven suggests that influencers might be motivated to exert pressure for a variety of reasons (e.g., attain goals, gain status, it is part of a role they play) (p. 240), but whether they exert this pressure depends on the power they think they have. This implies that it might not just be that a person wants to gain power through pressuring someone to commit a crime. It might be that a person is driven to exert pressure because they perceive themselves to have some form of power in the first place.

In relation to crime, people might instigate crimes because they hold power that comes from their expertise. Using data from 1,399 inmates (p. 471), McGloin and Nguyen (2012) investigated how instigating co-offending may change across individuals and situations. They found that people who started offending earlier in life were more likely to report instigating group crime compared to those with a later criminal onset. They also found that individuals were more likely to instigate co-offending when they felt that they were skilled at the particular crime (p. 484). These scholars also note that little research has been done on why individuals instigate co-offending (p. 464).

Examining the issue from a different angle, Kipnis (1972) explored how holding power impacts an individual’s view of themselves and less powerful people. University student participants were told that they were to act as a manager for a company with the goal of making sure the company stayed profitable and efficient. Half of the sample was told they had

authorization over specific strategies (e.g., threatening to take away worker's pay, threatening to fire workers, providing extra instruction), and half were not told these extra things (p. 181).

Kipnis found that those who were given the extra powers were more likely to attempt to influence others (p. 181) and were more likely to state that the ability to manipulate people was an important skill to be a manager (p. 183). Although this study focused on relations and power dynamics in the workplace, it does hold potential implications for crime and peer groups. Applying this study, instigators might be more willing to manipulate and pressure others to do things (e.g., steal from a store) because they have been given the social power or "authorization" from peers to do so.

From a different angle, Anderson and Galinsky (2006) explored the relationship between power and risk taking. In one of their studies, they observed job negotiations that took place among 36 students. They found that those who thought they held more power in the situation were more likely to take risks. Specifically, these students were more likely to be straight forward in stating their interests and preferences to the other party (p. 527).

Instrumental Purposes

There is also the possibility that people might actively influence or encourage others to participate in crime simply because it makes the crime possible, easier to conduct, or more rewarding. Looking at why this might be the case, Alarid, Burton, and Hochstetler (2009) interviewed 93 incarcerated males about robbery events that took place with co-offenders (p. 4). They found that those who committed robberies usually did so with friends or acquaintances (not family) (p. 5), and that offending with others was associated with more planning and an increased sense of control over the event (p. 7). Co-offenders also appeared to be easily

convinced to join in. The authors suggest that this may be to show masculinity or their important role in the group (p. 8).

Related research has also been conducted in different countries and cultures. Uhnöo (2016) analyzed group dynamics of 60 cases of juvenile group arson in Sweden from court documents (p. 318). Uhnöo found evidence of distinct positions filled at the preparation (motivators, strategists, skills person, informed person, and resource keeper) and execution (driver, look out, fire setter, and audience) stages of the act (p. 320). In these cases, the fire starter was not always the same person to instigate the offence. It is suggested that different members of the group who are not the original instigator might start the fire because they are more skilled at the task, they hold less power in the group, or are a better option legally for the group (underage) (p. 328). Considering this, it is plausible that a person who is 19-years-old might be motivated to convince a 14-year-old to help steal something from a house because they may be smaller (e.g., easier to fit through a basement window) and might not attract as much punishment compared to the instigator if they did it themselves.

Similarly, Kivivuori (2007) examined proxy offending and shoplifting. Through multiple studies with Finnish adolescent offenders, he found that 55% of offenders claimed that they had shoplifted for someone else and that many claimed that they did so either because they were being paid by the instigator or because they felt pressured by the instigator (p. 823). When the participants were asked if the instigator gave a reason for why they did not want to do it themselves, many said that they did not “dare to shoplift” or did not want to get caught (p. 824). This suggests that individuals might exert pressure on someone else to participate in crime because they do not want to be the ones getting caught.

In these studies, Kivivuori also found that instigators were usually older and that adolescents who spent leisure time with people older than them were 1.8 times more likely to offend than other adolescents (p. 824). In his article, he discusses Shaw's (1952) analysis of Chicago adolescents as an example of why older adolescents might get younger ones to offend for them. They might do this because younger adolescents are less likely to get caught, younger youth are not treated as harshly by law officials compared to older youth, and some crimes require a smaller body (e.g., burglary) (Kivivuori, 2007, p. 819).

Some studies provide support for the need for resources. McCarthy, Hagan, and Cohen (1998) examined the relationship between co-offending and theft (e.g., stealing from a store, illegally using a bank or credit card) with 376 Toronto and Vancouver street youth (p. 164). They found that various social and structural factors were associated with whether someone would take part in different forms of collaboration. For example, those who reported having higher street adversity (e.g., going for long periods of time without eating or sleeping) were more likely to collaborate with others compared to acting alone (p. 168). Compared to other collaboration approaches (e.g., recruiting others through authority), collaboration was the most frequently used (being socially flexible and offering and getting offers to help commit an act) (p. 166).

Psychological Benefits

Other research suggests that people might pressure someone else to do a criminal or deviant act to feel better about oneself or avoid responsibility (i.e., to keep one's conscience clear). For example, rather than steal it themselves, someone might feel less responsible if they tell their friend "Wouldn't it be funny if you went into that store and stole a chocolate bar?" In this scenario, the person who provided verbal encouragement and direction to steal might get to enjoy the benefits of the crime while at the same time not feel guilty about it because they were

not the one who did it. The studies presented below are some examples of how this kind of thought process might come into play for people who hold instigator roles.

Bohns, Newark, and Boothby (2018) have outlined a model for how someone might decide on whether they are responsible or not for someone else's behaviour. They suggested that in making this decision, people will consider factors such as if a change in behaviour or attitude of the other person occurred (moderated by things such as attention and memory), if the change in behaviour or attitude of the other person was extrinsically driven (moderated by things such as cognitive biases that overweight incentives), and if the change that happened occurred as a result of something the influencer said or did (moderated by things such as egocentric biases and the influencer's personal motivations) (p. 165). If the answer to any of these questions is no, then the person will most likely decide that they are not responsible for the other person's behaviours. If the answer is yes to all of them, they may determine that they are responsible. They hold that people with traits such as narcissism or dominance may be more likely to engage in more direct acts of influence (e.g., making a direct request) (p. 166). This study, although focusing on after the fact decisions of responsibility, is relevant as it implies that a person might continue to pressure others because they do not consider the outcome to be their fault.

Related to the previous discussion of power, Bohns and Newark (2019) discuss the influence that powerful people perceive to have over others. Powerful people will often participate in deviance or unethical behaviour indirectly through others (p. 2; Parahia et al., 2009). They claim that power might increase someone's belief that they caused someone else's behaviour due to an increase in confidence in their abilities, higher levels of action and discussion of ideas, and the tendency to see their ideas put into action (p. 3). However, due to failures in accurately perceiving the perspectives of others (e.g., not acknowledging that

someone else might not be in a position to say no), they may at the same time not take responsibility for the actions of others that they influenced (p. 5).

Putting the preference of indirect harm to the test, Paharia et al. (2009) conducted several experiments to look at whether people prefer indirect actions when harm will occur. They found that people typically preferred indirect acts and judged acts done indirectly less harshly than those done directly (p. 138). As an example, one experiment hosted a scenario of hiring a domestic worker for under minimum wage. Participants here were more likely to hire domestic workers for under minimum wage through a third-party company compared to hiring them directly (p. 140). The authors note that reasons for this preference to act indirectly may include hiding the fact that the person caused harm, hiding the fact that they intended harm, and hiding the fact that they had control over the outcome from others (p. 141).

In a related study, Royzman and Baron (2002) tested whether people preferred indirect harm over direct harm in a series of studies. Samples of university students were given the choice of two scenarios - one where the harm caused was direct, and one where the harm was indirect. The outcome of the scenarios was the same (the same consequences occurred) (p. 167). Over all three studies, these scholars found consistent evidence that people preferred the scenarios where harm was caused indirectly. They suggest that people might prefer indirect harm because they perceive direct harm to be more morally wrong (p. 179).

Also related to indirect harm was a study conducted by Rehman and Dzianek-Kozłowska (2018). Looking at responses from 40 students, they revisited what is known as the “trolley problem”. During this study, participants were given multiple scenarios and asked about what they would do in that scenario. Of particular interest in this context, is the comparison between their 2nd and 3rd condition. When given a scenario involving the decision to save five people

from getting run over by the trolley or one, more people were willing to use a lever (87%) to divert the trolley to kill the one person than they were to physically push the one person in front of the trolley to save the other five (61%) (Rehman and Dzianek-Kozłowska, 2018, p. 27).

Regardless of the option of how the trolley is diverted, one person still dies. The difference is that in one scenario, the death is caused indirectly through a change in the track system, whereas the other is a more direct result of the person's physical action (pushing them).

Looking at psychological benefits from a different angle, Veltkamp, Aarts, and Custers (2009) designed a framework to help understand unconscious and implicit motivations in behaviour. They suggest that some actions may be motivated by being deprived of resources (e.g., water) or an association between the behaviour and positive affect (p. 347). Although not discussed by these scholars, this framework suggests that an individual may be motivated to pressure someone to commit a crime or deviant act to access a resource they need (e.g., food, power) or because an association between pressuring someone and/or the crime and positive affect has been formed (e.g., the instigator feels pleasure or another positive experience from the act of pressuring someone or seeing a crime occur).

Another psychological benefit that may result from pressuring others to do something is what scholars refer to as the amplification of shared experience, a potential reason for Costello and Zozula's (2018, p. 102) finding of 11% claiming that they were motivated to pressure others due to a desire to do the activity with someone else. This refers to the idea that when you are doing something with someone else, the experience is better. For example, scholars have found this on the topic of the taste of food. Boothby et al. (2014) conducted multiple studies with university students with a particular interest in the role of distance of a partner figure. They found that the distance of a partner when experiencing an event mattered. More specifically,

when tasting chocolate, participants reported that the chocolate tasted better when they were sharing the experience with someone else in the same room. However, when the partner was in a different room, this effect disappeared (p. 1441).

Continuing this line of research, Boothby et al. (2016) explored whether the amplification is moderated by the psychological distance between the people sharing the experience. In their first study, they examined social distance (e.g., strangers, or became acquainted in the lab). In the second study they looked at spatial distance (e.g., being in the same or different room) (p. 1434). Both studies provided similar results; when facing a positive experience, this experience was amplified for those who were closer to each other (both socially and physically) compared to those who were not (p. 1441). This may add to the understanding of why people in the current study were largely motivated by wanting to share the experience (e.g., drinking alcohol) with their friend when encouraging them to do it. It is possible that drinking alcohol alone or with strangers at a party, for example, may not have provided the level of experience they desired for themselves.

Other scholars have reported similar findings. In one study, Shteynberg et al. (2014) explored the amplification of emotion when viewing certain advertisements and images with others. They ran five experiments with different participant groups and found that people perceived scary advertisements to be scarier when viewing them with others (p. 1104). When being shown negative and positive images, participants were more likely to be sad or happy when viewing with others (p. 1106). When viewing a video about homelessness in a group, people were more likely to report sadness and donate to the cause (p. 1108). Overall, they concluded that people “feel more when they are together” (p. 1113).

In wondering why this emotional increase may occur, scholars point out that this may be because when you are doing things with others, you are paying more attention to the situation. Because of this increased attention, the impact of the event is larger or more intense (Boothby et al., 2014; Shteynberg et al., 2014). Relating this phenomenon to pressuring others to do something, people may then be motivated to pressure others because they think it will make the experience better or more enjoyable if they are not alone. For example, it may be that vandalizing a car is more thrilling or worthwhile in the presence of others.

However, if doing things as a group amplifies the experience, what about scenarios that are stressful or painful? Scholars have pointed out that stress and pain can also be intensified in a group setting. In one study, Nahleen, Dornin, and Takarangi (2019) asked 90 participants to put their hand in a water bucket with ice for one minute at the same time as an actor was doing the same thing or a different task (p. 1719). They found that when the actors also had their hand in the cold water at the same time as the participant, participants reported more pain and stress about the event (p. 1724). This is similar to what other researchers have found in the past in both humans and mice (e.g., Martin et al., 2015). They were also more likely to report that they had thought about the actor's feelings (p. 1718). In light of this, the motivation to pressure others into participating may depend on how stressful the event in question is.

Insult

It is also possible that people might be motivated to pressure others to do things because they want to either see a social norm fulfilled by another person or feel insulted by the other person's rejection to participate. Research in this area appears to be heavily focused on drinking. In one study, Ibanga, Adetula, and Dagona (2009) looked at peer pressure and drinking in Nigeria. Through a survey and focus groups, they found that males were more likely to be

reported as the ones pressuring a friend or acquaintance to drink or drink more than intended (p. 126). Different kinds of arguments are used to exert pressure. Some examples include “the bible says a little wine makes the heart rejoice”, “if you do not drink beer then I cannot trust you because you can hide facts from me”, and “are you a woman that you won’t drink?” (p. 126). They also found that people who came from higher income backgrounds felt more pressure to drink in family settings compared to other income backgrounds (p. 127). The researchers note that this may be due to having more access to alcohol in a higher income household (p. 127).

In another study, Paton-Simpson (2001) analyzed literature and interview data on the topic of drinking norms and pressure from 113 men in New Zealand that identified as non or light drinkers (p. 135). They found that when people refused to drink or were not drinking enough, they were sometimes faced with a variety of pressure attempts by peers. This pressure took the form of negative expressions and comments (p. 143), attempts to persuade the person to drink with money (p. 145), criticisms of being judgemental of people who drink (“Aren’t we good enough for you?”), name calling (p. 147), being called unsociable (p. 148) or not fun (p. 154), attacks on their masculinity or maturity levels (e.g., “go stand with the girls”) (p. 151), directly spiking their drinks, violence, and threats (p. 161). The author suggested that these reactions point to perceptions of drinking abstention as non-normative behaviour (pp. 136-137).

In a third study, Mäkelä and Maunu (2016) studied peer pressure and drinking in Finland. Through a survey (n=2,725) (p. 314) and interviews (n=52) (p. 314) they found that 47% of their sample reported that they had experienced pressure to drink at least once in the last year (p. 315). Direct pressures (e.g., verbal encouragement) were uncommon; most pressure that people experienced were through indirect pressures (e.g., cultural norms). In Finnish culture, and some other cultures, the authors note that drinking is a positive social and cultural norm. They say “To

ask someone to drink is to offer him or her a social bond. And, to decline the spoken or unspoken invitation to have a drink with someone may be interpreted as declining to share the social bond” (p. 318).

Doubt in Their Influence on Others

It is also possible that people who engage in pressuring others do not think they will actually have much of an impact on another person’s decisions. This has been described by scholars as the underestimation of compliance effect (Bohns, 2016). If this is the case, and people do not think they can effectively influence others, they may be more emboldened to exert pressure by saying or doing things targeted at others. This pressure may be perceived as a real attempt by someone to get them to do something. Returning to the example of the chocolate bar theft from Walmart, the influencer, underestimating the pressure behind their words and actions might say “Wouldn’t it be funny if you stole a chocolate bar right now. You should do it”. The person saying this might not think their friend will take them seriously and commit the act. However, the other person being told this might be thinking “Maybe I should go steal a chocolate bar. My friend clearly thinks that is a cool thing to do. I don’t want to embarrass myself.” The studies below are discussed to highlight the possibility of this dynamic occurring in peer groups.

For example, through studies that introduced different situations to students on a university campus (e.g., white lie, vandalism, buying kids alcohol, and taking office supplies for personal use), Bohns, Roghanizad, and Xu (2014) found that the people instigating the actual and hypothetical acts did not fully realize the amount of pressure they placed on the actors through their suggestions (p. 356). In another study, Bohns (2016) reviewed the research looking at people's perceptions of their influence over others. One example of this is a study where

participants were asked to request that others vandalize a library book. People making the request thought that roughly 28% of people would comply, but 64% did (p. 121). The research showed that people tended to underestimate their ability to get others to comply with their requests (p. 120). This underestimation is thought to be the result of not fully considering the awkwardness associated with saying no to someone.

Peer Influence as a Myth

Lastly, there is the possibility that peer influence is myth, making the role of instigators irrelevant since this would mean that they potentially do not have an impact on another person's behaviour or attitudes regardless of what they say or do. One theoretical perspective that takes this position is Matza's (1964) drift theory. The concept of drift, according to Matza (1964), is that people are not committed to criminal values, but sometimes are put into a situation where they turn to crime. People are typically bound to laws and society through controls, but Matza says that when these controls are loosened, the person is then free to drift (p. 28). Matza (1964) holds that drift is enabled through neutralizing the "bind to law" (p. 176). People will neutralize legal norms through cognizance (e.g., "I know I was part of the fight, but I was just defending myself" - p. 90), consistency (e.g., "That person didn't get the same sentence as I did in court" - p. 111), competency (e.g., "That cop doesn't know how to do anything" - p. 139), commensurability (e.g., "I don't deserve a fine for just having a drink" - p. 162), and comparison (e.g., "Nobody got hurt" - p. 167) of the laws, authority figures and situation. Under this theory, an individual might offend because they have neutralized their bind to law through the above justifications, not because they have been pressured or influenced to commit crime by their friends.

Other scholars have also suggested that peer influence has been overstated in criminological theories and research. For example, Gottfredson and Hirschi (1990) claim that the most important factor predicting offending is a person's level of self-control (p. 117). People with low self-control tend to be impulsive, risk taking (p. 89), and prefer immediate results (p. 88). From this perspective, the role of peers is overstated; their apparent importance is actually a product of the correlation between peer and individual offending being driven by a selection effect (i.e., people with low self-control both offend at high rates and end up with others who are similarly low in self-control as friends). If this is true, the instigator role is essentially irrelevant. Additionally, according to this theory, if a person has strong self-control, then they should also refrain from offending even if they are exposed to people modeling those behaviours or directly pressuring them to do something.

Both of the above theories have received substantial support which means it is still important to entertain the idea that peer influence might not play much of a role as a behavioural determinant. However, it is also important to keep in mind that peer influence research has frequently demonstrated support for the idea that the behaviours of peers (and even strangers) do have an impact on our behaviour (e.g., Akers, 2009; Beier, 2014; Dannick, 1973; Gallupe et al., 2016; 2019; Paternoster et al., 2013; Pratt et al., 2010; Ryan & Gallupe, 2022). As such, there is substantial empirical backing to continue trying to properly specify the conditions under which peer influence operates.

Compliance Gaining Strategies

Moving beyond motivations that underlie peer pressure, if the ultimate goal is to develop interventions, then understanding the practical approaches used by instigators to gain compliance of peers is critical. When discussing compliance gaining techniques here, I am referring to the

strategies that people use while pressuring someone else to follow their request. Some examples of this may be verbal encouragement (“you can do it!”) or threat (“If you don’t do this, I am not going to be your friend anymore”). Research suggests that the compliance gaining strategies used are related to the motivations and goals of the person using them, making this topic relevant to the conversation around criminal and deviant instigation.

Compliance gaining strategies have been discussed in the literature for decades (e.g., Marwell & Schmitt, 1967), but there is still limited research on the topic of compliance gaining strategies in relation to crime and deviance. When considering compliance gaining strategies in general, it is important to think about some of the ways scholars have grouped these tactics over the years. Marwell and Schmitt’s (1967) discussion closely parallels the bases of power discussion (French & Raven, 1959; see above section on power) that was taking place around the same time. Marwell and Schmitt found five main types of compliance gaining strategy; offering rewards (e.g., “I promise to give you money”), punishment (e.g., “I will hurt you if you don’t do this”), expertise (e.g., “Listen to me. I am the experienced one here”), activating impersonal commitments (e.g., “You will feel bad if you don’t do this”), and activating personal commitments (e.g., “You should do this because you owe me”) (pp. 361-364). Below are examples of studies that have been conducted since this discussion.

Wheless, Barraclough, and Stewart (1983) reviewed studies and theoretical discussions that have taken place in this area. Throughout the years, researchers have looked at a variety of compliance gaining strategies in general (e.g., promise, expertise, moral appeal, esteem, debt, altruism) (p. 115). The authors argue that some research in the area of power has failed to consider the roots of compliance gaining techniques and that future research in this area should ground itself in the power and persuasion literature (pp. 106, 140). They claim that the best way

to conceptualize compliance gaining behavior is as “the implementation or operationalization of interpersonal or social power” (p. 141).

In relation to positive and negative peer influence, Costello and Hope (2016) discuss some of the techniques that a sample (n=269) of university students claimed to use when encouraging another person to do an activity. When the activity was “negative” (e.g., drinking alcohol), the most common strategies used included simply asking or offering (48%) and using coercive tactics (e.g., ridicule) (20%) (p. 23). Two years later, Costello and Zozula (2018) found different prominent strategies in their sample of university students (n=102). Although a substantial portion of their sample (13%) still deployed coercive tactics, the two most commonly used methods were minimizing consequences (e.g., chances of getting caught) (23%) and persistently offering the activity (17%) (p. 102).

In another study, Checton and Greene (2011) explored the strategies used by university students to convince others to give them prescription drugs. They found that people were more likely to do things like explain why they wanted the person to give them the drugs or promise to return the favour compared to more coercive measures such as threatening others or acting sad if the person rejected their request. They also found that strategy choice did not depend on the person they were trying to convince (friend vs acquaintance) (p. 267). In general, they suggest that the strategies used should be viewed in relation to the goals driving the behaviour.

As part of their drug resistance research, Alberts, Miller-Rassulo, and Hecht (1991) created a typology for both strategies to gain compliance for drug use and strategies when resisting. They did this by interviewing 33 college and high school students about times they were offered drugs or alcohol and how they responded (p. 132). The categories of compliance gaining strategies included a simple offer (i.e., directly asking or offering another person to

participate), availability (i.e., when the substance was made available to the person), minimization (i.e., talking about how it was only going to be a little bit or it wouldn't hurt at all), appealing to group norms (i.e., talking about how everyone else is doing it), stating the benefits (e.g., talking about how it will be good for them), and making a strong offer (e.g., repetitive requests) (p. 136). Other researchers in the communications field have found support for this typology as well (e.g., Harrington, 1997).

In the context of alcohol consumption, Wagner and Punyanunt-Carter (2009) surveyed 365 college students on the compliance gaining strategies they used to persuade friends to drink. They found that debt (e.g., "you owe me this") was the most frequently used strategy and threat was perceived to be the most effective (p. 482).

Also exploring the use of compliance strategies among students, particularly on the topic of drinking alcohol, Wright and O'Hair (1999) found that when participants were trying to persuade someone else to drink, the most popular compliance gaining strategy used was a simple offer (e.g., "do you want a drink?"), followed by availability (e.g., "we have a lot of alcohol here"), minimization (e.g., "it won't hurt you"), and stating the potential benefits of doing it (e.g., "It will make you feel good") (p. 271). One thing to note about this lab experiment is that participants were given a list of potential compliance gaining strategies to use (p. 270); particularly the categories previously designed by Alberts, Miller-Rassulo, and Hecht from their 1991 research on drug resistance noted above. This may have altered how participants would have handled the conversation in a more natural setting.

Giving an example of specific techniques, some scholars have tested the "low-balling" technique in the context of deviant requests. This technique involves initially offering a more attractive request to a person and then changing the request to be less desirable. This idea is

premised on individuals resisting change; once a person has agreed to do something, in many circumstances they will follow through with that decision even if the offer increases in cost or becomes less desirable in another way (Gueguen & Pascual, 2013, p. 163).

In one experiment, Gueguen and Pascual (2013) had confederates approach 100 individuals smoking cigarettes while walking down the street. In their low-ball condition, individuals were initially asked if they could light a cigarette for the confederate and were later shown that the cigarette was a cannabis joint (illegal at the time and location). In the other condition, the individuals were shown the cannabis joint while the initial request was being made. These scholars found that 80% of participants agreed to light the confederate's joint in the low-balling condition compared to only 38% in the control condition.

In a second experiment (n=480), participants were again approached by confederates on the street and asked to either hold a syrup mint, beer, or absinth (illegal) bottle and be in a photo for a local magazine (Gueguen & Pascual, 2013, p. 166). Participants in the control condition were shown the bottle type at the same time as the request, while participants in the other condition were not. Like their first experiment, participants were significantly more likely to comply to the photo request in all item scenarios in the low-balling technique scenario compared to the control condition. For example, 20% of participants in the low-balling condition who were asked to hold the illegal bottle of absinth still agreed to be in the photo compared to 7.5% of participants in the control condition (p. 167). In relation to the current research being proposed, it is possible that instigators might perceive (and use) this technique to be effective when asking their peers to participate in deviant activities.

Neuliep and Mattson (1990) explored persuasive message strategies by asking 283 undergraduate students to describe their responses to a hypothetical situation. Half of these

students were told to write their responses under the assumption that they were not going to tell the other person the real reason for the request whereas the other half were told they could let the other person know (p. 412). None of the three scenarios involved convincing the other person to do something illegal, but they did involve asking the other person to do something controversial (e.g., asking your professor for a make-up quiz without saying the main or real reason you need it - p. 413). Across all three scenarios, the people who had to convince someone else without telling them the real reason behind the request used more explanation-based strategies (e.g., offering reasons for why the other person should comply) than the others who were told they could let the other person know. The people who were told the other person could know the real reason typically relied on strategies such as promise (e.g., promising things before asking for compliance), debt (e.g., mentioning how the other person owes them), threat (e.g., saying they will do something the other person won't like if they don't comply), and guilt (p. 415).

Examining the topic from the speech communication field, King (2001) looked at persuasive strategies used between a person trying to persuade another in a sample of 120 undergraduate students (p. 390). During conversations between participants and confederates, King found that when participants were told in advance the person they were trying to convince seemed to be generally in favor of the action they were trying to get them to do (helping with a cleanup campaign), they often eventually used negative sanctions (e.g., threat, guilt), but as a last effort. On the other hand, if participants were told in advance the person they were trying to persuade was generally against the activity, they relied heavily on positive sanctions (e.g., making a promise - p. 395). Additionally, the majority of participants (81%) used a rationale strategy (e.g., providing an explanation, directly requesting) as their first attempt at persuading the confederate.

Chapters one and two have outlined the purpose behind this research alongside potential theoretical explanations for deviant instigation. Broadly the research has examined instigator role shifts (Warr, 1996), and areas that may explain the motivation behind deviant instigation (e.g., social status and bullying research). However, there is a major gap when it comes to work on testing and exploring the motivations specifically behind deviant instigation. Chapter three will outline the methodology used for phase one of this research, which as you may recall involves semi-structured interviews.

CHAPTER 3: PHASE 1 METHODOLOGY

Chapter Overview

As outlined in the introduction chapter of this dissertation, the current research project was divided into two phases with the intention of conducting an exploratory sequential study. This current chapter outlines the methodology that was followed during phase one of the research (the qualitative component).

Methodology

This first phase of this research is comprised of data collection and analysis from 40 semi-structured virtual interviews. These were conducted through Microsoft Teams. Semi-structured interviews were chosen to allow for the ability to use probing questions to gain a better understanding, but to also maintain an ideal level of comparability among the interviews conducted (Aurini, Heath, & Howells, 2016, p. 82). Microsoft Teams provides an experience close to phone interviews. Although there are some disadvantages to conducting interviews on the phone (e.g., weaker rapport, inability to read nonverbal cues), phone interviews are known to have a variety of benefits such as affordability, flexibility, participant reach, and personal safety (Aurini, Heath, & Howells, p. 83). Additionally, scholars have pointed out that the quality of data collected from phone interviews is similar to face-to-face interviews (Couper, 2017, p. 125). Notably, conducting the interviews over Microsoft Teams also allowed the researcher to move forward with data collection without the many physical barriers put up by COVID-19 safety regulations. 42 interviews were conducted. Out of these 42, two were removed at the analysis stage out of data integrity concerns (which will be explained later in this chapter), meaning that the analysis of phase one of this research was done with 40 interviews.

Pretesting

The interview questions (see Appendix A) were pretested prior to use as scholars have suggested (Martin, 2017, p. 90). The interview process and questions were pretested with seven individuals. This pretest group was comprised of family members, friends, acquaintances, and peers. The characteristics of individuals in this pretest group varied (e.g., age, socio-economic status, gender, level of education, race). Since the goals of the pretest was to check for the level of understanding of questions, to see if questions had to be added or removed, and for the researcher to practice interview skills (e.g., probing, gaining rapport), pretest participants were asked to answer the questions with fake information. This was done so that they did not disclose any true information about unlawful activities they may have committed in the past. These interviews were recorded so the researcher could find flaws in the questions and probing. At the end of the interview, the pretest participants were asked if any of the questions were unclear or could be interpreted in a different way.

Overall, pretest participants expressed that the interview process was smooth. They were able to enter the virtual meeting without complications, they understood the majority of the questions being asked upon first hearing them, and they felt that the interviewer stated questions and prompts in a neutral way. After evaluating interviews conducted during our pretesting, it was evident that the responses received for most questions were appropriate (i.e., the answers fit the questions). There was, however, an adjustment that was submitted and received ethics approval. This adjustment included slight rewording of three questions and the addition of some more background information about the study and who the researcher was before reading the consent form.

At this point, we also decided to narrow the study's focus. The original plan was to interview people on their experience with encouraging another person to do anything that was

against the law. Our pretesting showed that this was too broad and, if similar issues were encountered with real data, would lead to difficulties detecting trends across participants. For example, one pretest participant talked about fake stories related to encouraging someone to speed while driving, one person talked about encouraging others to sell drugs, another person talked about getting someone to steal, and another participant talked about encouraging others to vandalize a bridge. Identifying this issue, we instead decided to focus on encouraging others to either steal something or use alcohol or drugs in a context that was against the law. This allowed for exploration of different kinds of offences but also enabled comparisons at the analysis stage. After the pretest interviews, an explicit statement was also added before the questions that requested participants not use names in their responses and to only talk about situations and activities that took place in the past (i.e., no future plans) for their protection and the protection of other people they may be associated with.

Sample Selection

The sample for phase one was collected using social media¹. In recent years, scholars have explored the use of social media when recruiting hard-to-reach populations². Many have expressed great support for its use (Amon et al., 2014; Ince et al., 2014; Levine et al., 2011; Chenane & Hammond, 2021; Weiner et al., 2017)³. As Chenane and Hammond (2021) point out

¹ As mentioned through the section that discusses recruitment challenges, we initially attempted to recruit participants of criminal justice and reintegration programs by partnering with various organizations in Ontario. It was found that this route to recruitment was not feasible.

² A hard-to-reach population can be defined as “sub-groups of the population that are difficult to reach or involve in research [...] due to their physical or geographical location [...] or their social or economic situation” (Shaghaghi, Bhopal, & Sheikh, 2011). It can be argued that the population we were trying to access for this research was a hard-to-reach population due to the social circumstance of having pressured someone else to do something against the law (an experience that many people may not want to explicitly acknowledge).

³ It is important to note that there are some downsides that social media recruitment as well, notably knowing less about who you are recruiting and where they are located (a problem that is discussed later in this chapter), and only gaining access to those actively using and checking the platform you are recruiting from.

in their recent study examining the use of Facebook as a recruitment tool to reach Kenyan immigrant women, Facebook is effective to gain a “vast and diverse” sample (p. 11). In another study, Amon et al (2014) reviewed six studies that used social media recruitment in the area of adolescent health and supported Facebook as a recruitment strategy citing that it was more time efficient, easier to follow up with study participants when needed, and offered a greater reach of participants (p. 446). Additionally, in a study comparing Facebook recruitment to more traditional strategies (e.g., press release, digital mail, pamphlets, advertisements), Ince et al. (2014) found that most study applicants (75%) were attracted through Facebook (pp. 76, 80), making it the most effective recruitment platform used.

The majority of participants for this study come from the population of adults who participate in various general Facebook groups across Ontario.⁴ The study was open to people across Canada and the United States. However, during data collection, we realized that some people may be participating from overseas. Because of this, and the screening tools we decided to implement, we needed participants to come from a location that allowed for general screening questions that people from the area would know the answers for and the researcher conducting the interviews would also be able to recognize quickly if the answers were correct without having to have knowledge from multiple countries, states, or provinces.

The researchers chose to originally restrict the study location to Canada and the United States for a variety of reasons. One was due to compensation issues which are discussed below. Most importantly, because phase one focused on specific acts (illegal use of alcohol or marijuana and theft), we wanted to interview people from areas where the understanding, conversations, and repercussions for these acts would be similar. For example, in some countries, the penalty

⁴ Please note that originally, the study was advertised in Facebook and Reddit groups across Waterloo Region and Toronto. Due to the recruitment challenges experienced (explained later in this chapter), this had to change.

for theft might be much more severe than they are in North America; deviant instigation might look very different when the consequences differ dramatically. Future research could explore this possibility.

For most of the study, the researcher asked to join Facebook groups across many areas in Ontario. In total, 211 Facebook groups were posted in from August 25th 2021 to January 10th 2022. In most circumstances, the groups were unmonitored by members, acting as an open discussion board. In cases where administrators were monitoring the page or certain posting rules had to be met, the researcher asked permission to post in the group. If permission was not granted, the group was not posted in. The researchers intentionally posted in groups reaching across the province, including all major cities, towns, small rural areas, regions, etc. This was done by spotting different areas on Google Maps, searching terms such as “Ontario towns”, “Ontario cities”, etc. Municipalities were also targeted if they had general groups. A list of municipalities was used from an open government website (i.e., “List of Ontario Municipalities”). In addition to general area groups, Ontario student groups were also posted in (e.g., various college and university groups). Although we did not ask about specific locations in Ontario, we have reason to believe that participants varied greatly in location due to brief mentions of locations during the interviews. This includes participants from more northern areas like Thunder Bay and Dryden. Additionally, through conversation with participants, we also have reason to believe that many participants were no longer students (our sample is not solely university and college students, though these groups were posted in, and some students did participate).

The social media advertisement acted as an open call for anyone who met the eligibility criteria and wanted to participate. Eligibility for this study was adults between the ages of 18 and

30. This age limit was set because most offending takes place in adolescence and early adulthood (Hirschi & Gottfredson, 1983; Nagin & Land, 1993) and is therefore a prime age to study deviant influencers; criminal activity tends to decrease as people get older. The maximum age limit of 30 to participate was set so that people were not being asked to recall situations that may have occurred 20+ years ago (as would be the case with a 40-year-old reporting on an offence when there were 20). Future research may want to explore potential differences in older demographics.

I did not interview adolescents, even though a substantial amount of offending commonly occurs during this developmental stage. To interview someone under the age of 18, I would have needed to gain not only their consent, but also the consent of their parent or guardian which likely would have resulted in low participation rates, particularly since the entire process was done virtually during the COVID-19 pandemic. By only interviewing adults between the ages of 18-30, I was able to gather information on relatively recent criminal involvement (some of which may have been done during the adolescent years) without having to gain consent from multiple parties.

In addition to their age, a person must also have encouraged someone in the past to either a) steal something (e.g., at a store, from someone's house, in public) or b) use alcohol and/or drugs in a context that was against the law (e.g., drinking alcohol underage). They had to speak and understand English (given the language limitations of the researcher), be currently physically living in Ontario, Canada⁵, and have not participated in this study before.

Near the end of the recruitment process for these interviews, in an attempt to get a few more participants, we received ethics clearance for Ashley Ryan to post on her personal Facebook page with the request of her friends and family to share the study request to people in

⁵ Location eligibility did change multiple times during interviews 1-18 for reasons outlined in the recruitment challenges section of this chapter.

their own networks. When this happened, an additional criterion was added; participants could not personally know the researchers.⁶ We believe this alternative approach only resulted in one interview, meaning that most interviews resulted from posting in Ontario Facebook groups. To compensate people for their time, participants were offered a \$10 virtual gift card to Amazon, Walmart, Tim Hortons, or Ultimate Dining for the appreciation of their time.

When someone contacted the researchers, they were thanked, the recruitment letter was offered again for review, and they were asked to confirm eligibility once again. At this point, many people either decided to no longer participate, saw that they were actually not eligible, and/or did not respond further. When people did respond and met the participation criteria, an Microsoft Teams call was scheduled. Leading up to the interview, participants were sent the consent form in advance to review (this consent form was also read to the participant again before the interview), and further information on joining the interview was provided to ensure people were able to enter the call.

When participants showed up to their interview, they were introduced to the study and the researcher again, were read the consent form, and were asked if they have any questions. Verbal consent was then obtained. Please see the interview guide for a more in-depth view of this process. Due to concerns around location eligibility and potential repeat participants that were raised in the first set of interviews (please see recruitment challenges section), after interview 18, an additional screening process was implemented. This was completed for every interview that followed and was greatly beneficial in removing individuals who may not have been fully truthful about their location. During this screening process, participants were asked to

⁶ There were no instances where this occurred. This criterion was added to ensure that the sample contained no participants who might have reason to provide socially desirable biased responses.

have their camera on temporarily⁷ (this part was not recorded, and the participant was made aware of this). This was done to deter individuals from trying to participate more than once. Participants were told in the recruitment letter that this would be a mandatory screening component. No one expressed that they had an issue with this and were open to temporarily having their camera on. There were two instances where a person said their camera was broken and they therefore could not turn it on. To standardize screening, these people were informed that they could not participate in the study and were thanked for their time.

Participants were also asked three randomly selected questions about Ontario and Canada (e.g., what colour is a Canadian \$5 bill? Can you please name 3 cities located in Ontario?). A list of these questions can be found in the appendix (B) and were approved by the University of Waterloo ethics board. Those in Ontario who we believe met the eligibility requirements had no issues answering these questions. However, this process did screen out some people who we believe were not in Ontario (please see recruitment challenges section).

After the screening, information, and consent processes, these interviews were audio recorded with the explicit permission of the individual. Once transcribed, these audio recordings were deleted. Pseudonyms were used to protect the confidentiality of participants. I, as the interviewer, also jotted reflexive and informational notes during the interviews to assist in the analysis process.

Recruitment Challenges

⁷ Although it would have better mimicked an in-person interview, participants were asked to turn their camera off after this initial screening for multiple reasons. Some of these reasons include wanting the participants to feel comfortable and safe in providing information about their own and other's criminal behaviour, to decrease the chance of facing internet issues due to bandwidth, and because the recording platform we were advised to use by the Research Ethics Board at the University of Waterloo (Microsoft Teams) would have recorded both video and audio (when only audio would have been preferred for reasons above). Additionally, since recruitment for this study was substantially challenging, it was thought that requiring video would have decreased the response to our recruitment calls even more.

When we first started the recruitment process, the initial plan was to reach out to local organizations that run criminal justice and reintegration programs to see if they would be open to the idea of allowing us to recruit people from their programs. Only one organization responded, and the CEO met with me to discuss this pathway. They explained that due to COVID-19, some programs were not currently running, and they were having staffing issues. After discussing these issues, and a few other concerns they brought forward (e.g., length of time to get approval, people potentially not trusting the researchers to not disclose information to the organization), we decided that this recruitment strategy would not be feasible.

From this point, we decided the best option moving forward would be to recruit from social media. This approach is financially feasible, allows us to speak to people from different locations and backgrounds, and allows participants to feel more comfortable speaking to us (since they were potentially not involved with the criminal justice system). We received ethics approval at this point to post a recruitment message in Toronto and Waterloo Facebook and Reddit groups with no location-specific eligibility listed. The assumption was that if we are posting in Toronto and Waterloo based groups, most people contacting us would be from these areas.

The response to the first posting was substantial. When interviews started, we quickly realized that some people were located in the United States. We are not sure why this occurred, but it could have happened for a variety of reasons. For example, because of COVID-19, some of these people could have been students at Canadian schools like the University of Waterloo temporarily living or doing business in the United States (e.g., co-op, online schooling from their home). Another reason this could have happened is that Toronto is a large, well-known metropolitan area; as such, it may attract an international audience. Because of this, there could

have been a higher number of people outside of Toronto in these groups than we guessed. Regardless, we made the decision to set an eligibility to span across Canada and the United States to allow these people to participate as we saw no immediate issue with this.

As interviews progressed, we started to become concerned with the honesty of some of the participants. Particularly, we grew concerned over the potential of people participating more than once or contacting us from other countries. This concern stemmed from identical e-mail wordings upon initial contact and hearing night associated sounds (e.g., crickets) when conducting interviews during daytime hours in Canada and the United States. The largest marker of concern was when an individual responded to us asking a question through a Google account and it showed in the e-mail that the meeting they had scheduled with us was in West African Time.

It is important to clarify why the researchers were more willing to open the study to people in the United States compared to other countries. The first reason is that the United States and Canada are broadly similar in cultural and linguistic terms; both being western, English-speaking countries, participants' understanding of interview questions would be less prone to interpretive variation relative to participants in other regions. The second reason is that there was less financial advantage for people in the United States to participate in this research, as the compensation amount offered was very clearly in Canadian dollars, meaning that when converted, U.S. participants would receive a lower dollar amount in their own currency. However, if people were trying to participate from countries with a lower cost of living, the Canadian compensation amount may be worth substantially more in real terms, potentially leading to the compensation being a larger driving factor in the decision for people to participate in the research. This opens the possibility (one that we suspect of occurring in the early stages,

hence the deletion of some data) that some participants will be motivated to participate repeatedly under false pretenses which puts the validity of the data into question (i.e., making up stories to avoid the duplication being detected).

The third reason is that during the initial recruitment attempts, the eligibility requirements did not explicitly state location, meaning that it was fair for people residing in the United States to assume they were welcome to participate. However, when we realized people from the United States were participating, a location requirement was explicitly added to the study description and potential participants were asked to confirm this upon first contact. Past this point, the people who were not honest about their location were potentially consciously lying to the researchers. This created a concern that they may be lying about other aspects of the stories they were talking about in their interviews. There is, of course, no way to tell with any certainty how honest a person is being when conducting research, but it is a researcher's responsibility to maximize this as much as possible. Therefore, when it was identified that there may be people participating outside of Canada and the United States, we reevaluated the recruitment methods.

Once we realized what may be happening, all interviewing was paused to consider how to proceed. The dissertation committee unanimously decided that the best path forward would be to a) delete all flagged interviews where there was reason to believe the individuals may not have been located in eligible areas; b) alert the ethics board about the issue and ask approval for a revised screening procedure; c) change location eligibility to Ontario, Canada to enable the use of location-specific screening questions; d) only post in Facebook groups (no longer posting on Reddit as posts here are more easily found on Google); e) cancel all currently scheduled future interviews in order to start the new recruitment process; f) compare the first set of interviews to

the second set of interviews (pre enhanced screening vs post advanced screening) at the analysis stage to see if the findings differ (no differences were found).

There are many potential reasons for why these recruitment issues may have occurred, but we believe there is a chance that we could have been targeted by online scammers noticing the \$10 compensation gift card being offered in the study. We decided to continue offering the compensation because we believe it would be unfair if some of our participants did not receive the compensation and because we believed the new screening procedures would successfully identify future potential scammers or people who wanted to participate but did not live in Ontario.

As mentioned previously, the enhanced screening procedure involved a) requiring participants to temporarily turn their camera on showing their face, and b) asking each participant three randomly selected questions about Ontario and Canada from a list of 10. Participants passed this part of the screening if they accurately answered at least two in a reasonable amount of time. It was important for the questions to be different every time so that if someone participated and got them wrong, they could not let someone else know about the questions ahead of time so that they could then pass the screening. Though I cannot guarantee with absolute certainty this is the case, I am highly confident that everyone who should have been screened out of the sample due to location eligibility were successfully screened out using these measures. For those who arrived at the interview, seven out of twenty-nine people did not pass the location eligibility screening questions. These seven people did not answer any question correctly even after long pauses. Others could be heard speaking to others in the background asking them for potential answers. When it was clear that a person had failed the screening, they

would be informed that they were not eligible for this study at this time and were thanked for their time before ending the call.

After switching to solely Ontario Facebook groups, we faced further recruitment challenges. People sometimes thought that we were either scammers looking for money (ironically) or undercover police officers looking for people to admit to illegal activities. It may have also just been challenging to find people to talk to because of the specific group of people we were looking to interview. This stage also involved a few trips back to the ethics board to rearrange the social media recruitment post. It appeared that we got slightly more success when we started the post introducing the researcher and the personal reason for why the study was being conducted (PhD dissertation) compared to starting the post stating that we were looking for research participants. Nonetheless, over time between August 2021-January 2022, the interviews were all collected.

With the above challenges in mind, we provide the following advice to those considering similar methods: 1. Acknowledge that recruiting via third party organizations may come with more complications, concerns, and barriers than you might initially think. 2. If you are recruiting online, be prepared to use additional screening mechanisms. 3. Do not assume that posting on social media accounts will yield potential participants quickly. This may be the case for some, especially those who may be doing survey research, but we did not find this to be the case when seeking participants for interviews. 4. Follow your gut. When you think something may be off in your sample, do not ignore it purely to avoid complications. To produce strong research using social media recruitment methods, creative and flexible approaches may need to be used and adapted over the course of the project. The additional screening was particularly effective, easy

to implement, and not difficult for local participants to pass (e.g., all Ontarians are likely to know that Ottawa is in Ontario). Please see appendix B for a list of screening questions used.

Analysis

Interviews were transcribed initially by Microsoft Teams during the recording process and then checked and fixed by the researcher after each interview. Interview transcripts were then imported to NVIVO for analysis. I initially precoded the data as Saldaña (2015, p. 16) suggests by highlighting and bolding participant quotations that appear significant. Before coding the data, I proactively made overreaching codes to be able to separate the different kinds of offences covered (e.g., drinking underage, using marijuana, theft) so I could easily make comparisons later. Since the interview covered a variety of topics, I also made overreaching codes for the responses for each question asked. For example, I created a code category named “resistance” and the responses answering the question about resistance faced were sorted here under the scenario activity type (e.g., underage drinking). After going through an interview and coding it this way, I would read through the interview again to see what was coded and what to double check. I also double checked the nodes in NVIVO to ensure it was logged properly. This was important to do for every interview before moving on to the next stage to ensure no data was missed. For example, if I initially coded an interview and noticed that the file number did not change on a question referenced node, I would be able to explore why this might be missing. This was uncommon, but did happen either due to researcher error, NVIVO error, or on the occasion that the participant did not answer a question. Overall, this process was beneficial in allowing the researcher to catch potential coding errors.

After separating the data by question and response groups, I then engaged in descriptive coding as a first cycle approach by applying descriptive codes to each line of data. As Saldaña

(p. 21) recommends, each recorded code was accompanied by a description of the code being used and an example of data that is associated with this code. An example of this is if a response originally related to “resistance” under the underage drinking scenario category, I looked at it further to code what the resistance entailed. From here more codes emerged under the question category of resistance such as “no resistance,” “minimal resistance,” “large resistance.” Similar to the initial process of dividing the data by question type, I would read through each interview again to ensure I was confident in the coding choice at that moment.

During the second cycle of coding, I deployed both pattern coding which involved bringing related codes together to create larger themes. For example, when looking at motivations for encouraging someone else to drink alcohol underage, the data that fell under codes “Help influencee feel included” and “Help influencee feel better” would have then been brought under the overarching code and motivation of “Helping influencee.” Looking at the themes created, I then examined which of these theme groups appear most frequently in the data through focused coding.

Some scholars have argued that the use of numbers in qualitative data analysis is controversial. However, as Maxwell (2010) points out, numbers may be acceptable when used to identify patterns (p. 479). Although I did include this analysis method to better understand patterns that were appearing, the primary focus was on the descriptions provided by participants.

Lastly, as I mentioned previously when discussing the additional procedures that had to be added during the recruitment stage for this part of the research, after the main analysis was completed, I created a duplicate file in NVIVO and deleted the first set of interviews to see if the findings differed from the second half of interviews that underwent the advanced screening

procedures. The main themes and findings were the same between both sets, adding credibility to the remaining interviews in the first part of the recruitment that were not deleted.

Authenticity and Trustworthiness

Various steps have been taken to maximize the authenticity and trustworthiness of this research. One way to define authenticity in qualitative research is “the degree to which the research is transformative and emancipatory for the people studied and society at large” (Bryman & Bell, 2019, p. 204). It may take time to see the full reach of this research, but it does have the traits of being authentic. First, it may be emancipatory or freeing for the individuals who directly participated in the research. I have provided them with a space to share their experiences and stories, which may be cathartic. Some people mentioned this as a reason for participating. Second, this research has the potential to help others who did not participate directly as this research aims to better understand peer pressure and group dynamics, an issue that many people will come across in their lifetime, to hopefully aid in the creation of content in ongoing and new social programs. I believe that it will also be transformative for peer influence research in the social sciences.

Trustworthiness is often broken down into credibility (e.g., how close do the study’s findings match the reality of the people being studied?), transferability (e.g., can the study be transferred to another context?), dependability (e.g., are the findings consistent?), and confirmability (e.g., are the study findings the result of the perceptions of the people being studied rather than biases stemming from the researcher?) (Shenton, 2006). Numerous steps have been taken to increase the trustworthiness of this study.

One step taken to increase the trustworthiness of this research was the selection of an appropriate sample size. Considering the scope of this phase of the research, 40 interviews were

analyzed. I argue that 40 interviews were enough to appropriately reach theoretical saturation. Morse (2015) states that indicators of saturation include speaking to experts on the topic being explored, having multiple examples for the themes discovered, and appropriate application of the data to the work of others (p. 588). Phase one of this research has all these indicators present, implying that data saturation was achieved.

In addition to the above, the data collection and analysis stages were described in detail in notes and in this dissertation, creating an audit trail. Additionally, a form of member checking also took place at the end of each interview, a technique often used to establish credibility. One question participants were asked was “My impression is that you were highly motivated by X when encouraging Y to do Z. Does that sound about right?” This allowed participants to correct the researcher if needed or confirm if the impression was correct.

This research also involved two different forms of triangulation, a technique used to establish confirmability. Before data collection began, theory triangulation took place where I read multiple theories for why someone may be driven to pressure another person to break the law as well as the different understandings of compliance gaining strategies. Triangulation of methods also took place. Since this is a mixed methods study, the findings in phase one (interviews) were tested in phase two (a survey discussed later). To increase confirmability, I have also included a detailed description of the methods used during data collection and analysis to allow other researchers to view and critique the process. With this description, I have also outlined with as much detail as possible (with the protection of participants as my top priority) the sample used so that others may evaluate the transferability of this study in the future.

Multiple steps have also been taken to encourage honesty in interview responses. First, I assured participants multiple times that I will protect their identity in the research process and

told them that I would greatly appreciate it if they were as honest as possible with me. Participants were also advised that they could refuse to answer a question they did not feel comfortable talking about it. With this, hopefully interviewees chose to use the ability to not say anything instead of providing a false answer. The interviews also took place without the presence of others to encourage comfort. These strategies should increase the trustworthiness of the qualitative research outlined in this phase (Shenton, 2006).

CHAPTER 4: PHASE 1 QUALITATIVE FINDINGS

The Sample

The below findings explore the themes stemming from the motivations and strategies of people encouraging others to do things that are against the law. More specifically, these people talked about events that involved encouraging someone else to either drink alcohol underage, use other drugs in an illegal context (e.g., smoke marijuana underage or when it was banned for recreational use in Canada), or steal from a person or institution. The discussion is divided below with one section exploring alcohol and marijuana use and the other being theft related. Alcohol and marijuana use were combined since they had identical main themes.

As described in chapter three, 40 interviews were included in this analysis. The individuals who participated in these interviews varied greatly in their backgrounds; a trait of the sample that may have been a silver lining stemming from the recruitment challenges (see Chapter three). At the end of each interview, participants were asked a few questions for demographic purposes to help the researchers better understand the diversity and representation present in the sample. The data collected from these demographic questions is also included in table one below.

Participants ranged in age from 18-30 years old. Roughly 25% of the sample were between the ages of 18-21, about 50% between 22-25, and 25% between 26-30. Approximately half the sample identified as male with the other half identifying as female. One individual identified as gender fluid. There was a large variety of educational backgrounds, with some people holding a high school diploma as their highest formal education milestone (32%), and others holding college diplomas (12%), bachelor's degrees (45%), master's degrees (7.5%), one law degree, and one doctoral degree. Some people noted that they currently live in rural areas

(25%) while others lived in more suburban (37%) or urban areas (37%). In relation to geographic location, most people lived in Ontario, Canada (roughly 65%) as that became the targeted population for the second half of the sample. Some participants mentioned that they live in the United States (e.g., Ohio, New York, Florida, Texas, California).

Table 1: Demographic Summary of Phase One

Demographic Trait	Summary
Age	18-21=25% 22-25=50% 26-30=25%
Gender	Female=48% Male=50% Other options (e.g., Gender Fluid) =2% (n=1)
Education	High school=32% College=12% Bachelor’s Degree=45% Master’s degree=7.5% Other (PhD or Law)=1%
Country	Canada=65% The United States of America=35%
Type of living area	Large city=31.5% Suburb near a large city=44.5% Small city or town=20% Rural area=4%

Participants were also asked questions about their perspective on breaking the law and their personal experience with breaking the law. When asked about previous law-breaking behaviour, many people mentioned that they had broken the law in the past. These acts varied greatly and included things like sexual assault, traffic violations, drinking underage, theft, prostitution, drug transportation, scamming, breaking local curfew, and vandalism. When talking about their perspective on breaking the law in general, most people felt that it was okay to break the law depending on the situation. For some people, it depended on the necessity of breaking the

law in a specific situation (e.g., needing food). For a few, it depended on the likelihood of getting caught (e.g., it's ok as long as you don't get caught). For others, the level of acceptance of law-breaking behaviour depended on if there was a victim suffering as a result. For example, Felix Tremblay⁸ (FT), a 29-year-old participant, spoke about how insurance can help cover damages caused, making stealing more acceptable in those cases:

(FT): Thefts where you know like nobody was intimidated or nobody was threatened. And like you know it was in and out just what you grab, you got you wanted, and you got out. You know, like. It ...it's like robbers say in the movies, you know "your stuff is insured. Don't be a hero" but also at the same time you don't need to intimidate people like you know if you're going to be robbing banks, obviously you're intimidating people. You're traumatizing people. That's wrong, but you know, if you're shoplifting games or movies [...] if you're stealing what you want, but you're not hurting anybody, insurance is going to cover that.

Alcohol and Marijuana Use (20 Stories)

Motivations

There were two main themes that emerged for the motivations behind why people encouraged others to drink alcohol underage or use marijuana in a context that was against the law. These are discussed below.

Together is Better!

Over half of the people who talked about an underage drinking or marijuana use event mentioned motivations related to an improved experience for themselves. People expressed that drinking or using marijuana is more fun or a better experience when other people are participating. Further, it is important to some people that, in a group setting, everyone there is

⁸ All names are pseudonyms.

drinking or using marijuana or else it will hinder their own personal experience at the event, or “kill the vibe” as some suggest.

Nicky Sampson (NS), a 26-year-old female, talked about a situation that played out when she was at boarding school. Nicky wanted to drink with her friends to have a good time and reduce boredom. To do this, she wanted others to participate:

(NS): I mean. It is fun. And it's one of the things I enjoy truly. I hope my friend would enjoy with me. You know, drinking alone is weird. Drinking together is fun.

(AR): OK. So kind of like it's an improved experience to do it with a group. Is that what you're saying?

(NS): Yeah, I think so.

Quinn Kelly (QK), also a 26-year-old female, felt a similar way in her interview about a time where she was at a party with some friends:

(QK): Yeah, I was thinking. I think I was just trying to get them more drunk so we could have a better time together and kind of be on the same level of drunkness.

Martha Willcox (MW), a 22-year-old female who had also talked about wanting her friends to have fun (see below) at her 18th birthday party, wanted others to drink too as she perceived that they would be more enjoyable to be around if they were to drink more:

(MW): Yeah. Yeah, it just seemed like they were not on the level of having fun that I wanted. Then they were like bumming me out so I would be like “Oh my God. Drink more!”

Gail Xanos (GX), a 22-year-old female, had a similar view as Martha. Other people not drinking bothered them to the point where they felt inclined to encourage or pressure the other person to drink. Talking about a party situation Gail shared this:

(GX): I would probably say it's a heavy factor. I'm someone who really cares that everyone's involved because it'll bother me if there's one person just sitting

there. So. I think that did have a big impact on me. I think it would have been more fun if all three of us did it. I think that was a big reason why I was trying to get her to do it with us.

Later in the interview talking about which motivation was most important for them

(GX): Uhm? I would say they're pretty equal (*referring to the motivation of not wanting to feel judged by the person not drinking*), but if I did one in a little bit above the other, it would be so that we're all doing it together and we're all having fun together, so it's not one sitting out 'cause that could have, you know, ruined the feeling of the night if she wasn't enjoying herself and we were having a great time while drinking. So primarily so that we could all have fun I guess. I would say it was the top reason for me.

Similar to Gail, it bothered some people when others were not using marijuana with the group because they believed it would impact their own experience. Simon Young, a 24-year-old male, spoke about a time where he tried to convince his friend to join him in smoking marijuana because they were best friends and Simon wanted to do it together:

(SY): It was... was because I just wanted him to join me. That's 'cause he's my best friend. We do everything together. We go to the park and did everything together. So, I was like nervous (*referring to how he was feeling during the attempt to convince his friend*), I want him to join me. He's my best friend [...] I just want him to be with me and in the decision.

Derrick Pitt had similar thoughts about trying to convince his friend to smoke marijuana:

(DP): It feels good when you're with your friends and you're smoking along together [...] so I just wanted the gang smoking... I just wanted the gang smoking.

A large motivation for getting others to drink underage or use marijuana is not wanting to do it alone or feeling bothered by others not drinking because it could hinder their experience during the event. Later in the interviews when people were asked if they have or would consume alcohol alone, the majority of people said they would not. As multiple people stated in their interviews, drinking alcohol is mostly a “social thing” and not something to be done alone. Some

people went further to talk about how drinking underage alone was actually something frowned upon or concerning. Some examples of this are when Larry said:

(LT): Underage yeah I always either drink with people of my own age, people who were older, or like my parents, which I classify as a different category from anything else.

(AR): OK so like you wouldn't go get some alcohol and like drink it alone in your bedroom kind of thing?

(LT): No, no, that... that just sounds really depressing for a child in the prime of his youth.

Or when Sylvia Hart (SH) said:

(SH): I don't know. I always thought that like... having a drink alone was cause for concern.

In contrast to this, the willingness to use marijuana without friends around was higher.

Let Me Help You!

Although sometimes not mentioned as their top motivation, over half of the people who talked about an underage drinking event mentioned motivations related to wanting to help the other person on the receiving end of the encouragement or pressure⁹. Sometimes these individuals thought that if they could get the other person to drink, they would feel better. In other circumstances, they wanted to make sure their friends or peers had fun in the moment and were not left out. For others, they wanted to help the other person socially (e.g., fit in more) or have a new experience. Lastly, for a couple of people, they felt driven to encourage the other person to drink because they thought the person wanted to drink anyway and that they were just helping them along in that decision making process. Overall, the participants expressing this common theme felt that at the time of the event, drinking underage would hold benefits for the

⁹ Since only five people spoke about marijuana use, only the previous motivation (seeking an improved experience by doing it with others) came forward as more prevalent than others.

other person on the receiving end of the encouragement or pressure and they wanted to help them obtain these benefits.

Some participants like Carl Ace (CA), a 30-year-old male, expressed that drinking alcohol would help the other person feel better in the moment. CA thought that if he could get his nephew to drink alcohol, that his nephew would be able to relax more and worry less about the family turmoil they had been experiencing with their parents.

(CA): Soo...my motivation of course was to make him relax and make him feel like there are other things in the world rather than being depressed and you know thinking about the life of their parents and I was also trying to tell him that that is their life. It's not part of your life. You should just relax and just have fun and you should just forget about everything. So, I was just maybe to try to get him to feel relaxed

Multiple people also talked about encouraging their friend or peer to drink alcohol underage because they didn't want them to feel left out of a situation. Vanessa Ellis (VE), a 19-year-old female, talked about a time where she was at a party with some friends and wanted her friend to drink so that they felt included and were able to have fun with the rest of the group.

(VE): Again, like the main reason is because we're the same group of friends. We don't want her to feel left out and also because like as I said after this small party thing like we were all going to like this bigger event [...] it's called froshed out and it's basically like people just dancing. There's lots of people that are drunk and like it's a big concert [...] it's more like you're not gonna have fun, right? Because if everyone else is tipsy, everyone else is getting hyper and you were the only one just standing there sober, so I think that's the main reason.

Vanessa was not the only one who talked about wanting to make sure their friend had a good time. Martha (MW), also talked about this when she hosted an 18th birthday party for herself and wanted her friends in attendance to have a good time because she thought many of them would face hard times in the future:

(MW): I kinda, I obviously wanted to have a fun time. 'cause it was like my birthday and stuff, but I wanted my friends to also have a fun time. 'cause like I had said earlier, I knew that a lot of them wouldn't make it through college. I knew a lot of them would get pregnant young and be trapped in like that same small town.

In a different situation, Zack Easton (ZE), a 19-year-old male, mentioned a time where his friend approached him and asked to come to a party with him. Zack assumed that his friend wanted to have the full experience and brought up the idea of them drinking at the party. Overall, Zack wanted his friend to have the high school party experience they were looking for and to maybe make some new friends along the way:

(ZE): You know, I'm honestly a big believer in just kind of having experiences. Kind of this way, it's the best way you learn [...] and he had never really been out. He was personally a little antisocial, but it certainly was really awesome to see him come out of his shell a little at this party and you know, enjoy being around people, so that was a really cool thing to see.

(AR): OK, so would it be fair to say like you went into this conversation with the intention of like helping your friend get socialized and do the typical normal like high school social things?

(ZE): Yep, Yep, those...I was one of his only really two friends in high school and then he had a couple more after that party so...

Larry Terrel (LT), a 23-year-old male, had a similar experience helping a co-worker be okay with the idea of drinking after they had expressed that they were considering it to feel more included:

(LT): There was one person who was slightly hesitant about joining in due to a combination of the fact that he was underage and that he was on Accutane. Uh, and although he wanted to participate, he wasn't sure that if he should and so I just kind of made it clear to him that this was a thing that he was able to participate in if he wanted to do it, and he was in as a safe environment to do so.

As these stories suggest, people are not always encouraging or pressuring other people purely for their own benefit, at least not explicitly. Some people see someone else struggling to make a decision or not having fun and want to help them. This goes against the stereotypical

conception of peer pressure. In underage drinking cases, most participants were faced with some level of resistance when they started encouraging the other person to drink. However, even when faced with resistance on behalf of the person on the receiving end of the encouragement because they thought the other person would benefit from breaking the law in this context, most were willing to continue this pressure.

The examples above highlight an element of selflessness or desire to help others. However, it's worth noting that these could, to some degree, be post-hoc rationalizations to preserve the participant's self-image. That is, even in situations where people may have consciously told themselves they were doing a good thing for the other person by enacting this pressure towards them, there may have still been more self-serving subterranean motivations playing a part in their behaviour in the moment, especially in situations where there may have been benefits for the person doing the pressuring (e.g., diffusing responsibility of doing something illegal). Of course, we do not have the capacity to do anything more than speculate about subconscious processes.

In addition to the two most common themes above, there were other motivations mentioned by participants. Some examples of these include just going with the flow of what other people were doing, wanting the influencee to be deterred from getting drunk in the future, not wanting to be judged for drinking alone, or not wanting to be the drunkest person at the party. Each of these motivations only came up once in the interviews.

Strategies

It's common for media portrayals of peer pressure to take the form of humiliation tactics (e.g., name calling), or using other direct, aggressive, and/or "mean" techniques. If one were to watch the Full House episode mentioned in chapter one of this dissertation, you would see the

instigators enacting peer pressure by calling Stephanie, one of the main characters of the show who is refusing a cigarette, a “dweeb” and further saying that “sixth graders are terminally pathetic” in front of her as a group of peers laugh at the situation (“Fast Friends”, episode of Full House, 1993). Despite this stereotype, strategies like this were not commonly found in phase one of this research.

You’ll be Fine!

The most common theme that emerged in relation to the strategies people used when trying to encourage someone else to drink alcohol underage or use marijuana was providing reassurance. This came in different forms like telling people they will be physically okay if they drink alcohol. Similarly, some people explicitly told the person they were trying to convince that the alcohol or marijuana was not going to hurt them. Others provided reassurance by saying that they would not be caught by parents or other authorities. In cases where people deployed multiple strategies to convince the other person, they believed that providing reassurance was the most effective strategy in the situation.

Returning to the boarding school example, where Nicky was convincing some friends to drink with her, one of her main strategies was pointing out that the teacher overseeing their class was not going to pay attention to what they were doing and that no one was going to get caught or get in trouble by the school or their parents:

(NS): I mean, I was pretty good at convincing them. I told them like the teacher wouldn't find out. I guess like there was one concern here like the teacher would find out and tell our parents because it was a boarding school. You don't see your parents very often, so you pretty much do whatever you want. And I was like “no, the teacher is in another class teaching mathematics and it's only going to be us. Nobody is going to come here and keep looking at us.”

Gail provided similar reassurance to her friend:

(GX): Uhm, just 'cause of knowing my parents, I know they wouldn't come down. They leave me and my friends alone I'd say so I wasn't worried for them for those reasons and so then we wouldn't have to interact with them, so we won't have to worry about being drunk. Things like that. I just told her that they wouldn't really come check. They were coming home late at night so they would have just left us alone. So that's how I reassured her.

Carl Ace and Charles Moore (CM) both turned to pointing out that the alcohol was not going to hurt the person being encouraged when trying to convince them to participate:

(CM): I just started convincing him that it's not going to hurt him. Ah, I tried telling him it's not going to hurt him or give you pain.

Similar to Carl and Charles, Larry noticed that the person who was resisting the idea of drinking was partially doing so because of a medication that they were taking at the time and addressed their concerns:

(LT): I think the big kind of notable items are just kind of tackling his main concerns, which was just you know, "oh, I don't know if I'm able to drink because I'm on this medication" so you know, we did a little bit of research and found out that it wasn't the kind of roadblock that he thought it was.

Looking at marijuana use, Halle Bennet (HB), a 22-year-old female, used this strategy when trying to convince a co-worker to use marijuana at a holiday party:

(HB): I think it was just like letting them know that like everything is okay if they wanna try it, like we're all okay. I think that was kind of the most... like the factor that kind of persuaded them the most when they saw that we were all okay.

Derrick Pitt used himself as an example to demonstrate that nothing bad would happen to his friend if they smoked marijuana:

(DP): I was like "see I'm good, I'm good, there's nothing wrong with me, I'm good, and you know... I do this all the time, so why don't you come along and try it with me?".

Similar to Halle and Derrick, Luke used someone else's current apparent health as a demonstration to provide reassurance to a friend he was trying to convince at a party:

(LC): I pointed out that the younger person in the group was a girl. So I pointed out that. The girl is, well younger than him and she's already taking cannabis and she's still okay. She's still looking good and there's nothing wrong with that, so I tried to point out someone from the crowd.

Here's a Shot!

Another common theme that emerged when talking about strategies and underage drinking scenarios specifically was the participant physically providing alcohol to the other person. This came in the form of buying alcohol for them from the store (or getting someone else to get it for them), pouring them a shot, or handing them a drink at a party. This was often paired with some form of verbal statement like the below examples show. Some people made the offering of alcohol sound more optional like Zack:

(ZE): But I was like I was like “come to this party and like we'll get you drinks” and then.... Then he goes he goes. “I'm not like... I'm not too sure about the drinking thing” I'm like, “OK, like I'll get, I'll get you some and then. If you want them when we're there, you can have them”.

Other people, like Quinn, took a more direct route:

(QK): I would just be like “oh take another shot” and then I would find the cup and the alcohol for them and I'd pour it for them and I would just hand it to them and be like “oh, take another shot”. It's kind of just like all set up for them, you know [...] I definitely handed it to them. Or like I'd find the alcohol and give it to them.

Although providing reassurance was the most effective strategy for Gail, she also used this strategy with a hint of personal obligation:

(GX): I also was pouring the drink as I was trying to persuade her too. Then maybe also say it's already poured. “You have to take it”.

There were some other strategies deployed by the people in the interviews discussing alcohol use as well. These included casually asking or suggesting the idea to drink (e.g., let's have some drinks), mentioning the benefits of drinking to the other person (e.g., it will help you focus, it will help you relax, you will have fun), normalizing the activity (e.g., alcohol is a

normal drink, you're in university, everyone else is drinking). These strategies were not rare. At least four people talked about each of these. However, they were seen less commonly than the themes discussed above and were often shadowed by another strategy (e.g., providing reassurance). Some other people made verbal demands to the other person (e.g., chanting for them to drink) or told the other person about potential consequences they could face if they do not drink, but these were uncommon strategies.

Regarding marijuana use, as mentioned, since only five people disclosed events related to marijuana use, only one common motivation appeared (4/5 of these participants used reassurance as a strategy). However, some other strategies were briefly mentioned by others such as pointing out the benefits of using marijuana (e.g., "you will like it"), mentioning the potential consequences of not using marijuana (e.g., leaving them out of activities), and directly asking (e.g., "can you please join me?"). There were three other people in addition to those mentioned in the above categories of illegal marijuana use and underage drinking who spoke about getting a peer or friend to deal drugs (two people) and do cocaine (one person). The motivations differed between all three cases and so did the strategies used. However, one of two people convincing their friend to deal drugs did use the reassurance strategy.

Theft (17 stories)

Motivations

I Can't Do This Alone!

Most people (10 out of 17), when talking about a time where they encouraged someone to steal something, indicated that they wanted someone else to do it either with or instead of them because they needed their help to achieve the level of success they desired. For example, under this motivation, they either expressed that they needed the other person to steal so they could get

more money or items, they could get access to money (e.g., influencee had wealthy parents to steal from), because the influencee was more experienced or braver, or because they believed the person they were convincing had a better chance of succeeding than them. The first example is a story told by Kim Hill (KH), a 24-year-old female, about a time she convinced five of her friends to go pick pocketing in a bar to get money for them all to attend a party:

(KH): At that point I felt I couldn't do it alone. Yeah, I wouldn't be successful doing it alone. I need, uh, people or backup plan and all of that.

(AR): OK, so kind of like if you got your friends involved like there would be a higher chance that you would be able to actually pull it off?

(KH): Yeah. Because we need to distract them.

Claiming to need the money for survival needs, Declan Baker (DB), a 25-year-old male, mentioned that he successfully convinced a group of five to routinely steal food and money from various corner stores in New York for him. Like Kim, he felt he needed others to pull it off:

(DB): We needed five more guys to be on our team [...] we just needed a company, you know. We just need that those to go with us so we could get more stuff.

As mentioned, some wanted others to steal with them or on their behalf because the other person had access to the person, money, or items targeted. An example of this is Lucy Voss, a 27-year-old female, who mentioned a time where her and a group of others convinced someone to steal alcohol from their parents because the parents of the person were not around a lot of the time and she had access:

(LV): We were convincing this one friend who was used to doing that because her parents never notice because they were usually not around most times.

For some people like Zoe Hayes (ZH), a 20-year-old female, encouraging someone else to steal instead of doing it themselves was important because the other person had more experience in the activity:

(ZH): Uh she's better than me, uh at shoplifting I would say. I get very nervous and my heart starts pounding when I'm near the cashier but she's very, very experienced and she's very like slick with it and yeah I just tell her most of the time to do it and like very rarely if it's like very very small things then maybe I would do it when most of the time it's just me telling her to do it like take whatever I want for myself.

Gracie Newton (GN), a 21-year-old female, had similar thoughts about getting her friend to steal:

(GN): It was also the fact that like she had the knowledge. Which is really weird to say? She had the knowledge of how to do it. For example, like she would have these really heavy magnets that could take off the tags without like them exploding on the shirts or something like that. Like there's just like more experience.

For others like Max Dyer (MD), a 23-year-old male, echoing what was mentioned by Zoe in her above comment, they felt the need to convince someone else to steal because they did not feel brave enough to go through with it:

(MD): so my friend is brave...braver than me and uhh...I was shaken and doing something bad so I could not control myself so I just had to have a little help from him so he could get the food.

I Don't Want to Get Caught!

The other theme that emerged in relation to theft was the participant wanting someone else to be the one physically stealing the item or money so that they were the one caught or in trouble if something were to happen instead of them. This was the case for Ivan Walker (IW), an 18-year-old male, who talked about a time in elementary school where him and some peers would walk around the halls during recess stealing hand sanitizers off backpacks:

(IW): We'd see one on the bag and then we kind of huddle up pretending that we were talking and then we would be, you know, "you should take it. No, you should take it" and then, because I thought you know, what if we do get caught. I didn't do it. I'm not the one that really took it off. I'm just kind of the one that was there supporting, so maybe I wouldn't be as a punished as severely as the one that I physically took it off the bag.

A similar reasoning was expressed by Emma Johnson (EJ), a 25-year-old female when talking about a time she convinced a friend to steal a handbag they came across on the sidewalk:

(EJ): I didn't want... I didn't want to be the one taking the money... so I had to persuade her to do it [...]

(AR): OK, so you didn't want to be the one to do it. Why didn't you want to be the one to pick it up?

(EJ): Probably, maybe investigations might be done. The fingerprints may be taken.

(AR): Ok, so like you were kind of worried about getting caught?

(EJ): Yes.

For Freddy Olsen (FO), a 20-year-old male, this reasoning was deployed early in the process when originally selecting someone to convince:

(FO): If my friend failed, I could turn him in [...] so if you are like stranger to someone, obviously you feel like more cautious and you probably can't identify. Even so many strangers you just expose yourself, you don't want that to happen so obviously you find someone that's willing to take risks and kind of like not a good boy and let him in [...] and even if they fail, I won't expose myself.

Both themes listed above are related to each other. In both kinds of motivations, the underlying common trait was that the participant or person doing the encouraging felt like they needed to convince or pressure someone else to participate in the illegal activity to get away with it. In both cases, the participant used someone else to get what they wanted. Their main motivation for convincing someone else to steal was embedded in instrumental purposes.

When participants were asked about their participation in stealing, most said that they did not directly participate in the event, even when they mentioned that their life was on the line and they needed the items or money, like in Declan's case. Out of seventeen theft-related incidents, only four mentioned that they were directly physically stealing with the other person.

Additionally, seven people mentioned they would never steal by themselves. This lends support

to the above themes of using others to reach a desired result (e.g., getting money, food, other items).

Like the other categories of illegal incidents, there were other motivations that popped up and, in some situations, people mentioned more than one. Other uncommon motivations included wanting to help the person being influenced, wanting to go with the flow of the group, or because they thought the experience would be better as a group.

Strategies

Think of the Rewards!

The strategies deployed for situations involving theft were more diverse than those used for alcohol and marijuana use. The most common strategy (six participants) that emerged when people were encouraging others to steal was mentioning or showing the benefits that the other person could receive if they participated. This came in the form of things like pointing out how fun it will be, mentioning that other people would think they are cool for doing it, and mentioning the more direct rewards (e.g., I will give you half). One person who used this strategy was Mike Flores (MF), a 28-year-old male. When convincing his peers to steal money to jump start a business, he showed them his past successes and what they could have in the future as a result:

(MF): I told them about my past experiences and I told them the successes I had in the past. You know I had a phone I was using so I told them this phone was gotten and you know they were like “oh wow”, you know so and then... Also we're going to like use such kind of phone. So you know if the business was successful, they were also gonna have phones for themselves, so it was a part of it. It was a kind of encouragement.

In a couple of other cases, like in the event Walter Banner (WB), a 30-year-old male, mentions, the benefit pointed out was that if they stole, it would be funny and they would have a

good memory to look back on:

(WB): Umm it wasn't so much convincing. It was more encouragement. Like "Ya this would be really funny. Let's do this. This would be a fun night and something we would look back on fondly".

Taking a different approach, James Jacks (JJ), a 20-year-old male, tried to convince his friends to steal a table from a patio one night by talking about how funny it would be and mentioning that whoever did it would be perceived as cool or, as he says, "the guy":

(JJ): Um, just telling them like when people came over (*to their living area*) and they're asking about it, 'cause they're definitely asking about like this stuff would look really cool in the apartment [...]it would almost give my buddies like a badass kind of a look and it'd be a funny moment for sure.

(AR): OK, so kind of like your main strategy was kind of like just pointing out the benefits? Like "hey if we get this, it's gonna make like our apartment look cool, people are gonna ask about it, like it's going to be a funny situation"?

(JJ): Yeah, and you're gonna be the guy that like put it there [...] you're going to be the guy basically.

You Are Broke!

Another theme that emerged (five people) was the strategy of pointing out or highlighting the current financial situation in the moment (e.g., we/you don't have money). People used this strategy to the person they were encouraging to explain why stealing was needed in their situation or a good option. One person who used this strategy was Tre Glenn (TG), a 21-year-old male, when his friend mentioned that he wanted to look like the people on television and own expensive chains and watches:

(TG): Well, what I said to him was...I told him "Currently you know...you look at all this...You can't look like what's on TV without taking the move. You need to take the move in order to achieve what you want. Can't just sitting down at TV admiring and addressing their outfit" and stuff like that. Then you know... "we broke! you broke! You have to do something!" [...] I know he doesn't have money to get this stuff. They are very, very expensive. So that was the only chance he had, so I had to tell him so.

When talking about stealing a handbag off the sidewalk, Emma Johnson (EJ) mentioned things related to how they were both broke and asking her friend how they would survive if she didn't do this through this statement: "I explained to her our situation because we had no money, so I explained to her that through this we could have money, how will we survive?"

Some other less common strategies were also used. Like the other illegal activity category examined in this dissertation, some (4) people deployed the strategy of providing reassurance (e.g., I will watch your back, my plans always work, you will be fine). Two people mentioned directly asking the person to do it. Two people mentioned consequences associated with not doing it. Two people pointed out the other person's expertise (e.g., you should do it because you are experienced). Two people physically encouraged the other person by facial cues or setting an item in front of them. This was all non-aggressive. Some other rare strategies included the participant telling the people they were trying to convince that they (the participant) were in danger or telling them that they needed to teach the owner of the item being stolen a lesson. When asked about their perceived most effective strategy, the majority of people (including the ones who deployed these less common strategies) mentioned one of the main themes explored above.

Common Underlying Themes

This section will provide a brief discussion of the themes above and some additional themes discovered.

Motivations

Helping Myself vs Others

In all the illegal act categories examined, there is a theme of participants getting someone else to get involved in crime for their own benefit; instrumentally using someone else to help

them get ahead, whether it be financially, socially, mentally, or physically. In fact, there were not many instances where participants mentioned in their interviews that they considered or thought about the potential negative impacts on the person on the receiving end of the pressuring at all, suggesting that in these moments, many people's motivations are predominantly self-serving (and may continue to think that way after the event). An exception to this trend is the reflection of Naomi Irving (NI), who talked about a scenario where she encouraged a friend to drink underage at a party and did consider potential impacts the pressuring could have on this friend:

(NI): When I was trying to think of reasons why she might not want to drink like... I know that I have a couple of friends who don't drink because they have like their parents who are alcoholics or they have like. Uhm, alcoholics in their family or they have other reasons, they're on certain medications. Something like that. So when I was thinking like when I was talking to her and I was trying to consider why might she not want to drink. I was trying to just like. I guess I thought that crossed my mind was like oh like, what if she has a close relative? With who is an alcoholic and it's like a soft like a like a touchy area. Like I don't want to push her there but I knew her and I knew her family well enough. That like I was pretty like confident that the only reason she wasn't drinking was just because she was underage. And like maybe she wanted to get up early and have a productive Sunday.

Looking at the other side of this helping myself vs helping others theme, although it was more common for people to convince others for their own benefit, there was also a theme across all categories of acts involving people claiming that they did what they did to help the person they were encouraging (which will be addressed further in upcoming chapters). As discussed above, some examples of this occurrence were Carl Ace, who encouraged his nephew to drink alcohol underage to relax/feel better and Vanessa Ellis who talked about wanting to make sure her friend was having a good time.

Together is Better!

Although only two people mentioned this motivation when talking about theft, the idea behind an activity being better or an improved experience (or at least perceived as such) when with friends/peers was a dynamic that appeared across all categories. In fact, as mentioned above, the desire for an improved experience was the most common theme that emerged when exploring the driving motivations behind encouraging other people to drink alcohol or use marijuana in an illegal context.

This lends support to the psychological benefits explanations discussed in chapter two, specifically the literature examining the amplification of experiences when shared in a group setting. The research on shared experience and its amplification appears to focus heavily on testing the after effect (i.e., did people who shared the experience have greater joy, fear, etc. compared to those who faced the experience alone?) and not in illegal contexts (e.g., see Boothby et al., 2014; 2016; Nahleen, Dornin, and Takarangi, 2019; Shteynberg et al., 2014). However, if there is evidence to support the idea that people have amplified experiences in group settings, especially if they are with people who are socially close to them (e.g., Boothby, et al., 2016), it is possible that people recognize this possibility when entering social situations with various activities, illegal or not. This could account for why a person might persistently try to get a friend, sibling, or someone else close to them to participate in something like underage drinking at a party; the idea that drinking alone or with others who are socially distant may not be as fulfilling compared to doing it with someone close to them.

Lack of Power and Status Importance

As you may recall from chapter two where motivations were explored, both power and status were mentioned as potential reasons for why someone might be driven to encourage or pressure another person to do something against the law. However, the theme of power did not

appear at all during conversations. Lammers' et al. (2016) work provides a potential explanation for why this might be the case. After conducting nine studies they found evidence supporting the idea that people wish to achieve power to gain autonomy as opposed to a desire for influence (p. 509). Other researchers have found evidence to support this finding as well (e.g., Cislak et al., 2018; Van Dijke, 2006). For example, Cislak et al. (2018) found that people try to obtain higher positions in the workplace to gain freedom and personal control, not to have influence over others (p. 953).

Status did emerge, though it was mentioned only briefly and was not a main focus. Status was noted in seven out of the 40 interviews. In these seven, when status was mentioned, it was also not always part of the motivation behind why a participant pressured someone else to do something illegal. Out of these seven, on three occasions, "fitting in" was mentioned as something that was important and thought of by participants when convincing others. An example is when Walter said this:

(WB): Like it is high school and everyone is self-conscious and insecure in high school and I probably thought like the more I do with this group the tighter we get and the less likely I'll need to find new friends in the future or like you know this group was very popular so like I'm part of the popular group and the more I do with this group I get to stay with the popular group and the whole school hears about these funny shenanigans that this popular group gets into so I even if it was on a sub conscious level, I definitely think I thought about that before and during the activities.

One person discussed wanting to fit in when mentioning the desired result of the encouragement (e.g., being able to buy clothes to fit in with their friends), but not as the main motivation behind encouraging friends to steal. One person mentioned that they hosted a party with alcohol instead of mini putting for their 18th birthday (the event talked about in their interview) in order to fit in. One person briefly implied what could arguably be a status-based

concern when they talked about how part of the reason they encouraged someone to drink (in order to become more drunk than them) at a party was to protect their own public image:

(QK): Well, I've like there's been times well and I've seen like the most drunk person like embarrassing themselves, which is obviously just embarrassing to think about like the day after when you wake up. I mean like it's definitely embarrassing for them and like my friends always tell me like the stories that come out of parties are like people who embarrass themselves. I feel like that's what's talked about most so obviously I don't want to be that person because like. It would be just terrible.

Lastly, one person mentioned status as a reason for why the person on the receiving end of the pressure and encouragement might have listened to them:

(PJ): Well, actually I'm superior than them in the hood. Ah, I've had experiences in the hood and then so...I'm quite experienced with what I'm doing here and then I know what they don't know. So (**mumbled words**) they were ever willing 'cause they didn't know the danger. I will follow them if they help me out or bail me out. Something like that.

Again, these examples demonstrate where status and power briefly emerged, but in all, these occurrences were extremely rare and appeared to be of minimal importance when compared to the other motivations discussed.

Strategies

Providing Reassurance

Although it was not deployed as much in theft scenarios, providing reassurance was a strategy used across all categories of offences explored in this dissertation. More specifically, 16 of the 40 (40%) people interviewed used this strategy to encourage someone to either drink underage, use marijuana illegally, or steal. The general use of this strategy is in line with what has been discussed in the compliance gaining literature in past decades and is in line with Costello and Zozula's findings (2018). However, the literature is inconsistent in relation to what strategy emerges the most in specific situations. Additionally, when minimization (what some

researchers have labelled things related to providing reassurance) has been tested, there is some evidence for it, but it is not a common option for people acting in scenarios where they are trying to obtain compliance from friends (e.g., O’Hair, 1999; Wagner & Punyanunt-Carter, 2009). For example, as seen in chapter two, Wagner and Punyanunt-Carter (2009), who studied people convincing others to drink alcohol, found the concept of debt (e.g., “You owe me this!”) to be the most common strategy (p. 482). This is particularly interesting since, aside from Gail’s brief mention to a friend saying that they had to take the drink because it was already poured, no one in phase one of this research explicitly mentioned or implied using this strategy with their friends or other social connections. Potential explanations for this along with future research avenues will be discussed in later chapters.

Lack of Aggression

The stories told suggest that there were no instances of physically harming or threatening to harm the other person if they did not do the thing the person wanted them to do. There is of course the possibility that these actions could have occurred and were not mentioned, but when directly asked, many said their encouragement or pressuring was mostly just verbal and not aggressive. Some even explicitly voiced that they were against ever getting physical with their friends or others - e.g., James (JJ) - “I wouldn't get physical with my buddies”. Additionally, Felix Tremblay mentioned in his interview, “you get more bees with honey than you do with tar” which could be a similar thought others had in their own lives and situations. This lack of aggression and coercive strategies is in line with other findings in the compliance gaining and persuasion literature (e.g., Checton & Greene, 2011).

Roles

In all categories, it was most common for people to identify themselves as the leading actor in the encouragement conversation. People used role descriptions like leader, instigator, enabler, mastermind, manipulator, initiator, major actor, ringleader, boss, spearhead, recruiter, and savior. Some, but fewer, described themselves as being more akin to a middleman or behind the leading person.

It was uncommon for people to claim that they always play the role that they mentioned across all categories. Many said they “sometimes do” or that they infrequently take that role. This lends support for Warr’s (1996, p. 31) research pointing out that it is rare for there to be “pure instigators.” Many people appear to shift between instigator and follower/joiner roles depending on the situation.

Comparing Motivations to Strategies

As you may recall from the previous chapter, a comparison between each main motivation and the main strategy used was also done. No major themes emerged here; each main motivation had a variety of strategies that accompanied it. For example, among the people who talked about helping the other person as their main motivation for encouraging someone else to drink in an illegal context, some people focused on reassurance, some focused on getting the other person access to alcohol, some people minimized the situation (e.g., “It’s only one drink”), etc. This may be because when broken down to this point in the analysis, the number of people under each listed motivation is small, making this comparison more suited for phase two of the research.

CHAPTER 5: PHASE 2 METHODS

Overview of Phase Two

An online survey was created and conducted for the quantitative portion (phase 2) of this mixed methods research. Recruitment for this phase of the research was done through Prolific. Prolific is an online participant recruitment website specializing in academic research, with one of their fortes being behavioural research (Prolific, 2020). The measurements and concepts used for this survey were informed by the findings of phase one which, as you may recall, was data collected and analyzed from 40 interviews with people aged 18-30 across Ontario (with a few participants from other locations as explained in chapter three). The goal of this second phase was to test the main motivations and strategies found in phase one in a larger sample alongside other potential responses and with other law-breaking acts (e.g., vandalism). This was done so we can gain a better understanding of the use and prevalence of the motivations and strategies used. The guiding question for phase two of this research is:

Are the common motivations and strategies found in phase one of this research also found to be prevalent when tested within a larger sample?

To be eligible for phase two of this research, participants had to: 1) Be between 18-30 years old; 2) Reside in either Canada or the United States; 3) Be able to fluently understand English; and 4) Have an active Prolific account. Many of these eligibility requirements were set to maintain consistency with the qualitative phase of the research. The age of participants was limited to 18-30 years old to collect information from the same age demographic as people in phase one of the research and because, as discussed in chapter three, illegal activity tends to drastically decrease after young adulthood. Regarding the second requirement of residing in either Canada or the United States, this decision was made to create a broader, more generalizable sample.

Although it was discussed in previous chapters that the phase one research ended up being limited to Ontario residents for screening purposes, we did not see the need to implement the same restriction in phase two. Prolific has various measures in place to detect scammers, bots, and other issues (Prolific.co, n.d.). Considering this, enhanced location screening appeared unnecessary on our end. We also expanded our reach to the United States for this phase of the research because, when limited to Canada or Ontario, there is a considerably smaller pool of potential participants that could participate on Prolific. For example, as of July 4th 2022, 2,122 active Prolific users were people who currently lived in Canada between 18-30 years old. When expanded to the United States, this number increases to 25,801, meaning there is a larger opportunity to find participants and diverse perspectives if including both countries. Although there is a possibility that the geographic make-up of the phase two sample may look different compared to the sample obtained in phase one, we do not suspect that peer influence motivations and strategies differed meaningfully by region, though that may be an interesting avenue to pursue for future research. Alternative strategies were considered (e.g., surveying local university students, posting in the same Facebook groups as phase one), but the route chosen was thought to be the most efficient and an ideal way to get a more sociodemographically diverse sample.

The third restriction related to language remained in place for phase two of the research because the researcher who collected and analyzed the data only speaks English. The fourth restriction is of course in place because only those who have a Prolific account will have access to the survey recruitment.

The survey link for this phase of the research was created and hosted on Qualtrics and advertised to potential participants through Prolific in August 2022. By using Prolific, we were

able to specifically only target people who meet our eligibility requirements. Comparing Prolific to other participant recruitment platforms, Peer et al. (2017) found that when compared to Amazon's Mechanical Turk (MTurk), Prolific and CrowdFlower participants were more diverse and honest. Additionally, compared to CrowdFlower, Prolific and MTurk produced higher quality data (p. 161). With this in mind, we are confident that using Prolific was an ideal option for the second phase of this research.

Although online surveys can have some disadvantages (e.g., inability to know who is completing the survey and under what conditions), online surveys also have powerful advantages. For example, scholars have pointed out that individuals might take more time thinking about a question before answering (Dillman, Smyth, & Christian, 2014, p. 99) compared to participating in a study that requires face-to-face time with the researchers. Additionally, since the survey will be asking about criminal and deviant acts, asking questions online is an ideal choice since it has been shown that people tend to be more honest when answering sensitive questions in an online format (Dillman, Smyth, & Christian, 2014, p. 99). Please see appendix C to view the survey questions.

Survey Questions

After consenting to participating in the study, participants were asked to respond to demographic indicators: age, gender, socio-economic status, province/state/territory, and type of living area (e.g., urban vs. rural). They were then asked whether they have ever encouraged someone else to do something that was against the law. From here, people received a separate branch of questions depending on whether they said they had or had not encouraged illegal behaviour. If they had encouraged illegal behaviour in the past, they were asked what the act was (e.g., theft, underage drinking), relevant motivations, and strategies used to gain peer

compliance. If a person mentioned that they have never encouraged an illegal act, they were asked if they had ever encouraged alcohol consumption or marijuana use in a legal context. If they responded yes to this, they were asked similar questions about their peer-based motivations and strategies.

After these sections, all participants were given a hypothetical scenario where they were asked to respond with what strategies they would be willing to use to convince a friend to steal a \$20 phone charger from the store. Lastly, before confirming consent again and providing a message of appreciation, all participants were asked how true/not true the answers they provided were. This acted as a data quality screening measure, which has been recommended by scholars such as Meade and Craig (2011, p. 5). For a complete list of questions asked please see appendix C.

Pretesting

Prior to conducting the survey on Prolific, pretesting took place using graduate students in the Department of Sociology and Legal Studies at the University of Waterloo. I asked my peers to fill out the survey with fake data so the questions can be tested and so people can provide feedback on the clarity of questions being asked. These students were asked to provide fake responses when answering the survey so that we were not collecting sensitive information for people that we knew. The students who participated in this pretesting were asked to fill out the survey in a certain way depending on their birth month. This was done in an attempt to ensure all questions in the survey were viewed by at least a subset of pre-testers. Eight students filled out the survey and provided feedback. This pre-test resulted in minor revisions, but no major issues with the survey were discovered.

Subsequently, a pilot survey was then conducted by asking ten eligible Prolific users to participate in our survey. Ten people across Canada and the United States participated in this pilot. It demonstrated that people would be willing to provide information about situations where they encouraged others to do various things against the law in this setting. It also showed that most questions were operating the way we intended them to. Exploring the pilot data, we did identify some minor issues related to the embedded rank order questions. Specifically, in some instances the rank order questions were not activated, leading to the data for that question not being recorded. This could have been due to participants intentionally leaving it blank, but considering those questions were the only questions routinely left unanswered, we believed it was due to the overly complicated nature of having to drag options under the question to submit their response. To fix this issue, the rank order questions were simplified to prompt participants to select only their top motivation or strategy from previous selected relevant responses. In addition to this, we noticed that all participants completed the survey in less than seven minutes (previously estimated at 10 minutes), which led us to update the estimated time allotment and compensation amount in the information documents future participants would see.

CHAPTER 6: PHASE 2 QUANTITATIVE FINDINGS

The Sample

The sample used in the analysis of phase two of this research is made up of 214 people from across Canada and the United States who completed our roughly seven-minute online survey through Prolific in August 2022. Two responses were deleted at the analysis stage as they stated that they did not respond truthfully.

Roughly 20% of participants were between the ages of 18 and 21. About 40% of people were between the ages of 22 and 25. The remaining 40% were between the ages of 26 and 30. This age dispersion is different from the sample collected during phase one of this research where 25% were between 18 and 21, 50% were between 22 and 25, and 25% were between 26 and 30. The below table provides a summary of the demographic composition of the sample.

Table 2. Summary of Demographic Variables in Phase Two

Variable	Summary
Age (n=214)	18-21=19.5% 22-25=40% 26-30=40%
Gender (n=214)	Woman=58% Man=37.5% Other options (e.g., Two Spirited) =4.5%
SES (n=214)	Min=1 Max=9 Mean=5 SD=1.8
Geographic area (n=213)	Canada=35.5% United States=64.5%
Type of living area (n=214)	Large city=31.5% Suburb near a large city=44.5% Small city or town=20% Rural area=4%

Fifty-eight percent (n=124) of participants identified as a woman while 37% (n=80) identified as a man. Roughly 5% (n=10) of people selected other response options such as female-to-male/trans male/trans man, genderqueer or neither exclusively male or female, and two-spirited. Compared to the qualitative sample collected during phase one of this research, this sample has more women than men, whereas the phase one sample was closer to an even split. Despite this, men still make up a substantial amount of this sample at 37%.

Socio-economic status for phase two of this research was measured through a question centered on family income. Participants were asked to indicate their family income on a 10-point scale (1=lowest income group, 10=highest income group). The average score on this SES scale was five.

Regarding location, the majority (64.5%, n=137) of participants stated that they currently live in the United States with the most common areas being California and Texas. In total, 41 states were represented in the sample. The remainder of the sample (35.5%, n=76) lived in Canada, with Ontario accounting for almost half (47.5%) of these responses. All Canadian provinces were represented in the sample, but no territories were. Almost half of participants (44.5%, n=95) in the sample mentioned that they lived in a suburb near a large city. Nearly a third reported living in a large city (31.5%, n=67). A smaller proportion lived in a small city or town (20%, n=43) or a rural area (4%, n=9).

Encouraging Illegal Acts

Participants were asked if they have ever encouraged someone to do something that was against the law. Most people acknowledged that they had encouraged someone to do an illegal act in the past (59%, n=126). 40% of people (n=85) said that they had not done this before. The remaining three people (1%) stated that they preferred not to respond to the question.

For those who stated that they had encouraged others to participate in illegal acts in the past, they received questions based on their most recent experience doing this. We will address this group first. For people who preferred not to respond or who stated that they had not encouraged illegal acts in the past, they were asked if they had encouraged legal acts in the past related to marijuana or alcohol (e.g., drinking but the person was legally allowed). We will address this group of people second. Lastly, everyone completing the survey was asked a question based on a hypothetical theft scenario. We will discuss this closer to the end of this chapter. Table three provides a summary of the findings of this phase of the research.

Table 3. Summary of Phase Two Quantitative Results

	Illegal act (various)	Legal act (alcohol or marijuana use)	Hypothetical act (Theft)
Main motivation	<p>1. “I thought it would be a better experience if we did it together” (n=31/125, 25%)</p> <p>2. “I wanted to help the person I was encouraging (e.g., to relax or have fun)” (n=27/125, 21.5%)</p> <p>3. “I wanted the other person to experience the activity” (n=17/125, 13.5%)</p>	<p>1. “I thought it would be a better experience if we did it together” (n=18/46, 39%)</p> <p>2. “I wanted to help the person I was encouraging (e.g., to relax or have fun)” (n=13/46, 28%)</p> <p>3. “I wanted the other person to experience the activity” (n=7/46, 15%)</p>	NA
<p><u>Illegal and legal act:</u> Perceived most effective strategy</p> <p><u>Hypothetical act:</u> Most selected strategy</p>	<p>1. “I just casually brought up the idea (e.g., “Let’s go do this!”)” (n=27/100, 27%)</p> <p>2. “I provided them with reassurance (e.g., “It won’t hurt you”, “You won’t get</p>	<p>1. “I tried cheering them on (e.g., “You can do it!”)” (n=15/38, 39.5%)</p> <p>2. “I just casually brought up the idea (e.g., “Let’s go do this!”)” (n=11/38, 29%)</p>	<p>1. “I would provide them with reassurance (e.g., “This won’t hurt you”, “You won’t get caught”)” (n=86/210, 41%)</p> <p>2. “I would just casually bring up the idea (e.g., “Let’s go do</p>

	caught’’)” (n=22/100, 22%)	3. “I provided them with reassurance (e.g., “It won’t hurt”, “You won’t get caught”)” (n=4/38, 10.5%)	this!’’)” (n=65/210, 31%)
	3. “I tried cheering them on (e.g., “You can do it!’’)” (n=12/100, 12%)		3. “I would try cheering them on (e.g., “You can do it!’’)” (n=60/210, 28.5%)

“I have encouraged an illegal act before!”

Type of act (n=125)

For those who mentioned that they had encouraged someone to do something against the law in the past, they were then asked the following question: “During the most recent time you can think of where you tried to convince someone else to do something that was against the law, what were you trying to convince them to do?” Fifteen response options were presented to participants. Some examples of acts that were included were things like drinking alcohol underage, vandalizing something, and stealing (see appendix for the full set of response options). The most selected responses in order of sample percentage were encouraging someone to illegally download games, movies, books, music, etc. (25.5%, n=32), drink alcohol underage (24%, n=30), use marijuana underage or in an area where it was illegal (16%, n=20), and speeding in a vehicle (18.5%, n=23). The next selected option, “steal something” (5%, n=6), and other options were indicated by a substantially smaller proportion of respondents¹⁰.

Motivation(s) (n=125)

After providing their most recent act type, participants were asked to report why they attempted to convince others. Thirteen potential motivations were listed alongside an “other”

¹⁰ When asked when this situation occurred, most participants (58% n=73) mentioned that the event either took place within the last month or between one month and one year ago, meaning that most people were referencing a fairly recent event. It was uncommon for people to report that they were referring to a situation that took place more than five years ago.

option where people could write in a different response. All motivations that emerged as important during phase one of this research (e.g., “I thought it would be a better experience if we did it together”, “I wanted to help the person I was encouraging (e.g., to relax or have fun)”, “I didn’t want to be the one getting caught”) were included along with a selection of other potential motivations hypothesised to be relevant (e.g., “The other person was braver than me”, “I wanted to show them that I was in charge”, “I thought it would make me look cool if I was able to get someone else to do it”) so the motivations could be tested against each other in the same setting.

In this phase, the two most selected motivations were wanting to help the person to relax or have fun (46%, n=58) and thinking it would be a better experience if they did it together (37%, n=46). They were the same primary motivations that emerged during phase one of this research. In fact, people claimed to have the motivation of wanting to help the other person they were encouraging to relax or have fun across seven of the reported acts including: underage drinking, illegal marijuana use, illicit drug use, vandalism, illegal downloading, stealing, and speeding. Additionally, in phase two of the research, people who reported having the motivation of a better experience if they did it together, reported this motivation across six of the reported act types including all the act types listed above except for stealing. The following three motivations were also commonly noted: wanting the other person to experience the activity (34%, n=42), thinking that encouragement to do the activity was what the person wanted (23%, n=29), and thinking it would be funny or entertaining to see the other person do the act (22%, n=27).

Of the motivations listed by participants, they were asked to choose the “main/most important” one. The two most frequently selected options were thinking it would be a better

experience if they did it together (25%, n=31) and wanting to help the other person to relax or have fun (21.5%, n=27) (Please see Table 2 above).

Strategies (n=126)

After selecting what motivated them to encourage the illegal act they were referring to, participants were asked to indicate the strategies they used to try and get the other person to commit the act. Similar to motivations, all important strategies that emerged during phase one of this research (e.g., providing reassurance, outlining the situation the other person was in - e.g., “you are broke”) were included and mixed with other theoretically derived strategies (e.g., verbally demanding them to do it, making fun of them).

The most reported strategy was casually bringing up the idea (n=53) followed by providing reassurance (e.g., “It won’t hurt you”, “You won’t get caught”) (n= 51), cheering on the person (e.g., “You can do it!”) (n=43) and telling them that the activity was “totally normal” (n=37). Other strategies were selected but were not as prominent (e.g., “I physically motioned for the person to do it” had 18 responses). The importance of providing reassurance emerged in both data collection approaches as a key strategic manoeuvre. However, casually bringing up the idea, despite its prevalence here, was not commonly discussed in the qualitative data. This may be because it is something that could be easily taken for granted (i.e., to implement many of the strategies, a person would most likely first have to bring up the idea). The strategy of cheering the other person on was also not commonly seen when conducting interviews during phase one of this research.

Most Effective Strategy (n=100)

Respondents were asked if the person they were encouraging ended up doing the act they were encouraged to do. The people who said that the influencee did end up committing the act

were then asked which strategy they thought was most effective. The most popular strategies were also viewed as the most effective: 27% (n=27) of participants said just casually bringing up the idea was most effective; 22% (n=22) of people said providing reassurance was the most effective strategy, and 12% (12) said cheering the other person on was the most effective strategy (Please see Table 3 above).

There does, however, appear to be variation in the influence strategies used across different types of offences. Casually bringing up the idea (ten different acts) and cheering the other person on (nine acts) were strategies used with a larger variety of acts compared to the strategy of providing reassurance (seven acts). However, when participants were asked to specifically select what they perceived to be the most effective strategy, providing reassurance was selected across a larger variety of acts (6 acts) compared to casually bringing up the idea (5 acts) and cheering on the other person (5 acts). To understand this variability, I examine motivations and strategies separately for three acts reported to be common in either the earlier qualitative research or the current survey: substance use, stealing (including illegal downloading), and speeding.

Breaking it Down Further

Substance Use

For substance use (n=54) (e.g., underage alcohol use, illegal marijuana use, and other illicit drug use - e.g., methamphetamine), the main motivation is thinking it would be a better experience if they did it together (with the person they were encouraging) (48%, n=26). This matches the phase one research findings. Out of these 54 situations, 49 (91%) reported that the influence attempt was successful.

Although all types of substance use included in this research shared the same main motivation, they differed slightly when it came to perceptions of the most effective strategy. For encouraging someone to drink alcohol underage, casually bringing up the idea was thought to be most effective (39%, n=11/28) whereas providing reassurance was the most effective strategy listed for marijuana use (35%, n=6/17) and other illicit drug use (75%, n=3/4). To compare, during phase one of this research, providing reassurance was the most common strategy found in both marijuana use and alcohol use.

Stealing and Illegal Downloading

Stealing/theft was commonly discussed in phase one of this research, though it was noted by only six people in the survey. Five of these were situations where the person went through with the act. Because of the small number of cases, there was no clear main motivation. The most effective strategy listed was casually bringing up the idea (n=3).

Illegally downloading items online (e.g., games, movies, books, music), however, was commonly discussed among participants who reported attempting to influence others to commit a criminal act (n=32). Of the 32 cases reported, the most prevalent motivation was trying to help the person (44%, n=14). The encouragement was successful in at least 22 of these cases. Out of these 22 cases where people went through with the illegal download, the two strategies perceived to be the most effective were casually bringing up the idea (27%, n=6) and telling the person that the activity was totally normal (27%, n=6).

Speeding

Speeding was frequently reported (n=23). Regarding main motivations, the most common response was the “other” option (n=8). These were accompanied with statements such as “I was in a hurry”, “we were running late”, “I needed to get somewhere quick”, and “I wanted

to get somewhere sooner”, implying direct instrumental motivations were the driving factor. Twenty of the 23 situations (87%) were reported as being successful attempts. When asked about what participants thought the most effective strategy was, providing reassurance was the most prominent (25%, n=5) followed closely by saying the act was totally normal (20%, n=4).

It is evident that providing reassurance is a common strategy across different illegal acts. Other approaches such as normalizing the act were also noted regularly. Below is a similar analysis for those participants who stated they have not encouraged others to participate in acts against the law but have encouraged people to use alcohol/marijuana in a legal context. This is followed by the results from a hypothetical scenario posed to all 214 participants.

“I have never encouraged an illegal act!”

Participants who reported that they had never encouraged someone to do something that was technically against the law (or stated that they preferred not to respond to that question) were asked “have you ever encouraged someone else to use alcohol or marijuana in a legal context (e.g., the person was of age and allowed to drink)?” Eighty-eight people responded to this question. About 52% (n=46) of these respondents said that they had done this before¹¹. Roughly 48% (n=42) said they had not or preferred not to respond. Those who said that they had encouraged others to use alcohol or marijuana in a legal context were further questioned about motivations and strategies.

Motivation(s) (n=46)

For the most part, the motivations and strategies employed by influencers for licit substance use were similar to those used for illicit acts. The most frequently reported motivation

¹¹ Many of these participants discussed an event that took place within the last year (n=22). Others discussed an event that occurred between one and five years ago (n=21). It was very uncommon for people to discuss an event that took place over five years ago (n=3), and no one discussed an event that took place more than ten years ago.

was thinking it would be a better experience if they did it together (n=32). The second most common motivation was wanting to help the other person (n=21), followed by wanting the other person to experience the activity (n=19).

Main Motivation (n=46)

Like the other set of questions discussed, participants were then asked to select the most important or main motivation out of the ones they selected. Thinking it would be a better experience together remained the most important motivation (n=18, 39%), with wanting to help the other person in second place again (n=13, 28%), and wanting the other person to experience the activity remaining in third place (n=7, 15%). These motivations were the same as people encouraging others to do things against the law and appeared in the same order of importance, implying that it may not be particularly useful to distinguish between motivations for encouraging others to commit deviant acts illegally versus legally.

Strategies (n=46)

The same four most common strategies for licit substance use largely echoed the strategies employed for illegal acts. For participants encouraging the use of alcohol and marijuana in a legal context, casually bringing up the idea (n=25) was noted most frequently, followed by cheering the other person on (n=19), providing reassurance (n=13), and telling the influencee that the activity was totally normal (n=12). Here, providing reassurance was less common than cheering the other person on, a strategy that did not emerge as being particularly important in phase one of the research.

Most Effective Strategy (n=38)

The most effective influence strategy for licit substance use was cheering on the other person (n=15, 39.5%), followed by casually bringing up the idea (n=11, 29%). All other

strategies, including providing reassurance (n=4), a strategy that remained prominent when convincing people to do illegal acts, were selected by substantially fewer people.

Hypothetical Phone Charger Theft (n=210)

All 214 survey participants were asked to indicate the strategies they would use if attempting to convince a friend to take a \$20 phone charging cable from a store. All 214 people responded to this question, but four were removed at the analysis stage for selecting other strategies alongside the option stating that they would not do any of the strategies listed (i.e., a contradictory response). The strategies listed as options were similar to the previous sections' questions about strategies. There were minor wording differences to make it more applicable to the hypothetical scenario. Please see the full survey question in the appendix for exact wording. The results largely support the previous findings. Once again, providing reassurance was most important (n=86), followed by casually bringing up the idea (n=65), and cheering the other person on (n=60). This implies that even when thinking about a different kind of act (stealing compared to using alcohol or marijuana), people consider the same strategies.

Discussion

Motivations

The main motivations that emerged in phase two of this research are **1.** thinking it would be an improved experience if they were able to get someone else to do the activity with them **2.** Wanting to help the other person relax or have fun, and **3.** Wanting the other person to experience the activity (e.g., drinking alcohol). Not only did these motivations emerge as prevalent when examining illegal acts, but they were also common in the group of people who referred to a time where they were encouraging another person to drink alcohol or use marijuana

in a context that was legal. This implies that motivations for instigation may look similar for both illegal and legal acts¹².

Regarding seeking improved experience as a motivation, again, like phase one, this is related to the current literature on the amplification of shared experience (e.g., see Boothby et al., 2014; 2016; Nahleen, Dornin, and Takarangi, 2019; Shteynberg et al., 2014) and lends further support to the psychological benefits section discussed in chapter two of this dissertation. As discussed in previous chapters, the amplification of shared experience means that when people are experiencing something (e.g., looking at a funny picture, a scary movie) with other people, they are likely to report their experience differently. For example, if someone is looking at a funny picture with their friends, they might experience a higher level of pleasure or entertainment from the event compared to if they had just looked at the funny picture by themselves. On the other side, if a person is watching a scary movie, they might report higher levels of fear if experiencing the movie with others compared to if they were watching it alone. Looking at the results of the research presented in this dissertation, it may be that when people are going to do something like drink alcohol, smoke marijuana, steal something, or some other form of deviant activity, they might be driven to encourage other people to participate in the act alongside them because they consciously or unconsciously think it will be a better experience compared to doing it alone.

Additionally, like phase one, wanting to help someone else have fun or relax emerged as a motivation, lending more support to the idea that, at least explicitly, not all instigation necessarily comes with what would typically be thought to be “bad” or “selfish” intentions.

¹² Though more research would need to be conducted in the future examining this as well as any differences that may exist between deviant activities (e.g., using illicit drugs) and non-deviant activities (e.g., taking a certain course at university).

There is some support for this finding in Costello and Zozula (2018). Although more selfish appearing motivations (e.g., own benefit or amusement) appeared more often in their study, some people did report motivations related to thinking the other person would enjoy it (p. 103).

The third motivation that emerged in phase two, wanting the other person to experience the activity, was not prominent in phase one. This motivation may be related to wanting to help someone or improving the experience, but the current survey responses cannot confirm this. There may be a couple of reasons for wanting someone to experience the activity (e.g., because it would help them or because it would help group cohesion). This will be discussed more in relation to phase one in chapter seven.

Power and status remained mostly unimportant in phase two. When participants were asked to report their main motivation for encouraging another person to do something illegal, only one person said they did it because they thought it would make them look cool if they could get them to do it and no one reported encouraging the other person due to wanting to demonstrate that they were in charge. This theme continued when looking at encouraging legal alcohol and marijuana use with no one reporting their main motivation as thinking it would make them look cool; only one person reported that they wanted to demonstrate to the other person that they were in charge. Even when participants had the opportunity to select multiple motivations, a total of six participants selected the status or power measurement for illegal acts, and four participants selected one or both of those options for legal alcohol and/or marijuana use. This finding is in line with both phase one of this research and recent literature, discussed in chapter four, that has pointed out that people tend to desire power to gain freedom, not to have control over others (see Cislak et al., 2018; Lammers et al., 2016; Van Dijke, 2006).

Strategies

The main strategies that emerged in phase two of this research include **1. Casually bringing up the idea** **2. Cheering the other person on** and **3. Providing reassurance**. These strategies remained consistently important throughout the different sections of the survey including when people were referring to various circumstances where they were encouraging another person to do something against the law, to use alcohol or marijuana legally, and when participants were considering a hypothetical scenario where they were encouraging a friend to steal a phone charger from a store.

The first strategy, casually bringing up the idea, was mentioned occasionally in phase one but was not viewed as a particularly effective one. In phase two, it emerges as a main strategy and is perceived to be effective, both for experienced and hypothetical deviant acts. This may be because casually bringing up the idea acts as a common precursor strategy to others (e.g., providing reassurance). People might first be casually bringing up the idea to gauge initial interest from others; if the person is interested, the instigator would not have to use further strategies. If the instigator faces resistance, that may be when other strategies emerge. Since we did not ask about resistance faced during phase two of the research, we cannot analyze this possibility.

The second strategy that emerged in phase two was cheering the other person on. People who use this strategy, particularly in the context of drinking/drug consumption at parties, might use it because they think the other person is considering the idea of participating and just need to be “hyped up”. This strategy did not emerge as particularly salient during interviews and was also not prevalent in Costello and Zozula’s work (2018). This is likely because it is not viewed as being particularly strategic in any sort of premeditated way. Instead, it is a situational dynamic

that arises in the moment. However, when listed as a response option, participants do appear to acknowledge that it occurs.

The third major strategy that emerged in this phase was providing reassurance. This is a strategy that people noted using in a variety of situations during phase one as well. Interestingly, providing reassurance appears to substantially decrease in importance when examining the encouragement of legal acts. Specifically, 22% (n=22) of participants responding about an illegal act considered providing reassurance to be their most effective strategy, with 42% (n=52) of these participants using the strategy at some point in that event. Additionally, 43% (n=91) of participants stated they would consider using this strategy when faced with the hypothetical theft scenario. By comparison, only four of the 38 (10.5%) participants reporting legal encouragement thought providing reassurance was the most effective strategy, with only 13 out of the 46 participants (28%) stating that they used the strategy at all during the event.

Providing reassurance may not be as prominent with legal acts. This may be because there is less risk associated with legal activities. Given this, the people being pressured (the influencee) may be voicing other types of concerns compared to those raised over illegal acts. For example, when a person is being pressured to do something that is against the law, they may resist with responses like “I don’t want to get in trouble”, “I don’t want to get fined”, or “I don’t know if I should be doing this”, whereas people who are being pressured to do legal acts may voice other excuses, prompting a different kind of strategy from the instigator. Reassurance may still be important when encouraging legal acts, however instigators may be offering reassurance for other things (e.g., “It won’t make you sick! Don’t worry”). It appears to be less important for legal acts than illegal acts, though.

The following chapter will conclude this dissertation and will include an in-depth discussion of findings from both phases of this research and their implications, the strengths, and limitations of this work.

CHAPTER 7: DISCUSSION

The research conducted for this dissertation has explored the motivations and strategies behind deviant instigation through qualitative and quantitative work. We will now revisit the research questions that were posed during chapter one. Since they offer the most direct route to understanding the motivations found, the initial discussion below takes a social psychological perspective. Following this, I discuss what a sociology of instigators might look like.

#1: What motivates someone to actively try to persuade others to commit deviant acts?

The results from both phases of this research suggest that people have various motivations driving them to encourage others to do things that are against the law. Some people mentioned that they were just going with the flow of the situation and did not have a particular explicit motivation for actively encouraging the other person. Others mentioned that they tried to convince the other person to do the illegal act because they thought they could not do it alone or because they did not want to be the one getting caught. Other motivations made brief appearances as well throughout the study (e.g., not wanting to be judged). However, across both phases of this research there were some motivations that consistently appeared across different acts. These motivations include seeking an improved experience if done with others and wanting to help the other person to relax or have a good time.

Together is Better!

The most prevalent motivation for why people encourage others to commit illegal acts is thinking it would be a better experience if others joined in (e.g., drinking alcohol). During phase one, this motivation was most commonly reported for substance use and was mentioned for theft. This motivation continued to appear in phase two of this research as the strongest motivator, even when tested alongside 13 other options (e.g., not wanting to be the one getting caught) and

a variety of illegal acts (e.g., graffiti). The reliability of this finding is bolstered by the top motivations (for own benefit and desire to have someone to be deviant with them) found by Costello and Zozula (2018).

Additionally, in phase two where we asked participants to discuss a time where they encouraged another person to use alcohol or marijuana in a legal way, this motivation again appeared as the strongest motivator. This suggests that not only is seeking an improved experience a driving factor when encouraging others to participate in a variety of illegal acts, but it may be an important factor when people actively pressure others to participate in legal or non-deviant activities as well. More research is needed to explore this possibility.

This “together is better” thinking relates to the amplification of shared experience literature shared earlier and an area of research in cognitive psychology which has in recent years gained more attention - joint action. Joint action in a broad sense can be described as “any form of social interaction whereby two or more individuals coordinate their actions in space and time to bring about a change in the environment” (Sebanz, Bekkering, & Knoblich, 2006, p. 70). Scholars have stated that people may be socially motivated to act together to both reach the desired outcome of the action and to obtain the benefits related to being part of a social connection with others (Godman, 2013, p. 588). Godman states that “we often do things with others because we simply like to do things with them” (p. 593). Additionally, people may receive benefits from joint action such as trust and feelings of closeness or connectedness (Rinott & Tractinsky, 2021, p. 69). Godman (2013) points out that the social aspect of joint action has been ignored in the literature (p. 589). Researchers have stated that this gap and the slow progress on joint action research has been due to the tendency of cognitive scholars to study minds in isolation from each other (Sebanz, Bekkering, & Knoblich, 2006).

In Godman's work, she often refers to situations where both parties are motivated to act together and does not refer to situations involving deviant activities. However, it may be the case that in the situations discussed in the interviews, the instigator may have been partly driven to try to get others to join to merely act together and improve the social bond in the moment.

This discussion may lead one to think, "if the main component is simply doing things with other people, why then in a group or party setting would people go out of their way and exert the effort to pressure someone to participate when there is potentially a whole room of other people doing the activity? Is the participation of other people in the room not enough?" Maybe it is not. The satisfaction derived from joint action potentially depends on the emotional bond between the two parties; strangers/acquaintances may just not cut it.

For more perspective, in Katz's (1988) ethnographic account of the motivations behind criminal behaviour, he suggests that people do not partake in criminal acts due to material rewards (e.g., money), but instead do it for the experience of doing the crime; the fun, thrill, or the sensation of it. For example, when recounting a story from a student who stole a pizza from a store with their friend even though they recalled not being hungry, Katz states that "It's not the taste for the pizza that leads to crime; the crime makes the pizza tasty" (p. 52). If we pair this idea with Godman's work on joint action and the research on the amplification of shared experience, it makes sense that people might pressure others to do criminal activities because they think that doing crime together is fun or will get them the experience they are looking for.

An alternative to the joint action hypothesis is the possibility that cognitive dissonance plays a role in determining whether a person chooses to exert pressure on someone else. People could be seeing one person not participating in the act (e.g., drinking) and thinking that them not participating "kills the vibe" as some participants (e.g., Martha, Gail) in phase one shared. It has

been shown that it bothers people when cohesion is missing, as discussed in interviews such as Luke Carter (LC). This discomfort that could be a factor in some people's decision to encourage others to do illegal things might not be just because we enjoy acting together or general group cohesion. It is possible this discomfort is caused by cognitive dissonance. Festinger (1957) argued that when people have conflicting thoughts, cognitive dissonance occurs leading to psychological discomfort. People then actively try to decrease or eliminate this discomfort by avoiding information or trying to remove "dissonant cognitions" (p. 18). When this cognitive dissonance is particularly troublesome, there is a greater pressure to minimize or eliminate it.

This could be a potential explanation for why people feel driven to get others to participate in an activity to improve the experience for themselves. For example, imagine a scenario where a group of friends in university are at a party. Most of the people in this friend group decide that they are going to use cocaine. One person in this group does a line of cocaine with the others but sees that one of their friends has decided not to participate. Perhaps the first person who decided to use cocaine has conflicting thoughts about this situation. On one hand, they want to have fun with their friends and thought this was an acceptable thing to do. On the other hand, the presence of a resistant friend has caused them to realise that this act is not fully accepted by everyone. This has now created discomfort for the person who did the cocaine and perhaps they now actively try to encourage their friend who has not participated to join them to minimize the cognitive dissonance they are experiencing. If their friend goes through with it, they may believe that their experience will improve since their discomfort will be eased.

Let Me Help You!

The other motivation that emerged consistently across phase one and phase two is wanting to help the person being encouraged to do the illegal act. Participants in phase one of

this research talked about wanting to help the other person have fun, relax, or fit in. One example of this is when Carl Ace discussed a time where he convinced his nephew to drink alcohol underage because he wanted to help him relax. Pressuring someone because the instigator thinks the person will enjoy the behaviour was also a motivation reported by 11% of Costello and Zozula's sample (2018, p. 102).

It is entirely possible that participants who talked about this motivation solely wanted to help the other person and did not consider any personal benefits. If this is the case, this motivation would be quite different than the one discussed above (wanting an improved experience for themselves). To specify, this would imply a selfless act, whereas the motivation above related to wanting a better experience for themselves would imply a more selfish thought process. Alternatively, it is possible that people were not actually motivated to help others, but that the underlying drive to do this was that it somehow benefited themselves (e.g., feeling good about helping others). If this is true, it would provide a clearer understanding of why both main motivations mentioned here emerged frequently; it would mean they may be related.

Considering that many studies have explored links between helping others and benefits for the self across different topics, this is not an absurd idea. Researchers have shown that people who help others and act in unselfish ways experience better mental health and have lower mortality rates compared to those who act more selfishly (Post, 2007). Related to mental health, Dore et al. (2017) in their study exploring how participants interacted with an online platform training people on emotion regulation found that participants who engaged with the program by helping others reported a greater reduction in depression symptoms compared to others who did not (p. 737). Other studies have shown a reduction in depression symptoms in those who help others as well (e.g., Shwartz & Sendor, 1999). Additionally, in the workplace context, it has been

found that highly altruistic individuals received more advancement opportunities and rewards (Rosopa, Schroeder & Hulett, 2013).

Looking at both motivations discussed above and why they could have emerged so strongly in this research, one might be wondering why people continue to exert pressure or encouragement on their friends, peers, family members, etc. even after they resist. Resistance was not a focus of phase two but was briefly asked about during phase one. Many participants during this phase did mention that the person they were pressuring demonstrated some form of resistance. In fact, 27 of the 40 (67.5%) people interviewed mentioned that they were faced with resistance from the person they were pressuring and most of this resistance was vocally expressed (e.g., “I am not doing that”).

Given the most prevalent motivation of wanting a better experience for themselves, it is not surprising that facing some resistance would not prevent further pressure, especially if the resistance was minimal (e.g., “I don’t know, I’m not feeling it”). If it is important to the instigator that the other person participate in the activity for the instigator’s benefit, it may be that people doing the pressuring in this situation would be willing to push a bit harder than people with less selfish motivations.

So, how then do we explain the people who continued to pressure their friends, peers, and/or family members after facing resistance if their motivation was wanting to help the other person? One may think that if they are there purely to help the other person in the scenario that facing resistance from that person would provide a social cue telling the instigator that they may not be helping them by pressuring after all. If we apply the potential explanation of truly wanting to help them, the instigator in this case may still be under the impression that the other person deep down wants to do it or that this activity will still help them even if they do not want to do it.

If this is not the case and the instigator is seeking benefits for themselves through these actions, the reasoning may be more related to the first motivation discussed above.

To again bring our focus back to the research question at hand, there are multiple motivations that people might have for encouraging or pressuring others to do illegal acts. Some of these motivations may also be at play when convincing others to do legal acts, though more research is needed in this area. The top motivations that appeared most consistently throughout this research include 1. seeking an improved experience and 2. wanting to help the person they were encouraging or pressuring. There are potential explanations for these motivations that were discussed above. Some of these explanations would mean that these two motivations are closer in relation than they appear at first glance as both motivations would be related to seeking psychological benefits. Other explanations would place these motivations at odds with each other. Future research should dive into the differences and explore these potential explanations further.

#2: What strategies do people use when trying to persuade others to commit deviant acts?

Which of these strategies do instigators perceive to be the most effective?

These questions relate to the strategies that participants used when instigating illegal acts, a secondary interest we had when exploring motivations. Throughout phase one interviews and in survey responses during phase two, it was clear that there are many different strategies people select when trying to encourage someone to do something illegal. Some examples of less common strategies were things like pointing out how the activity in question was totally normal, directly asking the other person to participate, telling the other person about potential rewards they might receive (e.g., money), and physically motioning or guiding them to do the activity (e.g., handing them a drink).

It was also observed that the main strategies people use can differ depending on the activity the person is attempting to influence. An example of this is when people spoke about a time where the activity they were trying to promote included the use of alcohol or drugs. In this setting, most people opted to provide reassurance by stating that everything would be okay. On the other hand, the main strategy used for theft was either telling the other person about the potential rewards they could receive or outlining the financial situation the other person was in (e.g., “you are broke!”).

“You’ll be Fine!”

As mentioned above, a strategy that many people used was providing reassurance. During phase one, this strategy was the most discussed for all forms of substance use explored. It also appeared as a strategy for one out of the two people who talked to the researcher about encouraging someone to deal and transport drugs for them and was also mentioned by some participants who were encouraging others to steal (though not the most common strategy here).

In phase two, when competing alongside twenty other strategies and considering a variety of acts, providing reassurance emerged again as a major strategy. It made the top three selected strategies across those who have encouraged others to do something illegal, those who have encouraged others to use alcohol or marijuana in a legal context, and for those who were asked to select which strategies they would be willing to use if they were in a situation where they were encouraging a friend to steal a phone charger from the store. Not only was providing reassurance mentioned frequently by people in both phases of the research, but it was also commonly mentioned as the most effective strategy people thought they used during times where the person on the receiving end of the pressure or encouragement ended up participating in the activity. As mentioned in previous chapters, this is in line with Costello and Zozula’s 2018 findings.

Why then do so many people opt to provide reassurance to those who they are pressuring or encouraging to participate in an act? An explanation is that it may be an intuitive conversational response when faced with resistance. As we saw in phase one, many people instigating illegal acts faced resistance from the people they were encouraging. Examples of resistance included stating that they can't drink alcohol because of the medication they were taking, saying they did not want to get in trouble, or they had to get up early the next morning. When resistance is expressed this way, the conversational context could lead the person on the other side to provide some sort of reassurance regarding why the person's excuse is not such a big concern. This response to the resistance may look something like "I looked it up and you will be fine if you drink with that medication", "no one is going to find out", or "sleeping less hours than normal tonight will be fine". However, resistance is not always met with reassurance. There are instances, even in this research, of people being faced with resistance and stopping their pressure, but it was not as common as continuing the pressure.

Interestingly, providing reassurance was less important in phase two compared to phase one. Conversely, other strategies appeared more frequently in phase two (e.g., just casually bringing up the idea or cheering the other person on). There are multiple potential reasons for this. One is that strategies like just casually bringing up the idea or cheering the other person on may have occurred more frequently in the events discussed by people in phase one but just were not explicitly mentioned either because it was a quick in-the-moment strategy that may not have been as memorable for participants or because they were strategies that some participants assumed I knew happened. It may have appeared more explicitly during phase two because participants were directly shown the response option to consider. Another possibility is that top strategies could have slightly differed in phase two since providing reassurance was listed among

many other strategies that participants read and different illegal acts were considered compared to just substance use and theft.

Another reason for why cheering the other person on could have appeared more prominently during phase two of the research is how the question response options were listed. “I tried cheering the other person on (e.g., “You can do it!)” was listed as the first response option under the strategy-based questions on the survey and emerged as a prominent strategy only during phase two of the research. It is possible that some participants were “satisficing”. Satisficing occurs when the cognitive effort needed to answer a question is too high, leading people to just select an adequate response instead of the ideal or fully true response (Krosnick, 1991, p. 213). Scholars have explored the effects of survey question and response ordering and survey design for decades and have found support for similar effects to this (e.g., more visible responses) as well (e.g., Barge & Gehlbach, 2012; Couper et al., 2004).

Despite this, satisficing may not have had a large impact on the data collected during phase two if it did occur. As previously mentioned, Prolific has screening mechanisms in place when people are signing up to participate in surveys on their site to look for people who appear to not pay attention to questions. Additionally, proactive measures were taken to maintain and check participant attention during participation. These include things like keeping the survey short, avoiding grid questions, and adding a data screening question near the end of the survey. Additionally, we paid survey participants. Researchers have suggested that incentivizing participants this way increases the amount of effort put into the survey’s completion. For example, Kapelner and Chandler (2010) found that when collecting survey information from participants on Amazon’s Mechanical Turk, paid participants provided more words in their written responses and were more likely than unpaid participants to pass their instructional

manipulation check (p. 7). These strategies are likely to have limited, though not entirely eliminated, the extent to which satisficing occurred.

To provide a more direct answer to the research question above, there are many strategies that people use when encouraging other people to do illegal things (e.g., normalizing the activity, talking about rewards, cheering the other person on, buying the other person alcohol). Some of these have been mentioned before in the literature in relation to peer pressure more generally (e.g., Marwell and Schmitt, 1967), drug use (e.g., Alberts, Miller-Rassulo, & Hecht, 1991) or other acts (e.g., Gueguen & Pascual, 2013). When exploring the strategies that people use in deviant instigation, there is one strategy that consistently makes an appearance in the current research - providing reassurance to the person questioning or resisting the activity.

#3: Are the common motivations and strategies found in phase one of this research also found to be prevalent when tested within a larger sample?

The answer provided for this question will be more direct as it is discussed above. The answer is yes. The prominent motivations and strategies that emerged during phase one also appeared to be important when tested in a larger sample during phase two. The motivations that appear to emerge consistently across both samples include seeking an improved experience and wanting to help the other person. The strategy that consistently emerges across both research phases is providing reassurance to the person being encouraged.

A Sociology of Instigators

The above discussion has provided potential theoretical explanations for the findings of this research. Since it appears to offer the most plausible avenues to explain the motivations found, psychological perspectives (e.g., joint action, cognitive dissonance) were addressed. This

next section will address the potential broader sociological explanation of these findings and a general discussion on the sociology of instigators.

As I discussed in chapter two, a sociology of instigators does exist (e.g., Costello & Zozula, 2018; Morselli, Tremblay, & McCarthy, 2006; Warr, 1996). However, to date it has been extremely limited. The results of this research highlight a greater role for both psychology and sociology to play in instigation. In the discussion below I propose an expansion of the sociology of instigation drawing on interaction ritual claims as outlined by Collins (2004), collective effervescence, and the importance of cohesion and solidarity as described by Goffman (1971) and Durkheim (1912/1995).

Collective Effervescence

The idea of collective effervescence (CE), a term originally coined by Durkheim (1912/1995), may offer a sociologically based understanding for why people are motivated to pressure others to participate in activities. CE has been described in the literature as “the sense of connection and meaning that comes from collective events” (Gabriel et al., 2019, p. 129). Examining CE through nine studies, Gabriel et al. (2019) found that roughly 75% of people experience CE at least once a week with 33% of people experiencing it every day (p. 149). Additionally, they found that when experiencing CE, people gain benefits related to their wellbeing (e.g., greater life satisfaction) (p. 150). Experiencing CE is both common and personally beneficial.

One way to experience collective effervescence is being in a crowd of people (Liebst, 2019, p. 35). Collins (2004) points out that “being in a crowd gives some sense of being ‘where the action is’” (p. 82). Although you can experience CE in a crowd setting without participating in a specific group action (e.g., clapping, drinking), when people are taking part in a collective

action, they can experience greater solidarity and connection (p. 82). For example, let us consider Taylor Swift's 2023 Era's Tour. The opening night was on March 17th in Arizona with a crowd of over 70,000; a bigger physical attendance than the 2023 Super Bowl for context (The Globe and Mail, 2023). Following the idea behind collective effervescence, attendees would have already been able to gain its benefits just by being part of the crowd, but for those who joined in with the cheering and singing of Swift's popular hits, the benefit may have been greater, experiencing a higher level of solidarity with the other 'Swifties'¹³.

In the above example, people had the opportunity to experience collective effervescence and potentially a high level of solidarity by participating in collective actions related to clapping, singing, and dancing. What happens when we introduce an event where the encouraged collective action is something more deviant? Swift's Era's Tour kicked off on St. Patrick's Day. In Waterloo, Ontario - the home of Wilfrid Laurier University and the University of Waterloo - many locals, especially students, associate this day with a popular unsanctioned street party that takes place on or near Ezra Avenue. This party typically involves thousands of people, a lot of alcohol, substantial property damage, health risks, and arrests (Bholla & Monteiro, 2023; CTV News, 2022; Wilde, 2018). For example, at the Ezra Street Party in 2022, the Waterloo Regional Police laid 147 charges and arrested 19 people, with most infractions falling under the Liquor Licence and Control Act, the Highway Traffic Act, and the Criminal Code of Canada (Villella, 2022). In relation to health risks, in 2018, 52 attendees were admitted to the hospital, with most of them being unconscious (Silva, 2018). With this reputation, it is no surprise that the Ezra Street Party, the 1995 version especially, has sometimes been referred to as the "Ezra Street Riot" (Wilde, 2018).

¹³ Swiftie is a term popularly used to describe members of Taylor Swift's fandom (Driessen, 2019).

It is not that alcohol was not present at Taylor Swift's concert or that Ezra Street Party goers were not dancing or doing other collective actions. It is that the Ezra Street Party promotes and is essentially centred around the consumption of alcohol, whereas the promoted collective actions at Taylor Swift's concert is centered on singing, dancing, and cheering. Attending both crowds theoretically would allow someone to experience CE and group solidarity, but one (the Ezra Street Party) is more likely to promote a route of deviance to that goal.

Interaction Rituals

Now that we have discussed collective effervescence at the large group level and what someone can achieve from participating in group activities, let us now look at it from the perspective of instigators who are pressuring other people to join in, particularly from Collins' (2004) interaction ritual theory (IRT). Collins outlines four distinct requirements for an interaction ritual. First, two or more people must be together in the same space. Second, there are boundaries established to show who are outsiders to the ritual and who is to be included. Third, the group becomes focused on a common objective, and this is achieved by gauging group members' focuses through communication. Fourth, the group shares a common mood or emotional experience through coming together on this common objective (2004, p. 48). The emotional state that they share is important to both developing their awareness of themselves and their sense of belonging (Summers-Effler, 2004).

When the quality of a ritual is not up to standard or when the "ritual proprieties are broken" (e.g., someone refuses to go along with the common objective everyone else is focused on), the people who are present in the interaction might experience "moral uneasiness" since a failure of an interaction ritual throws the social equilibrium out of balance (Collins, 2004, p. 25; Goffman, 1971). When this happens, others may act on this uneasiness or "disgust" through

things like “labelling the violator as mentally ill” (Collins, 2004, p. 25). Relatedly, referring to the fourth component of interaction rituals that Collins (2004) outlines (sharing a common mood or emotional experience), scholars have discussed what happens when people cannot achieve the “emotional energy” that is supposed to come from these interactions and that if this is a routine thing, people will use other measures aimed at maximizing this emotional energy. Specifically, people will develop and use strategies that minimizes the loss of emotional energy; these are referred to as defense strategies (Summers-Effler, 2004, 310). These defence strategies are used to gain more control in a situation for oneself, so the outcome is not solely left to the environment (p. 310).

Considering this, if it is the common objective the group is trying to focus on (or at least what the instigator may think is the common objective), people may become motivated to pressure or encourage others to participate in acts with the group to restore the social equilibrium, improve the quality of the current or future interaction rituals, and maintain or build the level of emotional energy achievable, whether it be encouraging a friend to get up dancing at that Taylor Swift concert or taking shots at the Ezra Street Party. In their discussions, Collins (2004) and Goffman (1971) do not focus on groups looking to come together on a criminal or deviant objective, but there is no current reason to believe this theoretical understanding cannot be applied to those who are.

Solidarity and Cohesion

A common theme throughout the discussion above is that of solidarity and group cohesion. Various scholars in past literature have suggested that solidarity is a main motivation driving both social organization and individual behaviour (Durkheim, 1912/1995; Goffman, 1967; Summers-Effler, 2004; Wiley, 1994). If we expanded this from the micro level where

Goffman (1971) and Collins' (2004) respective work falls, to a macro level, we would be again returning to Durkheim's work (1897/1951) which essentially highlights that cohesion is in the interest of the social system and the individual. It is what keeps our social world optimally moving from a functionalist perspective. If we do not have this cohesion within groups at the micro/individual level, it creates issues at a larger scale. This suggests that successful interaction rituals, experiencing collective effervescence, and building our emotional energy is important for our own social wellbeing, the continued functioning of small groups (e.g., our friends), and the functioning of the social world.

The Current Research

In the following paragraphs I will apply the above sociological explanation to the findings of this research. Returning to the most common motivation mentioned by participants in both phases, with the individual goal of maintaining or building emotional energy that stems from the solidarity and cohesion resulting from successful interaction rituals, people may take on the instigator role in pressuring others to participate in group (and in this case illegal) activities. Additionally, people might pressure their friends to participate in these group activities (e.g., drinking at a party), regardless of already being in a crowd of other drinkers because this greater level of cohesion from collective action may allow for more emotional energy¹⁴. When our participants displayed distress with their friends not participating with the group activity, like Luke Carter, they may have been experiencing this "moral uneasiness" that Collins speaks of (2004, p. 25). Doing things together may indeed be better!

This explanation can also add to our understanding of the second major motivation - wanting to help someone. If other people are in an optimal spot to continue participating in

¹⁴ This might run parallel to the joint action work mentioned previously.

interaction rituals and ensuring their success, therefore allowing members of the group to reach a common emotional experience, people can build their emotional energy. So, this sociological understanding allows both major motivations to stand on common ground. However, this explanation may have only limited applicability to theft where the motivations tended to be largely utilitarian (i.e., instigators pressured others to act to increase their odds of success) rather than involving shared emotional experiences.

The sociological view explained earlier in this section also adds to our understanding of the strategies used in deviant instigation. People may commonly experience pressure to do deviant or illegal activities because the instigator has formed and deployed defence strategies to preserve emotional energy (see Summers-Effler, 2004). These strategies may have to be deployed more often in scenarios related to activities that go against social norms of broader society (in this case illegal ones) because there may be more resistance faced during interaction ritual attempts of this kind, leading to more failures compared to interactions of more common or socially acceptable activities (e.g., playing soccer).

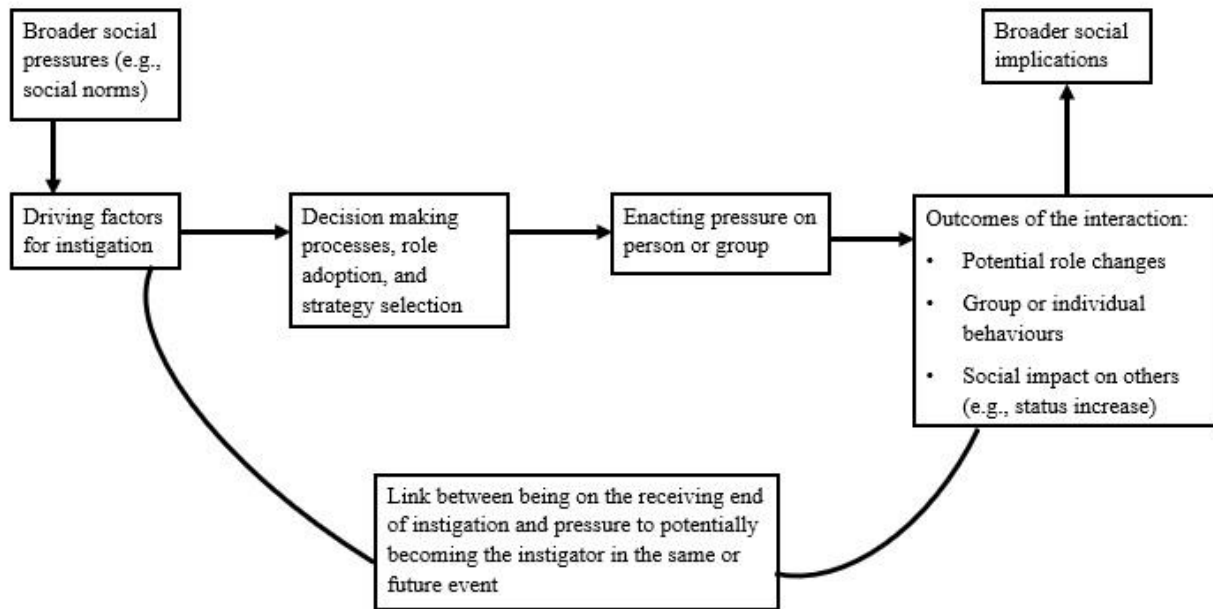
Expanding the Sociology of Instigators

As mentioned, a sociology of instigation exists, but there is substantial need for expansion. This next section highlights some of the factors and areas of research an expanded sociology of instigators may consider. Figure 2 below demonstrates this.

As implied by the discussion above, a sociology of instigators should consider both macro and micro theoretical levels, considering works from scholars such as Durkheim (1912/1995), Goffman (1971), and Collins (2004). Specifically, it should draw from theories of group cohesion, collective effervescence, emotional energy, and interaction rituals to build our understanding of the motivation behind deviant instigation. It would also consider the decision-

making process of enacting pressure on others, taking on the role of the instigator (and how this might shift over time or between situations as Warr, 1996, has pointed out). An expanded sociology of instigators would explore the outcomes of instigation both for the instigators and people on the receiving or observing end such as potential role changes in the group, group or individual behaviours or acts, and the potential social impact on others (e.g., a social status shift). Additionally, the link between being on the receiving end of instigation and pressure to becoming an instigator at a future event should also be pursued. Existing theories that may also be applicable to a sociology of instigators include rational choice, social learning, and social bond theories.

Figure 2: An Expansion of the Sociology of Instigators



Implications

This research first demonstrates that there is more to explore on the topic of peer influence and pressure. Specifically, we need to shift more of our attention to the person or

people creating the pressure - the instigators - as this has been lacking in the literature. It is also clear that we must expand the sociology of instigators that currently exists through future work.

The most important implication of the findings presented here is that those interested in deviant peer influence should be critical of their assumptions around how peer influence and pressure plays out. The media (e.g., movies, shows, books) often portrays peer pressure in the form of bullying behaviour (e.g., “Do this, or you will have no one”, “You are a loser!”). This style of peer pressure may happen, but it may not be as common as people think. In phase one, humiliation or coercive tactics were rare. This trend was observed again when tested in a broader sample during phase two. As discussed, it was substantially more common to see people enacting pressure by strategies like providing reassurance (e.g., “you will be ok”), which suggests a friendlier side of pressure.

Future creation and reshaping of peer influence interventions, training, and ads should consider the possibility that only focusing on strategies to avoid or face aggressive forms of peer pressure may not be as effective in scenarios where people are faced with this more neutral, subtle, and sometimes potentially kinder pressure. The findings of this research suggest that many people are not pressuring their peers with the intention of harming them or exerting power over them, but to help others and/or have a good time as a group. Peer pressure interventions and programs should reflect this.

A change to peer pressure programming that flows from the current research may be teaching communication strategies for people who are being pressured to gain a quicker understanding of why they are being pressured and how to address the deeper motivation. This was briefly implied by Costello and Zozula as a path forward as well (2018, p. 108). For example, if the person knows that their friend is pressuring them to drink because they think it

will help them, one communication strategy that may help could be explicitly outlining why it is not in fact helping them in that moment instead of pointing to other reasons (e.g., “I would, but I have to get up early and drinking will make that difficult”). This might increase the chances of the instigator backing down instead of continuing to exert pressure.

Additionally, in many programs and initiatives, the focus seems to be on teaching people resistance and how to avoid peer pressure situations. This sole focus should be re-evaluated. Perhaps when creating peer influence programs and interventions, we need to ensure there is also a focus on the instigator in addition to the person being pressured. For example, we can teach youth about better communication with others, respecting boundaries, recognizing discomfort in others, and being critical. These are already engrained in formal and informal education, but it may need to be explicitly discussed when covering the topic of peer pressure. There are forms of training and prevention strategies that already place the focus on the instigator that we can refer to. For example, consent training to prevent sexual assault tends to focus on the instigator. Humber College’s consent training module includes a section on how to ask for sexual consent (“Consent Education”, 2023). Another example is the University of Waterloo’s training section on how to navigate rejection when you do not receive sexual consent (“Rejection”, 2023). Future research can explore the effectiveness of these possibilities in relation to peer pressure and crime in general.

Ethical Considerations

This study was reviewed and approved by the Office of Research Ethics at the University of Waterloo (ORE# 42949). Phase one of this research involved interviewing people about illegal or deviant activities they may have been involved in or instigated. There is a chance that participants may have felt uncomfortable with some of the questions being asked. Because of

this, participants were informed that they did not have to answer any question that they did not wish to and were encouraged to reach out to people they trust if they needed someone to talk to about their experiences (e.g., counselling services). Contact information for mental health services was provided on the information and consent form. They were also provided with contact information for both researchers (Ashley Ryan and Dr. Owen Gallupe) and the Office of Research Ethics at the University of Waterloo in case they had any questions or concerns about the study at any point. In addition to this, there were protocols in place to stop the interview immediately if the researcher noticed that the participant was uncomfortable or if they informed the researcher explicitly that they were. No adverse effects were reported.

With the intention of creating a more comfortable environment for the participants and protecting confidentiality, the researcher reminded the people being interviewed that the information given was only being used for research purposes (e.g., dissertation, journal articles, academic conferences), that the researcher was not there to judge them for anything, that their name would never be used in association with any quotes we used, and that the data would be stripped of identifiers and stored in an encrypted, password protected file on a password protected computer. Participants were informed that the interview would be audio recorded with the participant's permission. These recordings were transcribed within 48 hours following the interview after which point the interview recording was permanently erased. The transcription process involved first deleting all identifying features (e.g., names) from the transcript that was populated by Microsoft Teams followed by a close comparison and adjustment when needed by following the recorded audio.

Interview participants were thanked multiple times for their willingness to participate in this research and were given a \$10 virtual gift card of their choice in appreciation of their time,

an amount that the researchers believe did not hinder participants' ability to refuse participation. The people being interviewed were also ensured that they would receive this \$10 compensation even if they chose to not answer questions or retract their consent to participate. They were informed of this at the beginning of the study.

Phase two involved a cross-national (Canada and the US) online Qualtrics survey that was hosted on a recruitment website called Prolific. Similar to phase one, the questions included in this short survey may make some individuals feel uncomfortable. Again, participants were informed of this prior to participation and were told they could exit the survey (or not respond to a question) at any time they wish and provided with mental health resources and contact information if they had questions or concerns. Unlike phase one of this research, this survey was completely anonymous meaning that the researchers had no way of knowing who completed the survey. Once the survey recruitment was complete, the data was exported from Qualtrics and stored in an encrypted, password protected file on a password protected computer. Participants were informed about the potential, but strongly unlikely event, that the survey answers they provided could be accessed by someone other than the researcher if Qualtrics or the storage computer was hacked. All features in Qualtrics to protect against this (e.g., not tracking IP addresses) have been used as a proactive measure in addition to the security protocols outlined above.

Study Limitations

There are limitations to this work which may have impacted phase one and/or two of this research. The first limitation is the fact that during phase one we specifically focused on the motivations and strategies of deviant instigation of illegal substance use and theft. Although our initial research plans were to include other illegal acts (e.g., graffiti), pretesting showed a need to

focus on a few offences to make data analysis feasible given the achievable sample size for this project. Because of this, qualitative data was not collected on a variety of offences. However, phase two did include a large variety of offences and similar findings emerged.

The next limitations that need to be addressed are the recruitment challenges encountered during phase one of the research (an issue that was already discussed in depth in chapter three) and potential impacts on participant responses. The following issues are not unique to this study and are common in criminology where participants may be embarrassed about their involvement in the acts we are interested in. This could result in participants lying to access the compensation amount.

To qualify as coercive compensation, the amount provided would need to be “unreasonable to resist [and mean the person] cannot satisfy his or her needs by less costly means” (Belfrage, 2016, p. 72). The researchers intentionally selected a compensation amount that, to people in Canada, would generally not be viewed as a lot of money or an offer they could not turn down. \$10 is lower than the minimum hourly wage in Ontario. Additionally, the compensation was delayed (e.g., if a person said they would participate, their interview date may have been scheduled for a week in the future). The compensation provided for this study does not appear to reach the level at which it could be considered coercive.

However, there were concerns related to this compensation amount being a potential driving factor for people from overseas participating under false pretenses. This is an issue that was addressed as soon as its potential emerged. It is discussed in depth in chapters three and four of this dissertation. It was also accounted for at the analysis stage by comparing the data collected before and after increasing eligibility screening protocols. Lastly, participants were

notified on multiple occasions that they could leave the study at any time and still be paid. No participants dropped out during the start of the interview to quickly “cash in”.

Also related to participants who were ineligible due to location potentially participating, there may be concerns related to the trustworthiness of that data. In the case of this research, we do acknowledge it could have been an issue which is why we deleted interviews (n=2) where we were certain the participants were outside the focal areas and embedded an enhanced screening protocol when we found out a problem could be occurring. We also compared the two halves of the data (pre and post enhanced screening) and observed the same common themes emerged in both halves of the data.

There are a variety of reasons for why someone might participate in this research (e.g., boredom, catharsis). In relation to this research, it is possible that the research attracted a certain kind of participant, particularly those who were interested in the topic or those who wanted to help in some way. This could have an influence on the motivations and strategies that were discussed. For example, if the research attracted those who wanted to help by sharing their story, the motivation of wanting to help others might be overrepresented in the data since the sample includes unusually helpful people.

There are also limitations associated with how the interviews and survey were designed. For example, when participants were talking to the researcher about the strategies they used to convince the other person and the reasoning behind it, at no point was the participant explicitly asked if the things they were telling the other person were known to be true. By that I mean, the researcher did not explicitly ask if the instigator attempted to lie to the other person when offering reassurance or otherwise. However, no participant mentioned lying to the person they

were encouraging as part of their strategy, which implies that intentional lies may not have really played a part in the encouragement process.

In relation to question design, the interview guide (as well as the survey deployed in phase two) was intentionally designed to focus on the most recent time that the person tried to encourage someone to do something illegal. There was not a lot of opportunity for participants to tell the researcher about other times they had encouraged others to do something illegal to compare potential differences in motivations and strategies between events. However, focusing on one event allowed for a fuller discussion of that event without placing a heavy time burden on participants (e.g., if we were to discuss multiple events, an interview may have had to be 2-3 hours long compared to 45 min). Additionally, focusing on the most recent event tends to produce data on a broadly representative cross-section of events. If participants were asked to discuss their most memorable event or were asked to discuss multiple events without specification, participants may have been inclined to report the most extreme scenarios, leaving more typical and/or casual events underreported.

Regarding the survey deployed in phase two, participants did answer a question based on strategy after being told about a hypothetical scenario, but those participants too did not report on more than one event. The reason this was done was because long (e.g., 15+ minutes) surveys are not ideal as they could lead to respondents either not participating at all, resulting in non-response issues, or dropping out before reaching the end (e.g., Crawford, Couper, & Lamias, 2001).

This research, in both phases, was designed to confront the explicit motivations and strategies people held. Since this was the focus, there is a chance that some underlying implicit motivations were unnoticed during the research process. However, it is important to

acknowledge that many participants appeared to be quite insightful to their own experiences and did acknowledge on many accounts that they were acting selfishly or did not only speak of motivations that made them look good. Additionally, some implicit motivations that we thought might emerge in the data (e.g., wanting power) did not appear to emerge even in passing.

Related to the event participants were asked to talk about during the interviews (e.g., the most recent time where they encouraged someone to steal or use alcohol or drugs in a context that was against the law), some people discussed events that took place multiple years in the past. This could be problematic due to recall issues. However, there is no reason to believe that this impacts the interpretation of the findings. Looking at each major strategy and motivation mentioned in phase one, time gaps vary for each; no strategy or motivation is solely mentioned by people recalling very recent or distant events. Regardless, if this research were to be replicated in the future, it may be useful to add an additional eligibility requirement looking specifically for participants who had encouraged someone to do something illegal within the past year.

Related to recall is the reality that some participants explicitly mentioned that they were drinking alcohol or using drugs at the time that these events occurred. This is not surprising as parties and social activities do not take place in a vacuum and if we are to research this topic (deviant instigation of alcohol and other drugs), then we must accept that participants are not always going to be fully sober when the events unfold. However, studies examining eye-witness recall have found that witnesses under the influence reported the same number of accurate details compared to an event where participants were sober (Compo et al., 2012, p. 83; Flowe et al., 2016, p. 1058), suggesting it may not be a large concern that some participants were under the influence during the event discussed.

Procedures were in place to make participants feel as comfortable as possible to provide more honest answers (e.g., no in-person interaction, ensuring confidentiality) and these are procedures that have been recommended and found to decrease the impact of social desirability bias and/or increase honesty (e.g., Couper, 2017; Shenton, 2006). However, there remains the possibility that some participants provided socially desirable responses. If this occurred, it would imply that the “nicer” intentions (e.g., wanting to help the other person) behind peer pressure in this research may not have been the true driving motivation during the event the participant talked about. Despite this, similar findings were derived from both phases of the research, even when the researcher had no direct contact with the participants. Additionally, participants in both phases, phase one participants especially, were greatly forthcoming with information that could reflect poorly on them even in situations where they said they were trying to help the other person. Due to these factors, there is reason to believe that social desirability and other self-serving biases may not have played a significant role.

Strengths

The angle on peer influence explored in this research is mostly missing from the literature to date. In fact, some scholars, such as Costello and Hope (2016, p. 40) have identified peer influence and pressure from the perspective of the instigator as a gap that needed to be addressed in the field. More specifically, there has been little research explicitly addressing the motivations behind deviant instigation, which was a major component of this project. However, research on the *strategies* that people use in scenarios involving peer pressure is not entirely new. Others have observed and explored compliance gaining strategies for decades (e.g., Marwell & Schmitt, 1967). What makes the research conducted in this dissertation unique is that work on compliance gaining strategies has generally not been applied to criminological outcomes.

Further, this research provides a new way of thinking about peer influence and pressure. It has now become clear that the motivations behind peer pressure and instigation, even for illegal acts, may not be ones that follow the stereotypical understanding of what peer pressure entails. An example of this is the prominence of wanting to help the person they were encouraging.

This research has also examined peer pressure from a different perspective. Specifically, this research shifts the focus from the person receiving the pressure to the person explicitly creating it. This shift allows for a better understanding behind the motivations people have when they decide to encourage others to do things that are against the law and for why they encourage people to use alcohol or marijuana in a legal context.

In terms of research design, the processes and tools used in both phases of the research were carefully considered and tested prior to data collection. As discussed in chapter one, a mixed methods approach, and more specifically an exploratory sequential design, was deployed because the researchers believed this approach would be best to gain a more comprehensive understanding of deviant instigation. Phase one, which involved semi-structured interviews, was valuable in forming the measures and questions used in the online survey used in phase two. Additionally, this design, alongside the choice to allow people from all over Canada and the United States to participate in phase two of this research, increased both the validity and reliability of our findings.

Not only did this study provide a better understanding of deviant instigation and strategies, but it should also inform research that recruits interview participants through social media networks (see chapter three). Lastly, this research provides multiple suggestions and

pathways for future peer influence research, including guidance for a needed expansion of the sociology of instigators

Future Research Directions

This research suggests a number of future paths for scholars to embark on in the area of peer influence. As other scholars (Costello & Hope, 2016, p. 40) and this research has called for, it is important for more research to be conducted in peer influence from the perspective of the person doing the influencing. This perspective has largely been ignored, despite decades of research in the peer influence realm. It is time that researchers look at this perspective more deeply. I argue that what has been done so far has only been the “tip of the iceberg”.

One area of interest may be to look at instigation across the lifespan. The research conducted for this dissertation focused on people aged 18-30 for reasons discussed in previous chapters. We also found consistent themes emerging in relation to motivations that people might have, and the strategies people might use, when convincing others to do things against the law. Research in the future could explore different age groups to see if these motivations and strategies remain consistent across the lifespan from childhood to old age. If these motivations and strategies remain consistent, what would be the implications of this? Alternatively, what are the implications for peer influence messaging if they differ?

Researchers may also seek to investigate if these strategies and motivations differ depending on the relationship between the instigator and the person on the receiving end of the pressure or encouragement. Do motivations and strategies differ if the person on the receiving end is a sibling, friend, co-worker, or stranger? Additionally, are there different approaches taken depending on other factors (e.g., age difference, gender)? The research in this dissertation does not focus on these dynamics.

Additionally, researchers should also more thoroughly explore the strategies and motivations of deviant instigation and how this might compare to peer pressure to do legal or more socially acceptable activities (e.g., studying for a test). It may also be of interest to explore the motivations and strategies used for encouraging someone to do more serious illegal acts (e.g., homicide) to see if similar motivations and strategies appear. In phase one, we did not focus on these more serious acts. During phase two of this research, no one mentioned this kind of event taking place. This is not surprising considering the severity and rarity of this kind of act. A population of serious offenders is incredibly difficult to access, but this research, if possible, would be highly beneficial as a comparison to the findings of this dissertation and Costello and Zozula's (2018) work.

Another factor for future research to explore is lying as an influence strategy. In this research, no one mentioned anything related to explicitly lying to the person they were pressuring. It did not appear to emerge in Costello and Zozula's (2018) work either. It might be the case that people truly did not use any lies in their efforts. It is also possible that lies were used as a strategy but were not explicitly discussed either because they were not comfortable mentioning it or because they were not directly asked about it. Future research on this topic could specifically dive into this possibility to gain a clearer understanding of this potential strategy.

Thinking of strategies from a different angle, scholars should explore effective strategies when resisting peer pressure. Specifically, in different scenarios, what are the most effective things a person can do to put a stop to the pressure? Just saying no or leaving the situation may not be realistic or socially desirable for the person on the receiving end of the pressure. Other

strategies should be tested and taught to youth and young adults so more options are available in whatever situation they could face.

We as peer influence researchers must also continue to have a discussion on how we can harness knowledge from the perspectives of the influencers to push for the evolution of peer resistance programs, particularly for youth and young adults where the majority of illegal activity takes place (Hirschi & Gottfredson, 1983; Nagin & Land, 1993). As it stands, many programs appear to heavily focus on the person receiving the pressure. This is not sufficient. Why should the onus be on someone potentially in a vulnerable position in front of peers to “just say no”? Research on peer influence program implementation should take a more comprehensive approach and try to target the instigators and their motivations. After all, research has shown that instigators do act as the gateway to deviant and criminal acts and lifestyles (Alberts et al., 1992; Lantz & Hutchison, 2015; Morselli, Tremblay, & McCarthy, 2006; Reiss, 1988). This is not to say that we should ignore the fact that someone does have the ability in many circumstances to “say no”. Programs should continue to address this and build individual resistance and confidence. However, this should be complemented by efforts to curb the pressure from happening in the first place.

Aside from peer influence research, I encourage methodological researchers to continue exploring best practices and options in relation to participant recruitment in the age of social media. Social media outlets can be an incredibly useful tool to reach hard to access populations. Platforms like Facebook not only enable researchers to reach demographics that might have experiences to share on a specific topic, but it also enables researchers to advertise their study to millions of people all over the world. We should be taking advantage of this, but with caution. It was clear in the current study that there are risks associated with recruiting participants online

and researchers must be aware that extra precautions need to be taken to protect participants, themselves, and the integrity of their data. Researchers should continue exploring the implications and use of social media for participant recruitment as well as the level of control researchers have over study advertisement dispersion and what impacts this could have on the research process.

Conclusion

This dissertation has presented the findings from an exploratory mixed methods study involving both interviews and an online survey spanning Canada and the United States. This research specifically has explored the motivations behind deviant instigation and the strategies that people use when they are encouraging illegal behaviour. It was found that some common motivations for encouraging others to do things against the law is thinking the act or situation would be better or improved for the instigator if others were doing it with them and wanting to help the other person.

Along the way, many strategies also emerged for how people go about conducting this instigation (e.g., cheering the other person on, casually bringing the idea up, talking about the rewards they could receive), with one strategy consistently emerging across both phases of the research - providing reassurance to the person on the receiving end of the pressure.

There are multiple routes researchers can take in the future when exploring peer influence dynamics and, more specifically, why people pressure others to commit deviant and non-deviant acts. With the limited literature available on deviant instigation to date and other researchers calling for this kind of work (e.g., Costello & Hope, 2016, p. 40; Costello & Zozula, 2018, p. 108), it is my hope that scholars will use the research presented in this dissertation as a stepping stone to gaining a deeper understanding of this phenomenon in the future.

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Appendix A

Phase One Interview Schedule

Thank you so much for agreeing to participate in my study. My name is Ashley Ryan, and I am a PhD student in sociology at the University of Waterloo. I am conducting these interviews as part of my dissertation, which goes towards the completion of my degree. In this research I am exploring social influence and behaviour that is against the law.

I want to remind you that you do not have to answer a question if you do not feel comfortable doing so and you are free to leave the interview at any time you wish without loss of remuneration. Before we get started, I am going to read you some information about this study. Please feel free to stop me at any time if you have any questions or concerns. *Read consent form to participant* Do you have any questions before we start?

In order to further protect your identity, could you please ensure your video stays off during the interview while we are recording? I am also going to request that you please refrain from using other people's names in the information you provide today and to only focus on activities that took place in the past.

To clarify, I am not here to judge anything you have done. Many people have done things that are against the law. I am just interested in listening to your experiences to explore what goes on in some of the group settings we are going to talk about. Again, your identity will remain confidential. I would greatly appreciate it if you are as honest as possible.

****NOTE THAT I AM STARTING THE RECORDING NOW****

WARM UP QUESTIONS

- Tell me a little bit about yourself
- How did you find out about this study?
- What types of illegal activities have you been involved in in the past, if any? (*e.g., stealing, illegal substance use, etc.*).
- Why do you think you did some of those things?
- What is your general opinion on behaving in ways that are against the law? (*e.g., it's fine as long as no one gets hurt, it's never ok, it depends on which law it is*)

CENTRAL QUESTIONS

You noted earlier before this interview that you have tried to persuade other people to do things that were against the law.

-What are some examples of things that you have tried to get people to do?

-Thinking of the most recent example of a time where you tried to get someone to either steal something or use alcohol/drugs in a context that was against the law:

-Can you tell me what happened?

-How did the idea come up?

-Without providing any names, who was with you (e.g., a friend)?

-Whose idea was it?

-What did you want them to do?

-How old were you at the time? Was the person you were trying to convince the same age as you?

-Why did you want them to do it?

-(If more than 2 people present) Were you trying to persuade everyone there to do it, or just X?

-How would you describe your role in that situation?

-Thinking for a second about other scenarios, is this a role you frequently play?

-In this scenario, you mentioned you encouraged X to do X. What did you do to try and convince them?

-Did they resist?

-What did you say in response?

-Did you say anything specific to try to convince them?

-Can you describe what you were thinking about when you were trying to convince the person to do it?

-Can you describe how you were feeling? (e.g., Was it exciting? A challenge? Entertaining?)

-What motivated you to encourage X to do X?

-Did the person (or people) do X [the thing you wanted them to]?

-Why do you think they did (or didn't do) what you wanted them to?

-What do you think they were thinking when you were trying to convince them?

-Comparing everything you said and did in that scenario to convince them, is there anything that stands out as the most effective thing to you for getting them to listen to you?

-How did their decision to participate (or not) make you feel? (*e.g., upset, excited, angry, happy*)

-Why do you think you felt that way?

-Were you also planning on participating?

-In this situation you were with other people. Would you ever do this thing alone?

-Why/why not?

-Were there any benefits to getting someone else to do it?

-What were they?

-Were there any negatives to getting someone else involved?

-What were they?

COOL DOWN QUESTIONS

-Thank you for talking to me about your experiences. My impression is that you were motivated by X when trying to convince X to do X. Does that sound about right?

-I am also getting the impression that you think the most effective thing you said or did that day to get them to listen/do the thing you wanted them to was X. Does that sound about right?

-do you think that doing X to try to convince X, was effective in gaining X (whatever the motivation is e.g., status)

DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONS

-We are almost done. I just have a few questions to ask you now for demographic purposes if that's alright.

-How old are you?

-What gender do you identify with?

-What is your highest level of education?

-Do you live in a rural area, a suburban area, or an urban area?

-What country are you currently living in?

-What state or province do you live in?

That is all the questions I have for you today Thanks again for talking to me. I really appreciate your insight.

Do you have any questions or concerns for me? Again, your identity will remain confidential. If after this interview you would like to withdraw, please let us know within the next 24 hours. After this point, your name and identifying information will be removed from the interview file. If you have any concerns or questions for me in the future, feel free to contact me at alryan@uwaterloo.ca. You can also contact my supervisor, Dr. Owen Gallupe at ogallupe@uwaterloo.ca. If this conversation has brought up any feelings of distress, please consider reaching out to someone you trust or contacting a local service. For example, Here247 is a mental health service covering Waterloo Region and Wellington County and can be accessed anytime by calling 1-844-437-3247.

The insight you provided is very valuable. The information you provided will help us to better understand why people encourage others to participate in things that may be against the law. This is useful to guide future research in criminology and in the development of social programs. Thank you again! I really appreciate you taking the time to speak with me.

Appendix B

Phase One Interview Screening Questions

(To take place after introducing self and welcoming participant to the call)

Before we get started, I am just going to ask you 3 questions about living in Ontario. This is just a quick knowledge check that we are using to make sure people are eligible to take part in the study and should only take about 1 minute.

(Researcher to ask 3 of the following questions)

- Could you tell me the names of at least 3 cities in Ontario?
- What are some major highways in Ontario?
- Can you give me the name of at least one major internet provider in Ontario?*
- What are some popular grocery store brands you might come across in Ontario?*
- True or False. Ottawa is located in Ontario.
- Can you give me the name of at least 2 well known non fast food sit down restaurants in Ontario? (e.g., Montana's)
- Can you please tell me the name of at least 2 universities or colleges in Ontario that are not the University of Waterloo?
- Who is the current Premier of Ontario?*
- What is a Canadian \$1 coin called?*
- What colour is a Canadian \$5 bill?*

(*If someone just moved to Ontario, pull from these questions)

Appendix C

Phase Two Questionnaire

Study title: Social Influence and Law Breaking Behavior

Introduction

To help you make an informed decision regarding your participation, this letter will explain what the study is about, the possible risks and benefits, and your rights as a research participant. If you do not understand something in the letter, please ask one of the investigators prior to consenting to the study. Please print/save a copy of this letter for your records.

Who are the researchers?

You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Ashley Ryan, under the supervision of Dr. Owen Gallupe in the Department of Sociology and Legal Studies at the University of Waterloo, Canada. This study is being conducted as part of a Ph.D. dissertation.

What is this study about?

The objective of this research study is to try to better understand the behaviors and motivations behind encouraging other people to participate in activities that may be against the law.

What will my involvement entail?

If you decide to participate, you will be asked to complete an online survey that should take you approximately 7 minutes to complete. Your answers will be anonymous. The questions you will be asked will focus on your thoughts about participating in activities with others such as theft, drinking, etc. You will also be asked a few background questions (e.g., age, gender, education). This information is being used so that the researchers can describe the sample in a general way; your identity will remain anonymous.

Is my participation voluntary?

Participation in this study is completely voluntary. It is important for you to know that any information that you provide will be completely anonymous. You will not be asked to provide your name at any point throughout the survey and no identifying information will be collected.

Where is this survey hosted?

You will be completing the study by an online survey operated by Qualtrics. Qualtrics has implemented technical, administrative, and physical safeguards to protect the information provided through Qualtrics from loss, misuse, and unauthorized access, disclosure, alteration, or destruction. However, no internet transmission is ever fully secure or error free. Prolific will be hosting a link to a Qualtrics survey. All functions in Qualtrics and Prolific that collect machine identifiers such as IP addresses have been turned off. The anonymous data set for this project may also be uploaded to an online platform for future research.

What if I change my mind about participating?

You may decline to answer any questions that you do not wish to answer and you can withdraw your participation at any time without loss of remuneration. If you wish to stop participating, please skip through to the last survey question where you will be asked if you still consent to your data being used. By doing this, your response with Prolific will still be registered to ensure you receive payment, but the researchers will know to delete your data. Further, if you would like your data to be deleted after participating, you can contact the researchers with your Prolific ID for up to 2 weeks after the study to do so. After 2 weeks, your Prolific ID will be permanently deleted from the data meaning that the researchers will no longer be able to delete your data as they will not know which data belongs to you.

Will I receive anything for participating in this study?

To thank you for your time, you will receive £1.05 (~\$1.26 US or \$1.63 CAD). Please be sure to click through to the end of the survey where it links back to Prolific to ensure that your participation is recorded. The amount received is taxable. It is your responsibility to report this amount for income tax purposes.

What are the possible benefits of the study?

Participation in this study will not provide any personal benefit to you.

Are there any risks associated with participating in this study?

Some of the questions you will be asked may cause feelings of distress. For example, you may be asked about past experiences with encouraging another person to steal from a store or use drugs. If you have any questions or concerns relating to this, please contact the researchers (contact information below) or seek help from a person or organization that you trust.

How will my data be protected?

The data collected from this study will be saved in an encrypted, password-protected computer file. The data will be kept for a minimum of 7 years. All records are destroyed according to University of Waterloo policy.

Has this study received ethics clearance?

This study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through a University of Waterloo Research Ethics Board (REB #42949). If you have questions for the Board contact the Office of Research Ethics, at 1-519-888-4567 ext. 36005 or reb@uwaterloo.ca.

How can I contact the researchers if I have questions or concerns?

Please contact either Ashley Ryan at alryan@uwaterloo.ca or Dr. Owen Gallupe at ogallupe@uwaterloo.ca (519-888-4567 ext. 43361). Further, if you would like to receive a copy of the results of this study once it is completed please contact either investigator.

Consent

-By agreeing to participate in the study you are not waiving your legal rights or releasing the investigator(s) or involved institution(s) from their legal and professional responsibilities.

I agree to participate

I do not wish to participate (Please close your web browser now and "Return" the study in Prolific)

-Do you agree that your anonymous responses can be uploaded to an online data repository for other researchers to use?

I agree

I do not agree

-What is your Prolific ID? Please note that this response should auto-fill with the correct ID.

Thank you for participating! Your time is greatly appreciated and will add great value to this research project.

The first few questions are being used to describe our research sample. They will not be used to identify participants. Your identity will remain anonymous.

-How old are you (current age in years)? (Options ranged from 18-30)

-What gender do you most identify with?

Man

Woman

Transman

Transwoman

Genderqueer/ Gender non-conforming/ Gender non-binary/ Gender fluid

Two-Spirited

I prefer to self-define (please use the text box below) _____

I prefer not to answer

-Below is an income scale on which 1 indicates the lowest income group and 10 indicates the highest income group. Which number would you say best represents your family's household

income? Please specify the appropriate number, counting all wages, salaries, pensions, and other incomes that come in. (Sliding bar options ranging from 1-10)

-Which province, territory, or state do you live in? (Drop down menu listing all Canadian and US provinces, states, and territories)

-What type of area do you live in?

Large city

Suburb near a large city

Small city or town

Rural area

- Thank you again for taking the time to participate in this survey!

Many people have done something against the law in their life. A lot of the time, that happens with others where people encourage each other. This can involve anything from encouraging

people to use illicit substances (including underage drinking/marijuana use, marijuana use before it was legalized (where relevant), shoplifting, getting into a fight, etc.).

I would like to remind you that all information you provide is anonymous. We would appreciate it if you answered as honestly as possible.

Have you ever encouraged someone to do something that was technically against the law?

Yes

No

I prefer not to respond

***SHOWN TO THOSE WHO RESPONDED “YES”:**

- Thinking about the last time you encouraged someone to do something against the law, please answer the following questions:

During the **most recent** time you can think of where you tried to convince someone else to do something that was against the law, what were you trying to convince them to do?

If more than one applied to your situation, select the option that you wanted them to do the most.

Drink alcohol underage

Use marijuana underage or in an area where it was illegal

Do other illicit drugs (e.g., meth, cocaine)

Vandalize something (e.g., paint graffiti)

Get into a physical fight

Illegally download games, movies, books, music, etc.

Steal something

Break into someone’s house or business

Provide false information on official forms (e.g., taxes, insurance claims)

Flash or moon someone

Sell or transport drugs illegally

Speed in a vehicle

Leave a restaurant without paying for the food (dine and dash)

Other (please specify) _____

- Referring to the time that you thought of when answering the previous question, why did you try to convince them? (Select all that apply)

I needed them to help me do it successfully

I thought it would be funny or entertaining to see them do it

I thought it would be a better experience if we did it together

I thought it would make me look cool if I was able to get someone else to do it

I wanted to show them that I was in charge

It was just something I said to them. I didn't think they would actually go through with it

I didn't want to be the one getting caught or getting in trouble

I wanted to help the person I was encouraging (e.g., to relax or have fun)

Other people were encouraging them so I just went along with it

The other person was braver than me

The other person was more experienced than me

I thought that encouragement to do the activity was what they wanted

I wanted the other person to experience the activity

Other (please specify) _____

-Out of the reasons you mentioned in the previous question, which was the main/most important reason to you at the time? (Options offered were the ones the participant selected from the previous question)

-How long ago did the situation you were referring to happen? Please select the option that is closest to when it happened.

Within the past month

Between a month and a year ago

1-5 years ago

6-10 years ago

More than 10 years ago

-Referring to the same time where you tried convincing someone to do something against the law, what did you do to try to convince them? (select all that apply)

I tried cheering them on (e.g., "You can do it!")

I verbally threatened them (e.g., "If you don't do this, I will hurt you")

I provided them with reassurance (e.g., “I won’t hurt you”, “You won’t get caught”)

I made fun of them (e.g., “You’re a chicken!”)

I told them they owed me this

I physically motioned for them to do it (e.g., pointed at the item)

I physically guided them (e.g., handed them the item)

I promised to personally give them a reward (e.g., “I will give you \$50 if you do this”)

I told them that I was an expert in this activity

I told them it was the right thing to do

I just casually brought up the idea (e.g., “Let’s go do this”)

I verbally demanded them to do it (e.g., “Do this NOW!”)

I told them that the activity was totally normal

I told them that doing the activity would help them (e.g., “You can use the money for something else”)

I told them I would be in danger if they didn’t do it

I outlined the situation they were in (e.g., “You are broke”)

I told them about the consequences they could face if they did not do it (e.g., losing friends, feeling left out)

I told them about some physical rewards they would get if they did it (e.g., money, jewelry)

I told them they would look cool if they did it

I provided them with access to the activity (e.g., bought them alcohol)

Other (please specify) _____

-In the end, did they end up doing the thing you were trying to convince them to do?

Yes

No

-From the strategies you used to convince them, what do you think was the most effective strategy you used? (options were the strategies the participant said they used)

*SHOWN TO THOSE WHO ANSWERED “NO” OR “ I PREFER NOT TO RESPOND”:

-Have you ever encouraged someone else to use alcohol or marijuana in a legal context? (e.g., the person was of age and allowed to drink)?

Yes

No

Prefer not to respond

- Referring to the time that you thought of when answering the previous question, why did you try to convince them? (Select all that apply)

I needed them to help me do it successfully

I thought it would be funny or entertaining to see them do it

I thought it would be a better experience if we did it together

I thought it would make me look cool if I was able to get someone else to do it

I wanted to show them that I was in charge

It was just something I said to them. I didn't think they would actually go through with it

I didn't want to be the one getting caught or getting in trouble

I wanted to help the person I was encouraging (e.g., to relax or have fun)

Other people were encouraging them so I just went along with it

The other person was braver than me

The other person was more experienced than me

I thought that encouragement to do the activity was what they wanted

I wanted the other person to experience the activity

Other (please specify) _____

-Out of the reasons you mentioned in the previous question, which was the main/most important reason to you at the time? (Options offered were the ones the participant selected from the previous question)

-How long ago did the situation you were referring to happen? Please select the option that is closest to when it happened.

Within the past month

Between a month and a year ago

1-5 years ago

6-10 years ago

More than 10 years ago

-Referring to the same time where you tried convincing someone to do something against the law, what did you do to try to convince them? (select all that apply)

I tried cheering them on (e.g., "You can do it!")

I verbally threatened them (e.g., "If you don't do this, I will hurt you")

I provided them with reassurance (e.g., "I won't hurt you", "You won't get caught")

I made fun of them (e.g., "You're a chicken!")

I told them they owed me this

I physically motioned for them to do it (e.g., pointed at the item)

I physically guided them (e.g., handed them the item)

I promised to personally give them a reward (e.g., "I will give you \$50 if you do this")

I told them that I was an expert in this activity

I told them it was the right thing to do

I just casually brought up the idea (e.g., "Let's go do this")

I verbally demanded them to do it (e.g., "Do this NOW!")

I told them that the activity was totally normal

I told them that doing the activity would help them

I told them I would be in danger if they didn't do it

I outlined the situation they were in

I told them about the consequences they could face if they did not do it (e.g., losing friends, feeling left out)

I told them about some physical rewards they would get if they did it

I told them they would look cool if they did it

I provided them with access to the activity (e.g., bought them alcohol)

Other (please specify) _____

-In the end, did they end up doing the thing you were trying to convince them to do?

Yes

No

-From the strategies you used to convince them, what do you think was the most effective strategy you used? (options were the strategies the participant said they used)

***SHOWN TO ALL PARTICIPANTS**

-In a hypothetical situation where you wanted to convince someone to take a new \$20 phone charging cable from a store, what would you be willing to do to convince them to do it? (select all that apply).

Even if you do not think you would convince a friend to take this in real life, please respond as if you would.

I would try cheering them on (e.g., "You can do it!")

I would verbally threaten them (e.g., "If you don't do this, I will hurt you")

I would provide them with reassurance (e.g., "This won't hurt you", "you won't get caught")

I would make fun of them (e.g., "You're a chicken!")

I would tell them that they owed me this

I would physically motion for them to do it (e.g., point at the charger)

I would physically guide them (e.g., hand them the charger)

I would promise to personally give them a reward (e.g., "I will give you \$50 if you do this")

I would tell them I am an expert in taking things from stores

I would tell them it's the right thing to do

I would just casually bring up the idea (e.g., "Let's go do this")

I would verbally demand them to do it (e.g., "Do this NOW!")

I would tell them that taking things from stores is totally normal

I would tell them that doing the activity would help them (e.g., "You can use the money for something else")

I would outline the situation they are in (e.g., "You are broke")

I would tell them about the consequences they could face if they did not do it (e.g., losing friends, feeling left out)

I would tell them about the physical rewards they would get if they did it (e.g., new phone charger)

I told them they would look cool if they did it

Other (please specify) _____

I wouldn't be willing to do any of the above things to convince them

-How true are the answers you provided in this survey? Please remember that your responses are completely anonymous

All or mostly true to the best of my knowledge

Not true/mostly not true

-Thank you again for taking the time to participate in this research study. Is it still okay that we use the data you provided us?

Yes

No

By clicking on the arrow below, you will be redirected back to Prolific to ensure that your participation has been recorded.

Thank you very much for taking the time to participate in this study, Social Influence and Law Breaking Behavior. The information you provided will help us better understand why people encourage others to participate in law-breaking acts. This is useful to guide future research in criminology and in the development of social programs.

This study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through a University of Waterloo Research Ethics Board (REB # 42949). If you have questions for the Board contact the Office of Research Ethics, at 1-519-888-4567 ext. 36005 or reb@uwaterloo.ca.

The data you provided is anonymous and will be stored in an encrypted file on a password protected computer. No personally identifying information was collected. Once all the data are collected and analyzed for this project, I plan on sharing this information in aggregate form with the research community through conferences, presentations, and journal articles.

If you are interested in receiving more information regarding the results of this study, or would like a summary of the results, please e-mail one of the researchers and when the study is completed, anticipated by August 2022, I will send you the information. In the meantime, if you have any questions or concerns about the study, please do not hesitate to contact me at

alryan@uwaterloo.ca or my supervisor, Dr. Owen Gallupe at ogallupe@uwaterloo.ca (519-888-4567 ext. 43361).