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The Ambivalence of People Who Offend and of their Prosocial Relatives

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Résumé

Les criminologues étudient depuis longtemps l'entourage social des gens qui commettent des délits afin de mieux comprendre leur comportement, particulièrement pour comprendre comment ceux-ci se désistent éventuellement du crime. Même si aucun consensus n'a été dégagé concernant le mécanisme par lequel ce processus intervient, ils s'entendent pour affirmer que les proches des personnes qui enfreignent la loi ont le pouvoir de contenir la délinquance, dans la mesure où ils et elles adoptent une posture *prosociale* (Cullen, 1994; Hirschi, 1969, Sampson and Laub, 19993; Sutherland, 1947). La recherche soutient plusieurs de leurs affirmations, si bien que ces proches sont désormais régulièrement intégrés aux théories du crime et du désistement. Jusqu'à maintenant, ces travaux ont toutefois eu peu à dire au sujet de ces acteurs influents. Quelles sont les conséquences d'entretenir une relation avec quelqu'un qui agit illégalement? Comment l'expérience d'une personne est-elle affectée par cette conduite? En fait, un petit corpus de travaux émergents et portant spécifiquement sur les proches suggère que ceux-ci sont aussi influencés de manière significative au cours de leur relation avec ceux qui enfreignent la loi (Condry, 2007; Christian & Kennedy, 2011). Toutefois, contrairement à la prémisse qui sous-tend les travaux sur le désistement, c'est plutôt la posture *antisociale* des délinquants qui les affecte.

En combinant les prémisses de ces deux littératures, la présente thèse soutient que tant les délinquants que leurs proches prosociaux sont influencés par la relation qui les unit et que cette influence se déroule à la confluence du prosocial et de l'antisocial. Il est en outre proposé que, parce qu'il est simultanément teinté par le crime d'un de ses membres—une conduite qui enfreint des normes morales reconnues—et par la posture prosociale de l'autre, ce lien social est susceptible de générer de l'ambivalence.

Cette thèse est donc dédiée aux individus qui parcourent cet univers conflictuel. Spécifiquement, elle examine l'hypothèse de l'ambivalence tant chez les délinquants que chez leurs proches prosociaux. Au niveau empirique, cette tâche est accomplie par l'entremise d'une méthodologie multiple composée de deux études indépendantes, mais liées. En premier lieu, la composante qualitative analyse l'ambivalence des proches à travers des données collectées lors d'entretiens semi-directifs menés auprès de 18 personnes qui soutiennent un

individu ayant commis des délits. Dans un second temps, une banque de données quantitative contenant de l'information sur 1 318 individus ayant reçu une peine au Québec est utilisée pour analyser l'ambivalence chez ceux qui enfreignent la loi.

Les résultats des analyses qualitatives suggèrent qu'être lié socialement à quelqu'un qui commet des délits est une expérience qui génère de l'ambivalence. Afin de réduire cette tension, les participants emploient un ensemble de stratégies qui, lorsqu'efficaces, leur permettent de maintenir leur relation avec la personne ayant enfreint la loi. Les analyses quantitatives, quant à elles, suggèrent que l'ambivalence parmi ceux qui commettent des délits survient dans des environnements sociaux hétérogènes qui se trouvent dans une zone milieu entre le prosocial et l'antisocial. Les implications de ces résultats sont discutées.

Mots-clés : Délinquants, Proches, Ambivalence, Attitudes, Tolérance, Liens sociaux, Influence sociale

Abstract

Criminologists have long looked at the relatives of people who offend to understand their conduct, notably to understand how they eventually desist from crime. Though no consensus has been reached concerning the mechanisms of social influence, they have agreed that those who love and care for offenders have the power to restrain offending, to the extent that they endorse a *prosocial* orientation (Cullen, 1994; Giordano, Cernkovich, Rudolph, 2002; Hirschi, 1969; Sampson & Laub, 1993; Sutherland, 1947). Research has given support to many of their propositions, and relatives are now routinely integrated into theories of crime and desistance. However, to date, these works have had little to say about these influential actors. What are the consequences of being in a relationship with someone who acts unlawfully? How is one's personal experience affected by this conduct? As a matter of fact, a small but burgeoning literature about offenders' relatives suggests that their experiences are also shaped in significant ways as they maintain relationships with someone who breaks the law (Condry, 2007; Christian & Kennedy, 2011). As opposed to the premise upon which desistance research rests, however, it is the *antisocial* orientation of those who offend that affects them.

Combining insights from these two scholarships, this thesis argues that both offenders and their prosocial relatives are influenced by their relationship to one another, and that this influence specifically occurs at the confluence of the prosocial and the antisocial. It is further proposed that because it is simultaneously tainted by offending of one of its members—a conduct that breaches well-known moral norms—and by the prosocial orientation of the other, this social bond is likely to generate ambivalence.

This thesis is dedicated to individuals who navigate this antithetical universe where conventions and law-breaking commingle. Specifically, it seeks to examine the ambivalence hypothesis among both offenders and the prosocial individuals who care for them. Empirically, this endeavour is carried out through a multiple methods design composed of two independent, yet connected, studies. The qualitative component first examines ambivalence among prosocial relatives through data from semi-directed interviews conducted with 18 individuals who support someone who has offended. Second, the quantitative piece relies on a

quantitative dataset containing information on 1,318 individuals who have received a sentence in the province of Québec, Canada in order to analyze ambivalence among those who break the law.

Findings from qualitative analyses suggest that being related to someone who offends is an experience that often generates ambivalence. In order to decrease that tense state, participants employ a series of strategies, which, when effective, allow them to maintain their relationship with the person who had acted unlawfully. Quantitative analyses, for their part, suggest that ambivalence among those who offend emerges from heterogeneous social environments that exist somewhere between the prosocial and the antisocial. The implications of these findings are explored.

Keywords: Offenders, Relatives, Ambivalence, Attitudes, Tolerance, Social bonds, Social influence

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List of Acronyms

QCS: Quebec's Correctional Services

AA: Alcoholics Anonymous

GA: Gamblers Anonymous

Susanna: *I'm ambivalent. In fact, that's my new favourite word.*

Dr. Wick: *Do you know what that means, ambivalence?*

Susanna: *I don't care.*

Dr. Wick: *If it's your favourite word, I would've thought you would…*

Susanna: *It *means* I don't care. That's what it means.*

Dr. Wick: *On the contrary, Susanna. Ambivalence suggests strong feelings—in opposition. The prefix, an in "ambidextrous," means "both." The rest of it, in Latin, means "vigour." The word suggests that you are torn between two opposing courses of action.*

Susanna: *Will I stay or will I go?*

Dr. Wick: *Am I sane… or, am I crazy?*

Susanna: *Those aren't courses of action.*

Dr. Wick: *They can be, dear—for some.*

Susanna: *Well, then, it's the wrong word.*

Dr. Wick: *No. I think it's perfect.*

-Girl, Interrupted
1999

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Introduction

This thesis is about the people who engage in offending and those who care about them. It is about the ways in which each of them are changed through their relationship with one another. At its heart, this thesis is about the ambivalence that emerges from their social connection. It is about the good, the bad, and everything in between. It is about the 'yes-buts,' the pushes and pulls inherent to the bonds that tie these two groups together. This thesis is about the greyness of their social life that unravels at the confluence of the prosocial and the antisocial.

As I have worked on this thesis, I have had the chance to meet and get to know a group of people who support—or at least try to support—someone who has broken the law. These mothers, fathers, sisters, lovers, friends, and extended family members were seeking refuge at *Relais Famille*, a community organization that provides services and help to anyone who lived through a similar situation. Although their experiences varied in countless ways, one particular element brought them together: a loved one's offending. As a volunteer in that support group, my role was not that of a researcher, but rather to help maintain the smooth functioning of the offered activities.

Ever since the beginning of my studies in criminology, I have been a student of crime: my interests have revolved around those who engage in it and the reasons, motivations, and attractions that lead them to do so. In parallel, I have been particularly interested in understanding why and how most of them eventually desist from crime, a feature of offending trajectories that is now well known (Gottfredson & Hirschi, 1990; Laub & Sampson, 2003; National Research Council, 1986). I have become acquainted with the ideas of control theorists who have taught me that conformity is favoured when one's relatives[1] bond her or him to 'conventional' institutions (Hirschi, 1969; Sampson & Laub, 1993). Social learning theories led me to understand that law-abiding conduct is learned through social interactions with individuals who are largely unfavourable to crime, and who endorse prosocial identities (Akers, 1973; Giordano, Cernkovich, & Rudolph, 2002; Sutherland, 1947). In Cullen's (1994)

[1] In this thesis, relatives are understood in a broad sense, one that extends beyond traditional kinship. In line with previous research on relatives that have relied on a similar definition (Christian, Martinez, & Martinez, 2015), it not only includes parents and members from the larger family, but also romantic partners, and friends. In sum, it encompasses all social ties that have been at the heart of the social theories of crime and desistance.

writings, I saw that these processes of control and learning are underlined by social support: the relatives of those who offend act as a key institution of crime reduction by providing instrumental and expressive support. Through my doctoral trajectory, I have quantitatively tested several of these ideas, though I rarely felt I was bringing much new insight to what had already been said and done. A piece was missing in this puzzle of social influence, one that was brought to light as I interacted with the relatives of those who break the law.

At that point, I understood quite lucidly that the relatives of individuals who offend play an important role in constraining their conduct. As a matter of fact, it was through their prosocial[2] orientation that these individuals acted as agents of social influence, and that they could promote desistance. Although I had internalized that knowledge, my involvement in the activities of *Relais Famille* made me realize how little I had actually learned about these influential people. Who were they? What were their experiences like? As I discovered a parallel body of work, I learned that many of these people endure a plethora of emotional, social, and financial hardships because of their close connection with someone who breaks the law (Braman, 2004; Codd, 2007; Comfort, 2008; Condry, 2007; Davis, 1992; Fishman, 1990; Granja, 2016; Johnson and Easterling, 2015; Morris, 1965). Delving further into this literature, I realized that these relatives were not mere receptacles for various forms of trouble—they adapted, accommodating through a variety of means to adversities. In sum, they were changed in fundamental ways by their relationship with someone who had offended.

What I had read in these works slowly came to life through my interactions and conversations with the members of *Relais Famille*. They, too, told me about the costs of visiting their partner in prison, and the angst they felt as their daughter served a sentence in a universe alien to them. At the same time, they talked about the strong emotional connection that tied them to these people and the love that defined their relationship. Intertwined in this sharing, these relatives described the strategies they employed to manage the hard times, while focusing on the positives. Mirroring the ideas proposed by social control, social learning, and social support theorists, it became clear that these people were also influenced in significant

[2] The term *prosocial* is not intended to imply any moral or normative judgment. Rather, it has been chosen to describe individuals who are not involved in offending actions, and who largely endorse social and moral norms.

ways by their relationship with a loved one who offended. In opposition to the propositions of these seminal theories, however, it was the antisocial orientation of those who acted illegally that shaped their experiences.

This thesis is dedicated to the two groups of people that have now become central to my research interests: the people who offend and their prosocial relatives. More specifically, I am interested in how each party is affected as they maintain a significant relationship with one another. As I have been inspired by insights from both classical criminology (Matza, 1964; Sutherland, 1947) and the literature about relatives, I understand this bidirectional influence as operating in a social space that exists at the confluence of the prosocial and the antisocial.

Extending this foundational premise and grounded in a view of crime as moral action (Parsons, 1951; Wikström, 2010), I propose that, because it transgresses well-known moral norms, offending is likely to generate ambivalence. In this thesis, I apprehend this concept as a state of internal conflict in which positive and negative feelings and/or attitudes toward the same object simultaneously coexist (Weingardt, 2000). This experience of bipolarity is particularly probable when the antisocial nature of that conduct and of its perpetrator is set against the prosocial orientation of a significant other. As such, ambivalence is likely to emerge when offending taints a relationship between someone who offends and a prosocial relative. Although they are differentially related to the unlawful conduct—one being its perpetrator, the other its audience—I argue that both groups are susceptible to this state of internal conflict.

The research endeavour on which I embark is entirely driven by my desire to understand what happens within individuals who come to navigate at the point of convergence between the prosocial and the antisocial. Specifically, I seek to evaluate the ambivalence hypothesis among both the people who offend and their prosocial relatives. To begin this quest, Chapter 1 presents the two scholarships that I have mobilized to develop this central proposition. Because they have focused on the role of relatives in fostering desistance for several decades, I begin by reviewing the main social theories of crime and desistance: social control, social learning, and social support. Doing so, I pay special attention to two elements. First, I examine how each theory understands desistance as being promoted by the prosocial orientation of the relatives of those who offend. Second, I focus on how they conceive of these

conventional individuals. As will be argued, though they have been imbued with influential powers over the conduct of those who break the law, to date, little attention has been paid to their particular experiences. To palliate this shortcoming, I end Chapter 1 by reviewing the literature about relatives. As I integrate findings from this small but burgeoning body of work, I posit that the experiences of relatives are also significantly shaped by their relationship with someone who offends. I further argue that it is specifically the antisocial orientation of offense perpetrators that foster such influence.

I begin Chapter 2 by arguing that, although they have evolved separately, these two literatures are inextricably connected. Combining their findings, I develop the basic premise upon which this thesis rests. Indeed, I posit that the experiences of both individuals who break the law and their prosocial relatives are shaped by their relationship with one another, which unfolds at the confluence of the prosocial and the antisocial. From there, I present the conceptions of crime and normative socialization upon which my thinking rests, and explain how they relate to ambivalence. The remainder of this chapter is dedicated to ambivalence, and focuses on the theoretical framework that guides this thesis. The ambivalence hypothesis, and the specific research question examined in the analytical components of my project are presented as a conclusive statement.

In the methods Chapter, I enter into a reflexive discussion about how I became interested in the notion of ambivalence, and in its role in the experiences of individuals who offend and their prosocial relatives. As hinted at in the beginning of this Introduction, this process evolved over my academic and personal trajectories, which have both been interspersed with serendipitous internal pressures and external events. While I openly share these elements, I pay particular attention to the ways by which these elements have not only shaped my understanding of social relationships, influence, and subjective experience, but also directed the methodological strategy used in this project. Indeed, I explain how my research approach has morphed into a multiple methods design (Morse, 2009; Morse & Maddox, 2013), once I met the relatives from *Relais Famille*. Chapter 3 further explores how my preliminary analyses of their narratives abductively led me to think about ambivalence, promoting the development of the theoretical thrust of this entire research endeavour. Although my multiple methods design is composed of two independent studies—one

qualitative and one quantitative—both are inextricably connected as they follow that same overall thrust and seek to assess the same hypothesis.

I pursue Chapter 3 with a presentation of the two components that make up my entire research project. First, the ambivalence hypothesis is assessed among prosocial relatives using data collected through qualitative interviews I conducted with 18 individuals who love and care for someone who has offended. Second, as I seek to examine the value of the ambivalence hypothesis among those who offend, I rely on a quantitative dataset containing information on 1,318 men and women who received a sentence in the province of Quebec between the 1st of April, 2010, and the 31st of March, 2013. The respective strengths and limits of these two datasets are presented, along with the advantages of multiple methods design, and its pertinence in the context of the present thesis.

Results from the qualitative study are presented in Chapters 4 and 5. In the first of these, I focus on the emergence of ambivalence among the relatives who generously took part in this study. The analysis begins by examining the daily roles participants fulfilled in their relational context, as I study what it means to be related to someone who has offended. The analysis of relatives' impacts on the demeanour of the person who offends put certain claims of social control theory into perspective, an idea that is further examined in the Conclusion of this thesis. In the second part of Chapter 4, I analyze how the positive and negative aspects of the relationships binding participants together with their loved one confront one another, an experience that can best be described as ambivalence. In Chapter 5, I take advantage of the richness of the qualitative data and examine the outcomes of this experience among those who love and care for individuals who offend. The analysis suggests that participants handle the contradictions inherent to their ambivalence by employing various strategies, which I described at length over the remainder of the Chapter.

I turn to the assessment of the ambivalence hypothesis among those who offend in Chapter 6. To set the stage for the analyses, I begin by presenting the prevalence of ambivalence—defined as the adherence to attitudes that are simultaneous favourable to offending *and* to conventions—among this group. Though not experienced by the majority, a non-negligible portion of individuals from the quantitative sample report being ambivalent. The last part of this chapter focuses on the interpersonal sources of ambivalence. A

multinomial regression model delves into how maintaining relationships with prosocially- and/or antisocially-oriented individuals affects the likelihood that individuals who offend will experience ambivalence.

In the Conclusion, I begin by presenting a narrative summary of results in which I integrate findings from both the qualitative and quantitative components of this multiple methods project. Doing so, I pay special attention to how these results relate to the theoretical ideas that form the backdrop of this thesis. Taking advantage of the independent nature of the two studies, I then enter into specific discussions about the implications of their findings for their respective literatures. I first review how the qualitative findings relate to the social theories of crime and desistance, and argue that the experiences of prosocial relatives are important in understanding how they affect the people who offend. Notably, I unveil an unexpected outcome of ambivalence among relatives, and discuss its potential consequences on social influence. Second, I explore the potential implications of the quantitative findings for individuals who break the law, and discuss the potential pertinence of the ambivalence concept for criminology. This conclusive chapter lastly explores the larger theoretical, policy, and practical implications of ambivalence.

Chapter 1

Social Influence between Individuals Who Offend and their Prosocial Relatives

At its most general level, this thesis focuses on the social influence that operates between individuals who engage in unlawful actions and their prosocial relatives. More specifically, it seeks to comprehend how both parties are affected by being in a relationship that exists at the confluence of conventions and norm-breaking. The current chapter begins by presenting the scholarship upon which this endeavour rests. As they have imbued prosocial relatives with influential power over the conduct of those who offend, the main social theories of crime and desistance—social control, social learning and social support—are a natural starting point. Over the following pages, the ideas they have put forth will be reviewed, paying special attention to the way they have theoretically and empirically treated these influential people. Arguing that this literature has left its readers with a very limited knowledge *of* these relatives, who purportedly act as 'controller,' 'teacher' or 'supporter,' the last section presents a small but burgeoning body of research specifically focusing on the experiences of these individuals. Together, findings from these two scholarships suggest that both groups are influenced through their relationships with one another. The importance and pertinence of this proposition is described in Chapter 2 and thoroughly analyzed in the following chapters of this thesis.

The Social Theories of Crime and Desistance

The relatives of individuals who act illegally have repeatedly been portrayed as key players in their conduct (Burgess & Akers, 1966; Cernkovich & Giordano, 1987; Cullen, 1994; Giordano, Cernkovich, & Rudolph, 2002; Hirschi, 1969; Sampson & Laub, 1993; Sutherland, 1947). While different kinds of relationships have been studied, the prosocial individuals who constitute the social milieu of offense perpetrators have been posited as central in fostering law-abiding conduct or facilitating the desistance process. Of course, scholars have tended to remain entrenched in the confines of their theoretical schools, and have thus focused on specific mechanisms of social influence by which the termination of illegal actions is promoted. For instance, while social control theorists argue that social bonds can constrain law-breaking actions by fostering strong attachment to conventional society (Hirschi, 1969; Sampson & Laub, 1993), social learning theorists postulate that they foster law-abiding actions by teaching prosocial definitions, by showing the ways and means to act conventionally, and by providing guidance toward a law-abiding identity (Akers, 1973;

Giordano et al., 2002). Importantly, these theories rest on distinctive views of human nature, which have not only directed their focus, but also shaped the mechanisms of social influence they put forth. While providing an extensive review of that literature is beyond the scope of this thesis, the next pages present the main social theories of crime and desistance, emphasizing their pertinence for this thesis.

Social Control Theories

Social control theories are grounded in a Hobbesian view of human nature: as a species, we are inherently drawn toward profit and pleasure and will seek these desires at any cost (Hirschi, 1969; Hobbes, 1957). As such, no special motivation underlies deviance, and offending thus requires no explanation. In contrast, the question that deserves attention is: "Why do men obey the rules of society?" (Hirschi, 1969, pp. 4–5). The answer to that question, according to social control theorists, was long ago sketched out by Durkheim (1961), who argued that: "We are moral beings to the extent that we are social beings" (p. 64). In other words, our innate evil tendencies can only be constrained when we are strongly bonded to society. Deviance is therefore the outcome of weak or broken social ties (Hirschi, 1969; Sampson & Laub, 1993). Going beyond the intuitive understanding of social control as a product of state repression (see Janowitz, 1975), social control scholars are particularly interested in the *informal* forms of social control, the ones "that emerge from the role reciprocities and structure of interpersonal bonds linking members of society to one another and to wider social institutions such as work, family, and school" (Sampson & Laub, 1993, p. 18). Two main theories have been especially significant in the criminological thinking on social influence and offending: Hirschi's (1969) social bond theory and Sampson and Laub's (1993) age-graded theory of informal social control (see also Laub & Sampson, 2003).

Hirschi's social bond theory

Although it is mainly concerned with the onset of offending conduct and as such mainly explores its occurrence among youths, Travis Hirschi's work deserves a place in this review. Indeed, some of his insights have generated controversy within the field of criminology, giving impetus to research on social control and crime. While his later work is

pertinent, this section focuses on his early scholarship as it touches more directly upon the role of relatives in constraining involvement in delinquency.

In line with other social control theories, social bond theory rests on the premise that an individual's bond to society acts as his or her main constraint against delinquency and deviance (Hirschi, 1969). For Hirschi, however, the most influential bond is the one that is forged during childhood through early socialization. Creating a link between an individual and the wider conventional society, this bond is composed of four elements: attachment, commitment, involvement, and belief.

The first element, attachment, refers to individuals' emotional attachment to conventional 'others,' most importantly parents, school, and peers, and specifically, the extent to which they care about their opinions. Because these prosocial individuals have "internalized the norms of society" (Hirschi, 1969, p. 18), engaging in deviant acts is equivalent to acting against their expectations. In sum, individuals who care about others and their opinion will refrain from deviance. Commitment, the second element of the social bond, refers to individuals' personal investments in conventional lines of action. When they are committed, norm-breaking is perceived as risky, as it could result in important losses and costs. High investments in conventional society thus foster law-abiding conduct. Thirdly, Hirschi (1969) described involvement as "engrossment in conventional activities" (p. 22) and, along the lines of conventional wisdom, argued that busy people simply have little time to engage in deviant endeavours. The fourth and final element that binds people to conventional society, belief, represents the extent to which people believe in the moral validity of the rules of society, and thus that they should abide by them.

Support for social bond theory

Using data from the Richmond Youth Project, which contained information from official records and a self-reported questionnaire, Hirschi (1969) found considerable bivariate support for his propositions. While some indicators of the social bond were not associated with delinquency, youths who reported caring about their teacher's opinion, who were committed to achieving academic and professional goals, and who believed in society's norms engaged in fewer acts of deviance. Re-analyses of this data have alternatively questioned the

validity and strength of these findings (Greenberg, 1999; Matsueda, 1982), while also supporting some of Hirschi's original claims (Costello & Vowell, 1999).

This shift between support and rejection of social bond theory is somewhat representative of the state of its empirical validity in the literature. While numerous studies have supported its specific propositions, the literature has been described as disconnected (Kempf, 1993). Notably, few tests have included all four elements of the social bond (e.g., Agnew, 1991), thus making it hard to reach an unequivocal conclusion about the theory as a whole. Perhaps unsurprisingly, attachment has received the most empirical attention and support, particularly attachment of youths to their parents (Cernkovich & Giordano, 1987; Hoeve et al., 2012; Wiatrowski, Griswold, & Roberts, 1981). By contrast, involvement in conventional activities has been subjected to less scrutiny. Though it has been found to have a smaller impact on delinquency than what Hirschi originally claimed (Kempf, 1993; Wiatrowski et al., 1981), findings suggest that this might depend on the type of conventional activity under study (Agnew & Petersen, 1989; Booth, Farrell, & Varano, 2008; Osgood, Wilson, O'Malley, Bachman, & Johnston, 1996). Research on the impact of commitment on delinquency have relied on a plethora of measures, some of which overlap with the other elements of the social bond, such as involvement. Overall, commitment has been found to be moderately related to delinquency (Agnew, 1991; Krohn & Massey, 1980). While support has generally been found for Hirschi's assertion concerning belief (Gardner & Shoemaker, 1989; Junger & Marshall, 1997; Li, 2004; Payne & Salotti, 2007; Wright, Cullen, & Miller, 2001), several authors have noted the similarities between this element of the social bond and other theoretical constructs such as Sutherland's (1947) definitions (Payne & Salotti, 2007). Because of this, it has been difficult to ascertain whether support for the impact of belief on delinquency should be considered as support for social bond theory or for other theories such as differential association (Matsueda, 1997).

Of particular interest for this thesis, the bulk of this work has measured norm-breaking and the elements of the social bond through self-report and arrest data (Kempf, 1993). As will be argued below, the reliance on an operationalization strategy that focuses exclusively on the person being 'socially bonded' might overshadow the specific ways by which 'social bonders' actually influence them. While not designed or intended to evaluate Hirschi's social bond

theory, some studies in the broader parenting literature have included parents as informants. In a recent meta-analysis, Hoeve et al. (2012) found that effect sizes of the association between parenting practices and delinquency depended on whether the data was gathered from the child or her/his parents. Even in that field, however, the vast majority of studies—close to 70%—relied strictly on children's self-reports. The authors argued that their findings should be taken seriously and encouraged future research to include both sources of information (for an example considering the impact of parental monitoring on delinquency through both groups of informants, see Stattin & Kerr, 2000).

Sampson and Laub's age-graded theory of informal social control

From the outset, Sampson and Laub (1993) acknowledge the 'fact' that age and crime are inextricably related: after reaching its peak during the adolescence period, offending conduct steadily declines. Moreover, people who engage in more acts of delinquency in their youth will also be the ones who engage in more such acts during adulthood. For these authors, the correlation between past and future involvement in an illegal conduct is partly attributable to state-dependence: criminal involvement acts as its own cause. For instance, crime interferes with the likelihood of both attaining conventional success, and creating social connections with conventional others, which in turn increases the chances of criminal persistence. This argument of cumulative disadvantages is not intended to suggest a dire and hopeless future for adults who have been engaged in high rates of delinquency during their youth. On the contrary, changes in trajectories of offending occur as individuals experience adult transitions, known as turning points, such as marriage, employment, and the military, which foster the development of new, prosocial adult social bonds.

Extending Hirschi's (1969) ideas by allowing social ties to vary over time, but staying in line with the Hobbesian view of human nature, these adult social connections act as informal sources of control, which in turn reduce criminal involvement. Specifically, they provide individuals with resources that can be mobilized to move toward a conventional lifestyle. As they slowly benefit from the perks associated with acting in accordance with society's norms, people refrain from deviating. As a response to criticisms of their previous work (Giordano et al., 2002; Maruna, 2001), and to better account for some of their new findings, the authors later offered a revised version of their theory (Laub & Sampson, 2003).

While the core proposition remained identical, the authors now acknowledged the importance of other causal factors, namely structured routine activities and human agency.

Support for the age-graded theory of informal social control

Sampson and Laub's life-course take on social control has propelled the development of a rich body of empirical work. In their own re-analysis of the Gluecks' data (Glueck & Glueck, 1950), the authors found that above and beyond differences in childhood experiences, both marital attachment and job stability significantly reduced recidivism. The more individuals were attached to these informal sources of social control, the less the Glueck men were likely to pursue their involvement in illicit activities. These findings not only suggest that changes in social ties do occur over one's life-course, but also that they can constrain conduct and foster conformity. Expanding the Gluecks' data with official criminal and death records, as well as with over fifty life-history interviews, Laub and Sampson (2003) found further support for their theory. While interviewees described multiple pathways to desistance and highlighted different turning points, the general process underlying each of them was the same. The Gluecks men essentially highlighted the mechanism of informal social control that was central to Sampson and Laub's life-course theory.

Numerous additional studies have assessed the theory's claims, providing particular support for the role of marriage and employment in desistance. King, Massoglia and Macmillan (2007) for instance found that marriage decreased male offending, even after controlling for individual differences in propensity to marry. Research further suggests that marriage may exert its magic even when there are only short-terms modifications in life circumstances. Indeed, Horney, Osgood, and Marshall (1995) found that the men from their sample were less likely to engage in violent offenses during months when they were living with their wife than when they had other living arrangements. Doherty and Ensminger (2013) found a similar phenomenon in a sample of disadvantaged African-American males. Research looking into the specificities of marital relationships has found that this form of social bond most promotes desistance when it is stable (Farrington & West, 1995) and of good quality (Laub, Nagin, & Sampson, 1998). The prosocial nature of these relationships is also particularly important in promoting the termination of offending. Indeed, desistance was found to be most probably when one's wife was not herself involved in offending (S. H. Andersen,

Andersen, & Skov, 2015; Simons, Stewart, Gordon, Conger, & Elder, 2002), and when her brother(s) was/were not involved in such conduct either (Andersen, 2017).

In nuancing these studies, a non-negligible body of work suggests that marriage might have varying effects on the likelihood of offending. For instance, Mackenzie and Li (2002) suggest that its influence might depend on individuals' age, on the nature of their romantic relationship, and on the type of offending in which they take part. Indeed, the authors found that living with a spouse decreased non-drug related offending, but only for younger individuals. Conversely, living with a partner, as opposed to living with a spouse, increased that form of offending. Finally, their results suggest that cohabiting with any romantic partner does not significantly affect engagement in drug-related crimes. Similar relationship-specific results were presented by Horney and her colleagues (1995), though in their study, living with a partner increased males' likelihood of engaging in drug offenses. Together, these findings highlight the societal changes that have occurred since the Gluecks' original work was conducted as far as the propensity to get married goes. Researchers have been concerned with this, particularly with the trends toward postponement of marriage, the increased rates of divorce and remarriages, and the higher occurrence of cohabitation with romantic partners that are not spouses (Giordano et al., 2002; R. D. King et al., 2007), and how these affect the mechanisms of informal social control.

Gender is another important factor that has attracted the attention of researchers trying to understand the impact of romantic relationships on offending. In line with authors who argue in favour of gender-specific theories of crime (e.g., see Steffensmeier & Allan, 1996), several studies have found that marriage and/or romantic relationships exert a different influence on women than on men. In a quantitative study conducted on a sample of 236 males and females, Simons, Stewart, Gordon, Conger, and Elder (2002) found that while the quality of romantic relationship was significantly associated with criminal conduct among females, it was not among males. In contrast, Alarid, Burton, and Cullen (2000) found that while being married or in a relationship with a romantic partner did not influence males' involvement in crime, it increased females'. Through qualitative interviews conducted with fourteen young men and women, Abrams and Tam (2018) similarly found that romantic relationships were considerably more supportive of desistance for males than they were for females. Indeed, as

opposed to their male counterparts, the romantic partners of females were often associated with gangs and/or involved in criminal endeavours, and by extension, the support they provided was unreliable. While the authors interpreted this finding as a gender-specific effect, it might also actually be in line with previous findings suggesting that romantic relationships foster desistance when they are of good quality (Laub et al., 1998), and when the romantic partner is not involved in illegal activities (Andersen et al., 2015).

The idea that romantic relationships play a similar role on conformity/offending among individuals of both genders was highlighted by several studies (Bersani, Laub, & Nieuwbeerta, 2009; Doherty & Ensminger, 2013; R. D. King et al., 2007), and is reflected in research conducted by Peggy C. Giordano and her colleagues over the past 40 years (Giordano, 2016). Indeed, their research suggests that the mechanisms of desistance are similar across genders (Giordano et al., 2002). This view is in line with Leverentz's (2006), who found that women who offend tend to maintain relationships with men or women who are also involved in illegal activities and/or who have substance-use difficulties. While some of these relationships were at times positive and helped women along their desistance process, Leverentz found that these romantic social bonds often have destructive effects. Together, these results invalidate the proposition of a gender-specific 'marriage effect.' Indeed, they suggest that women's romantic relationships do not inherently foster persistence. Rather, it is the complex and often problematic nature of the relationships of many women that hinders the desistance process. In sum, this body of work generally supports Sampson and Laub's (1993) view that, under the right, prosocial circumstances, romantic relationships affect one's likelihood of engaging in offending actions.

Research suggests the existence of a similarly complex relationship between work and offending/desistance. While some have found that having a good and stable job decreases involvement in offending (Kruttschnitt, Uggen, & Shelton, 2000; Shover, 1996), others found that this effect varies over the life course. Uggen's (2000) findings for instance suggest that while individuals over the age of twenty-six significantly benefited from being assigned to a supported work program, their younger counterparts did not. Although these findings lend support to Sampson and Laub's (1993) theory by suggesting that employment is an important turning point for adults, opposite results were reported by Mackenzie and Li (2002). In their

study, people between the ages of 20 and 30 who were employed had lower rates of participation in non-drug offending than those without a job. The reverse was true among older study participants: although their rates were generally below the sample average, individuals aged 30 and above who were employed engaged in non-drug related crimes at higher rates than their unemployed counterparts.

The effect of work on offending has also been found to vary according to offense type. In their study of the short-term effects of life circumstances, Horney and colleagues (1995) found that work increased the likelihood of involvement in one specific form of crime: property offenses. The idea that work exerts offense-specific impacts was also found by Piquero, Brame, Mazerolle, and Haapanen (2002). While individuals who had full-time employment and were married had lower rates of arrest for nonviolent offenses, these social ties did not affect rates of arrest for violent crimes. Although findings have been inconsistent, research has generally supported the notion that changes in social bonds over the life course induce changes in offending. As argued by Laub and colleagues (2009), however, "caution is warranted about generalizability across all subgroups and all crime types" (p. 320).

The measurement of control

As was the case in studies assessing Hirschi's social bond theory, much of the data used to evaluate Sampson and Laub's (1993) theory of informal social control is gathered from the viewpoint of the 'controlled.' Of all the studies reviewed in the previous section, the majority were based on first-hand data from these 'target' individuals (Abrams & Tam, 2018; Alarid et al., 2000; Bersani & Doherty, 2013; Horney et al., 1995; R. D. King et al., 2007; Mackenzie & Li, 2002; Uggen, 2000), or used data extracted from official documents such as criminal records, large-scale administrative data, and pre-sentencing reports (Andersen, 2017; Andersen et al., 2015; Bersani et al., 2009; Kruttschnitt et al., 2000; Piquero et al., 2002). Some of the cited research included both self-, and official reports (Doherty & Ensminger, 2013; Giordano et al., 2002).

Interestingly, however, four of these studies included other sources of information. First, in addition to conducting interviews with their main participants, the Gluecks' research team interviewed their parents and teachers (Glueck & Glueck, 1950). These supplementary

sources of information were included to “obtain information about the home atmosphere, family finances, family background, and genealogy, as well as the boy’s developmental health history and his leisure-time habits” (Sampson & Laub, 1993, p. 49), and to “determine how the delinquents and non-delinquents behaved in school during their most recent school year” (Glueck & Glueck, 1950, p. 51; as cited in Sampson & Laub, 1993, p. 49). While the inclusion of multiple informants is certainly commendable, this strategy still principally aimed at gathering the most valid information possible on ‘target’ participants. A similar use of additional informants was employed in the Cambridge Study in Delinquent Development (Farrington & West, 1995). Originally established by West (1969), the data from this study was collected with a specific view of informants and the way they should be used, one that is well captured by Farrington, Ohlin and Wilson (1986): “Data about crime should include arrest reports, self-reports, and (to the extent possible) the reports of peers, parents and teachers. Moreover, these reports should focus not only on crime and delinquency, but other measures of misconduct like truancy, drug and alcohol use, problems at school, etc.” (p. 18-19). The idea that ‘informants’ act as a means to validate the information reported by primary ‘targets’ is particularly salient in the description of their data collection procedure (Farrington, 1999). While interviewers were instructed to explore some specific pre-established themes in the interviews with the youths’ parents, they were allowed some flexibility and could undertake a more unstructured interview. The information thus collected has been described as being “too subjective” (Farrington, 1999, p. v) and of little use since few objective measures could be derived from it.

The methodological strategies used in studies of social control are important to review, as they underscore the field’s general position vis-à-vis the relatives of people who offend, as well as the kind of interest it has in this group. So far, we have seen that when data is collected from their viewpoint, it is mainly a means to validate the information pertaining to the person how has offended, particularly when these ‘targets’ are youths. However, two of the studies reviewed above included additional informants and focused on an adult or young-adult population. First, in addition to their interviews with “236 target young adults,” Simons and colleagues (2002, p. 410) interviewed all of their romantic partners and videotaped the couples as they interacted. The goal of these additional data sources was to measure the partners’

offending from their own perspective, as opposed to gathering that information from the 'targets,' and to obtain objective measures of the quality of romantic relationships. Similarly, Leverentz (2006, 2014) interviewed the relatives of some of the women who were the main focus of her study. While she does not offer a detailed description of the specific aim of these interviews, she mobilized their content to analyze the relational context of the women. To be sure, including secondary sources in any research project is an important addition that can provide invaluable information. However, these empirical strategies remain focused on those who engage in offending, and informants largely serve to collect information on them through someone else's eyes. As will be argued below, learning more about the actual experiences of these 'secondary sources' is an interesting avenue forward.

Challenges to Sampson and Laub's informal social control theory

Several scholars have raised questions concerning the validity of Sampson and Laub's (1993) theory. In line with observations made by life-course theorists (e.g., Shanahan, 2000), some authors have argued that cohort and historical period effects may explain some of the findings among the Gluecks' men (Giordano et al., 2002; King et al., 2007). In addition to the changes in marriage trends that have occurred since the 1970s, which were raised above, important changes in the availability and nature of employment have also been noted (Giordano et al., 2002). Others have questioned Laub and Sampson's use of the concept of agency, and wondered about the extent of individual capacities and choices, in a context of informal social control (Maruna, 2001). For their part, Gottfredson and Hirschi (1990) have argued that offending conduct among adults is the outcome of self-selection: individuals with low levels of self-control are simply more likely to select environments that will foster more offending. Studies have since lent support to an encompassing view, which suggests that both self-control and social relationships influence offending/desistance (Doherty, 2006; Wright, Caspi, Moffitt, & Silva, 1999, 2001).

These theoretical confrontations, and the support each side has been able to muster, suggest that the social mechanisms that underlie crime and desistance are still not fully understood, or, that these mechanisms are more complex than any one theory assumes. For instance, in addition to the palpable tension between self-control and social control theorists, scholars adhering to different views have also challenged Sampson and Laub's (1993)

postulates. Based on the well-known finding that befriending individuals who engage in delinquent actions is one of the strongest predictor of delinquency among adolescents (Warr, 2002), several have argued that while not central to the age-graded theory of informal social control, friendships continue to exert an important influence on individuals well after adolescence (Giordano, Cernkovich, & Holland, 2003; Weaver, 2016). In line with this, Warr (1998) found that romantic relationships foster changes in one's illicit endeavours because they promote changes in peer relationships. In a similar vein, Wright and Cullen (2004) explored the relationship between employment and offending and found that the crime-reducing effects of work were largely attributable to the creation of relationships with 'conventional' coworkers. In turn, these new social ties changed existing friendship networks and decreased time spent with friends who engage in illicit activities. In and of themselves, such findings do not entirely invalidate Sampson and Laub's claims: settling in a romantic relation and finding work remain important turning points that turn people away from deviance. However, they lead to a different interpretation of the mechanisms by which one's social relationships influence one's actions. Indeed, rather than direct social control, it might actually be changes in social learning processes that account for the role of marriage/romance and conventional work on offending. These 'peer mechanisms' are central to social learning theories of crime, to which we now turn our attention.

Social Learning Theories

Grounded in ideas borrowed from symbolic interactionism, both Sutherland's differential association theory and view of human nature significantly departs from that of social control theorists. Indeed, whereas the latter considered humans as naturally drawn toward deviance, differential association theory starts from the premise that all human action is learned through social interactions. Although differential association theory is often understood as a theory of peer influence, this is not the sole type of influence it considers. As a matter of fact, learning is postulated to occur within primary groups, which effectively include friends, but also other important types of social ties such as family.

According to Sutherland (1947), associations exert different levels of influence on one's conduct. The most influential are those that are formed earlier, last longer, take up more

of one's time, and involve more intimately-linked people. It is when these modalities of association (priority, duration, frequency, and intensity) converge that individuals are most likely to learn from their social interactions. Sutherland further posits that two elements are learned with regard to offending: (1) the specific techniques to engage in such conduct; and (2) the definitions that are favourable and unfavourable to it. The mechanism by which learning such definitions leads to offending conduct is encapsulated in the theory's eponymous principle of differential association. Simply put, the likelihood of illegal action depends on the ratio of definitions learned from one's relatives: it is most likely to occur when definitions favourable to law violation exceed definitions unfavourable to it.

In the decades following the publication of his differential association theory, Sutherland's ideas were integrated into what is now formally known as social learning theory (Akers, 1973; Burgess and Akers, 1966). While differential association theory was intended to study the onset of offending conduct, Akers' (1973) view is intended to be general in scope: it not only seeks to explain how people initially engage and then persist in illegal and deviant conduct, but also how they eventually desist from it. On the flip side, social learning theory can also be used to explain how individuals rather engage in conformist courses of action over their life course (Akers & Jensen, 2009).

Integrating the concept of operant conditioning into Sutherland's ideas, Akers' theory asserts that learning occurs through four main mechanisms: differential association, definitions, differential reinforcement, and imitation. Together, the four social learning concepts form a single underlying process, which is captured in the following sentence:

> *The probability that persons will engage in criminal and deviant behavior is increased and the probability of their conforming to the norm is decreased when they differentially associate with others who commit criminal behavior and espouse definitions favorable to it, are relatively more exposed in-person or symbolically to salient criminal/deviant models, define it as desirable or justified in a situation discriminative for the behavior, and have received in the past and anticipate in the current or future situation relatively greater reward than punishment for the behaviour. The probability of conforming behavior is increased and the probability of deviant behavior is decreased when the balance of these variables moves in the reverse direction (Akers, 2017, p. 50).*

To this day, social learning theory remains one of the most tested theories in criminology. In fact, it has attracted so much attention that most students of criminology today

'know' Sutherland's work through Akers' propositions. While the notion of normative socialization has remained largely unchanged, the nature of some of Sutherland's insights has been somewhat altered with their integration into social learning theory. Tremblay (2010) has aptly noted that the notion of definitions and, by extension, the principle of differential association, have lost the nuances that Sutherland previously infused them with. Indeed, Akers has conceptualized the notion of definitions as individuals' orientations, norms, or attitudes toward given behaviours, which specifically refer to the extent to which they perceive such actions as being 'good' or 'bad,' 'right' or 'wrong,' or 'justified' or 'unjustified' (Akers, 2017). For social learning theory, it followed that people are more likely to engage in offending when their reference groups endorse more definitions that portray this type of action in a positive light than definitions that depict them negatively. However, in his work, Sutherland (1966) understood 'definitions favourable to offending' in a broader sense. For him, they encompassed all *choices*, which include social support, rejection, and abstention, made by the members of one's reference group that are favourable to the *people who offend*. In this sense, relatives' actions—notwithstanding the extent to which these individuals are prosocial in their attitudes and conduct—that fail to 'punish' the people who act unlawfully are 'favourable' to this type of conduct, or at least transmit the message that they are favourable to it. Differential association thus refers to the ratio of definitions that are favourable to those who offend and those that are unfavourable. Though it is unclear why they have been lost in the translation between Sutherland's and Akers' work, these ideas merit consideration as they offer yet another understanding of the role that relatives can play on the conduct of those who offend.

Support for social learning theory

In taking stock of the empirical status of social learning theory, Akers and Jensen (2009) have argued that "social learning theory is supported by the preponderance of empirical evidence" (pp. 44-45) and that support has been gathered for the four mechanisms of social learning. In fact, there has not only been "very little negative or counter evidence reported in the literature" (p. 48), but social learning theory's mechanisms generally account for more variance than other theoretical models. In addition to the numerous research reviews conducted by Akers (Akers, 2001, 2017; Akers & Jensen, 2009; Akers & Sellers, 2009), Pratt

and his colleagues (2010) recently conducted a meta-analysis of social learning theory. Based on 133 studies published between 1974 and 2003 that "deliberately intended to test the empirical validity of social learning or differential association theory" (Pratt et al., 2010, p. 773), and on 118,403 individual cases, results suggest empirical support is strong for some of its propositions. Both differential association and definitions were found to have robust effect sizes, lending support to the idea that they are important factors in offending and deviance. On the other hand, effect sizes for differential reinforcement were weak, and those for imitation were modest. The different treatment and attention received by the four propositions in the literature might partly explain this unequal support. As commented by Pratt et al. (2010), differential association and definitions "have appeared […] in tests of virtually all of the major individual-level theories of crime (e.g., tests of strain, self-control, social bond/social control theories)" (p. 788). Yet, others have argued that these differential findings may also reflect the relative unimportance of differential reinforcement in the explanation of learning (Haynie & Osgood, 2005).

While differential association and definitions tend to have general effects, in that they play a significant role in offending across different methodologies, the analyses conducted by Pratt and colleagues suggest that support for these concepts is not unqualified. For instance, gender was found to moderate the relationship between peers' attitudes and deviance/offending: the effect peers' attitudes had was weaker and insignificant in a sample comprised of both males and females. Analyses also highlighted the moderating role of age on differential association and definitions. Specifically, while peers' attitudes played no significant role in offending among samples of juveniles, it played a strong role in samples of young adults (aged 17 or under). On the other hand, the effect size of peers' behaviours, another common measure of differential association, was strongest among samples of juveniles and young adults. Concerning antisocial attitudes/definitions, they were insignificant predictors of delinquency in samples of juveniles. Finally, moderator analyses suggested that the effect size of definitions was stronger in cross-sectional studies than in longitudinal ones.

In spite of these moderating effects, results from Pratt et al.'s (2010) meta-analysis indicate that research has generally lent support to social learning theory. In fact, comparing this analysis with some of their previous work, the authors conclude that overall, "the mean

effects sizes of the differential association and definitions (or antisocial attitudes) are comparable in magnitude to self-control" (Pratt et al., 2010, pp. 787–788). While the research included in this analytical review has focused on the extent to which social learning promotes offending, desistance researchers, many of which have been cited above, have found similar support for its role in fostering desistance (Giordano et al., 2003, 2002; W. L. Johnson, Giordano, Manning, & Longmore, 2011; Leverentz, 2014; Warr, 1998; Weaver, 2016; J. P. Wright & Cullen, 2004).

Desistance and the social perspective on cognitive transformation

As Akers (1973) argued, one's relatives are not only important in teaching how to deviate and offend, but also in teaching how to conform. This proposition has interested many desistance researchers (Farrall & Bowling, 1999; Fortin-Dufour, Brassard, & Martel, 2015; Healy, 2013; S. King, 2014; LeBel, Burnett, Maruna, & Bushway, 2008; Maruna, 2001), but the social perspective on cognitive transformation developed by Giordano and her colleagues (Giordano, 2016; Giordano et al., 2003, 2002; W. L. Johnson et al., 2011) is conceivably the most thorough examination of these mechanisms of prosocial influence. While the interactionist perspective they embrace recognizes the importance of cognitive changes in the termination of offending, it simultaneously highlights the key role played by prosocial significant others in fostering such transformations. In accordance with Mead's symbolic interactionism, the authors argue that desistance is promoted through four types of cognitive shifts, most of which are aided by these prosocial bonds.

The first of these shifts is a cognitive openness to change: one needs to be ready to alter one's ways. This is not only a primordial step in the desistance process, it also helps explain why individuals exposed to catalysts for change sometimes fail to do so, a reality that social control and social learning theories can hardly account for. Second, one must be exposed to hooks for change toward which one holds a positive attitude. Similarly to what Sampson and Laub proposed, these hooks include social elements such as entering a relationship with a romantic partner and finding employment, but also include other types of hooks such as parenthood and friendships (Giordano et al., 2003). While they found that friends tend to exert less influence on adults than they do on youths, this hook was still important in the change process. Further work also highlighted the importance of relationships

with parents and other members of families of origin, particularly after the emotional mellowing that often occurs at the beginning of adulthood (W. L. Johnson et al., 2011). In line with learning theories, these hooks promote change by providing individuals with a blueprint on how to be a person who doesn't engage in offending anymore.

The third cognitive shift proposed by the social perspective on cognitive transformation is that one must contemplate a replacement self that will supersede the current one. Again, prosocial relationships play a key role in this step toward change, as they provide guidance in the construction of that new self and offer constant encouragements. Lastly, one’s attitudes toward deviance must change. Much like social learning theory, Giordano’s perspective assumes that people have motivations to engage in illegal actions. In this sense, attitudes are conceived as the capstone of the theory: desistance is said to be complete when one has ceased to view deviance in a positive light, a feat that is once again favoured by prosocial relatives.

While the original version of this cognitive perspective on desistance stipulated a precise sequencing of cognitive shifts and social influence (Giordano et al., 2002), subsequent empirical work has prompted Giordano to revise her take on temporality. Reflecting upon her work, she recently argued that “the idea of a series of steps is itself not all that helpful or accurate as a description of what occurs” (Giordano, 2016, p. 15). Instead, she proposes that these cognitive elements unfold simultaneously and mutually reinforce the process of desistance. Notwithstanding the precise unravelling of these elements, her work highlights how prosocial ties encourage the termination of offending conduct by showing desisters how to become law-abiding, conventional citizens through the endorsement of prosocial attitudes and identity.

The measurement of learning

Although numerous studies testing the validity of social learning theories have been conducted using samples of adults, the bulk of research has been completed with adolescent samples. Moreover, much like the methodological strategies used in studies of social control, these works have traditionally relied on survey data gathered from the point of view of the ‘learner.’ Recently, however, a few scholars have recognized the advantages of gathering

information on the 'mentors' from their own perspective. For instance, Haynie and Osgood (2005) have argued that because individuals tend to be poor judges of their friends' action and attitudes, such first-hand data is invaluable for strict tests of differential association. In line with this, Haynie has published a series of studies based on data from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health (Haynie, 2001, 2002; Haynie & Osgood, 2005). Much like Simons and colleagues' (2002) study presented above, this dataset contains network and offending data collected from the viewpoints of both 'target' youths and their peers. In their 2005 paper, Haynie and Osgood found that the peer-delinquency relationships is greatly reduced when peer offending is measured directly from that peer as opposed to when it is measured from the viewpoint of the 'target' individual. In her recent study on desistance, Weaver (2016; see also Weaver & McNeill, 2015) similarly collected data from an entire friendship group of six adult men and arrived at some interesting conclusions. Indeed, her narrative analysis suggested that while they had engaged in offending together for a long time, it was one of the men's move away from crime that encouraged others to do the same. Along the lines of Haynie and Osgood, her findings suggest that researchers might be missing out on important nuances in the processes of social influence when relying on information gathered from a single viewpoint. Needless to say, this work represents an important empirical development over previous studies.

Challenges to social learning theory

Social learning theory has not remained immune to criticism. Most notably, several authors have questioned whether it correctly assesses the mechanisms by which friends influence offending and/or conformist conduct. For instance, some have argued that befriending individuals who engage in illicit ventures impacts one's actions by modifying the structure of opportunities in which one navigates (see Pratt et al., 2010). For others, the strong relationship between 'antisocial' peers and offending might actually be an artefact of criminologists' typical measurement of peer variables. Recent studies indeed suggest that individuals often have a distorted view of the conduct and attitudes of others, mainly because they tend to project their own reality onto them (Haynie & Osgood, 2005). In that sense, the strong link between differential association and offending/desistance would be inflated by a same-source bias: one's view of peers' conduct—which is tainted by one's own conduct—

predicts one's conduct. As will be seen in the following section, criminologists have granted the relatives of those who offend with one additional power: they can act as social 'supporters.'

Social Support Theory

The proposition according to which social support is important for individuals who offend, particularly as they seek to refrain from doing so, is certainly not new (Glaser, 1964). Although they do not label it as such, Cullen (1994) has even argued that social support underlies numerous theories of crime and that it could therefore act as an organizing concept in criminology. Through a rereading and reinterpretation of a wide range of writings, from the classic Chicago school scholarship to the more contemporary work on labelling, strain, and control, the author essentially proposed that by providing social support, individuals' relatives can reduce their motivations to break the law.

Inspired by the sociology of mental illness, Cullen (1994) defined social support along three main dimensions: "the perceived or actual instrumental and/or expressive provisions supplied by the community, social networks, and confiding partners" (Lin, 1986, p. 18; as cited in Cullen, 1994, p. 530). First, a distinction was made between objective and perceived forms of social support. This is important as it suggests that the experience of support does not solely imply concrete, measurable provisions, but also those that are subjectively understood as such by its beneficiary. Second, social support can take two main forms: instrumental or expressive. The former includes any way a relationship can be used as a means to an end. This not only includes tangible provisions such as money or commodities, but also immaterial ones such as guidance and recommendations.[3] Expressive support, on the other hand, refers to the affective component of relationships. It involves the sharing of emotions and fulfills the human need for affection, love, recognition and companionship. Thirdly, social support can be provided at different social levels: from the macro-level support of communities and global networks, to the micro-level support of personal relationships. Finally, while not explicitly

[3] A frequently cited form of immaterial instrumental support is the social capital gained through relationships. This is the case, for example, when families use their resources to help their loved one find employment (Mills & Codd, 2008).

stated in the definition presented above, social support, much like social control, can be formal or informal.

According to Cullen (1994), social support is a useful concept for understanding how individual-level offending is influenced by the social context in which it occurs, a general premise that he unfolds over a handful of propositions.[4] First, the theory postulates that "the more support a family provides, the less likely it is that a person will engage in crime" (Cullen, 1994, p. 538). It is argued that researchers have historically over-emphasized the criminogenic role of the family or focused too rigidly on its controlling capacities. This has prevented them from seeing that the notion hidden behind factors such as parental attachment, warmth, and nurturance is familial support. As opposed to what control theorists like Hirschi suggest, family life not only involves constraints—it also provides support, which can be very positive in the development of youths. Extending from the work of scholars like Sampson and Laub (1993), social support theory pushes this idea beyond the family and proposes that "the more social support in a person's social network, the less crime will occur" (Cullen, 1994, p. 540).

In an extension of social support theory, Colvin, Cullen and Ven (2002) argued that support can be erratic. When it is, individuals are forced to live with unpredictability, constantly wondering whether they can rely on members from their social networks. Under such circumstances, people sometimes turn to 'illegitimate' sources of support, which has led Cullen (1994) to assert that the "anticipation of a lack of social support increases criminal involvement" (p. 543). In line with differential association and social learning theories, social support theory further specifies that while 'conformist' supporters can lead people away from criminal involvement, 'deviant' ones might have the opposite effect. Differential social support is formalized in the following proposition: "crime is less likely when social support for conformity exceeds social support for crime" (Cullen, 1994, p. 544).

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[4] Cullen's theory is encapsulated in fourteen propositions that not only offer insights into individual-level offending, but also provide a better comprehension of the social ecology of crime, and help devise more efficient social control strategies and reduce victimization. For a full review of these, see Cullen (1994).

While these previous propositions concerning the individual-level offending/social support nexus concern the conditions in which support may prevent offending, Cullen relied on previous research to delineate the mechanisms by which this occurs. For instance, in his rereading of Sampson and Laub's work (1993), he highlighted how social ties formed over the life-course act as a source of social support and not strictly as a source of control. In his view, the likelihood of offending is reduced as social relationships increase social capital, lessen emotional stresses, and foster the development of new identities.[5] Forging these new relationships also involves personal investments on the part of those who offend, investments that often entail reciprocating the support received. In line with the notion of 'stakes-in-conformity,' Cullen thus argued that "giving social support lessens involvement in crime" (Cullen, 1994, p. 544).

Support for social support theory

Research has given substantial credence to the most basic premise of social support theory: individuals who engage in offending do receive support from their relatives. Notably, re-entry scholars have time and again noted that a large share of them will turn to relatives upon prison release, relying on their support to thwart the obstacles of resettlement (Fishman, 1990; Martinez & Christian, 2009; Visher, Kachnowski, La Vigne, & Travis, 2004). For instance, La Vigne, Visher and Castro (2004) recently found that among the 205 men they followed upon their release from prison, 59% received financial support from family members, spouses or friends, and 88% lived with family members. While various relatives provide support upon the re-entry of a loved one, some research suggests that families of origin are the most likely to do so (see Mills & Codd, 2008).

As suggested by Cullen's definition, social support is a complex and multi-faceted phenomenon that encompasses various forms of support. As such, it is fairly unsurprising to note that tests of his theory have been slightly disconnected, with individual studies focusing on different propositions and resorting to a range of operationalization strategies. The most common dependent variable found in that body of work is 'post-release success' or the extent

[5] To be sure, Sampson and Laub recognized that turning points could lead to changes in offending trajectories by providing social support in the revised version of the theory (Laub & Sampson, 2003).

to which individuals refrain from offending after incarceration. In general, studies tend to find that social support reduces involvement in illegal activities both during incarceration (Cochran, 2012), and after (Bales & Mears, 2008; Cochran, 2014; Duwe & Clark, 2013; Mitchell, Spooner, Jia, & Zhang, 2016; Taylor, 2016).

However, some research suggests that the impact of support on conduct is not unqualified and might depend on various factors such as the type of 'support provider,' the form of social support provided, gender, and on whether studies control for other important predictors of offending. For instance, Duwe and Clark (2013) found that, while receiving visits from siblings, in-laws, and fathers significantly decreased the likelihood of recidivism among a sample of 16,420 individuals released from prison, visitations from ex-spouses significantly increased that risk. Concerning the type of social support provided, Taylor (2016) found that only emotional support significantly decreased the probability of re-offending. As opposed to Cullen's propositions, instrumental support played no significant role in that likelihood.

With regard to gender, Abrams and Tam (2018) found that being supported by a romantic partner favoured desistance among men, but hindered it among women. This echoes one of the main findings of Mitchell and colleagues' (2016) meta-analysis on the effect of prison visitation on successful re-entry. While being visited (i.e., supported) during incarceration reduced the likelihood of recidivism in studies using male-only and mixed samples, it played no significant part in studies that worked with female-only samples.[6] For instance, based on a mixed-sample study, Jiang and Winfree (2006) found that while females received significantly higher levels of social support than males while they were incarcerated, their likelihood of violating prison rules was not significantly affected by that support. The opposite was true among men: those that were married were significantly less likely to have write-ups. In addition to this gender moderation effect, findings from Mitchell et al.'s (2016) meta-analysis further suggest that the impact of social support on recidivism is significantly smaller (4%) in studies that controlled for other important criminological variables, as compared to studies based on bivariate associations (41%). Although the effect size of social

[6] As the authors underscore, these findings must be interpreted with caution as there were only two studies with female-only samples included in their meta-analysis (Mitchell, Spooner, Jia, & Zhang, 2016).

support was still significantly associated with recidivism in more stringent tests, these findings suggest that other concepts might be required for a thorough understanding of the influence exerted by significant others on the people who offend.

Challenges to social support theory

The nuances brought forward by the works reviewed above might indeed echo the complexity of the mechanisms by which social support operates. For instance, a handful of studies have highlighted that, notwithstanding the quality of social support provided and the strength of the relationship, negative outcomes often emerge from the relationship between individuals who have offended and their prosocial relatives. In line with this, Zamble and Quinsey (1997) have found that conflict with romantic partners is frequent upon re-entry. Similarly, Breese, Ra'el, and Grant (2000) suggest that while social support is crucial to individuals trying to desist from crime, being socially dependent upon others is also a source of conflict, problems, and stress.

The simultaneous occurrence of positive and negative outcomes in processes of social support is perhaps best illustrated by Martinez and Abrams (2013). In their meta-synthesis on informal social support among young adults returning to their community after incarceration, the authors found that the literature centered around one theme that is of particular interest to this thesis: the "ties that bind" (p. 175). Most of the studies they reviewed noted the complexity of family relationships, underscoring how the influence they exert on those who break the law often transcends the prosocial/antisocial divide. Indeed, these relations could have dual effects: while all studies found families to be important sources of instrumental and emotional support, many simultaneously found them to be too restrictive in their support. While control theorists would probably argue that this is a good strategy to foster desistance, findings from Martinez and Abrams' meta-synthesis instead show that familial expectations were often set too high. In turn, these led to self-fulfilling prophecies in which young adults were pushed back to offending.

An additional body of literature is pertinent in illustrating the complexities and limits of social support. Cullen's theory 'works' to the extent that the relatives of people who engage in crime are not only willing to provide social support, but also possess the resources and

capacities to do so. Research suggests this is not always the case. In line with works showing that numerous incarcerated individuals are socially isolated (Mills & Codd, 2008; Wolff & Draine, 2004), some studies suggest that many relationships do not survive a sentence of incarceration (Codd, 2007; Condry, 2007; Fishman, 1990). Moreover, many providers of social support are drawn from the same socioeconomic background as individuals who offend and, as such, have limited personal access to social and material capital (Jardine, 2017; Leverentz, 2014). The capacity of relatives to provide support might thus also depend on forces that lie far beyond their personal will (see Schafer, 1994).

Together, these findings suggest that presupposing that certain types of relationships are beneficial to individuals who offend might overshadow the complexities of social support. For instance, prosocial family relationships do not automatically entail desistance, even when they provide the best quality support possible, and put every effort into the prevention of recidivism. As argued by Martinez and Abrams (2013), research would benefit from paying closer attention not only to the type of support that is provided, but also to the specific conditions in which it is provided, and to how it is experienced by the 'supported' and 'supporters' alike.

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Throughout this review of past research, my aim has been twofold. First, I have been interested in understanding how criminologists envisage social influence and how it can foster desistance. In doing so, I have paid particular attention to the roles attributed to the relatives of individuals who engage in offending. As seen, social theorists have proposed a variety of mechanisms by which these people affect the conduct of their loved ones. While for some they act as agents of informal social control by increasing stakes in conformity, for others, they act as instructors by teaching the 'appropriate' attitudes and actions and by providing a blueprint on how to be a conventional citizen. For others still, they are providers of capital and support. Notwithstanding the precise mechanism they put forward, these propositions are grounded in a single premise: it is through their *prosocial* orientation that the relatives of people who offend promote desistance. Fundamentally, it is because they are bonded to society (Hirschi, 1969; Sampson & Laub, 1993), because they believe in and adhere to moral and social norms (Akers, 1973; Giordano et al., 2002), and because they are providers of conformist support

(Colvin et al., 2002; Cullen, 1994) that these individuals can pave the way for law-abiding conduct. As will become clear in Chapter 2, this premise is also a fundamental piece of the present thesis.

Second, looking beyond these mechanisms, I have tried to understand how social theories concretely construe the relatives of those who break the law. To do so, I have reviewed the methodological strategies most commonly used in research and found that, for the most part, these individuals have been operationalized through data collected from an external stance, that is, from the viewpoint of the person engaged in illegal actions. To be sure, this is fairly unsurprising as criminology's main study object is, after all, offending. However, this strategy suggests that although it has bestowed influential powers—the power to constrain someone else's action—upon prosocial relatives, the field has generally paid little attention to these sources of influence. In this sense, the social theories of crime have decontextualized the role of these individuals, "relegat[ing them] to the domain of conditioning structures to the neglect of their unique powers and properties" (Weaver, 2016, p. 54).

In that respect, the caveats of social support theory exposed at the end of the previous section extend to every theory reviewed in this chapter. While the field has gathered impressive knowledge on its 'target' participants, little is still known about the people sitting at the other end of these social relationships: about the prosocial 'controllers,' 'teachers,' 'mentors,' and 'supporters.' As criminologists, we might be missing out on important clues concerning the dimensions and conditions of social influence[7] by failing to better get to know these individuals. What is it like to be closely related to someone who has broken the law? How does it feel to learn that your husband has been downloading juvenile pornography for the past decade, unbeknownst to you? How does your daughter's incarceration affect your perceptions of what's right and what's wrong? As seen throughout this review, in spite of its prosocial nature, control, learning and support can lead to undesired consequences and, in some cases, even promote untoward conduct (see Abrams & Tam, 2018; Horney et al., 1995; Mackenzie & Li, 2002; Martinez & Abrams, 2013). Following some of Sutherland's (1966)

[7] Whether they refer to control, learning, support, or enablement, all of the theories presented in this literature review are fundamentally interested in processes of social influence. I thus use this term to encompass them all.

propositions, these counterintuitive findings could be due, for instance, to the fact that by choosing to maintain their relationships with those who offend, prosocial relatives hold and promote a "favourable attitude" toward the offense perpetrator. Rather than fostering desistance, this could, in Sutherland's view, promote recidivism. Of course, this can only remain speculative for now. However, gaining better knowledge into the experiences of relatives could provide valuable insight into the mechanisms of social influence proposed by the social theories of crime and desistance. As it turns out, a burgeoning scholarship on the relatives of people who have engaged in illicit activities provides a first step toward that goal.

The Relatives of People who Engage in Offending

In the mid-1960s, Morris (1965) conducted one of the first studies on the effects of men's incarceration had on their family. Despite the decades that elapsed prior to her work truly taking root in the literature, her analysis of the stresses and hardships endured by the wives of these secluded men to this day serves as a guide for research on the relatives of incarcerated individuals (Granja, 2016). As such, an overwhelming amount of that scholarship focuses on the collateral consequences of being in a relationship with someone who has been sentenced to prison. This focus on the costs of "secondary prisonization," (Comfort, 2003), has frequently been coupled with an emphasis on the stereotypical, nuclear view of the family, in which a man leaves his wife and children behind upon incarceration (Codd, 2007). Though some researchers have gone beyond that image and looked into the experiences of individuals involved in other forms of social relations, such as friendships (Christian, Martinez, & Martinez, 2015; Condry, 2007; Jardine, 2017; Schafer, 1994), most work has focused on the impact of men's incarceration on their children and wives/romantic partners. Notwithstanding these caveats, findings from this body of work remain informative for the purposes of this thesis.[8]

[8] Most of the research presented in this section focuses on the experiences of relatives of individuals who are incarcerated. I posit that it also provides invaluable information on the more general experience of being related to someone who engages in offending, whether that person is sanctioned/incarcerated or not.

The Collateral Consequences of Being a Relative

One of the most consistent findings in research about the relatives of incarcerated individuals is that being a relative is a costly experience. Indeed, numerous forms of negative consequences have been associated with the maintenance of a relationship with someone in prison. First, relatives experience a plethora of psychological costs such as disbelief and shock upon the discovery of the offense (Condry, 2007; Fishman, 1990), as well as stigma and shame (Condry, 2007; Fishman, 1990; E. I. Johnson & Easterling, 2015), stress (E. I. Johnson & Easterling, 2015), depression (Braman & Wood, 2003), and, more generally emotional turmoil (Comfort, 2008). In certain studies, the experiencing of these psychological consequences was found to vary between relatives. For instance, Condry (2007) found that shame was particularly strong among wives and mothers in comparison with other types of relationships, and that the tendency to engage in self-blame for the offense of a loved one depended on the specific type and characteristics of the offense.

Second, a great deal of attention has been paid to the economic costs endured by relatives. Maintaining a relationship with someone who is imprisoned has been found to lead to an important loss of income, particularly when the person being incarcerated previously contributed to familial earnings (Braman, 2004; Davis, 1992). In addition to ensuring the care of other dependents, relatives often face an increase in expenses, as they now have to spend money on collect calls, visits, and goods of various kinds (Christian, Mellow, & Thomas, 2006; Granja, 2016). Because many relatives come from lower-income milieus, some authors have argued that they are placed in a double bind (see Christian et al., 2006): "Incarceration tends to co-produce and/or aggravate positions of socio-economic vulnerability, emerging as an additional factor that imposes further pressures on the lives of people already facing a range of vulnerabilities." (Granja, 2016, p. 13).

In addition to these psychological and economic costs, research suggests that the concrete, day-to-day life of relatives is affected in important ways by the incarceration of a loved one. Often described as serving a parallel sentence, their experience of time and family life is disrupted as they await for the imprisoned person's return home (Granja, 2016). Notably, interpersonal relationships have been found to undergo significant strain (La Vigne, Naser, Brooks, & Castro, 2005). During that limbo period (Fishman, 1990), life becomes

organized around a few spaces—prison, work, and home—and time is allocated according to the restrictive obligations of the correctional system (Braman, 2004). Research also points to the pressures relatives place on themselves to remain present and provide support, particularly as they seek to prevent prison from imposing its 'criminogenic effects' on the person they love (Granja, 2016). In addition, these daily predicaments often unravel in contexts where resources devoted to relatives are scarce, where crucial information is withheld, and where prison visitations are often experienced as belittling (Codd, 2007; Comfort, 2003).

The incarceration of a loved one does not solely lead to negative consequences, however. Although her study highlighted the numerous costs of imprisonment for relatives, Granja (2016) also noted the complexity of its effects. For instance, some of her interviewees perceived incarceration in a positive light, welcoming it as a much needed respite to their constant worry about the well-being of their loved one. Some studies further suggest that imprisonment can mitigate relational tensions and interrupt cycles of abuse, thus paving the way towards the reconstruction of a fulfilling relationship (Comfort, 2008; Morris, 1965). Beyond incarceration and its collateral consequences, studies have found that certain relatives benefit from their relationship with someone who has engaged in illegal activities. Noting that several of them are "engage[d] in reciprocal exchange of informal social support" (Martinez & Christian, 2009, p. 202), these works remind us that these relationships extend beyond the offense and incarceration (see also Leverentz, 2014).

Managing the hardships

Although this subset of works suggests that the outcomes of being a relative are heterogeneous and can at times be positive, the majority of studies have focused on detrimental consequences. Of course, it is possible to imagine that certain relatives could handle these hardships more easily than others. For instance, this could be the case with those who are highly favourable to offending and deviance. Though no specific study on the proportion of relatives holding such attitudes could be located, research suggests that this is not a frequent occurrence, at least not within those studies.[9] In line with Matza (1964), who

[9] As stated above, many relatives come from social environments that are similar to those of individuals who break the law and many of them have their own histories of offending (Fishman, 1990; Leverentz, 2014). In

argued that parents were unlikely to explicitly encourage offending and that most were "united in their denunciation of delinquent deeds" (p. 37), the relatives met in the confines of this literature generally hold unfavourable attitudes toward offending (see Condry, 2007). In sum, the majority of relatives endure a plethora of psychological, social, and economic difficulties, and also go through the pains of secondary prisonization (Comfort, 2003) as a result of actions they condemn and perceive as reprehensible. Under such circumstances, why do so many of these people choose to stay in contact and continue to provide their support? Part of the answer lies in the various tactics utilised by the relatives of people who take part in illicit actions.

While critics have argued that research has largely overlooked the role of agency in the experiences of relatives (Arditti, 2012; Christian et al., 2015), a handful of studies suggest that they are not mere victims of their circumstances. Whether they label it adaptation (Christian & Kennedy, 2011), coping (Christian et al., 2015; E. I. Johnson & Easterling, 2015), or resilience (Arditti, 2012), what this body of work suggests is that relatives who choose to maintain their relationship employ a series of strategies to get through their predicaments, while also exerting some level of control over their life. To make sense of this somewhat disparate literature, it is helpful to distinguish between two types of strategies: active and narrative.

The former type—the strategies of action—refers to concrete and observable measures put in place by relatives as a result of being related to someone who has been involved in offending and/or who has been incarcerated for such conduct. For the most part, these strategies are interpersonal in nature as they affect interactions with others. May (2000) for instance found that family members of individuals who had been convicted of murder avoided going out in public and carefully selected the information they would disclose to others. While some authors have argued that secrecy is particularly prominent among relatives of people involved in serious offending (Condry, 2007), Granja's (2016) findings suggest that this strategy is employed by several relatives, regardless of offense type. In line with May's work,

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addition, developmental criminologists have time and again shown that offending and deviance often have their roots in the family (Farrington, 2010). While it is certainly a possibility that individuals who engage in offending and who perceive it in a positive light make up a large share of the population of relatives, they are a minority among the samples used in the literature on relatives. This might be a methodological artefact and it is thus hard to tell whether relatives, as a whole, are more or less 'favourable' to offending.

she found that relatives of incarcerated men were generally reluctant to talk about their loved one's circumstances with others. On the other hand, they also needed some form of social support. As such, many of them chose to share information, but did so with a restricted group of trusted others. Concerning this secrecy/disclosure strategy, others have found that relatives also opt to join support/self-help groups, which provide them with both a safe sharing space and mechanisms to cope with stigma and shame (Codd, 2000; Condry, 2007; May, 2000).

Some of the active strategies employed by relatives also involved the person who has engaged in illicit action. For instance, Fishman (1990) found that wives of incarcerated men used a series of accommodative tactics in order to preserve their marriage. While some women used a nurturing strategy by overly caring for their husbands and rewarding their 'good' actions, others resorted to resistance by directly confronting their partner and sometimes even threatening to leave. Interestingly, the specific tactics used depended largely on the men's general demeanour and could evolve over time. In line with these findings, Granja (2016) found that although relatives were adamant about providing support to their loved one while he was incarcerated, they often did so within pre-established limits. For instance, some of her interviewees reported being willing to be emotionally present and to offer material/economic help as long as the person who was incarcerated acted appropriately. Research further suggests that, under some circumstances, relatives also resort to more restrictive strategies such as limiting contacts with, and distancing themselves from their loved ones (Braman, 2004; E. I. Johnson & Easterling, 2015). Though this was found to be a rare occurrence among relatives, the ultimate strategy of action is, of course, to sever the relationship altogether (Condry, 2007). While these strategies could be understood as social, they can also be construed as a means to manage the hardships associated with being a relative (Christian et al., 2015).

In addition to actively setting concrete parameters (Christian et al., 2015), research suggests that relatives can also manage adversity by employing narrative strategies, which encompass all tactics used to create meaning around personal and relational experiences. In line with narrative criminology, narrative strategies are important, as they often shaped courses of actions and provided means to handle hardships (Presser, 2009). For instance, some authors have argued that making sense of the offense of their loved one helps relatives in their coping process. In her study on wives of men who are imprisoned, Fishman (1990) found that

women devised a vocabulary of motives through which they rationalized the illegal activities of their husbands. By externalizing blame onto outside forces, highlighting their partner's character flaws, and sometimes even blaming their personal shortcomings, Fishman argued that these wives were able to more easily accommodate their partners and maintain their marriages. Formulating accounts for the motivations underlying the offending actions of a loved one is seemingly not a strategy restricted to wives. Condry (2007) found similar results in a heterogeneous sample of relatives of individuals who have engaged in serious offending. While the content of these accounts resembled that of the wives interviewed by Fishman, Condry argued that these were part of a larger strategy aimed at overcoming stigma and shame.

In addition to making sense of the illegal action, some studies suggest that narrative strategies can be mobilized in a second way. By narratively constructing—or *re*-constructing—their experiences, relatives are able to "upen[d] the negative situation into one with potential and actual benefits" (Christian et al., 2015, p. 7). For example, Comfort (2008) found that several women whose romantic partner was incarcerated actively emphasized the positive aspects of both their relationship and their partner, rather than focusing on their negative features. Christian's (2015) study similarly highlights that relatives sometimes employ the "hate the sin, not the sinner" (p. 18) narrative to construct their loved one in a positive light. In addition to these 'present-oriented' outlooks, a few studies suggest that looking forward to the future is also an effective way to manage the hardships experienced by relatives. Much like Fishman (1990) who found that wives devised narratives that focused on their husbands' future release from detention, Christian and Kennedy's (2011) work suggests that relatives can emphasize the future, and envision it as better than the past and/or the present. Though this was a rare type of narrative in their study, these findings nonetheless suggest that hope can act as an important anchor into the positive and rewarding aspects of one's relationship.

To be sure, the people who were met through this small body of research did not respond uniformly to their experiences as relatives, and made different uses of the strategies just described. For instance, while several of them have been able to devise a narrative that focuses on the positive aspects of both the person they cherish and of their relationship, for

some, this was an arduous task. Christian and Kennedy (2011) found that the narratives of some relatives remained largely precarious. This was more prevalent among participants who were dissatisfied with the conduct of their loved one, but could also result from relational circumstances that predated the incarceration. The heterogeneous responses of relatives to their experiences suggest an important caveat that should be kept in mind when reviewing this literature. Indeed, much like the individuals who engage in illegal activities, relatives do not form a uniform group of individuals. Not only do they have different personal histories and experiences, but they also have different vulnerabilities, needs, and resiliencies (Codd, 2000). Moreover, they are engaged in various forms of relationships and have distinct relational histories. Given these discrepancies, it is hardly surprising that the collateral consequences of being related to someone who has broken the law, as well as the strategies used to respond to such consequences, not only vary greatly between relatives, but also change over time and depend on the context (Christian et al., 2015).

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Though not its intended goal, this body of research suggests that prosocial relatives—criminology's controllers, teachers, and supporters—are significantly influenced by their relationship with someone who offends. Indeed, in order to maintain their social bond with individuals who take part in actions they do not condone, relatives use a series of strategies that not only modify their daily activities, but also shape their subjective outlooks in significant ways. As opposed to those who break the law, however, it is the *antisocial* aspect of their loved ones' demeanour that generates that influence, that encourages relatives to adapt. Combining findings from the two fields of research presented throughout this chapter, this thesis argues that social influence is bidirectional: both those who offend and members of their prosocial relatives are affected by their relationship with one another. More specifically, this influence occurs at the *confluence of the prosocial and the antisocial*. This foundational premise and its potential interest for criminology, as well as its repercussions for individuals who act unlawfully and their loved ones are explored in the following chapter.

Chapter 2

Social Influence at the Convergence of the Prosocial and the Antisocial

Although the scholarship on relatives, and the theories of crime and desistance, have each evolved separately, their findings suggest that they are inextricably linked. Decades of research in sociological criminology have demonstrated that individuals who love and care for those who offend can significantly shape their conduct. While the mechanisms of influence emphasized by theorists in this field differ, their works essentially agree that relatives' prosocial orientation is what encourages investment in law-abiding courses of action. Proponents of social control theories have argued that it is because they are tied to conventional institutions that prosocial relatives foster the termination of offending (Hirschi, 1969; Sampson & Laub, 1993). For their part, social learning theorists have argued that it is through their adherence to attitudes that favour social norms, and their endorsement of a prosocial identity that relatives promotes prosocial conduct (Akers, 1973; Burgess & Akers, 1966; Giordano, Cernkovich, & Rudolph, 2002; Sutherland, 1947). Social support scholars have similarly proposed that it is 'conformist' supporters who can lead people away from criminal involvement (Cullen, 1994).

Focusing on the other end of these social ties, the literature on relatives suggests that those who act as 'controllers,' 'mentors,' or 'supporters' are also influenced in significant ways by their relationship with someone who engages in illegal pursuits. In contrast to the premise on which the social theories of crime and desistance rest, here it is the antisocial orientation of these bonds that affects relatives in very profound ways. Not only do they have to subjectively comprehend the offending conduct in which their loved one has been involved, but they also actively alter their lives to accommodate this reality.

Insights form both scholarships suggest that the bidirectional influence that occurs between the people who offend and their relatives operates at the confluence of the prosocial and the antisocial. This observation is, of course, not entirely new, and resonates with some of criminology's seminal ideas. Sutherland (1947) long ago suggested that a delinquent's social universe contains an amalgam of attitudes, some of which view norm-breaking in a positive light, and others which view it negatively. While he argued that it is the ratio of these attitudes that matter in understanding social influence, Matza (1964) instead believed that these opposing views toward moral norms are incorporated by individuals, and that they can both be mobilized at different points in time. Notwithstanding the distinctions between their

propositions, both theorists have recognized the complex and often contradictory nature of the social milieus in which people are embedded. What the literature on relatives adds to this proposition is that through their significant relationship with people who break the law, relatives also navigate this antithetical social space. Lying at the heart of this thesis is this contradictory and bipolar universe. Specifically, it seeks to understand what happens within individuals who find themselves, whether by their own accord or not, at this point of confluence where crime and conventions comingle. This chapter will argue that ambivalence is likely to occur whenever an individual finds himself embedded in such a relationship. Before explaining how this happens, however, the next section presents the general conception of crime upon which this thesis rests. It will further emphasize how individuals develop different attitudes toward social norms through normative socialization.

Crime as Moral Action and Attitudes toward Moral Norms

The research question posed in this thesis is explored through a view of crime as moral action (Parsons, 1951; Toby, 2005; Wikström, 2010). Though, as Toby (2005) argued, legal norms are occasionally independent of the "shared moral sentiments of members of the society" (p. 351), these norms are mostly intertwined with, and reflective of, such sentiments. By definition, then, offending conduct is globally understood as "socially disapproved" (p. 351) conduct. However, accepting the social disapproval definition does not entail that all members of society unilaterally and unquestionably endorse legal norms. Indeed, the criminological literature on attitudes (see Eichelsheim, Nieuwbeerta, Dirkzwager, Reef, & Cuyper, 2015; Mandracchia & Morgan, 2010), along with Sutherland's work on definitions and Matza's work on drift, have together demonstrated that individuals can develop different subjective views on such moral norms. While some will perceive their unfaltering respect as a legitimate and positive guiding principle of action, others will more easily dismiss moral norms, even perceiving their transgression as desirable.

These varying subjective positions toward moral norms, henceforth referred to as attitudes[10], are understood to be the product of individual-level characteristics (Mitchell &

[10] Attitudes are defined as the "tendency that is expressed by evaluating a particular entity with some degree or favor or disfavor" (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993, p. 1).

Tafrate, 2012; Tangney et al., 2012), and, more importantly, of normative socialization (Eichelsheim et al., 2015; Simons & Burt, 2011; Sutherland, 1947). In sum, it is as they interact with other people over time that individuals learn the social and moral norms that regulate their world. In line with propositions made by certain theories of crime and desistance highlighted in Chapter 1, it is also through these interactions that people develop their own attitudes toward such norms, building their subjective understandings of what is permissible and what is reprehensible; of what is right and what is wrong (see Akers, 1973; Bourgois, 1995; Shaw & McKay, 1969; Sutherland, 1947; Thrasher, 1927). Within each individual, the relative prominence of these attitudes vis-à-vis offending and conventions depends on both the intensity with which they have been acquired, as well as the extent to which they have been confirmed by everyday experiences (Akers, 1973; Lahire, 2003, 2011; Sutherland, 1947).

However, as Parsons (1951, p. 251) argued, despite these individual attitudinal differences, "the fact remains that all social action is normatively oriented, and that the value-orientations embodied in these norms must to a degree be common to the actors in an institutionally integrated interactive system." In this sense, notwithstanding particular positions in regards to moral norms, and individual beliefs concerning the 'rightness' of offending and conventions, all members of society are minimally aware of the norms that regulate their world. Pushing this idea even further, Matza (1964) argued that not only are those who break legal rules aware of the norms they are defying—they are also largely in agreement with them.

Extending these premises, this thesis proposes that because it explicitly transgresses moral norms known by all, offending is likely to generate internal conflict—ambivalence—*particularly when the antisocial nature of that conduct and of its perpetrator is openly set against the prosocial attitudes of a significant third party*. When it taints a relationship between someone who has broken the law and a prosocial relative, offending is thus likely to generate ambivalence *in both parties*. To be sure, this hypothesis does not intend to circumvent the distinctions that exist between the realities of these two groups of people. Breaking legal norms, and maintaining a relationship with someone who broke legal norms, are different experiences, and ones that require distinct motivations, while entailing diverse outcomes. However, as will be argued below, notwithstanding the differences that exist between them, both of these realities are inevitably tainted by the offending act: one

personally, as perpetrator; the other vicariously, as audience. It is the concrete confrontation of two opposite attitudes vis-à-vis moral norms—one prosocial, the other antisocial—in the context of a single social relationship, that exposes both parties to a high likelihood of experiencing ambivalence over the course of their relational history.

Conceptualizing Ambivalence

As will be argued throughout this thesis, ambivalence is a concept relevant to the study of the social influence that operates between both the individuals who offend and their prosocial relatives. While criminology scholars have flirted with this notion for quite some time (e.g., Matza, 1964), very few have studied ambivalence in its own right. In fact, to the best of my knowledge, Burnett (2004) and Carlsson (2017) conducted the only two studies specifically dedicated to ambivalence, paying special attention to its role in the desistance process. While their focus largely differed from that of the present project, it is pertinent to review their favoured conceptualizations, before presenting the definition used in this thesis. Citing the Penguin Dictionary of Psychology, Burnett defined ambivalence as "a state in which one is pulled in two mutually exclusive directions or toward two opposite goals" (p. 168). For his part, Carlsson grounded his definition more deeply in the ambivalence literature by highlighting its psychological and sociological dimensions. Specifically applied to desistance, he defined ambivalence as: "those contradictory or incompatible expectations and processes, whether social, psychological, or both, that (ex-) offenders experience as they consider, attempt, and maintain desistance," (p. 338).

As hinted at by these authors' proposed definitions, ambivalence is a rather complex concept that can be explored through different lenses. Sociologists, for instance, generally define it as "incompatible normative expectations of attitudes, beliefs, and behavior assigned to a status (i.e., a social position), or to a set of statuses in society" (Robert K Merton, 1976, p. 6). Among psychologists, the same concept refers to individuals' "tendency […] to be pulled in psychologically opposed directions," (Robert K Merton, 1976, p. 6). In addition to these slightly different focuses, ambivalence is often conceived of as having various components. Of particular interest to this thesis are its affective and cognitive elements (Thompson, Zanna, & Griffin, 1995). More precisely, people are said to experience affective ambivalence when they

simultaneously experience both positive and negative feelings towards a single object (Hajda, 1968; Maio, Bell, & Esses, 2000). In parallel, cognitive ambivalence refers to the concurrent endorsement of attitudes that are both favourable and unfavourable toward one object (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993; Kaplan, 1972). To specify matters further, ambivalence can be experienced on two distinct levels: intra- or inter-component. On the one hand, intra-component ambivalence is said to occur when individuals experience opposite feelings *or* opposite attitudes toward a single object. On the other hand, inter-component ambivalence occurs when they simultaneously experience positive feelings and hold unfavourable attitudes toward, a single object (or vice-versa) (Maio et al., 2000; Priester & Petty, 2001).[11]

Notwithstanding these specificities, one common theme clearly underlies all conceptualizations of ambivalence: the experience of internal conflict. Embracing this idea and extending Weingardt (2000), ambivalence is understood as the "experience of being 'of two minds,' of bipolarity, of vacillation, of the dialectic push and pull of internal conflict" (p. 298), and is more specifically defined as the "coexistence of positive and negative [feelings and/or attitudes] toward the same person, object or behavior" (p. 298). Additionally, ambivalence is conceived as a dynamic phenomenon that can ebb and flow according to life's multiple contradictions and vagaries (Lahire, 2003, 2011).

Ambivalence is closely related to the concept of cognitive dissonance, which is said to occur when an individual simultaneously experiences two discrepant cognitions (Festinger, 1957). While this concept might have been used in the context of this thesis, as it also examines the tension that arises when two opposite attitudes are confronted, ambivalence was favoured for two main reasons. First, both concepts are largely similar in their understandings of internal conflict. For instance, both ambivalence and cognitive dissonance are flexible and allow for the examination of individual tensions arising between different components such as

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[11] In the psychological literature, theorists typically define attitudes as consisting of two components: feelings and beliefs. As such, ambivalence is often referred to as 'attitudinal ambivalence' (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993; Kaplan, 1972; Thompson, Zanna, & Griffin, 1995). In criminology, attitudes are generally considered synonymous with beliefs and both are understood as being different from feelings (Rebellon, Manasse, Van Gundy, & Cohn, 2014). In order to avoid any conceptual confusion and to remain in line with criminological writings, ambivalence is understood as having two distinct components (i.e., feelings and attitudes) and is simply referred to as 'ambivalence.' This choice does not affect any of the claims made in this thesis; it is merely a question of clarity.

feelings and attitudes (Festinger, 1957; Maio et al., 2000). Moreover, the two concepts are closely related to the notion of self. Indeed, cognitive dissonance and ambivalence are thought to be particularly likely to emerge when their object relates to one's self-concept (Aronson, 1969; Carlsson, 2016). On these issues alone, it would therefore be difficult to favour one concept over the other. Second, however, while both notions are understood as being an internal process that is experienced in the individual mind, ambivalence is thought to emerge from social interactions (Priester & Petty, 2001; Visser & Mirabile, 2004). This is, of course, of particular importance to the present project, as it specifically focuses on the interpersonal sources of internal conflict. As opposed to what might have been possible had the analyses presented in the following chapters relied on cognitive dissonance, they instead take advantage of this conceptualization of ambivalence, and thus rest upon an important research legacy. These social sources of ambivalence are the topic of the following section.

The Interpersonal Sources of Ambivalence

Although only a handful of criminology researchers have been intrigued by ambivalence or its related concepts, the larger body of ambivalence scholarship provides fertile ground for understanding how this experience of internal conflict is likely to emerge among both those who offend and their prosocial relatives. In addition to intrapersonal elements such as personality features and individual preferences (e.g., DeMarree, Christian Wheeler, Briñol, & Petty, 2014; Thompson & Zanna, 1995), researchers have also underscored the importance of interpersonal factors in the development of ambivalence and in its maintenance (Connidis & McMullin, 2002; Priester & Petty, 2001; Visser & Mirabile, 2004). Much in line with Lahire (2003), who proposed that the social contexts which individuals navigate can lead, under certain circumstances, to moments of "discomforts, crises, or personal rifts" (p. 353), Connidis and McMullin (2002) argued that "the experience of ambivalence is an ongoing feature of social relations, [one that] must be continually negotiated and renegotiated over the life course" (p. 559). While several interpersonal conditions have been explored as potential antecedents to internal conflict (e.g., Lahire, 2003), two social pathways are particularly pertinent for the study of ambivalence among individuals who offend and their relatives. However, though both groups are susceptible to ambivalence because of the opposition between the antisocial and the prosocial that taints their relationship,

their differing roles vis-à-vis offending—one as audience, the other as perpetrator—entail different manifestations of internal conflict, and different mechanisms of emergence.

Research has demonstrated that individuals are susceptible to ambivalence when they experience an *interpersonal conflict in attitudes*, that is, when their attitude toward a given object conflicts with the attitude of significant others (Priester & Petty, 2001). As previously argued, the social connection between someone who breaches well-known moral norms and someone who does not is likely to emphasize such a discrepancy. In this pathway to ambivalence, individuals are not necessarily 'of two minds' about the attitude object—the offending conduct—but instead, evaluative tension nonetheless rises because someone they are significantly attached to has a different position toward, or acts differently with regards to, offending.[12] This interpersonal conflict transforms into internal tension as individuals become conflicted between their attitudes toward law-breaking actions, and their emotional attachment to a loved one who sees things differently. In sum, they experience inter-component ambivalence.

Though his psychodynamic orientation differs from the one embraced in this thesis, Parsons (1951) has nonetheless provided important insights into the connections between ambivalence and deviance that result from social norms. As he argued, when someone perceives that an important norm has been violated in the context of a significant relationship, then that person:

> *must have some reaction to the frustration which alter has imposed upon him, some resentment or hostility. In other words, the cathetic orientation acquires an ambivalent character, there is still the need to love or admire alter, but there is also the product of his frustration in the form of negative and in some sense hostile attitudes toward alter. In so far as this happens of course ego is put in an emotional conflict in his relation to alter*. (p. 253)

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[12] This proposition is in line with important findings from the literature on attitudes, which highlight the disconnect that can exist between how one thinks and how one acts (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1977). While a portion of those who break the law will also endorse attitudes that are resolutely favourable to such conduct, others will be mostly unfavourable to it (Matza, 1964). In line with Sutherland's (1947) work on definitions, however, when individuals act a certain way—in this case, when they offend—even these unfavourable individuals promulgate a particular vision of law-breaking to the audience who watches them. They are, essentially, proclaiming that they view such acts in a positive light. In this sense, illegal actions can be perceived by onlookers as an endorsement of offending.

Experiencing ambivalence due to an interpersonal conflict in attitudes is particularly likely among relatives, because they have been forcibly exposed to a breach of the norms they adhere to and believe in. This proposition is supported by the literature on relatives, which suggests that the majority of these individuals are largely unfavourable to offending (see Condry, 2007), and that many have had very limited experience with deviance in their personal histories. In fact, several may even lack the necessary dispositions or knowledge to make sense of the fact that someone they love has taken part in actions they perceive as reprehensible (see Lahire, 2003). It is thus through their relationship with someone who has broken the law, and specifically *because* of that conduct, that these prosocial individuals are likely to experience ambivalence. While research has shown that relatives involved in different forms of relationships respond differently to the offending of a significant other (Christian, Martinez, & Martinez, 2015), this thesis posits that given a strong attachment to the offense perpetrator and an unfavourable view of offending, all prosocial relatives are susceptible to ambivalence.

While this pathway to internal conflict is most likely among relatives, individuals who offend could also become ambivalent as they experience an interpersonal conflict in attitudes. Indeed, maintaining relationships with people who are unfavourable to law-breaking can also bring to light an internal conflict between the offending individual's own attitude toward this form of action, and their emotional attachment to these significant others. Of course, this proposition is echoed in Sampson and Laub's (1993) age-graded theory of informal social control. As they create new social ties or as they revise the meaning and importance of their pre-existing relationships with prosocial others, the people who offend can begin to perceive their involvement in illegal actions as both incompatible with the expectations of those who matter to them, as well as being a possible hindrance to the emotional perks that come with these bonds (see Burkitt, 2016). Research thus suggests that the recognition of an interpersonal conflict in attitudes could also foster ambivalence among individuals who offend.

A second social pathway to ambivalence opens for individuals who are embedded in heterogeneous social networks, comprising people who endorse incongruous and even contradictory views on a given object (Visser & Mirabile, 2004). In addition to emphasizing the inherent tension that exists between two opposite positions, these networks "decrease individual-level attitude strength by reducing the confidence that people have in the

correctness of their attitudes" (Visser & Mirabile, 2004, p. 780). In turn, this socially derived uncertainty increases one's chances of experiencing ambivalence. Again, as it violates moral and social norms, offending conduct is a particularly sensitive attitude object that is prone to generate conflict within one's interpersonal circle. Following up on insights from Visser and Mirabile (2004), it is thus also likely to foster an internal conflict in attitude toward offending, increasing one's chances of becoming 'of two minds' vis-à-vis such conduct. In sum, it can lead to intra-component ambivalence.

In contrast to interpersonal conflicts in attitudes, a social network's heterogeneity in this regard is more likely to foster ambivalence among individuals who actively breach the norms around which attitudinal oppositions emerge. This proposition is in accordance with Sutherland (1947), who long ago stated that the social universe of individuals who offend is composed of both people who perceive offending favourably and people who perceive it in a negative light, a proposition that has reverberated in more recent research (Haynie, 2002). As argued before, a vast majority of socialized individuals are aware of moral norms of conduct (Matza, 1964; Parsons, 1951). Therefore, heterogeneous networks do not lead to ambivalence among offense perpetrators as a result of significant others teaching them conventional ways of being that they were previously unaware of. Rather, it is by underscoring the existing contradiction between varying attitudes toward both offending and conventions that plural social universes hold, that these networks provoke experiences of internal conflict. For instance, while spending time with friends who engage in illicit actions might reinforce attitudes that are favourable to offending, coming home to a prosocial family can make attitudes supportive of normative conduct salient. In this sense, being embedded in heterogeneous social milieus is likely to bring to light the fact that people who offend are themselves bearers of contradictory attitudes. Over time, these paradoxes can transform into ambivalence.

Although prosocial relatives can also be embedded within such heterogeneous networks, it is unlikely that such social arrangements would equally lead them to experience ambivalence. Again, these prosocial individuals are by and large unfavourable to offending (Condry, 2007). While it certainly remains possible that being exposed to contradictory positions vis-à-vis this type of conduct might encourage them to question their personal

attitude and become ambivalent about it, no studies from the scholarship on relatives supporting this hypothesis could be located.

Notwithstanding its specific manifestation, that is, whether it expresses itself as inter-component or intra-component, both these types of ambivalence remain rooted in the interpersonal experiences that bind individuals who offend to their prosocial significant others. The heart of this thesis lies at this social confluence; its focus is on the ambivalences that emerge when conventional beliefs encounter norm-breaking, and when the prosocial meets the antisocial.

Ambivalence and its Conditions of Emergence

Room (1976) warned against imposing ambivalence on others simply because we, as external observers, notice they hold inconsistent attitudes. Though it partly emerges out of social interactions, ambivalence remains "a property of the individual mind" (p. 1054), and many people pursue unambivalent lives despite adhering to contradictory subjective positions. Given this fair warning, why should we believe that ambivalence is likely to be internally experienced by individuals who break the law and their prosocial significant others? As already argued, part of the answer lies in the sensitive and morally charged nature of the offending conduct that taints their relationship. This significant feature of their social bond means both of them are likely to fulfill some of the central conditions under which ambivalence is most susceptible to emerge.

Though seemingly basic, the first condition under which ambivalence is likely to be experienced is a fundamental one: individuals must be aware of a discrepancy between some of their beliefs and/or feelings toward a given object (Priester & Petty, 1996; Thompson et al., 1995). Holding divergent attitudes is not an uncommon experience, yet these positions are not constantly interacting with one another. Realizing that one is besieged by a state of internal conflict thus requires that these beliefs/feelings be "brought together in some way" (Osgood, 1963, p. 362). This is a condition that is very likely fulfilled via the relationship between individuals who offend, and their prosocial significant others. Indeed, given that both parties are cognizant of both the illegal conduct of one party, as well as of the unfavourable attitude toward offending of the other, this social connection therefore acts as a bridge between two opposite attitudes, effectively highlighting the discrepancy between them.

A second condition under which ambivalence is particularly susceptible to emerge, is one where it both touches an area that has important subjective value, and when its associated costs and stressors are high (Bolen & Lamb, 2004; Parsons, 1951). Given that the relationship is emotionally significant for both individuals who offend and their prosocial relatives, oppositions in attitudes toward well-known moral norms are likely to be perceived as sufficiently serious so as to stimulate the development of ambivalence (Parsons, 1951). Moreover, research suggests that the object of internal conflict under scrutiny in this thesis—offending—generates considerable costs, and is an important source of stress for both those who break the law and the prosocial members who constitute their social milieus. While this proposition was explored in Chapter 1 with regards to relatives (see Braman, 2004; Comfort, 2007; Condry, 2007; Davis, 1992; Fishman, 1990; Granja, 2016; Johnson & Easterling, 2015; Morris, 1965), the negative repercussions related to being personally involved in offending have also been well documented, ranging from the costs of a criminal record in regards to employment opportunities (Pager, 2003; Pager, Western, & Sugie, 2009) and social reactions (Lemert, 1951; Matza, 1969), to its potentially devastating impacts on personal relationships (Mills & Codd, 2008; Wolff & Draine, 2004). Extending these ideas, offending is an attitude object that is particularly likely to foster ambivalence, because of the costs it generates for those who rub against it, whether wilfully or not.

Finally, research suggests that certain types of relationships are, by their nature, more ambivalence-inducing than others. For instance, long-enduring social ties, specifically those of an undetermined duration, which foster frequent contacts, while also entailing a strong sense of obligation, nurture more interpersonal tension. This socially tense state in turn increases one's chances of experiencing internal conflict (Fingerman, Hay, & Birditt, 2004; R .K. Merton & Barber, 1963). Of course, these characteristics are especially representative of family bonds, which have been found to generate individual ambivalence (Connidis & McMullin, 2002; Fingerman et al., 2004; Fingerman, Pitzer, Lefkowitz, Birditt, & Mroczek, 2008; Luescher & Pillemer, 1998).

Beyond these features, the emotional intensity invested in one's social ties is also linked to internal conflict, with closer bonds being more susceptible to cause interpersonal frictions (Fingerman et al., 2004; Sillars & Scott, 1983). Given their potential significance in an individual's eyes, any type of relationships can thus potentially provoke intrapersonal

ambivalence. Research suggests that the social ties that are the focus of this thesis, that is, those that bind an individual who offends with a prosocial significant other, largely fulfill these relational criteria. Indeed, descriptive findings from studies focused on prison visitors and the individuals who provide pre- and post-incarceration support, suggest that these supporters are mainly romantic partners, parents, children, siblings, and friends (Braman, 2004; Christian & Kennedy, 2011; Condry, 2007; Schafer, 1994). Importantly, an overwhelming proportion of these individuals are female (Comfort, 2003; Girshick, 1996; Jardine, 2017), a characteristic that likely epitomizes women's higher involvement in caring responsibilities (Codd, 2007). Again, being involved in a caring role has also been found to increase one's chances of experiencing ambivalence (Connidis & McMullin, 2002).

Research Problem

The empirical work presented in this thesis is devoted to the experiences of individuals who come to navigate at the confluence of the prosocial and the antisocial in their social universe. More specifically, it seeks to understand what happens when a significant relationship is simultaneously tainted by both the offending conduct of one of its actors and the prosocial attitude of the other. As argued throughout this chapter, it is hypothesized that the clear opposition that exists among divergent attitudes toward moral norms is likely to generate ambivalence. The analytical chapters of this project are based on a multiple-methods design, which intends to assess this 'ambivalence hypothesis' among both individuals who offend and their prosocial relatives. Because the analyses are conducted over the course of two distinct studies, relying on two datasets that have their own sets of strengths and limits, they are presented in turn.

First, this research endeavour focuses on the experiences of prosocial relatives. Based on a qualitative study conducted with 18 relatives of people who have offended, Chapter 4 begins by thoroughly reviewing how these individuals describe the negative and positive aspects of their relational histories. As will become clear, the overlapping presence of 'good' and 'bad' gives rise to deep feelings of ambivalence as their relationships with someone who breaks the law evolves. The depth of the data collected through the qualitative interviews

allows the analysis to be pushed even further in Chapter 5, which assesses the various strategies used by relatives to manage this ambivalence.

Driven by the same theoretical thrust of ambivalence, Chapter 6 shifts the analytical focus to the people who are the focus of the social theories of crime and desistance: those who offend. The quantitative component of this multiple-methods thesis is based on a large sample of individuals who have been incarcerated in the province of Québec, Canada. In line with the general aim of this research project, the analyses seek to investigate the interconnections that exist between the social environments of study members and their likelihood to experience ambivalence. Special attention is paid to the prosocial/antisocial nature of the relationships in which these individuals are embedded.

While the dual nature of the analytical strategy employed in this thesis could be conceived of as a weakness, one that highlights a rupture between its different sections, this strategy is instead one of the thesis' main strengths. Indeed, in addition to shedding light on ambivalence, an understudied yet potentially fruitful concept in criminology, the different methodological strategies used demonstrate how ambivalence can be successfully explored through various means, whether qualitative or quantitative. This research endeavour is pertinent, because it aims to understand the complexities inherent to the relationships that bind individuals who act illegally to their relatives, and to comprehend the ambivalences that emerge as a result. While the theoretical and practical advantages of this inquiry will be explored in more detail in the Conclusion, the following chapter describes the methodological strategy used to assess the ambivalence hypothesis.

Chapter 3

Methods

While the experience of being someone who actively takes part in illicit ventures differs from that of her/his prosocial relatives, their realities are inextricably connected. Indeed, their social connection fosters a convergence between the prosocial and the antisocial, a tense opposition that both parties come to confront. As posited in the previous chapter, developing a thorough understanding of the social influence that operates between these people requires considering the commonalities of their experiences, notably how it renders both susceptible to the experience of ambivalence.

In this chapter, I engage in a reflexive discussion about how I became interested in these questions, and about how I developed the ambivalence hypothesis examined in this project. Doing so, I explain how my academic and personal trajectories were interspersed with a series of serendipitous events that have not only shaped the methodological strategy I developed, but also forged my reflections about social relationships, influence, and moral attitudes. While I had originally planned on using a deductively driven mixed methods design, my experiences rather led me to devise a multiple methods approach, and to embrace an abductive mode of reasoning. Once the work I present in this manuscript has been contextualized and the theoretical thrust of the project has been identified, I review the methodological strategy used to assess the ambivalence hypothesis. I explain how a multiple methods design is particularly well suited to examine a phenomenon that affects two different groups of people: those who offend and their prosocial relatives. The two studies that compose my research endeavour are then presented, along with their respective strengths and weaknesses, before I lay out the analytical plan deployed over the following chapters.

Serendipity and the Research Endeavour

At its inception—back when the work was more focused on theoretical considerations than on actual data—my project and academic interests revolved around offending trajectories. Specifically, I sought to study the dynamic interconnections between the social bonds of people who offend, their subjective outlooks, and their illegal conduct. As I moved toward that goal, I became acquainted with the propositions of life-course criminology, mainly through the work of Sampson and Laub (1993; see also Laub & Sampson, 2003). Their writings made me especially familiar with Hirschi's (1969) views on social control, which in turn enticed me to

learn more about the other mechanisms of social influence that are central in criminology: learning (Akers, 1973; Sutherland, 1947) and support (Cullen, 1994). While I understood the importance of one's interpersonal bonds in shaping her/his conduct, my years as an undergraduate student of psychology incited me to wonder whether these sociological explanations of crime and desistance might be overlooking internal processes. I found comfort in the writings of Matza (1964; Sykes & Matza, 1957), Maruna (2001), Giordano and her colleagues (2003; 2002), and of Presser and Sandberg (Presser, 2008; Presser & Sandberg, 2015; Sandberg, 2016) who taught me that cognitive and narrative mechanisms also shaped individual action in significant ways. Although these psychological processes have always given impetus to my scientific curiosity, I realized that human conduct, including offending and desistance, was driven by both social and internal factors (Farrall & Bowling, 1999; Healy, 2013; King, 2014; LeBel, Burnett, Maruna, & Bushway, 2008).

In a sense, certain flavours of the work I did back then carried over into this thesis, but things also shifted in a direction I certainly did not expect. As I was discovering and integrating the teachings of these scholars and slowly forging my doctoral research agenda, I still needed to secure data and develop a sound methodological strategy to examine the relationships between the social and internal elements of life and their link with offending/desistance. At that time, I had been involved in a side-project with my research supervisor for Québec's Ministry of Public Safety. As their research department had been satisfied with the work we produced, I was authorized to use their data for my doctoral studies. As a first year PhD student I thus had access to a dataset containing information on several thousand individuals who had been under the purview of Québec's Correctional Services (QCS). As I compared my situation with that of most of my fellow students, I saw this data as a gold mine that would help me submit my doctoral thesis within three years. In retrospect, I was obviously naïve and wrong. While the dataset contained pertinent information about the social environments of numerous people who had been involved in illegal activities, it lacked the depth I needed to explore their subjective experiences to my satisfaction. This was, of course, understandable, as the data was not collected with my academic inclinations in mind: it was gathered by QCS, an organization whose aims are different from mine on many levels. Although the limited richness of the data was unsurprising, it remained frustrating. To palliate

some of that irritation, I was planning on conducting analyses with individuals who engaged in offending in order to grasp the famous 'human voice' behind the processes I aimed to explore.[13]

Looking back, I realize that the discomfort I had towards my data's methodological shortcomings rendered me particularly alert to any chance that might arise that would allow me to get my hands on an additional source of information. Simultaneously, a latent feeling of uselessness resulting from numerous years of graduate studies was slowing taking its toll on me, as well as on my motivation for work. During that unsettling period, I came across a posting from *Relais Famille*[14], a community organization whose mission is to offer services to the relatives of individuals who will be, are, or have been in touch with the criminal justice system. They were looking for volunteers to help with their weekly activities. I chose to get involved and was eagerly integrated into their project.

Getting involved with people—as opposed to sitting in front of a computer screen or 'interacting' with books all day—seemed like a good strategy to deal with my growing sense of futility (and it did, in many meaningful ways). At the same time, volunteering opened me up to a whole new reality, one that I had not previously considered, and, importantly, one that the criminological literature had thus far not revealed to me. The mothers, fathers, spouses, sisters, and friends I was helping through *Relais Famille*'s activities were the prosocial people that Sampson, Laub, Hirschi, Sutherland, Akers, Giordano, and Cullen had been talking about for all those years, yet I knew practically nothing about them and their experiences. As they started opening up to me, it became clear that their lives were inextricably intertwined with, and affected by the offending conduct of their loved one. At that point that I realized that I could never truly understand how 'social factors' affected the people who offend if I disregarded the voices of their relatives. Of course, some might argue that I had merely been lucky in finding this organization, which would become a central piece to this thesis. I see it as serendipity—sometimes, you have to be receptive to the opportunities that life presents you with.

[13] These interviews were conducted. As will be seen below, however, their content could not be used in the context of this thesis.
[14] Loosely translates to *Family Relay*.

In a nutshell, these are the stories of the two data sources that lie at the heart of this thesis. Although my work began as a fairly 'traditional', quantitatively driven research project, my encounter with the members of *Relais Famille* encouraged me to revise my methodological strategy and to embrace a multiple methods design. In contrast to mixed methods[15], multiple methods approaches consist of two (or more) complete research projects, usually one quantitative and one qualitative, which are methodologically independent of one another and which can be published separately, if so desired (Morse, 2003; Morse & Maddox, 2013). Though they can act as stand-alones, these projects are nonetheless inextricably linked as they seek to fulfill the single, overarching aim driving the entire research endeavour. It is their combination in an integrative piece that truly brings out the advantages of multiple methods designs, as it provides a richer description and understanding of the problem at hand.

In line with the propositions exposed in Chapter 2, the overarching aim of this multiple methods thesis is to better comprehend what happens when individuals come to navigate at the confluence of the prosocial and the antisocial. More specifically, it seeks to assess the ambivalence hypothesis among both individuals who offend and their prosocial relatives. This empirical goal is reached through the combination of findings from two distinct, but complementary studies: 1) a quantitative component examining ambivalence and its interpersonal sources among those who break the law; and 2) a qualitative component delving into the experiences of their prosocial relatives. To be sure, this would not have been possible had I not become personally involved with *Relais Famille,* an experience that drastically morphed my doctoral work. Indeed, it did much more than add an additional component to my research endeavour: it also shaped my thinking about social influence, fostering a drastic shift in my mode of reasoning.

A Journey from Deduction to Abduction

The advantages of multiple methods designs can only fully thrive when all of its components are informed by a single mode of reasoning. According to Morse and Maddox

[15] Mixed method designs consist of a complete, core study that is independent and publishable on its own, and of a supplementary analytical strategy, which serves as a complement to the principal component and that is generally not publishable without it (Morse & Maddox, 2013).

(2013) this means that each part must follow the *theoretical thrust* of the research endeavour. Because multiple methods approaches often entail conducting studies that rely on different methods, and because these typically entail divergent modes of reasoning, it is important to identify which component drives the research project. Failure to identify this theoretical thrust is problematic, as it risks leaving the fit between the independent studies unspecified or worse, disconnected (Morse, 2009). As I began to sketch the story of my academic journey above, I explained how my thinking and interests were shaped by a combination of internal pressures and external events. Following Morse's recommendations, I now delve into how my mode of reasoning—the theoretical thrust of this thesis—has also been moulded by my experiences.

After years of training in quantitative research methods, I have to admit that I find comfort in deduction. In fact, this mode of reasoning informed the original version of this thesis. Indeed, as I read about the mechanisms of social influence described by control, learning and support theorists, and about the subjective experiences of the people who offend, I began to think about how to test the interplay between social and internal factors and its role in offending. Once the QCS authorized me to use their data for my personal inquiries, my mind started wandering between various types of predictive statistical models, with mediation analysis particularly high on my preference list. The interviews I was planning to conduct would inject some depth into this project.

While the method design I had in mind shifted to a multiple methods approach when I encountered the people of *Relais Famille*, I remained entrenched in my quantitatively driven, deductive mode of reasoning. Following the literature I knew and the one I discovered about relatives, I constructed a semi-directed interview guide that would essentially give me more insights into the mechanisms that my quantitative analyses would uncover.[16] In fact, when the

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[16] The qualitative interviews with individuals who have offended were planned the same way: the guide I prepared followed a deductive logic in which I essentially explored what my quantitative data allowed me to see. I completed interviews with 14 of these individuals prior to conducting interviews with their relatives. Of course, at that time, I did not know my work would take a different direction. The themes I explored in these interviews turned out to be too limiting to include this qualitative data in my thesis. Most notably, while I focused on the relationships these people maintained with friends involved in offending, I did not explore the bonds they kept with prosocial others, a central theme in this project. Time and money considerations also made it impossible for me to enter into a new stage of data collection. Looking back, I consider this an unfortunate mistake on my part, albeit one that I could not prevent.

idea of interviewing relatives first occurred to me, I was convinced that it was a stroke of genius: I was going to get privileged, insider access into what it means to maintain a relationship with someone who has offended, but also—and mainly—into why people actually become involved in these illegal actions. During these interviews, I asked them why they thought their loved ones had acted the way they had, thinking that they would be the bearers of some undiscovered truth. As my encounters with them progressed, however, I slowly realized how wrong I had been. Like most of us—and probably much more than any of us—they are at pains to explain why people offend, let alone people they deeply care about. In fact, making sense of these acts is one of the hardest parts of their journey.

These preliminary analytical insights made it clear that the rigidity of my deductive strategy was not suited to the experiences of these people. While not a central theme of the original interview guide, most of them thoroughly described their views on norm-breaking in general, and explored questions of 'morality' and 'normality.' At the same time, they talked at great length about the strong interpersonal bonds they maintained with the person who had engaged in offending. In order to respect the words of the people who generously chose to take part in this project, I knew the focus needed to shift towards the processes of social influence that subjugated participants within the confines of their relationship with someone who had broken the law, as well as to the uncertainties and ambivalences that emerged from it.

Following this instinct, I delved into the ambivalence literature. As I learned about this bipolar concept and its inextricable links with personal attitudes, I was reminded of Matza's work on drift. I remembered his insights about delinquents who alternate between conventional and deviant courses of action. When the literature further taught me that ambivalence often emerges out of interpersonal experience, I began to wonder about the relationships that bind between individuals who offend and their prosocial relatives. Together, these insights shifted the focus of my work from offending/desistance to the complex reality that is created within social bonds that exist at the confluence of the prosocial and the antisocial.

In essence, my qualitative study paved the way to an unexpected finding, a 'discovery' that needed to be addressed. As I sought to comprehend the tension felt by the people of *Relais Famille*, I drifted into an abductive mode of reasoning (Pierce, 1955). Taking advantage of my

previous knowledge and expanding it through pertinent writings, I developed the hypothesis that would drive my thesis (Levin-Rozalis, 2010; Paavola & Hakkarainen, 2005): when people come to navigate at the confluence of the prosocial and the antisocial via their participation in a significant relationships, they are likely to experience ambivalence. The culmination of my thought process was presented in Chapter 2.[17]

While this thesis started as a deductively driven project, it morphed into a multiple methods approach informed by its qualitative component and guided by an adbuctive mode of reasoning. In this sense, the qualitative study presented in this thesis has priority in the complete research project: it is its main driving force (Morse & Maddox, 2013). This does not mean, however, that the quantitative study is of lesser importance or that it plays only a secondary role. Rather, it simply implies that its statistical models are driven by the theoretical thrust that was generated by the qualitative component. Although the two studies presented over the remainder of this chapter are empirically independent, their analyses are therefore conducted with the same aim in mind: to assess the ambivalence hypothesis. As each component focuses on a different group of individuals—those who offend or their relatives—this thesis can further examine the generalizability of this hypothesis and the extent to which the experiences of these people are comparable. This is an important process in the abductive mode of reasoning (Levin-Rozalis, 2010), one that can readily be tested in multiple methods designs (Morse & Maddox, 2013).

In an ideal world, both components would have included information gathered from the standpoints of both the person who has offended and her/his relative, a strategy increasingly advocated by criminologists (Haynie, 2001; Haynie & Osgood, 2005; Simons, Stewart, Gordon, Conger, & Elder, 2002; Weaver, 2016). This turned out to be impossible in the context of this research endeavour due to data-access issues and time considerations. To be

[17] When I first started exploring the ambivalence literature, I also became interested in understanding the outcomes of this experience for people. Combined with my unrelenting tendency to see criminological studies as incomplete if they don't address criminal action (thanks to years of quantitative work), this eventually prompted me to wonder whether ambivalence could somehow be linked to offending or even promote desistance. While Burnett (2004) and Carlsson (2017) have successfully studied this association, this thesis was not the right platform to assess this possibility. A previous version of this thesis included this proposition but as aptly highlighted by reviewers, the data did not allow for a valid examination of the question, and the prediction of offending went beyond the scope of this thesis.

certain, this is an important limit in this project, as the kinds of information collected, the types of analyses conducted and the conclusions drawn are not entirely equivalent between the two studies. The multiple methods strategy used, however, allows for exploring the research questions from multiple vantage points. This thesis can therefore serve as a methodological blueprint on how to study ambivalence and its interpersonal sources using both qualitative and quantitative research. This also has the added advantage of bringing together scholars from diverse traditions—from social theorists of crime and desistance to researchers working on relatives, who rely on either qualitative or quantitative methodologies. The following sections present the two datasets in turn, along with the analytical plans that were adopted to examine this thesis' research question.

A Qualitative Study about Ambivalence among Prosocial Relatives

This thesis was greatly influenced by the experiences of the prosocial relatives of those who offend. Its research question is thus first examined through data that was collected over a series of qualitative interviews I conducted with a small group of these individuals who love and care for someone who has offended. The majority of them were recruited via *Relais Famille*, the community organization presented above. By the time I completed the interviews for this project, I had volunteered for their activities for an entire year. Over these months, I have not only built strong connections with the organization's coordinator, but also with its members—those individuals who would become central to the development of my ideas about social bonds, social norms, attitudes, and ambivalence. In order to fully understand how this thesis evolved and to grasp its methodological intricacies, my personal bond to *Relais Famille* requires further attention.

The level of my involvement in the organization's activities has fluctuated over time due to external circumstances. At some points, I had to cut down my participations either because intense periods of work left me with little spare time, or because staff turnover induced slowdowns in activities. Despite this, I have been physically present at *Relais Famille* at least once a month over the interviewing period. My implication mainly revolved around one of its activities: the discussion group. During these monthly gatherings, members were invited to share their experiences in relation to pre-established themes. These included issues

such as the management of shame, self-care, and emotional difficulties. While the organization's coordinator is the one normally in charge of this activity due to both the sensitive nature of the topics covered and confidentiality issues, my background in criminology and psychology prompted her to include me nonetheless. My role was to moderate and facilitate the discussions between members and ensure the maintenance of a climate of respect. Over time, I have participated in several additional activities such as community days and art therapy, and I have also organized a conference on offending trajectories. While they might seem anecdotal, these details are important as they describe the kinds of contacts I had had with several members of *Relais Famille* who later took part in this study. While I did not record what these men and women shared with me before their formal interviews, I could not simply erase the information from my memory. These experiences obviously helped me build rapport with the men and women, and provided me with a better understanding of the stories they shared.

***Relais Famille*: Mission, Message and Structure**

In the 1990s, a group of people working with individuals who were incarcerated noticed that their clients' relatives were largely ignored by the criminal justice system. In order to fill this gap, they created an organization that catered to their needs. The main mission of their project was (and still is) to provide services to those who support people who have broken the law, and to help them achieve this goal without being overwhelmed by feelings of shame, fear, guilt, and rejection. Because it relies exclusively on a small grant from the provincial Ministry of Family, *Relais Famille* and its activities are run by one paid staff member (the coordinator, who is required to be trained in psychosocial work) and several volunteers. Besides one-on-one meetings with the coordinator, numerous activities and services are proposed, such as discussion groups, writing workshops, art therapy, and personal accompaniment to the courthouse or to penal institutions. Each year, a handful of conferences concerning topics related to incarceration, criminal justice, individual rights, and offending are also presented. Additionally, *Relais Famille* offers an information service to individuals who simply want to learn how the system 'works,' without becoming personally or emotionally involved.

On a more personal level, the organization helps its members make sense of their experience, a mission accomplished through three main channels. First, documentation is available in both paper and electronic versions. In addition to homemade documents, various informative pamphlets from governmental and non-profit associations such as the *Association des Services de Rehabilitation du Québec*[18] and the Canadian Families and Corrections Network are available and distributed. These include, for example, information on the impacts of having a criminal record and on visitation procedures (phone calls, conjugal visits, etc.).

The second channel through which information is shared is through phone or face-to-face individual conversations with *Relais Famille*'s coordinator. Not only does she represent the organization and its values, but she also provides frontline information and psychological support. Through their discussion with this person, members can start to make sense of the events that have taken place, and of the various feelings and emotional predicaments that accompany their experiences.

Finally, the various activities offered by the community group also serve as a channel for sense-making. During these activities, members gather to discuss specific topics related to the experience of being related to someone who has engaged in illegal activities. Personal testimonies—from both relatives and from individuals who have offended—are also part of the agenda. These often depict 'success' stories in which the protagonists have been able to pull through the hardships associated with incarceration. The communal nature of group activities is important: relatives who take part in them often refer to other participants as their 'family.' Above and beyond the topics covered and discussed, it is through the informal conversations that information and tools to deal with events are disseminated. The more 'experienced' members (i.e., those whose stories started a longer time ago) offer support and advice to newer members. These informal support networks are essential to the functioning of *Relais Famille*.

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[18] Loosely translates to the Association for the Rehabilitation Services of Québec.

As will become clear over the course of the analytical chapter, several relatives used this community organization as a means to expand their personal repertoire[19] and to make sense of their experience (see also Condry, 2007). For this reason, it is crucial to review its precepts before engaging in the analytical and interpretation phases. First, *Relais Famille* adheres to the idea that all negative experiences can be transformed into rewarding and meaningful ones. Second, it recognizes and highlights the various impacts—emotional, social, familial, and financial—that the relatives of people who have offended must endure. As a matter of fact, these individuals are portrayed as the 'invisible' victims of the system who must also 'serve the sentence' imposed on those who have broken the law. Finally, the organization's mission is grounded in the idea that relatives play a significant role in preventing recidivism: given proper support, they can and should maintain positive relationships with the person engaged in offending. Family is quite literally described as the 'best guarantee for successful re-entry.'

Sample

Relais Famille welcomes anyone who provides support to an individual who has broken the law. While a large portion of its members are involved in traditional kinships (e.g.: parents, siblings, children) or are romantic partners, several are engaged in other forms of relationships. For instance, some described maintaining friendly relationships with someone who had offended. Differing slightly from other studies on relatives, which typically focus on blood relations or on romantic partnerships (Condry, 2007; Fishman, 1990; Granja, 2016; Naser & Visher, 2006), the sample in this study thus mirrors the more flexible definition of 'relatives' applied by *Relais Famille*. Going beyond the traditional view of the nuclear family, this thesis' sample highlights the heterogeneous nature of the group of people who maintain social ties with those who offend (Christian, Martinez, & Martinez, 2015; see Codd, 2007; N. E. Schafer, 1994). In addition, it has the added advantage of allowing parallels to be drawn with the social theories of crime and desistance, which often include non-kinship ties.

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[19] The concept of repertoire was borrowed from the work of Swidler (2001), which she defines as the personal toolkit people use to make sense of their experiences. This concept will be reviewed in Chapters 4 and 5, as it is particularly important in the analyses they present.

In an ideal world, this qualitative sample would have included individuals who no longer maintain a relationship with the person who has acted illegally. Given the hardships experienced by relatives (see Chapter 1), it is more than plausible that a portion of these relations get severed over time. While certain people encountered in this study were uncertain about the future of their relationship, none of them had completely drawn a line under them. It is, of course, easy to imagine how complicated recruiting people who have 'once been in a relationship with someone who has offended' is, a difficulty that others have faced before (Christian & Kennedy, 2011; Johnson & Easterling, 2015). Including the experiences of these individuals would have been informative. Unfortunately, despite several attempts to locate such people, this turned out to impossible.

In that same ideal world, this qualitative sample would also have included the person with whom participants maintained a relationship (i.e., the offense perpetrator). This, of course, would have provided additional depth to the analysis as an important part of social influence passes through the interaction between individuals (Weaver, 2016). While this was the original methodological plan, and while some researchers have been able to collect such data before (for instance, see Christian & Kennedy, 2011; Leverentz, 2014), this task turned out to be far more challenging than anticipated. First, most of the participants' loved ones were incarcerated at the time of the interview. As the ethical approval for this thesis did not authorize access to correctional facilities for recruitment, interviewing these individuals was impossible. Despite employing the snowball technique for the few individuals who were not incarcerated, none agreed to take part in the study.

Who are the relatives met in this study?

As seen in Table 1, despite the loose definition of relatives used in this thesis, the 18 participants who shared their experiences in this thesis were, in many ways, similar to those who have taken part in previous studies on relatives. On average, they were 47 years old at the time of the interview, with the youngest being 27 years of age and the oldest 79. In terms of gender, the sample overwhelmingly consists of women (n = 15, 83.3% of sample), a common feature in the literature (Granja, 2016; Jardine, 2017). As argued previously, this characteristic is likely attributable to females' higher likelihood of fulfilling a more supportive role for individuals who are incarcerated than males (Comfort, 2008; Condry, 2007; Girshick, 1996).

Also in line with previous studies, Table 1 shows that the vast majority of the 'supported' individuals (i.e., those who have engaged in offending) were males (Condry, 2007; Hannem & Leonardi, 2014). Indeed, out of the 18 relatives interviewed, Philip (father) is the only one engaged in a relationship with a female who had broken the law. Evidently, this also echoes the gender distribution of individuals admitted to correctional facilities, with males being convicted for criminal offenses in larger proportions than females. In Canada for instance, women represented 15% of overall admissions to correctional services in 2014-2015 (Reitano, 2017).

Table 1

Descriptive information concerning the 18 relatives of people who have offended

Name	**Information pertaining to participants**			**Information pertaining to person who has offended**			
	Age	**Relational status**[c]	**Self-help group**[d]	**Gender**	**Age**	**Offense type**	**Judicial status at time of interview**
Kara	51	Romantic partner (w)	RF; AA	Male	55	Lucrative; Violent; Sexual	Incarcerated (life)
Norma	47	Romantic partner (w)	RF	Male	50	Lucrative; Violent	Incarcerated (life)
Laura[a]	62	Romantic partner (w)	RF	Male	61	Sexual	Incarcerated
Deanna	61	Friend	RF; AA	Male	36	Lucrative; Violent	Incarcerated
Rosa	79	Mother	RF	Male	51	Sexual	Liberated
Mia	33	Romantic partner (f)	RF	Male	35	Lucrative, Violent	Incarcerated[e]
Philip	57	Father	RF	Female	21	Lucrative	Probation
Kathryn[a]	29	Daughter	None	Male	61	Sexual	Incarcerated
Paule	30	Romantic partner (g)	None	Male	30	Lucrative	Liberated
Dorothy[b]	56	Mother	RF; Al-A	Male	28	Lucrative; Violent	Incarcerated
Jonathan[b]	55	Father	RF	Male	28	Lucrative; Violent	Incarcerated
Mildred	45	Mother	RF	Male	23	Lucrative; Violent	Parole
Louise	27	Sister	RF	Male	20	Violent	Incarcerated
Inara	33	Romantic partner (g)	RF	Male	31	Lucrative	Incarcerated
Isabella	59	Mother	RF	Male	29	Sexual	Incarcerated
Charles	73	Father	RF; GA	Male	47	Lucrative; Violent	Awaiting trial
Ellen	30	Romantic partner (g)	RF	Male	32	Lucrative; Violent	Incarcerated
River	27	Friend	RF	Male	30; 32	Lucrative; Violent; Sexual	Incarcerated (ex-boyfriend/friend); Parole (friend)

Notes. [a] Laura was Kathryn's step-mother and, as such, they were related to the same man; [b] Dorothy and Jonathan were married and the parent of the same young man; [c] for romantic partners, w = wife, f = fiancée, g = girlfriend; [d] RF = *Relais Famille*; AA = Alcoholics Anonymous; Al-A = Al-Anon; GA = Gamblers Anonymous; [e] Mia's boyfriend was incarcerated during her first interview and under parole during her second.

When considering the nature of relationships, the literature tends to be overrepresented by mothers and wives (Condry, 2007; Fishman, 1990; Hannem & Leonardi, 2014). However, people involved in other types of relationships, including male relatives, also play important caring roles (Schafer, 1994). These descriptive characteristics are consonant with the makeup of the study sample. Table 1 shows that, among the 15 female relatives met, seven (38.9%)[20] were romantic partners (four girlfriends and three wives), four (22.2%) were mothers, two (11.1%) were friends[21], one (5.6%) was a daughter, and one (5.6%) was a sister. Notably, the three (16.7%) male relatives were fathers. Importantly, two pairs of participants were related to the same individual who had offended. Specifically, Laura and her stepdaughter Kathryn were interviewed concerning a single man: Laura's husband and Kathryn's father. Similarly, the couple formed by Dorothy and Jonathan shared a common relation to their son. Despite the important overlaps between the experiences of the participants forming each duo, interviews were conducted on a one-on-one basis in order to ensure the collection of individual narratives.

In addition to this sociodemographic description, several other characteristics need to be underlined, as they are important to understanding the experiences of the relatives of people who offend. First, while all participants were in a relationship with someone who had broken the law, they were at different moments in their 'trajectories' within the criminal justice system. For instance, at the time of interview, thirteen (72.2 %) relatives were in a relationship with someone who was incarcerated, two (11.1%) with someone who was on probation or parole, one (5.6%) with someone awaiting trial, and two (11.1%) with someone who was no longer under the purview of the correctional services. The participants were also at different 'moments' in their relational histories when they discovered that their loved one had

[20] All percentages shown in this paragraph relate to the total sample.

[21] One of these friends, River, is actually involved in several relationships with individuals who have engaged in offending actions. In the course of the interview, however, it became clear that her supportive role was limited to two particular relationships with men she described as friends. The first is her son's father. While they were no longer romantically involved at the time of the interview and while their relationship was rocky, she still described being close to and caring for him. The second relationship at the heart of her narrative is a man she described as a friend. As will become clear, their relationship was also very unstable. Both are considered in this study because they were equally important to her story.

The second friend, Deanna, described her relationship as one of accompaniment rather than friendship. In order to ease classification, and because of the way in which she talked about her relationship, she was included in the friendship category.

offended.[22] While some were already in a relationship with that person upon discovery, others began their relationship after they had learned about the illegal actions. Because of the nature of their relationships, the seven parents obviously knew their relative prior to the beginning of any offending actions. This was also the case for Kathryn (daughter) and Louise (sister). Besides these nine relatives, two additional women, Laura (wife) and Inara (girlfriend), also knew their partner before they discovered that illegal actions had been committed. The five remaining romantic partners and two friends entered into their relationships fully aware that their loved one had broken the law.

Second, several participants were involved in various self-help groups. As described above, and as confirmed in Table 1, the majority of them were active members of *Relais Famille*. In addition, participants reported being involved in other groups such as Alcoholics Anonymous (AA; n = 2) and Gamblers Anonymous (GA; n = 1). Three relatives were also members of the Al-Anon movement, a self-help organization aimed at individuals affected by the alcohol problems of a family member or a friend.[23]

Third, no sampling criterion with regard to crime type was imposed in this study's recruitment procedure. This decision was motivated by a willingness to gain insight into the full range of relatives' experiences. Of course, one of the main drawbacks of this strategy is that offense-specific results could not be drawn from the analyses. Reflecting this decision, study participants described a variety of offending activities that had been committed, ranging from sexual crimes to drug trafficking, theft, and homicide. Table 1 presents the offenses categories in which respondents' loved ones have been involved. Notably, none of the participants were the 'official' victims of these offenses.[24]

A final point deserves to be addressed in this section. The people who benefit from the services of *Relais Famille* are the ones who struggle with the legal difficulties of the person they cherish, many of whom also fail to comprehend the events that brought them to this point.

[22] This information is not shown in Table 1, as it will be covered in the analyses presented in Chapter 4.
[23] While distinct from the AA and NA movements, Al-Anon's functioning and global vision is based on highly similar precepts. Notably, its activities are based on adapted versions of the 12 steps and 12 traditions (see al-anon.org).
[24] As will be seen in Chapter 4, this does not entail that participants were never victimized over the course of their relational histories.

It is thus perhaps unsurprising that, by and large, these members are exemplars of the prosocial relatives that are central to the social theories of crime and desistance presented in Chapter 1. While some have had personal experiences with certain forms of deviance in their past, the vast majority of participants are not involved in offending and perceive norm-breaking in a negative light. Of course, the prosocial nature of these individuals is central to this thesis and, as such, will be analysed in depth in Chapter 4.

Procedures

Data collection

Of the eighteen participants interviewed in this study, eight were recruited via *Relais Famille*'s coordinator, seven via face-to-face encounters, two via snowball sampling, and one via a personal friend. Notably, four members (three women and one man) of *Relais Famille* were approached, but chose not to participate. One woman said that she did not feel comfortable taking part in a project about offending because her husband had been found innocent and, as such, had never offended. A second woman never mentioned the project after I presented it to her. Individuals who take part in the organization's activities often deal with multiple and complex problems. As she and I saw each other several times after this introduction, and in order to respect the hardships she was dealing with, I simply assumed that she did not want to participate. Similarly, the two other members who declined participation—a couple—told me that they preferred not to take part in the project because they were going through very intense and emotionally troubling times at home.

Out of the eighteen participants, I had had significant previous contacts with seven of them when they took part in the interview.[25] As previously stated, because I had already built up a rapport with these people, these encounters felt more 'natural' than those with people I was meeting for the first time. While none of the eighteen interviews were uncomfortable or awkward, I felt a particular level of ease on the part of participants who already knew me. In all cases, the research project was described to them and they were given a copy of the consent form before being told to take their time to decide whether they were interested in

[25] Kara, Laura, Deanna, Rosa, Mia, Philip, and River.

participating. Once participants agreed to take part in the study, an interview was scheduled in accordance with their availabilities. In order to increase respondents' ease with the interviewing process, they were asked whether they had any preferences concerning location. In nine cases, participants suggested their homes or work offices. Other locations included the offices of *Relais Famille* (n = 4), coffee shops (n = 3), and offices at the University of Montréal (n = 2). On average, interviews lasted 90 minutes, ranging from 70 to 265 minutes. In order to facilitate the transcription process, interviews were recorded upon agreement from participants. All but one participant agreed to this. While the research design called for one interview per participant, one respondent, Mia (girlfriend), was met with twice upon her suggestion. Indeed, because several months had elapsed since our first interview and her experience had considerably evolved, she contacted me to suggest a second interview. Both interviews are included in the analyses.

In following the suggestion of Presser (2010), memos were created after each interview, which recorded details on the interpersonal interactions between participants and I. It also included a running summary of what I perceived, at that time, to be the main narrative shared during the interview. The memos also documented the main points pertinent to the study's themes. Additionally, all tape-recorded interviews were transcribed verbatim. In order to gain a more thorough and deeper feel for the participants' narratives and to ease myself into the analytical process, I completed the transcriptions of every interview myself. The close to 40 hours of recorded material generated over 500 single-spaced pages of text. While it is not a specific concern for the present study, fine language, and articulation details were transcribed to preserve the emotions and feeling of the rapport between the interviewees and I.

Eliciting the narratives of relatives

Semi-directed interviews were conducted with participants after the consent form was thoroughly reviewed. As described above, the interview guide was constructed through the deductive mode of reasoning that originally directed this thesis. Though the underlying goal of the interview was to explore the experiences of participants as the relatives of individuals who offend, many pre-established themes sought to examine the factors that influence offending, albeit through the eyes of participants. When respondents did not naturally cover these topics in the course of their interview, follow-up questions were used to elicit their take on these

issues. Of course, these queries were adapted to the specific narrative being told, and to the specific interviewee. At the conclusion of the interview, a short series of questions were asked. These concerned 1) sociodemographic information of both participants and their loved ones; 2) the extent to which respondents considered that they knew her/his relative and 3) whether respondents had any other personal or vicarious experiences with offending or deviance. The interview guide and this short questionnaire are presented in Appendix A. All interviews were conducted in French. The excerpts presented throughout this thesis have been translated to English.

Because I was already accustomed to qualitative methods and had some previous experience in conducting semi-directed interviews, I put great effort in respecting the words of participants. After the initial probe, by which I simply asked them to "tell me about [the person who had offended] and about their story"[26], respondents were thus allotted all the time they needed to talk about their loved one and/or about any related topics they chose to cover. Because they were aware of the study's focus from the outset, the stories they shared systematically revolved around the offending actions of that person. Several narratives naturally started with early life circumstances and continued up to present events and realities. However, many unexpected themes also emerged as participants described the intense emotional connection they felt toward the person who had broken the law, and their subjective position vis-à-vis antisocial conduct and social norms. As described above, these topics shaped the analyses that are presented in this thesis.

Qualitative Analytical Strategy

Because I conducted all interviews, I was fairly comfortable with their content by the end of the data collection period. During the transcription period that followed, I paid particular attention to the main themes that emerged from the narratives of participants, with a particular focus on those that I had predetermined (see Appendix A). Following Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña (2014), a coding grid was elaborated around these, with themes divided

[26] In contrast to 'traditional' interviews conducted with people who offend, a large share of the reality of participants is tainted by a conduct that is not their own. Rather, it belongs to someone they love. As such, I understand their narratives as second-order narratives (Christian & Kennedy, 2011; Condry, 2007).

into subthemes when necessary. It is mainly during this process that new themes came to light, each of which was added to the initial coding scheme. As described above, these included participants' views concerning normality and morality, as well as their personal experience of ambivalence. Once transcriptions were completed, each interview was thoroughly reviewed and coded in accordance with this grid. During the individual coding of interviews, transcripts were read whilst simultaneously listening to the audio recordings. This allowed the coding process to capture the emotional depth and interactional dynamics of each encounter. Once all interviews were coded, an overall plan connecting the different themes was elaborated. A transversal analysis was conducted to connect the experiences of all respondents to this global plan.

The results of these analyses are presented in Chapters 4 and 5. In order to contextualize the experience of participants, Chapter 4 starts off by thoroughly describing their relationship with someone who has offended. Specifically, the analysis first focuses on the various roles these individuals fulfill and the outcomes of these actions. By examining how positive and negative elements combine over the course of their relational histories, the second part of this chapter demonstrates how being related to someone who breaks the law is an ambivalent experience. The richness of the qualitative data that was collected allowed pushing the analysis further, a methodological advantage that could not be reciprocated in the quantitative study and which will be discussed further below. In Chapter 5, I was therefore able to hone in on that ambivalence and describe the various strategies respondents employed to reduce this inherent tension.

Further considerations of qualitative analyses

Over the course of the qualitative component of this project, three important issues arose, each worthy of attention. First, in line with narrative criminology, the analyses conducted did not aim to uncover the 'truth' concerning the events that were described to me by interviewees. I contend that the role of a social researcher cannot be equated with that of a private investigator or an investigative journalist. Attention was paid, however, to 'untruths' (Presser, 2008, p. 49), and to what several authors refer to as neutralizations (Sykes & Matza, 1957). In line with Presser and Sandberg (2015), I considered these important because they provide valuable information on how individuals perceive and understand themselves and

their experiences. They not only reflect their subjective positioning and experiences, they are also constitutive of them. In line with this, the analyzed narratives are understood as subjective performances that hide the multiple and complex nature of *truths* (Frank, 2010).

Second, during the analytical phase, a distinction was noted between the narratives of relatives who had considerable 'experience' in telling their 'story' and those who did not. This issue has previously been highlighted when comparing individuals who have been 'caught' for having broken the law as opposed to those who have not (Presser, 2010). Because the experience of being 'discovered' is often associated with considerable questioning and explaining, it can entice, over time, the development of coherent and convincing narratives that are readily accessible whenever one is required to talk about themselves and about their offending conduct. While this is easy to conceive of for the narratives of individuals who have been caught for offending, a similar process seems to be at play among their relatives. This was particularly salient in respondents who were long-time active members of *Relais Famille*. Several activities offered by this group encourage participants to share their stories about the offending of the person they support. Some of the relatives who have participated in this study have thus been engaged in narrative work for quite some time, an effort that appears to have crystallized their narratives into a more coherent form than those of relatives who had not previously engaged in such work. Furthermore, the narratives of 'experienced' members tended to more strongly reflect the main precepts and overall discourse endorsed by *Relais Famille* (see above for details). Special attention was paid to this issue during analysis.

Finally, over the course of data collection, I became aware of the power dynamics inherent to the research-interview context (Riley, Schouten, & Cahill, 2003). As a PhD candidate in criminology, many respondents perceived me as an expert on crime and deviance. In several instances, they asked about my thoughts on their 'stories,' wondered if I believed their loved ones could be "saved" (Paule: girlfriend), and inquired whether "people like [their loved one]" could ever change. As will be seen in Chapter 5, analyses suggest that study participants use several strategies when trying to make sense of offending. As they sought to elicit my opinion during the research interview, I became one of these strategies. Through my

knowledge—or rather through whatever knowledge they thought I possessed—these people sought to acquire sense, related to the offending conduct that had previously eluded them.[27] As I was a direct witness to their use of this strategy, participants granted me a privileged understanding of how they deploy the other means through which they manage ambivalence.

A Quantitative Study on Ambivalence among the People Who Offend

Multiple methods designs allow for the examination of a single research question through diverse means and among various samples. This feature is particularly useful in this thesis. Indeed, as proposed in Chapter 2, navigating at the convergence of the prosocial and the antisocial is not only a likely experience for prosocial relatives, but also for those who offend. Following the abductive thrust and theoretical reasoning hitherto described, the second component of this empirical endeavour therefore seeks to examine whether this confluence also generates ambivalence among the people who break the law. Since the theoretical impulse of this thesis was derived by its qualitative component, the principal challenge of the quantitative study was to figure out how to translate this research question into empirical measures amenable to statistical analyses. Although it was not collected to examine my scientific inquiries, the QCS dataset turned out to be a valuable testing ground for my new focus.

Data

The quantitative work of this thesis is based on data from QCS, a general direction overseen by Québec's Ministry of Public Safety. This dataset contains information on 16,526 men and women who have been incarcerated in a provincial jail between April 1st 2010 and March 31st 2013.[28] Two types of data were made available through this source. First, administrative data was extracted from the DACOR[29] system, which includes the

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[27] While I attempted to fend off these questions during the course of the interview, I came back to them at the end. This often generated interesting and thoughtful conversations.
[28] The generalizability of results needs to be undertaken with caution: because provincial correctional services are exclusively responsible for the management of sentences of two years less a day, this data likely underrepresents most serious crimes such as homicide, and sexual violence, as well as serious repeat offending.
[29] DACOR stands for *dossiers administratifs correctionnels*, which translates to correctional administrative files.

sociodemographic characteristics of all members of the sample, as well as information relating to all of their criminal charges and the sentences they received for each of these offenses.

Second, the QCS database includes information extracted from formal evaluations that were conducted by trained criminal-justice professionals.[30] This data covered a retrospective period dating back to March 10, 2008, for members who had been in contact with QCS prior to the observation period. As is typical in evaluations conducted in correctional settings in Canada, this data includes two main types of information, generally gathered to assess the level of risk posed by the people who are incarcerated or who will soon be released (Government of Canada, 2014). First, it contains individual-level characteristics such as past offending, personal problems, personality and mental health issues, as well as attitudes toward crime and convention. Second, it comprises information on the social environments in which interviewees navigate, including information on their professional involvement.

The main goal of these formal assessments is to inform correctional planning. The quantitative data were thus not collected for this thesis' specific research purposes. However, the thoroughness and scope of the evaluations represent clear advantages that can be capitalized upon. Indeed, because of the nature of their work, criminal justice professionals not only have good knowledge of the individuals under scrutiny, but they also have access to privileged information. For instance, when they complete their assessments, evaluators are strongly encouraged to validate their clients' answers by consulting their official files and interviewing people who know them well (i.e., their relatives). In this sense, this data offers a realistic glimpse into the lives and social circumstances of sample members.

Study sample

While every member of the total sample (N = 16,526) was formally evaluated by criminal justice professional, a subsample (n = 1,318) was assessed on two separate occasions. This difference is likely due to the fact that such evaluations are time-consuming, and are thus

[30] As part of their evaluations, QCS professionals use the Level of Service/Case Management Inventory (LS/CMI), a validated risk prediction instrument (Andrews & Bonta, 2006; Andrews, Bonta, & Wormith, 2004). Some of the variables used in this quantitative study were extracted from these assessments. A note is made when this is the case.

conducted parsimoniously within the QCS. Individuals who spend more time in prison, which often entails involvement in more severe and/or intense offending, are more susceptible to multiple evaluations. In line with this, slight differences between members from the entire and the restricted sample were noted. Though the analyses presented in Chapter 6 are based on the restricted sample, these divergences are presented below for purposes of comparison and transparency.

Notwithstanding this caveat, the restricted sample represents a key opportunity for this thesis, which seeks to examine whether navigating among prosocially- and antisocially-oriented individuals influences one's likelihood of experiencing ambivalence. Indeed, in order to respect the temporal ordering underlying this research question, the information pertaining to social bonds must be measured prior to that pertaining to ambivalence.[31] Because both groups of variables are measured during formal assessments, it is statistically preferable to include only individuals who were evaluated twice in this specific analysis. The predictive model presented in Chapter 6 is therefore based on this restricted sample of 1,318 men and women. In order to facilitate the presentation of study measures, T0 is used to refer to the first assessment, which was completed by all individuals included in the total sample (N = 16,526), and T1 to refer to the second assessment, completed only by members of the subsample (n = 1,318).[32] For purposes of clarity, Figure 1 visually depicts this methodological specificity.

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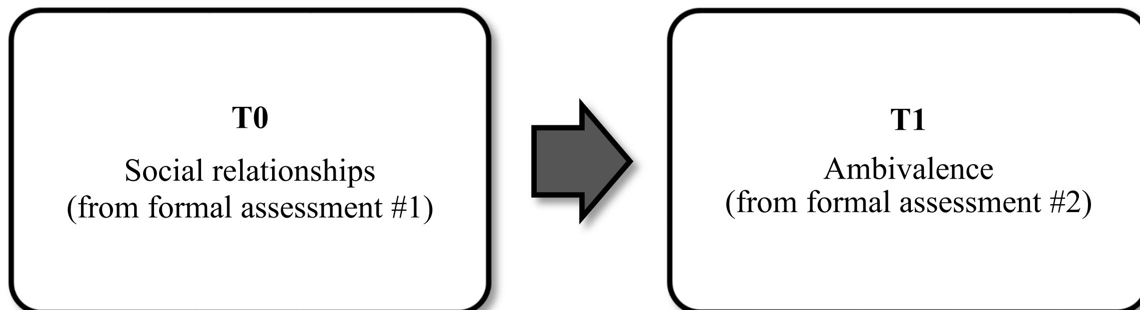
[31] The temporal stability of ambivalence was measured to assess the usefulness of this strategy. Close to 40% of individuals who were evaluated twice had changes in their attitudes toward offending and/or conventions scores (see below). This temporal change is considered important enough to warrant the use of the two timepoints strategy.

[32] The differences between individuals included in and those excluded from this restricted sample are presented in Appendix B.

Figure 1

Methodological requirements for the multinomial regression model predicting ambivalence



Measures

In line with this thesis' focus, two main groups of variables were operationalized with the QCS data: social bonds and ambivalence. A third group of variables, henceforth referred to as individual characteristics, was also included in the analyses. These are factors that are persistently identified as key variables by criminological theories, notably by the social theories of crime and desistance that were presented in Chapter 1. These are described in turn.

Outcome variable

The goal of this quantitative study is to assess whether the relationships of individuals who offend affect their likelihood of experiencing ambivalence. In statistical modelling terms, this means testing whether social bonds—the independent variables—predict ambivalence, which is the outcome and the focus of this section. Before describing how the QCS data was used to operationalize ambivalence, its two foundational elements are first presented.

The building blocks of ambivalence: attitudes

While defined as the "coexistence of positive and negative *feelings and/or attitudes"* (Weingardt, 2000, p. 298 see Chapter 2), data limitations prevented a nuanced operationalization of ambivalence within this study. Indeed, the absence of data on the

feelings of study members forced an exclusive focus on attitudes.[33] As explained in the previous chapter, however, attitudes are a major component of ambivalence and a significant portion of theoretical and empirical work is strictly dedicated to this fundamental element (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993; Kaplan, 1972). Criminologists have also paid significant attention to this concept (Akers, 1973; Andrews & Bonta, 2006; Pratt et al., 2010; Sutherland, 1947), making it a particularly interesting candidate to study ambivalence among individuals who offend. More specifically, it is individuals' attitudes vis-à-vis moral norms that are of interest: how do individuals perceive what is right and what is wrong? what is acceptable and what is not? One of the advantages of the QCS data is that criminal justice professionals collect such information among individuals who are incarcerated. They are particularly attuned to two types of attitudes.[34]

On the one hand, evaluators assess the extent to which interviewees are favourable to offending, and to which they believe that offending is a means through which personal goals can be achieved. To measure these *attitudes favourable to offending*, QCS professionals ask a series of questions exploring: 1) how people feel about the crime they have committed; 2) whether they have any regret concerning these actions; 3) whether they think that their conduct was wrong; and 4) what they think about the victim(s) of their crime. Interviewers are also asked to be attentive to any expression that depicts crime in a positive light or that offers justifications for law-breaking conduct. This information is coded on a 0-to-3 Likert scale, with 0 representing attitudes highly favourable to offending and 3 representing attitudes highly unfavourable to it. According to the coding guidelines followed by interviewers, scores of 0 and 1 indicate the presence of a problematic area, while scores of 2 and 3 indicate a non-problematic area. Translated in QCS parlance, this means that individuals who score 0 or 1 are favourable to offending, while those who score 2 and 3 are unfavourable to it. In order to facilitate interpretation of results, this measure was reverse coded so that the highest scores (i.e., 2 and 3) represent attitudes that are favourable toward offending.

[33] In this sense, the ambivalence variable used in this study represents intra-component ambivalence (Maio, Bell, & Esses, 2000; Priester & Petty, 2001).
[34] Both attitude variables were extracted from the LS/CMI (Andrews et al., 2004).

On the other hand, QCS interviewers evaluate the extent to which respondents are favourable to conventional social institutions and the values they represent.[35] Here, specific questions concern: 1) the extent to which they would like to lead a life without crime; 2) what they think about the idea of living a such a life; 3) whether they believe in obeying the law; 4) the extent to which they believe education to be important in life; and 5) whether they believe having a job is important. These *attitudes favourable to conventions* are also coded on a 0-to-3 scale, with 0 representing attitudes that are highly unfavourable to conventions and 3 attitudes that are highly favourable. Again, scores of 0 and 1 represent a problematic area (i.e., respondent is unfavourable to conventions), while scores of 2 and 3 represent an unproblematic one (i.e., respondent is favourable to conventions). The original coding scheme was kept.

Because the statistical model presented in Chapter 6 aims to predict ambivalence, the attitude variables were extracted from participants' second assessments (T1, see Figure 1). The descriptive statistics presented in Table 2 shows that the average attitude toward offending score for the restricted sample was 1.69, with a little over 60% of this group being favourable to offending (i.e., scores of 2 and 3). In contrast, the average attitude toward conventions score was 1.57, with a little over 53% of this subsample holding prosocial attitudes. On average, these people were thus more favourable to offending than they were to conventions.[36] The correlation matrix presented in Appendix C shows that the two attitude scales are significantly and inversely associated to one another ($r(1,316) = -.57$, $p < .01$).

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[35] These social institutions include the government, the workplace, family, and leisure/social organizations. Conventional values include order, peace, justice, love, and security.

[36] For purposes of comparison and transparency, Table 2 also shows the attitudes score of the total sample at T0. As opposed to the restricted sample, these people were globally more favourable to conventions ($M = 1.76$, $SD = .75$) than they were to offending ($M = 1.40$, $SD = .79$). Descriptive statistics presented in Appendix B suggest that the individuals included in, and those excluded from the subsample differ slightly in their positioning toward social norms (attitudes toward offending: diff = .21, $Z = -8.94$; attitudes toward conventions: diff = -.28, $Z = 9.60$).

Table 2

Descriptive statistics of study variables for individuals in total and restricted samples

Study variables	**Restricted sample (*n* = 1,318)[a]**	**Total sample (*N* = 16,526)[a]**	**Min**	**Max**
Individual characteristics				
Age	33.88 (10.78)	35.70 (10.80)	17.65	84.62
Gender			0	1
Female (sample %)	7.97	11.34		
Male (sample %)	92.03	88.66		
Prior convictions	9.22 (10.49)	6.36 (8.76)	0	130
Self-control deficits	.74 (.44)	.59 (.49)	0	1
Social bonds				
Work involvement	.65 (1.00)	.96 (1.14)	0	3
Prosocial romantic situation	1.48 (.79)	1.63 (.78)	0	3
Prosocial parental relations	1.24 (.83)	1.35 (.87)	0	3
Prosocial familial relations	1.33 (.80)	1.50 (.81)	0	3
Offending conduct among relatives	.46 (.50)	.41 (.49)	0	1
Friends favourable to offending	1.53 (.86)	1.31 (.82)	0	3
Friends favourable to conventions	1.00 (.76)	1.21 (.81)	0	3
T1 attitudes				
Attitudes favourable to offending	1.69 (.72)	N/A	0	3
0 (Sample %)	3.41			
1 (Sample %)	36.19			
2 (Sample %)	48.33			
3 (Sample %)	12.06			
Attitudes favourable to conventions	1.57 (.76)	N/A	0	3
0 (Sample %)	8.65			
1 (Sample %)	38.01			
2 (Sample %)	47.95			
3 (Sample %)	5.39			

Notes. Means reported, unless otherwise specified; standard deviations in parentheses. Means and standard deviations of variables in the total sample are shown for purposes of transparency and comparison. [a] one set of imputed data was used to replace missing values for individuals who would have been excluded from complete case analysis. Standard deviations are based on one imputation of the dataset.

Table 2 con't

Descriptive statistics of study variables for individuals in total and restricted samples

Study variables	**Restricted sample (*n* = 1,318)**[a]	**Total sample (*N* = 16,526)**[a]	**Min**	**Max**
T0 attitudes				
Attitudes favourable to offending	1.59 (.78)	1.40 (.79)		
0 (sample %)	5.77	10.94		
1 (sample %)	42.11	46.70	0	3
2 (sample %)	39.76	34.14		
3 (sample %)	12.37	8.22		
Attitudes favourable to conventions	1.50 (.73)	1.76 (.75)		
0 (sample %)	8.80	5.91		
1 (sample %)	33.08	25.46	0	3
2 (sample %)	50.30	55.23		
3 (sample %)	7.81	13.39		

One of the main limits of these two measures pertains to the specific context in which they have been collected. Indeed, it is important to underscore that it is employees of the criminal justice system who conduct assessments and measure interviewees' subjective views vis-à-vis moral norms. Of course, these representatives of the law have some level of power, as they can influence these individuals' future in many ways. Respondents might thus want to conceal their views if they are favourable to offending and/or emphasize their agreement with conventions. The prison context, in and of itself, might also increase their adherence to prosocial attitudes, as they experience the negative elements of imprisonment. This hypothesis is line with desistance research, which suggests that the subjective views and expectations of individuals during incarceration do not always match those they hold after release (Burnett, 2004). Though QCS professionals have access to additional sources of information to conduct evaluations, thus increasing the validity of their measurement, this remains a possible limit of the two attitude variables.

Ambivalence and attitudinal positioning

Ambivalence defined as is holding both positive and negative attitudes toward a single object. In the context of this quantitative study, this translates to being both favourable to social norms and unfavourable to them. In methodological terms, this means that individuals who simultaneously perceive conventions *and* offending in a positive light are ambivalent.

While this might seem fairly straightforward, the measurement of ambivalence has been a contentious research area in the psychological literature for several decades. The Griffin formula, which assigns specific ambivalence scores to individuals, has often been cited and used as the gold standard to assess the tension that people experience between two opposite attitudes (Thompson, Zanna, & Griffin, 1995). Recent work, however, suggests that collapsing the positive and negative elements of ambivalence to provide a single score is problematic, and can lead to biased statistical results and false empirical conclusions (see Ullrich, Schermelleh-Engel, & Böttcher, 2008). In line with these insights, and considering the specificities of the attitude variables used to operationalize ambivalence, the Griffin formula was deemed unsuitable for the purposes of this study. To illustrate, Table 3 depicts the ambivalence scores that would be attributed to individuals falling in each of the 16 possibilities of a 4X4 table measuring the overlap between the two attitudes scales if this strategy was applied.

Table 3

Ambivalence scores derived from the Griffin formula using the two attitude scales

Attitudes favourable to conventions	Attitudes favourable to offending			
	0	**1**	**2**	**3**
0	0	-0.5	-1	-1.5
1	-0.5	1	0.5	0
2	-1	0.5	2	1.5
3	-1.5	0	1.5	3

As can be seen, while the highest scores are attributed to the most ambivalent combinations, the same score, -1.5, represents non-ambivalence. In the case of the present study, individuals who are non-ambivalently favourable to offending (i.e., who score high on the *attitudes favourable to offending* scale and low on the *attitudes favourable to conventions* scale) would thus receive the same score as those who are non-ambivalently favourable to convention (i.e., who score low on the *attitudes favourable to offending* scale and high on the *attitudes favourable to conventions* scale). This operationalization is problematic on an analytical level as it merges individuals who are utterly opposed with regard to their attitudes toward moral norms and, most probably, with regard to other individual and social variables

that are of interest in this study. In order to avoid these untenable restrictions, and to allow for a valid analytical comparison of ambivalent individuals and individuals who hold different attitudes, an alternative grouping strategy was favoured.

In line with the spirit of the definition of ambivalence, and following the logic underlying the Griffin formula, the two attitudes scales were combined in a 4X4 table. In order to determine precise cut-off scores at which individuals are said to be ambivalent, the coding guidelines followed by QCS' professionals were used. Again, while scores of 0 and 1 indicate that the person under evaluation is unfavourable toward offending and/or conventions, scores of 2 and 3 indicate a favourable position. As shown in Table 4, this strategy generated four distinct *attitudinal positioning* categories, one of which represents ambivalence.

Table 4

Operationalization of attitudinal positioning using the two attitude scales

Attitudes favourable to conventions	**Attitudes favourable to offending**			
	0	**1**	**2**	**3**
0 **1**	Indifferent		Non-ambivalently favourable to offending	
2 **3**	Non-ambivalently favourable to conventions		Ambivalent	

Specifically, individuals who were highly favourable to both offending and conventions (i.e., those who scored 2 or 3 both attitude scales) were described as experiencing ambivalence. These people are, in essence, simultaneously favourable to social norms *and* unfavourable to them. As shown in Table 5, close to 22% (*n* = 288) of the restricted sample was ambivalent. Individuals who were highly favourable to offending and highly unfavourable toward conventions were described as being non-ambivalently favourable to offending, which represented 38.54% (*n* = 508) of the restricted sample. In contrast, people who scored high on the attitudes toward conventions scale and who scored low on the attitudes toward offending scale were portrayed as being non-ambivalently favourable to conventions (31.49% of restricted sample; *n* = 415). Finally, individuals who were unfavourable to both offending and conventional conduct were understood as being indifferent toward social norms. A total of 107

individuals (8.12% of the restricted sample) were considered indifferent using this operationalization.

Table 5

Attitudinal positioning among individuals in the restricted sample (*n* = 1,318)

Attitudes toward conventions	**Attitudes toward offending**				
	0	**1**	**2**	**3**	**Total**
0	0	4	19	91	114
1	0	103	346	52	501
2	4	347	265	16	632
3	41	23	7	0	71
Total	45	477	637	159	1,318

Notes. Numbers based on one set of imputed data.

Predictor variables

Data concerning the individual characteristics of sample members and their social bonds were extracted from QCS's administrative and formal assessments data banks. As they are exclusively used as predictors, all of the variables presented below were measured at T0.

Individual characteristics

The variables presented in this section were included in all models because criminological research persistently highlights their importance. Some research suggests that these personal features might also influence the development of individual attitudes and the likelihood of experiencing ambivalence.

Age

Perhaps one of the most robust and persistent findings in criminology is that as individuals age, they become much less likely to engage in offending conduct (Glueck & Glueck, 1940; Gottfredson & Hirschi, 1990; Laub & Sampson, 2003; National Research Council, 1986). While this is not a central consideration in the present project, research also suggests that age plays a role in the attitudes one is likely to endorse, with older people being less prone to view offending in a positive light (Mandracchia & Morgan, 2010; Tangney et al., 2012; Tittle, Antonaccio, & Botchkovar, 2012), and more likely to revise their subjective positions vis-à-vis conventions (Laub & Sampson, 2003; Shover, 1985). For these reasons, age

was included in the quantitative analyses. The employed measure represents age at the time of first assessment (T0). As is reported in Table 2, on average, individuals in the restricted sample were 33 years old, only slightly younger than respondents from the total sample (35 years old).

Gender

Another important individual-level characteristic in criminology is gender (Chesney-Lind, 1989; Steffensmeier & Allan, 1996). As described in Chapter 2, research on ambivalence also suggests that women are more likely than men to experience this state of internal tension, particularly when it arises from their interpersonal lives. Scholars have argued that this gendered experience of ambivalence is due to the fact that women take on more kin work, and tend to be more personally invested in their relationships than men (Connidis & McMullin, 2002; Fingerman, Hay, & Birditt, 2004). These considerations from both the criminological and ambivalence literatures are pertinent to this thesis, so gender is considered in the statistical models of the quantitative study. While Table 2 presents the relative proportions of gender in both samples, the restricted sample comprises 105 women.

Prior convictions

While this proposition and its policy implications are still debated (for e.g., see Kurlychek, Brame, & Bushway, 2006), criminologists generally acknowledge that past offending is important in understanding the experiences of individuals who engage in such conduct (Blumstein, Farrington, & Moitra, 1985; Farrington, 1987). Furthermore, research suggests that past offending influences individual attitudes (Matsueda, 1989; Simons & Burt, 2011; Walters, 2003). In order to take these effects into consideration, the predictive statistical model presented in Chapter 6 includes a measure of respondents' history of illegal actions. This variable was measured by calculating the total number of convictions that occurred prior to T0 for each study member. The descriptive data found in Table 2 shows that individuals from the restricted sample were convicted a little over 9 times before this study's observation period, a rate slightly higher than that of the total sample ($M = 6.36$, $SD = 8.76$).

Self-control deficits

Research has time and again highlighted the role of self-control in the experiences of individuals who offend (Gottfredson & Hirschi, 1990), as well as in the types of attitudes they hold (Tangney et al., 2012). As part of their assessments, QCS' professionals evaluate respondents' tendencies to act impulsively and without thinking.[37] More specifically, they assess the extent to which they: 1) act before they think; 2) set goals for themselves; 3) make plans; 4) devise strategies to ensure they are following their plans; and 5) tend to get in trouble "by accident." While the use of a validated scale such as the Grasmick self-control scale (Grasmick, Tittle, Bursick, & Arkneklev, 1993) might have increased the validity and reliability of this measure, the use of these strict criteria limits the subjectivity of this variable. The information thus collected is coded on a dichotomous scale, with 1 indicating that the person lacks self-control abilities (i.e., has self-control deficits), and 0 indicating good self-control. The original scaling was preserved in the models presented in this study. A total of 74% of individuals in the restricted sample lacked self-control according to their QCS evaluations, in comparison with 59% of individuals in the entire sample (see Table 2).

Social bonds

The formal evaluations conducted by QCS also seek to brush a thorough portrait of the social milieu in which interviewees are embedded. To do so, information regarding their significant relationships is collected. Importantly, these largely echo the social bonds that were investigated in the qualitative component of this thesis. More specifically, these relationships include ties to conventional employment structures, romantic partners, friends, and family members. These variables also take into consideration the extent to which these bonds are more or less prosocially- or antisocially-oriented.[38]

To be sure, most of the measures presented in this section are subjective in nature: they assess the extent to which individuals are engaged in "satisfactory prosocial" relationships. Though the use of secondary sources and of specific questions ensure the validity of the data that is collected, these measures remain largely personal because they are informed by the

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[37] This variable was extracted from the LS/CMI (Andrews et al., 2004).
[38] All social bonds variables were extracted from the LS/CMI (Andrews et al., 2004).

internal experiences of interviewees. While this could be seen as a limit of the variables included in this quantitative study, I see it as one of its strengths. Indeed, it is important to remember that this thesis seeks to understand how social relationships shape the subjective experiences of those who break the law. In line with previous research on the perceptions of people who engage in offending (e.g. Brezina & Topalli, 2012; Laferrière & Morselli, 2015), and with the central proposition of narrative criminology (Presser & Sandberg, 2015), personal beliefs are understood as being more important in shaping one's internal experience and attitudes than purely objective measures.

Work involvement

The first social bond included in this thesis pertains to professional endeavours. In line with ideas put forth by social control theorists (Sampson & Laub, 1993), these experiences are likely to shape individual experiences in significant ways, as work forms an important part of adults' social context. In this study, the work involvement variable concerns the extent to which sample members were personally invested in a professional (i.e., 'conventional') endeavour, prior to being incarcerated and/or during incarceration. In their evaluations, QCS professionals generally explore individuals' feelings toward employment, their competencies and achievements, as well as their attendance and professionalism. More specifically, interviewees are asked: 1) how well they do/did in their job; 2) the extent to which they liked their work; 3) whether their boss complimented the work they did; and 4) whether they have been promoted. The variable is then coded on a 0-to-3 scale, with 0 indicating no personal involvement in employment and 3 indicating high levels of involvement. The original scaling was kept. The average involvement score for the restricted sample is 0.65, with 73% of people scoring 0 or 1 and 27% scoring 2 or 3. Individuals from the restricted sample are, on average, somewhat less involved in work than the total sample (M = .96, SD = 1.14).

Prosocial and satisfactory romantic situation

As suggested by many social theorists of crime and desistance, romantic partners can not only exert significant influence on one's conduct (Sampson & Laub, 1993), but also on one's subjective views (Akers, 1973; Giordano et al., 2002). As such, this is an important addition to this thesis' quantitative (and qualitative) models. The QCS dataset contains

information pertaining to individuals' satisfaction with their 'romantic relationship status', whether they are in a relationship or not. Interviewers evaluate satisfaction levels by asking respondents if they have experienced certain issues in their romantic relationship over the past 12 months and, if so, how frequently. Specifically, these issues include: 1) arguments; 2) sexual satisfaction; 3) infidelity; 4) unwanted pregnancy; 5) disagreements about child rearing; 6) conflicts with/concerning in-laws/parents; 7) arguments about money; 8) conflicts concerning companions/friends; 9) arguments about leisure time; 10) arguments about ex-partners; 11) stress related to partner's problems; 12) difficulties with openness, warmth and intimacy; 13) communication problems; 14) excessive dependency; 15) contemplation of divorce/separation; 16) issues with child access/custody; 17) harassment; and 18) physical, psychological and sexual abuse. Among interviewees who are single, QCS professionals explore the extent to which they: 1) are satisfied not having a partner; 2) enjoy their single life; 3) wished they had someone to come home to at night; and 4) are looking for a commitment from someone.

An important feature that is also taken into consideration by QCS evaluators is the extent to which the romantic partner is a "positive" source of support. In line with this, a romantic situation can only be considered satisfactory if the partner act as models for conventional conduct (i.e., they are prosocial individuals). This variable is measured on a 0-to-3 scale, with 0 indicating an unsatisfactory romantic status, whether individuals are in a romantic relationship or single. In contrast, a score of 3 indicates complete satisfaction with relational status. The original coding scheme was preserved in the current analyses. Table 2 shows that, on average, the restricted sample has a score of 1.48, slightly below the average of the total sample (M = 1.63, SD = .78).

Prosocial and satisfactory parental relations

Because family relationships are regarded as an important source of social influence in several social theories of crime and desistance (Giordano, 2016; Sutherland, 1947), two variables operationalizing this type of bond are included in the present thesis. The first of these

concerns ties with parents.[39] As they complete their evaluations, QCS professionals ask interviewees to describe their parental relationships over the past 12 months, and pay special attention to: 1) how often respondents visit their parents/how often parents visit them during incarceration; 2) whether parents are helpful when problems arise; 3) the extent to which respondents argue with their parents; 4) whether their parents write to them while they are incarcerated. Again, these relationships can only be considered satisfactory if parents are a prosocial source of support.

The quality of parental relations is evaluated on a 0-to-3 scale, with 0 indicating a negative relationship. This is the case when the two parties hate each other, the relation is hostile and/or punitive, and/or the respondent simply does not care about what her/his parents think or feel. By contrast, a score of 3 indicates a positive, gratifying, and loving relationship where parties communicate with each other, and in which respondents care about what their parents think and feel. The original scaling of the variable was reverse coded to facilitate the interpretation of results. The average score on this scale is 1.24 for the restricted sample, slightly lower than the average score of 1.35 for the total sample.

Prosocial and satisfactory familial relations

The second variable dedicated to familial bonds concerns non-parental forms of family relations such as brothers/sisters, aunts/uncles, cousins, grandparents, and in-laws. Again, the QCS's evaluations focus on the extent to which respondents have been involved in satisfactory relationships with these prosocial individuals over the past 12 months. The specific questions asked by evaluators and the coding scheme are the same as those pertaining to parental relationships that were presented in the previous section. Again, scores of 0 indicate that the respondent is either involved in nefarious relations with family members or that she/he is not involved in any relations at all. Scores of 3 indicate the opposite: the respondent maintains gratifying and positive relationships with non-parent family members. Again, this coding was reversed to facilitate interpretation. As shown in Table 2, the average score for the restricted sample is 1.33, and for the total sample, 1.50.

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[39] Parental relationships are not limited to biological bonds; they include any individual who raised the respondent. This can include foster parents and grandparents, for example.

Offending among kin

The three previous relational variables focus on the quality of the prosocial bonds maintained by sample members. As such, these measures do not indicate whether these individuals are also involved in relationships with romantic partners, parents and other family members who are involved in offending and/or who perceive norm breaking in a positive light. Palliating this shortcoming, QCS' professionals assess whether any of the respondents' kin have an official criminal record. This variable was coded on a dichotomous scale with 0 indicating no criminal history among relatives, and 1 indicating its presence. As shown in Table 2, a total of 46% of the restricted sample and 41% of the total sample were involved in relationships with relatives who had previously been involved in illegal activities.

Friends favourable to offending

If we follow social learning theorists, no study on social influence among individuals who act illegally can be complete without a thorough consideration of their peers. Therefore, the quantitative study includes information pertaining to the sample members' friends. The QCS define friends as people whose opinions matter to their 'clients,' with whom they spend considerable time, and whom they generally trust. In line with the information extracted from their clinical evaluations, the 'friends favourable to offending' variable is a measure of the extent to which respondents' current friendship networks encompass people involved in offending actions and who view this conduct in a positive light. Specifically, interviewers seek to know: 1) whether interviewees have friends who are involved in crime; 2) how many of their friends have had legal problems; and 3) how often or how seriously their friends have been involved with the law. This variable is measured on a 0-to-3 scale, with 0 indicating that a large portion of the network is constituted of friends who themselves engage in illegal actions, and 3 indicating that no friends do so. In order to facilitate the interpretation of results, scores on this variable were reverse coded. In the restricted sample, the average on that scale is 1.53, with 52% scoring 0 or 1 and 48% score 2 or 3. By contrast, among the total sample the average score is 1.31, with 63% scoring 0 or 1 and 37% scoring 2 or 3.

Friends favourable to conventions

Employing the same logic that was used for the 'friends favourable to offending' variable, the QCS's evaluators examine the extent to which respondents' current friendship networks are composed of friends involved in 'conventional' pursuits (i.e., who are not involved in crime) and who generally adhere to 'conventional' norms and values. This is also measured on a 0-to-3 scale, with 0 indicating that the interviewee has very few 'conventional' friends and 3 indicating that most of her/his friends are involved in conventional activities and favourable to them. The original coding was kept. While the restricted sample's score on that variable is 1.00, the total sample's average score is 1.21.

Missing Data

While the total sample is comprised of 16,526 eligible individuals, listwise deletion of nonoverlapping cases with missing data on certain variables lead to a loss of 1,002 individuals. While the simplest and most common strategy to handle missing data is complete case analysis, it is inadvisable as it can lead to bias in parameter estimates, particularly when missing data is not missing completely at random (MCAR; Azur, Stuart, Frangakis, & Leaf, 2011; J. L. Schafer & Graham, 2002). Because small differences were detected between cases with missing data and those with complete information on a few variables (see Appendix D), and because it was hard to ascertain the exact reason underlying *missingness* due to data being collected outside of the present research project, it was considered ill-advised to assume this missing data was MCAR. In line with recommended missing-data handling strategies, multiple imputation (MI) was carried out using MPlus version 6.12 (Muthén & Muthén, 1998). The MI procedure implemented in this statistical package relies on Bayesian estimation and has the advantage of allowing for the specification of categorical variables in the imputation model. All variables with missing values were imputed, and all variables included in the study model were used in the imputation model. Based on recommendations, a total of 30 copies of the baseline dataset were created, and imputations were conducted on the total sample (StataCorp, 2013).

Quantitative Analytical Strategy

Following the general aim of this thesis, the quantitative analyses performed and presented in Chapter 6 seek to explore whether the social environments of individuals who offend influence their attitudinal positioning. More specifically, it is hypothesised that individuals who maintain relationships with prosocial others or who navigate in heterogeneous milieus that comprise both pro- and anti-socially oriented people are more likely to experience ambivalence. In order to provide a solid grounding for this model, the prevalence and descriptive characteristics of ambivalence among the restricted study sample is first presented. This is an important step as the experience of ambivalence among people who offend is a proposition of this thesis and, as such, is an empirical question that deserves specific attention. Following this descriptive endeavour, a predictive statistical model assessing the ambivalence hypothesis among members of the restricted sample (n = 1,318) is presented. In order to accommodate the categorical nature of that outcome variable (see Table 4), a multinomial logistic regression model is conducted.

The QCS data represents a major strength of this thesis, as allows for the assessment of ambivalence among individuals who offend through quantitative methods. However, as opposed to the qualitative data presented above, which also allows for an examination of the outcomes of ambivalence among relatives, the quantitative data could not be used to conduct such a thorough analysis. This is a limit of this thesis' analytical plan, one that will be considered in more detail in the Conclusion.

Protection of Research Participants

The present study was reviewed and approved by the University of Montreal's *Comité d'éthique de la recherche en arts et en sciences*, as well as by the QCS' general direction for use of the quantitative data. Anonymity and confidentiality is guaranteed to all research participants, whether their information was used in the quantitative study or whether they were met for the qualitative interviews. The names of the relatives who shared their personal experiences that are used throughout this document are pseudonyms.

Chapter 4

The Ambivalent Experience of Prosocial Relatives

As it gave impetus to my entire research endeavour, I begin my analytical work with the qualitative component of this thesis. The next two chapters thus focus on the mothers, fathers, friends, wives, and siblings of the people who offend. Together they shed some much-needed light on the multifaceted realities and subjective outlooks of those who have traditionally been left in the shadow of the social theories of crime and desistance. At the same time, however, they uncover how their particular experiences share many similarities with those of individuals who act unlawfully, because it unravels at the confluence of the prosocial and the antisocial.

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Through the presentation of the individuals who generously shared their experiences, thoughts, and feelings in this study, the present chapter depicts what it means to be closely attached to someone who has engaged in illegal activities. This exercise is necessary as it provides the ground for assessing how the experiences of relatives are influenced by a relationship that is tainted by what they see as reprehensible conduct. This incursion into their lives unfolds along two main foci. First, the analysis offers a micro-level examination of the concrete, day-to-day roles that participants take upon themselves in the confines of their relationship with someone who has acted illegally. The outcomes of such roles on the conduct and demeanour of their loved ones are then presented. The effects of participants' actions are often limited in scope, a finding that puts some of the claims of the social theories of crime and desistance into perspective.

The second section instigates a more subtle analysis by depicting how the offending conduct of a loved one can shape the experience of relatives. Before demonstrating how this process unfolds in Chapter 5, the following pages examine the negative and positive relational aspects described by participants. As will become clear, being related to someone who has acted illegally is a fundamentally ambivalent experience, one that constantly oscillates between the 'good' and the 'bad.'

The Everyday Roles Fulfilled by Relatives

It has been argued that a thorough understanding of the mechanisms of social influence among people who offend requires examining the actions of those who purportedly influence

them (Weaver, 2016). While no causal inference can be offered due to the qualitative nature of the analysis, it is nonetheless pertinent as it depicts what daily life looks like for participants, and how their actions influence the conduct of the person they support. To accomplish that goal, the following section focuses on the various roles that the participants described fulfilling in the context of their relationship. While their realities varied, the fact that they were all related to someone who had offended fostered important similarities in their experiences. Globally, participants described fulfilling three main roles: (1) support; (2) management; and (3) supervision/control. Each is reviewed before presenting the perceived outcomes of these roles.

Support

Virtually all relatives described fulfilling a supportive role vis-à-vis their loved one. In line with Cullen's (1994) conceptualization, support took two main forms within their narratives: expressive and instrumental. While both were central to the experience of every participant, they were all the more so for those whose loved ones were incarcerated.

Expressive support

An overwhelming majority of respondents underscored the importance of their presence and of the expressive support they provided for the well-being of their loved one. As stated, this role was particularly important when that person was serving prison time. Indeed, several participants understood incarceration as a reclusive experience and thus perceived themselves as accountable for breaking social isolation. This vision was often reinforced by their experiences as habitual visitors of correctional institutions, as it made them aware of the limited visitations of many incarcerated people. Norma (wife) expressed the importance of her support when she describes her husband's new perception regarding family visits:

> *I think he's very aware of it because he realizes that he's one of the few who has regular visits at the penitentiary. He sees the others. Before, he didn't see that because he was in that same situation. No one came to visit him. It was normal. But now, the number of times we go into the visiting area and we're—well, sometimes we're completely alone. Sometimes there are two other guys—sometimes three. You know, the area is never full. So, you know, he realizes that: 'Ok, yeah, I'm lucky. I have someone who visits me on a regular basis.'*

For other respondents, providing expressive support also included being “morally” supportive. While their power to change the conditions of incarceration or the decisions and procedures of the criminal justice system are limited, several participants believed that their mere presence throughout this process could alleviate some of the strains experienced by their loved ones. Deanna (friend) talked about how she followed her friend “*everywhere*” and explains how it resonates for him: “*That’s what it is: moral support. He knows that no matter what happens, I’ll be there*.” Mildred’s (mother) narrative not only echoed this, but further highlighted the one-sided benefits that moral support can entail: “*I went mainly for his morale. I mean it didn't bring me much personally*.” Offering expressive support can be a test of persistence. For instance, Isabella (mother), whose husband and daughter have chosen to sever their relationship with her son, insisted that she would always be there for him, while simultaneously admitting that she sometimes felt alone in her supportive role.

Others underscored the importance of their expressive support for individuals whose social circle consisted primarily of people involved in illegal ventures. This was the case for Paule (girlfriend) who explained being the “*only legit [person] in [her boyfriend’s] life*.” Ellen (girlfriend) similarly considered herself as an important source of non-deviant support. In explaining why she made it a point to visit her boyfriend several times a week, she talked about the deleterious social effects of incarceration:

> *You know, [if you don’t get visits] you lose a certain connection with the outside world and you become institutionalized. And when you go back into society seven years later, [...] a lot will have changed. So, when you don’t fit anymore and when everyone has gone on with their lives, you’re left to your own devices again. What are you gonna do? The only people you know are criminalised. You’ll go back to it for sure. So, that’s why I visit him three times a week.*

While particularly present in the narratives of participants who maintained relationships with individuals who were incarcerated, expressive support was also highlighted by those whose loved ones were in the community. Mia (fiancée), whose boyfriend was living in a halfway house during her first interview, stated: “*He needs me. Besides his mother, I’m the only person he has in his entourage*.” Inara (girlfriend) similarly emphasized the importance of her support when she described why she chose to pursue her relationship upon discovering her boyfriend’s illegal ventures:

Basically, I decided to be there until the end for him because I had the impression that a lot of people had abandoned him over time [...]. And I felt a certain responsibility to show him that there are people who truly care about you (cries softly). They can be there even when things don't go too well.

Instrumental support

Several relatives talked about how they provided financial and/or material support to their loved ones, both of which are specific forms of instrumental support (Cullen, 1994). Charles' (father) exemplified this by explaining how in addition to having lent him a considerable amount of money, he let his 47-year-old son live in his condo. He further explained how he decided to give his car to his son in the hope that increased mobility would encourage him to be more active and autonomous. Philip (father) similarly highlighted his role as a provider of financial and material support for his daughter. In reaction to her financial difficulties, he recounted how he often helped her by paying for her car repairs, buying groceries, and taking her out to eat. His financial generosity also extended to her judicial issues. In addition to her lawyer's fee, which amounted to over "*13-14 thousand dollars*," Philip paid her thousand dollar bails every time she violated the conditions of her probation. In some cases, financial support extended beyond the well-being or even the judicial needs of their loved ones. Jonathan (father) provides a clear example of this when he described paying off some of his son's drug debts:

So they came. The bums came here and [my son] owed 3000 bucks. Well, he had told them: 'I'll pay you tomorrow.' So I went and paid them. I knew where it was, so I knocked. 'Who does he owe money to? This much to you; this much to you.' And the guns were out on the table.

While some parents were quite generous in the financial support they provided, others were stricter. For instance, although Rosa (mother) allowed her 51-year-old son to live in her home, she refused to bear the costs of his journey through the criminal justice system. On this, she said: "*Well, he was incarcerated in [a provincial prison]. I went to pick him up. I paid for his bail. And besides, he's still reimbursing me because I won't endorse this*."

As suggested by the excerpts presented thus far, instrumental support was very frequent among parents. However, respondents involved in other forms of relationships also described fulfilling such a role. In fact the only two relatives who did not report such

involvement were Kathryn and Louise, respectively daughter and sister. Among romantic partners and friends, however, instrumental support was frequently reported. For instance, both Norma (wife) and Laura (wife) highlighted how they acted as an important source of material support during their husband's incarceration by providing them with clothes, money, and even electronic devices. Deanna (friend) described fulfilling a similar role: "*I've invested myself affectively, time-wise, and money-wise. When he went back [to prison] for his current federal sentence, we went to the flea-market […] to pick-up everything he needed, you know*." She continued by explaining how this is a never-ending process: "*We have to start over because the TV broke during transport [between prisons]. He also broke something because he got mad. [And] the CDs that he had managed to get for himself [were also taken away from him]. They're not allowed everywhere inside. So we have to start again.*"

When their boyfriends were not incarcerated, girlfriends also described being a source of support by providing their partner with a home and dealing with daily expenses and bills. While she considered this a temporary state of affairs, this was the case with Paule (girlfriend) who allowed her boyfriend to stay in her condo with her and her son, and who "*paid for everything*" in the household.

Management

The restrictions imposed on individuals who are incarcerated or in the midst of judicial procedures often force relatives to assume a managerial role, one that can take many specific forms (see Christian, Martinez, & Martinez, 2015). For instance, several respondents describe how during these periods, they come to handle communications with the various actors of the criminal justice system. The range of actions undertaken by relatives in these circumstances was well illustrated by Deanna who described being very involved with the management of her friend's life during his incarceration:

> *I wanted to act as a connection with the outside, you know. And there are times when it worked. You know, I was saying: what you can't do inside, whether it be access to lawyers, phone calls, getting documents, I can handle that […]. For instance, in the first few years, he wasn't even able to call his son. Well, […] I've helped him get some phone calls back. Now they've been cut again, but for a while he had access to them […]. I had even sent a letter to his mother and his brother telling them to let me know when they would be home, because I had frequent contacts with him and I could've*

scheduled [a visit]. But the collaboration wasn't good on their part. You know, […] I have all of his stuff. I'm the one who has all of his stuff. I have a ton of papers. I had his clothes. Even when he was caught [after his escape], his stuff was at a girl's place and he called me to ask if I would pick it up for him. I said yes. So, you know, the link between us goes that deep. He's in my home without being there.

Deanna further described how handling the affairs of someone who is serving an incarceration sentence can be quite demanding, an experience also shared by Mia (fiancée). For her, this sometimes felt like acting as their personal employee:

At the beginning, you know, there was a lot of: 'Can you call at my work and ask them to send you my pay cheques? Can you take care of my 4%?' It was during the income tax period, so he tells me: 'Can you send such things? Can you take care of my change of address?' You know, I was pretty much a secretary when he went in.

In addition to the management of paperwork, relatives described being actively involved in helping settle injustices experienced during incarceration. Jonathan (father) talked about how he managed a particularly unfair event his son, and himself as the financial supporter, had recently gone through:

I fought for him—for his clothes—because he was transferred here for a day in court. And from there, he was transferred to the psychiatric ward of the hospital for 2-3 days. When he went back [to the prison where he was serving his sentence], 80% of his clothes had been stolen. But I'm the idiot paying for those clothes […]. I went to see the Ombudsman to know what my rights were because nothing was happening. When I came back, I had a phone call from the prison that informed me that a cheque had been written.

Ellen (girlfriend) similarly talked about how she managed a situation she perceived as impinging on her boyfriend's fundamental rights:

In [a small town's prison], they didn't give shower curtains. There was the little community room. The shower was here and the TV there [really close by]. The people could see you in the shower as they watched TV. So he filed a complaint to have a shower curtain. They didn't respond. Well [the guys] would put towels up. [The guards would say:] 'If you put a towel, sir, we'll write you up.' I'm telling you, I was so discouraged, I called the Ombudsman. The Ombudsman is like: 'We have an agreement with [that prison]. We won't intervene.' After that I was so discouraged I called the prison chaplain. I told him: 'Listen up, this makes no damn sense. They're not giving them shower curtains.' So he told me: 'Ok, I'll see what I can do […].' He didn't really know what to do. In the end, I told my boyfriend: 'Listen, I started

> *checking into legal stuff and all. Take your little piece of paper and write that, according to the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, everyone has a right to his privacy and to his dignity. They're not putting up cameras in your cell because you are entitled to a certain level of privacy—and your dignity. You have the right not to want to shower in front of female [prison guards]. If this were a prison for women, they wouldn't let [the women] shower in front of male guards. So write this up on your little piece of paper and file your complaint. It took two and a half months before we got to that point. Ten minutes later they came back [saying]: 'You withdraw your complaint and we'll give you a shower curtain.'*

In addition to helping him with the management of issues of unfair treatment, Ellen was also very adamant about helping her boyfriend getting access to certain privileges, such as being granted rights to visitations with contact. To this end, she described using techniques similar to those reported by Kara (wife): making phone calls and making sure that their partner's dossier was moving forward. After her husband had been transferred from another institution, Kara talked about how she very quickly took the matters into her hands: "*He had been in the institution for under five minutes. I got there and I said: 'I want private family visits. I've been told you were more open because you work with sex offenders*.'" For Kara, this managerial role was very important and her narrative highlighted several examples of her taking charge of her husband's custodial case. Among other things, she managed to get him transferred in an institution that was closer to home, and that had a special program tailored to his specific needs.

Endorsing a managerial role was not restricted to relatives of individuals who were incarcerated. Rosa (mother) explains how she quickly took charge of her son's affairs, even after he returned to the community: "*I was the one making appointments with all of the social workers. All of them had my phone number. I was the one in charge of keeping the connection with these people. If not, he went nowhere. I accompanied him [everywhere]*."

Supervision/control

Several participants also described how they acted as supervisors and/or control agents for the person they cared about. What they described was very much in line with the premises of social control theories, which suggest that individuals involved in close and significant relationships with those who offend provide a frame within which they can act (Sampson &

Laub, 1993). Unsurprisingly, several parents described endorsing this type of role. After her son was released from prison, Rosa (mother) allowed him to stay in her home provided that he respected her code of conduct. For her, this ensured that he would take his responsibilities and do something positive with his life. She explained:

> *The deal I had with him […] went like this: you work, you contribute. If you don't work, well, you have to go on social security […]. He got social security. At one point, the months were passing by and then I said: 'I'm giving you a choice. You either work or you go back to school.' He said: 'no, no.' I said: 'I'm giving you two choices. I could've told you to work or to go to school. I'm giving you two choices. And I'm giving you one week to give me your answer.'*

In other cases, the supervision provided by parents was much more subtle. It could, for example, take the form of advice or recommendations. This was well illustrated by Charles (father) whose son lived in the community while waiting for his trial. Following his father's advice, he had recently expressed his willingness to find work, particularly since staying jobless during this waiting period might play against him at trial. To Charles, the job options he was considering were, however, less than ideal:

> *So he wants to work under the table. His current predilection is escort driver. I told him: 'I'm not sure about that. First of all, some of these girls use drugs. They might not all use, but some of them surely do. They'll be in your car. You might end up right back where you were.' He tells me: 'Yeah, but they're not street escorts.' I said: 'I understand, but there are shabby hotels in that area and they meet clients in shabby hotels. You'll end up there. I know where you used to hang out.' So he starts: 'Yeah, yeah, yeah—that's true.'*

Acting as control or supervision agents was not restricted to parents. In fact, virtually all types of relationships included in this study could lead to the endorsement of such roles. Similar to Charles' experience, Mia (fiancée) described how she sometimes gave her boyfriend advice on how to act. After he had spent an evening out with a friend, he admitted to having drunk three beers, an action prohibited by the terms of his conditional release. She remembered: "*I told him: 'You're not allowed to drink! You're looking for trouble. What if they come tomorrow and give you a urine test? They'll send you back up.'*"

In other cases, participants used money to control the actions of their loved ones. This was well exemplified by an event described by Kara (wife):

[My husband] wanted cash for his canteen. And when he needs cash, he asks me. But he had decided to go through his cousin. And I was very insulted by this. I told him: 'If you need cash--and first of all I want to know why you suddenly need cash for your canteen--well you don't go through your cousin. You go through me. You need money? You tell me. I'll give it to you, but you need a reason for it. You're behind bars, you know. What do you need money for? Are you in shit?' For me it was always: 'Are you still doing stuff inside that makes you as delinquent inside as you were outside?'

In addition to this form of supervision, Kara had put a very thorough surveillance system into place:

I wanted to see all of his [urine test] results—all of them. And I told him: 'If you don't show them to me, [...] I'm not taking [your] phone calls. I don't visit, as long as [you] haven't sent it to me by mail.' I don't do that anymore, but I have [...] And I want to see all of his reports. They're written and I want to see them. And I want both versions, in English and French, because they often make mistakes. Sometimes they don't say the same thing, you know.

Some respondents also talked about their control roles by describing the sanctions they have imposed when they perceived their loved one's conduct as reprehensible. Along those lines, Kathryn (daughter) talked about how she and her step-mother (Laura: wife) imposed a sanction on her father by putting a temporary end to their relationship and how this led to significant changes in his demeanour:

K: You know, at the beginning he was telling me: 'No, if you guys help me, it'll blah blah blah.' But I know that human beings change in suffering too. So he suffered enough to give himself a kick in the butt at one point.

Do: How would you say that it changes in suffering?

K: Well, it's because you have a comfort zone and all that. You keep telling yourself that you can change, you know, a little. But then he was forced to make his move because we were gone and he was all alone. He was left to his own devices, so he absolutely had to do something concrete to move.

Do: So that's how he ended up changing?

K: Yes, I think this was beginning of his progress and his realization of how we were saddened, because he hadn't realized that either.

These narratives highlight a very important point: the strength of the emotional bond that exists between relatives and the people who have offended can serve as a catalyst for change, as a means of control. The threat of rupture can be very strong. This was the case for

Inara (girlfriend) who bluntly told her boyfriend that she would put an end to their relationship if he did not change his ways:

> *I: [We had] a big talk—a big, big talk on, like: 'You go straight right now, big boy. If you want this to work, it's now.'*
>
> *Do: Yeah…*
>
> *I: […] This needs to [happen]. This can't be a passing thing and you go back in three weeks, when you suddenly need money because [we're] gonna have a child. That's not how it works. You find yourself a job. You get serious for real and you'll tell your mother about it.*

The influence of rupture threats on individuals' conduct, however, could not be better illustrated than through Kara's narrative. In the following excerpt, she tells of a moment where she came very close to putting an end to her relationship with her husband-to-be. Illustratively borrowing the parlance of religion, she said:

> *I had told him: 'Three strikes and you're out.' And it was super crude. He had used drugs. He lied to me. And he had used again. And he had lied to me on something else. So that was strike three. And I was going to break up with him. It was on Easter […]. I was on my way to the institution. I got there. My eyes were all red. I hadn't slept in two days. The guard even asked me if I wanted a visit without contact because I didn't look pretty. I had no makeup on, wasn't prettied up. He had never seen me like that. But I said no. I explained to the guards […] how he had used [drugs] and how it was over. I'm not spending my life with a drug user. I'm sorry, it costs me too much. It costs me physically. I don't want to come to my car one day and you owe money and the guy wants to get paid. No, I can't put my family in danger, you know, at risk and all that. And I was going to leave him. During the hour that I waited, there was a bible. I had never noticed the bible in the visitation room. I took it, opened it up, and I found myself on the part where St-Peter denied Jesus three times. And then [my husband] came in. His probation officer was named Pierre – Peter. And then I looked at my husband […]. The bible is in my hands and I tell him: 'You know what Peter did?' In his head he thinks I'm talking about his agent. So he tells me: 'I don't know. He called you and told you I'm an idiot?' I said: 'No, no, no, no–Peter–Peter from the bible–St-Peter.' He said: 'I don't know who the fuck St-Peter is.' He never went to church in his life. I said: 'He denied Jesus three times.' Do you know what Jesus did?' He said: 'I hope he forgave him!' (laughs). I said: 'Yeah, not only did he forgive him, but he built his church on Peter. Peter became the cornerstone of the church. Well, I'll forgive you one last time because today is the cornerstone of our relationship. But if you do anything, and I mean anything – you fart the wrong way – I'm out. And no explanations this time*

around.' And honestly, from that moment until today, [nothing happened], nothing that would've made me leave, you know.

The Perceived Limits of Social Control

At first sight, the excerpts presented above support the basic premises of social control and support theories: through their significant relationships, the relatives of those who offend can influence their demeanour (Cullen, 1994; Sampson & Laub, 1993). While this was somewhat true for certain respondents, it was far from being a power shared by all or applicable in all cases. In fact, even those who perceived playing a positive role in the actions of their loved ones often talked about instances during which they were completely powerless. This was even the case for Kara, who otherwise embodied the 'good wife effect' (see Sampson & Laub, 1993). Indeed, before choosing to forgive her husband, she was determined to sever their relationship because he had failed to change in spite of her numerous efforts. Third time was a charm for her, but this was not the only possible outcome of the efforts put forth by participants, nor was it the most common. Of course, those who break the law have their own volitions and they can be influenced by other significant relationships and by macro-level entities such as cultural and systemic factors. Despite their best intentions, participants perceived that the various roles they endorsed were significantly limited when it came to actually restraining actions, particularly deviant and delinquent ones.

In this study, parents often talked about the experience of having a limited influence on the actions of their child. While some were able to impose a structuring frame that was helpful, many recounted feeling powerless. This was the case with Isabella (mother) who described expanding her best efforts to help her 29-year-old son and to encourage his desistance. Highlighting her limited abilities to do so, she recounted how she continuously had to tell him to: "*Stop going back, this makes no sense*." Jonathan (father) and Dorothy (mother) shared a similar experience with their son. Jonathan remembered: "*We were always trying to [...] place beacons. And there was nothing we could do. He didn't care about us—at all*." Along the same line, his wife said:

He had no job, you know. It was completely surreal. And I could see that he was doing stuff that was not right. I couldn't stop him. However much I tried talking to him,

> *everything I said he already knew and [he thought] I couldn't understand what he was going through.*

To this, Dorothy added: *"[His actions] went against everything we have shown him. But he did it anyway. And [...] he'd do it again, I think*."

Mildred (mother) similarly recounted how her ability to control her son's demeanour has been almost inexistent since he was born. During his childhood, she had to place him in a group home because, as a single mother, she was "*completely unable to manage him*." Using a similar technique as Kara whose story was described above, she even resorted to threats of relational rupture in the hopes that he would change his ways. She described this event as such:

> *I had given him an ultimatum: 'Look, I'm still here for you, but I swear that if you commit another infraction, it's over. You won't be able to count on me anymore.' So... He hasn't done it yet, but [I know that] he has been planning [his next illegal venture]. And that's it—it's as if I understood that I want this more than he does. He's not interested in walking the right path.*

Mildred's experience highlights the fact that similar control 'attempts' can have very different outcomes. Of course, one could argue that, by the nature of their relationships, parents have a more limited impact on their offspring's conduct than people engaged in other forms of relationships. However, respondents involved in these other relations also talked about the limits of their controlling potential. After being crystal clear on the point that she would not tolerate his continued involvement in illicit actions, Mia's (fiancée) fiancé was nonetheless incarcerated upon breaching his parole conditions. Visibly shaken by her friend's recent escape from the halfway house where he was living, Deanna (friend) similarly highlighted her inability to restrain her friend's conduct.

In addition to having a limited impact on the conduct and choices of their loved ones, some participants reported feeling completely helpless, simply not knowing how to help. This was well exemplified by Louise (sister), who described how she had been unable to put any strategy in place to help her brother change his ways. For her, the helplessness was even more profound because he was her brother, someone she deeply cared about:

> *It was like a distress that was there. It's easier to help your friends than to help people in your own family [...]. For me, it was hard to see him going through that, to see him*

> *suffer […]. And at the same time, there's a part of me that hasn't taken responsibility because I keep telling myself that I have so much to handle in my own life. And I thought my parents would've put more energy into that, to try helping him.*

This experience is important to describe as it shows how, in some cases, control is not at all possible because those who are related to people who offend simply do not have the required resources, or the psychological, emotional, and physical strength to face the music.

In other cases, relatives were unable to exert any form of influence on their loved one because that person was too closed off to them. Paule (girlfriend), for instance, described how in spite of her best efforts and her willingness to help and support her boyfriend, she was unable to do so because he would not open up to her. After recounting how he "*doesn't talk to [her] and keeps everything to himself*," she added:

> *P: So, you know, I know a bit about his past. You know, I already told him: 'We've known each other for like a year now, but […] sometimes I feel like I don't know you 100%.' You know? I can tell what his reactions will be. I'm able to know when he's not feeling right. If I do this, he'll react that way. I know it touches him. But do I really know that person deep down?*
>
> *Do: Yeah…*
>
> *P: I think I'll never really get to know that part of him [the part that offended].*

While a rare instance in this study, some participants reported being unable to help or influence their loved one because these individuals had chosen to put an end to the relationship. This was the case with Inara (girlfriend) whose boyfriend had decided to break off their 5-year relationship upon the beginning of his incarceration. No matter how much she wished she could have been there for him through his current predicaments, she was simply left with no opportunity to do so. This rupture was so strict that she did not even know where her boyfriend was incarcerated, nor for how long. Philip (father) also exemplified how the roles of relatives can be limited by the relational decisions of the people who engage in offending. While he could not tell how long this would last and while he wished he could still see her, his daughter had also chosen to sever her relationship with him. Of course, this made it impossible for him to provide her with any form of support or to control her conduct, at least at that moment.

As suggested by the analysis hitherto presented, providing an unambiguous answer to the question 'can the relatives of the people who offend influence their offending actions?' is a difficult task. While some participants perceived having a concrete impact on the lives and demeanour of the person they supported, several described being powerless. Through the analysis of the relational and subjective experiences of respondents, the next section begins disentangling the reciprocal nature of the social influence that operates between people who break the law and those who love them.

The Collateral Consequences of Being Related to Someone who Offends

In what might be seen as a rather abrupt start, this section begins the analysis of the relational experiences of respondents by tackling the price that comes with being closely related to someone who has, and who sometimes still is, engaged in unlawful actions. While this was not the focus of the interviews, every participant talked about these costs, sometimes at great length, highlighting the difficulties and strains experienced through their relationships. As seen in Chapter 2, the body of scientific works dedicated to relatives have been primarily interested in such "collateral consequences" (Granja, 2016, p. 274). Methodological choices have led much of that literature to focus specifically on the costs related to the incarceration of a loved one. Because some of the participants met in the present study never had to deal with incarceration or because the incarceration sentence was terminated at the time of interview, the present section more broadly touches on the collateral consequences associated being involved in a relationship with someone involved in illegal actions.

In line with Granja (2016), the negative outcomes presented below are understood as collateral consequences rather than secondary victimization. While one participant (Kathryn, daughter) described herself as an "*indirect victim*," this was not a common self-representation within the sample. The term collateral is also pertinent because, in a large majority of cases, respondents were not the official victims of the offending of their loved one. As will become clear, this conceptual choice is by no means intended to curtail the damaging and sometimes violent experiences endured by participants. Rather, it intends to express how these people were not personally involved as victims in the criminal procedures they navigated. The term consequence, on the other hand, is broadly defined and encompasses any negative outcome

associated either with offending or with the judicial and/or public reaction to offending. Following this conceptualization, respondents described experiencing five broad categories of collateral consequences: (1) emotional; (2) relational; (3) dealing with the media and public exposure; (4) dealing with the criminal justice system; and (5) victimization.

Emotional consequences

Virtually all participants reported experiencing negative emotions over the course of their relation history. For those who were already engaged in a relationship with their loved one when his/her illegal actions occurred or, more specifically, when they became aware of it, emotional turmoil began upon discovery. Numerous respondents described feeling a tremendous shock at that moment, an experience previously reported in the literature on relatives (Condry, 2007; Fishman, 1990). In the present study, shock was particularly prevalent in the narratives of parents. This is illustratively exemplified by Charles (father), who remembered "*jumping out of his skin*" when he learned why his son had been arrested. Rosa (mother) shared a similar experience, with the additional shock associated with the fact that her son's illegal activities took place in her home. Recounting this event, she said:

> *At one point, I even thought they might have the wrong person. Anything, you know. It was irrational. It wasn't possible. You know, it was like, how did I not see anything? How is that possible? I didn't see anything in my home—in my house? I couldn't believe that […]. No, no. I was in a completely different universe with my son–completely. I could have thought about alcohol. I might've thought of drugs […]. You know, I couldn't believe it. I was like, come on, this is impossible. This couldn't have happened. […] But it could happen. And that's what it was.*

Experiencing shock upon learning about the offending of a loved one is not an experience that was restricted to parents. Similarly to Kathryn (daughter) who described being "*in a crisis*" upon learning about her father's illegal actions, Inara (girlfriend) recounted how she "*would've never thought*" her boyfriend could have been involved in an illegal scheme over the entire length of their romantic involvement. While some have argued that shock is particularly likely among relatives of individuals who have engaged in serious forms of offending (Condry, 2007), results from this study suggest that it can be experienced by anyone related to people who have broken social norms. Indeed, while Charles, Rosa and Kathryn were supporting someone who had either been involved in violent or sexual offenses, Inara's

boyfriend had been implicated in a milder form of lucrative offending. As seen, this seriousness difference did not prevent her from being thoroughly shaken by his illegal endeavours.

Once relatives became aware that illegal actions had taken place and once the shock of discovery had passed, the emotional consequences were far from over. Despite the heterogeneity of their reactions, the majority of respondents described going through an emotional rollercoaster, one that often mirrored the temporal evolution of their relational stories. Emotions waxed and waned as events unfolded, as participants progressed through the maze of the criminal justice system, and as their loved ones' conduct evolved or, in other cases, stagnated. Interestingly, those who became involved in their relationship while cognizant of the offending also described this fluctuating emotional experience. For instance, Deanna (friend) explained how she had been through a range of emotions over the course of her relationship. After experiencing a fulfilling and intense connection that brought her largely positive emotions, she described how his recent illegal escape from his conditional release affected her emotionally. As opposed to the benefits she felt she had gained when things were stable, she now focused on negative emotions such as powerlessness, disappointment, and betrayal. Similarly to Deanna, numerous respondents talked about additional negative emotions felt as a reaction to their loved one's demeanour. For many, these included shame, anger, and even fear.

When they touched upon this emotional rollercoaster, participants also talked about the guilt they experienced with regard to the illegal actions of the person they love. Again, this emotional predicament was particularly palpable among those who were already engaged in their relationship when they became aware of the offending. The idea that they might be somewhat responsible for this conduct was particularly frequent in parents' narratives, but was also noticeable in the narratives of participants involved in other forms of relationships. For instance, similarly to Isabella (mother) who openly wondered whether she could've done more to support her son over the years, Laura (wife) recounted how she had to bluntly ask her husband whether she had played a role in his illegal actions in order to put her guilt to rest. Along similar lines, Louise's (sister) narrative highlights how she wished she had been more supportive of her brother before he engaged in an irreparable path. Her guilt was still strong

during the interview, so much so that she believed she had to repay for her past omissions: "*Let's say [that], like, [I] blame myself because I didn't do the things to help him. So it's like, now I wanna try to be there for him to keep his good spirits because I know it helps him a lot that we visit him often. Yeah, we visit him very often*." As will become clear in the analyses presented in Chapter 5, the notion of personal responsibility was a particularly important element in the personal experiences of participants.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, several participants reported feelings of sadness and depression. For some, this was a very deep and painful experience. Jonathan (father), for instance, recounted how the accumulation of his son's problematic actions had recently led him to suicidal ideations. In a similarly deep and personal passage, Kathryn (daughter) described how her father's illegal activities had affected her emotionally, particularly given that she has been the victim of a similar offense when she was younger.[40] While she had finally chosen to stay by his side and support him through this situation, she was still distraught:

> *K: I had an episode of delayed-onset post-traumatic stress disorder because I was abused when I was younger […]. So when I learned that about my father, I relapsed hard […].*
>
> *Do: Ok…*
>
> *K: Even harder, because, you know, it's like what he has done to other people, other people have done to me […]. So it really put me down. You know, all of it: sick-leave from work, depressive symptoms, anxiety through the roof, trouble sleeping, and loss of appetite. I have a lot of difficulty with my social relations. I don't trust people. I wanted kids. I don't know if I want kids anymore because of that.*

A large share of the emotional rollercoaster experienced by participants was related to the process of going through the criminal justice system's lengthy, complex and hard to follow procedures. Sometimes this experience further intersected with the media exposure of the offending. The following excerpt from Louise's (sister) narrative clearly illustrated this:

> *L: [I've had] a lot of nightmares also in relation to [my brother's actions]. Well, [I've had] to rebuild my life after […] I entered somewhat of a depressive phase last year.*

[40] Importantly, her father was not the perpetrator of that offense.

Because I didn't really know how to get back up after all this. I've had my friends' support, but you know, I didn't go see a psychologist or anyone else […]. And now, it's not always easy. Like when I visit my brother in prison, it always takes time to get over it. You know, at first it would take me a week to get over it. I couldn't sleep at night. There were a lot of nightmares and anxiety over wondering if everything was going well for him. And there was anxiety for my family too It's been so intense in the media that I was scared for my family's safety.

Do: Ok.

L: […] We don't know whether there'll be a trial. So that's something we're a bit worried about. It'll be very mediatised if there's a trial. We don't really know… So, it's as if we never know what'll happen […]. It's like always a stress. Like the procedures are long, we don't know what'll happen, what's the next step. It's very unstable, which makes it hard to take roots. Like, right now, I'm in [the city], but I don't know for how long. It's hard to focus and go on with your life—well, for me anyway.

Relational consequences

Collateral consequences also permeated the social network of participants, sometimes in important ways. River (friend), for instance, explained how having an incarcerated ex-boyfriend (who is now a friend) curtailed her chances of becoming romantically involved with another man, particularly one not involved in offending. In her words:

I tried to meet people without a [criminal] record and every time this happens: I scare them away. And with my son's father who's in jail, well the guys are scared. Sometimes they're like: 'When is he getting out? What's gonna be? He'll come and tell me to move over?'

Others described how choosing to remain involved with someone who had offended led to important conflicts with others. In some cases, it even led to the rupture of long-term and significant relationships. For instance, Laura (wife) described how all of her in-laws seemed to "*hold a grudge against her*." When talking about their reaction to her decision to stay by her husband's side, she said: "*It's as if [he] was dead [to them]. And I died at the same time. They don't want to see us anymore*." Louise (sister), whose emotional predicaments were described above, reported a similar experience with some members of her extended family who are now "*gone*" from her life. For her, their estrangement was ascribable to the prejudices they held and the "*intense shame and anger*" they felt in relation to her brother's action. Along similar lines, Norma (wife) explained how she had also lost several lost long-time friends

because they disapproved of her decision to be romantically involved with an incarcerated man. Interestingly, she distinguished between two different reactions from members of her social network: the judgment of these friends and the incomprehension some of her family members:

> *Do: Would you say you have experienced that [judgment]? Earlier you were saying […] that you didn't like to talk about [your relationship with your husband]—that it's a taboo subject in your family. Do you feel you're being judged in relation to your relationship with your husband?*
>
> *N: Incomprehension—not really judgment—incomprehension. They don't understand what I'm doing there […]. It's not judgment. It's really that they don't understand what's interesting in going [to prison], trapped in a visiting room. You have to go through the scan, the dog. Some guards, let's be honest, they're not very friendly, you know […]. [My family] doesn't understand why I willingly go through all these steps, you know. So, as I'm saying, it's not really judgment. Well in my case anyway […], it's really incomprehension. They don't understand why. 'Why are you doing this? Why are you going there? Why him? Why not the other one instead?' So, they won't tell me: 'You're stupid, you're an idiot, don't do this.' There are friends [who do]… But I don't care about friends. Some of them judge me.*
>
> *Do: Yeah?*
>
> *N: Yeah, well yeah. […]*
>
> *Do: […] What kind of judgment is that?*
>
> *N: Well: 'What are you doing there? He's a bum. You have no future with him.' And well: 'you could find someone. And you're worth more than that.' Listen, I've chosen that life […] It doesn't change anything in [my friend's] life. It doesn't affect her life in any way. So:'If you're not happy my dear, well, this is where our paths will diverge and that's it.' I can't lose sleep over people like that. It's not worth it. There are some, they've been really good friends for a long time. But well, they don't understand and they won't accept it. So our paths have diverged.*

While several participants talked about how they have felt judged by people they were close to, others talked about how even mundane interactions are affected by their association with a person who has acted illegally. Rosa (mother) talked about the unpleasant strategy she adopted to deal with curious neighbours when her son was incarcerated:

> *R: You know, when [my son] went to [prison] for four month, my neighbours were asking me: 'We don't see your son anymore.' Don't ask me how, but my brain was*

running 300 miles an hour. One of my female neighbours with whom I talk a lot asked me: 'Is he in Europe?' Because she knows […] that his father has family in Europe. I said: 'No. Don't ask me why, but these days he goes out through the back door.' Sometimes [when I was talking with other people], I would say: 'He's looking for a job, he went for interviews.' Come on, that wasn't what it was at all. We were waiting for his sentence. You know, [I was] lying. I've been really bothered by that—lying, you know. It displeased me enormously […] This has been very difficult—very, very difficult.

Do: Why do you do it?

R: Why do I do it?

Do: Yeah.

R: Well, I think… that's a really good question. I never really asked myself that question. You know, maybe to avoid... I was coming to Relais Famille […] and I heard someone in the group talk about how things happened in their family. In my head I was like, at least I don't have a family. But [there are] my neighbours, you know. There was another person [in the discussion group] who was saying: 'We live in a housing cooperative.' When the kids came back from school there were pictures everywhere in the building announcing that their father was a pedophile. I don't know how I would've handled that, but I probably protected myself in a way—by lying. But at the same time it displeased me deeply.

Some relatives also described how the judgment of others toward them had actually changed their perceived social status. Dorothy (mother) described how her husband and her had "*become the aggressor's parents*" and how they had been treated as such on several occasions. When explaining how she wished she had done more to improve her son's incarceration conditions, Mildred (mother) highlighted a similar idea:

And I can't say: 'Ok, I'll go in the media.' Who's gonna be sensitive to my cause? My son's in jail. People don't give a fuck. It's like the last priority. No one's gonna be sensitive to my cause, you know. I have a delinquent. They're just gonna judge me because I'm the mother of a delinquent and that's it. No one's gonna help me.

Media and public consequences

For several participants, the social judgement described in the previous section also reverberated in the media. In some cases, this remained an anticipated fear as they worried about how the media would tackle the offending actions of the person they love. When thinking about her husband's future in the correctional services, Kara (wife) was filled with

apprehension, particularly as she reflected on how others have been treated by the media and the impact this had on them:

> *You know, my biggest fear is the day that [he gets out]. You know, let's say [my husband] gets out and it runs in the newspaper that he's out. You know. It's like Karla Homolka.*[41] *When she came out […] Look, I understand that what she has done is not ok, but she has done her time […].*

For others, dealing with the media was much more than a fear. It was a real experience that was sometimes complicated and painful. Echoing Louise's (sister) experience reported above, Philip (father) recounted how a media mishap had regrettable consequences on his relation with his daughter and his ex-wife. After agreeing to anonymously share his experience as the father of someone who had offended with a journalist, he believed that enough details were provided in the printed article to identify him, at least enough to raise suspicions among his personal and familial network. In his view, this journalistic fault was the reason for his daughter's decision to sever their relationship. Needless to say, he deeply regretted taking part in this project.

Respondents also talked about the repercussions of involuntary media appearance, as is the case when newspapers report of an offense or cover criminal trials for public interest. Isabella (mother) described how the media portrayal of her son's case encouraged her daughter to want to change her family name. As another example, Kathryn (daughter) described the televised coverage of her father's case and trial as trying, particularly as it led many of her acquaintances to become aware of the events. In addition, she described how she had to endure what she called "*disinformation*" from the media. In her words, the media "*worsened the situation. They put the really bad [stuff] on television. It's really like the show must go on […]. They worsened the situation and said things where I was like: 'Ok, that's not even true. That's total disinformation*.'" She describes this experience as very "*confronting because the version people had [of her father's offending conduct] was not the truth*."

[41] The story of Karla Homolka has galvanized the Canadian media and public attention since the 1990's. Homolka is infamously known as as Paul Bernardo's accomplice. She has been sentenced to 12-year of imprisonment for manslaughter.

In addition to this hardly bearable mediatisation, Kathryn further described her experience with social media. This outlet forced her to live her father's story over and over again, as if it was now part of a never-ending present. While several people had been empathetic to her situation, she nonetheless had to deal with some of social media's most pervert effects. When describing this, she said:

> *On Facebook, [I was friends with] the twin brother of [my father's victim]. And he was posting stuff on my father. So, I saw it on Facebook's news feed. And there were people sharing [the information] and things like that. And people were leaving negative comments. I wasn't the one being targeted, but I saw them. And when it first happened, I [spent a lot of time] on social media. You know, I even saw it on Twitter. Saw it on [a news channel's website]. You know I went to see and people were leaving comments. People who had never met [my father]. I was inclined to read it all, so I found it intense. And let me tell you that the second time it [was mediatized], I turned the TV off. I played with my Lego at home and I turned everything off. Never did it again because it was too hard [...]. Online social networks are really confronting.*

Dealing with the criminal justice system

Virtually all participants talked about how they had been affected by an entity they referred to as "*the system*." In general, this was understood in broad terms, encompassing every organization with which participants had to deal over the course of their experience: from the police, to the court and correctional systems. While most respondents reported being treated fairly by the police, some, like Rosa (mother), also talked about being distraught by their approach. As stated earlier, her son's illegal activities mainly took place under her roof, a circumstance that forced her to endure the long and uncomfortable search of her home. She described her experience as such:

> *R: You know, I was polite. But at the same time, I didn't really feel like talking to them. Because I was thinking that everything I said might turn against me—against my son. In the end, I was very puzzled, very confused. And I was so uncomfortable. But in the end, well, the atmosphere got more relaxed if you will.*
>
> *Do: Yeah.*
>
> *R: And, well, I had to live that. At one point, that's what I told myself. Well, they have work to do. That's why they're here. I have no choice, that's it.*

Dealing with the complexity of the criminal court was also an important consequence reported by participants. In addition to the numerous misunderstandings and to the bulk of

new information they had to ingest, they described the length of procedures as particularly difficult to bear. For many, several years had elapsed between the legal detection of the offending act, the trial, and the end of the sentence. This waiting period was filled with uncertainty, worry, and anxiety. They were often required to attend several appointments, to delve into experts' reports, and sometimes even to prepare for testimony. Rosa (mother) described this lingering process quite eloquently as "*the cancer [that] eats you from the inside*." For relatives who were very involved in the criminal justice system's procedures, the waiting could be debilitating and affect the flow of day-to-day life. As Rosa put it: "*You can't [...] organize yourself according to yourself. You organize yourself according to someone else*."

As previously highlighted in the literature on relatives, the correctional system—a system where "*all of humanity disappears*" (Deanna, friend)—was an important source of the collateral consequences reported by many respondents (Comfort, 2003; Naser & Visher, 2006; Ricordeau, 2008). To a large extent, these negative outcomes overlapped with the negative outcomes hitherto presented. For instance, many talked about the emotional turmoil they experienced when witnessing the physical restraints to which their loved ones were subjected. Like Philip (father) and Charles (father), some explained how seeing them handcuffed had been a particularly difficult experience. Others reported being in a constant state of worry, never truly sure what was happening behind the prison's walls. This emotional experience was especially present in Inara's narrative. Exacerbated by the fact that her boyfriend chose to sever their relationships upon his incarceration, her worry could hardly be dampened. Relying on popular culture, she tried to envision what life inside prison might have been like for him. The opacity of the correctional system, however, rendered this task quite difficult for her:

> *Because you know, Unité 9*[42] *is fiction. But at the same time, what's real and what's not? You don't know [...]. It's another world. He lives on another planet—literally. That's the hardest part: to never be reassured about what services are available. To try to find the information in order to tell yourself: 'Ok, yeah there are such and such risks. But yes, there's also this that can help him [...].' You know, we have nothing. We know nothing. So, to me, that's the worst in all that—It's not knowing. And thinking:*

[42] A dramatic Quebecois television series on life inside prison.

well, he might be left on his own devices and when he comes out it'll be worse than before […]. So it's all this uncertainty, in the end, that I find the worst. You don't know how he's being treated. Don't know how he manages, you know.

Of course, the prison sentence is also a lonely experience during which participants are separated from the person they love. While the social isolation is part and parcel of the sentence imposed on the person who has offended, relatives also have to pay this price. While her husband has only recently been incarcerated, Laura (wife) already felt his absence:

I was watching TV—we watched a lot of series together and we'd talk about them […]. I turned around to… It's as if I would've liked him to be there (tearful). And then I started to miss him. And I was saying: 'If I miss you, it's because of you. Darn, it's because of what you did that I miss you.' That's what I told him on Sunday […]. He has to know what I'm going through. Because there are consequences to what he did—and that's a part of it.

Being involved with and, more specifically, supporting someone who is incarcerated could also be costly. This was clear in Norma's (wife) story: "[*My husband's incarceration has] cost me a lot financially. I'd have a house paid in cash with all the collect calls and the trips to visit him. But I don't blame him because he didn't force me—it was me*." In other cases, the consequences are more tangible, however, as was explicit in Jonathan's (father) narrative:

I got sick of paying [for my son]. I'm not retired because I've spent my entire pension fund to pay for the lawyers, the drug debts, and to pay off the loans and all the stuff he did. If it weren't for that, I could retire today [like my wife]. It'll be in 6 years and a half instead.

In addition to these financial costs, maintaining a relationship with someone who is incarcerated could be time consuming, particularly when the sentence was served in a custodial establishment located far from participants' home. When her friend was imprisoned in another province, Deanna (friend) would drive 20 hours back and forth for a one and a half hour of visitation. Kara (wife) reported a similar experience:

And it was hell every time. You know, it was like eight and half hours of driving for me. And [I went for] two-hour visits without contact. They gave me four hours. I was lucky: they gave me twelve hours of visit over the weekend to do in three blocks of four hours. But, you know, it's an eight-hour drive. [Then I spent] twelve hours over the phone, another eight hours to come. It was in [a small town]. The road is not pretty in winter.

When talking about the collateral consequences of incarceration, numerous participants also mentioned the unpleasant experience of being submitted to the security protocols of correctional establishments. Deanna (friend) described her experience of being searched prior to a private family visit in these words: "*You know, it's ok. I know I have to go through it, but […] you don't belong to yourself anymore. Even as a person who accompanies*." For others, going to prison to visit a loved one is particularly difficult when they perceive guards to be against them, to target them. As clearly expressed in this excerpt from Norma's (wife) interview, this was more likely when prison personnel held a grudge against the incarcerated person:

> *One of them hated my boyfriend so much. When I came and he was assigned to the visitation room, I would get there and he would—I've had it all. I was strip searched once because he was convinced that I was bringing stuff in, you know. So it hasn't always been easy. But the longer [my husband] stays somewhere, the more people realize I have nothing to hide. So trust can't be taken for granted. Every time he's transferred, we have to go through all of this again […]. Of course, it's not always easy—it's not ideal, it's stressful. You get there, you're afraid the machine will go off for any reason. Because today you can touch anything and be contaminated […]. You see the dog coming your way—you know you're beyond reproach, but you watch it and think: 'Don't sit down, don't sit down. Don't stop, don't stop. Go away, go away.'*

The various collateral consequences that related to prison and that were reported by relatives are in line with previous research, particularly that which focuses on the concept of secondary prisonization (Comfort, 2008). This idea is particularly well put in Charles' narrative:

> *And [I told my son]: 'You've made a blunder—and it's a colossal blunder. And you'll likely pay the price for a long, long, long time. It has repercussions on a bunch of people.' You know, that's what I told [my son] when I went to see him in prison. Because he found it hard to be behind bars. And at one point he didn't want us to visit him anymore, because he found it too hard when we left. It was a nice day out that time and he said: 'I'm the one staying inside.' So I told him: 'Don't go and think that it's a party when we get out.' I told him: 'We're all prisoners of your situation.' It might not have been ok for me to say that, but I wanted him to know that there were repercussions to all this. You know, I've always said: 'Whatever my lot, you shall share it.' It has repercussions on the entire family. Your brothers, your parents, your sister, your children—everyone. We're not happy because we're on the outside and*

you're miserable because you're on the inside. The only difference is that you're inside and we're outside—but we all live with this.

Victimization

As briefly described in the methodological chapter, none of the participants was the 'legal' victim of their loved one's offending. This, however, does not entail that they had never been victimized. In fact, in addition to the collateral consequences thus far described, several respondents reported being subjected to actions that could be defined as illegal. For instance, Charles (father), Deanna (friend), Dorothy (mother), and Philip (father) all recounted how the person they support had taken their money without consent. Dorothy further described how her son once "*stole [her] car to go steal other cars*." Some of them also got tangled in the social networks of the person they love and support. Charles (father), for example, described how his son's friends had squatted his condo for a few days. Along similar lines, Philip's (father) talked about the moment when his ex-wife's computer was stolen by one of their daughter's "*good*" friends.

In other cases, the illegal actions that befell them exceeded pecuniary offending and mischief. Paule (girlfriend) described in detailed terms the numerous arguments she had with her boyfriend since the beginning of their relationships. His aggressiveness toward her and her son during some of these incidences has even prompted her to contact the police. Along similar lines, Dorothy (mother) recounted how her son had gripped her by the neck during an outburst of anger. While this was an isolated event for her, things have been very different for her husband, Jonathan (father). One incident was particularly evocative:

> *[My son] comes in [the house] and he wants to kill me. There's no one outside. It had snowed and there were no foot traces anywhere. He's running like a wild person. He's only wearing a t-shirt. He comes in and picks up a knife that long (shows me the length with his fingers) and he wants to kill somebody. He's protecting himself from someone. So I run after him to try and take the knife away from him. The knife brushes my ears—brushes my mouth and everything. I end up being able to take the knife away from him. At one point I come back inside to bring the knife in—woop—he takes his car and leaves. He might go and kill people, you know. I watched TV shows on psychoses in people who use cocaine. They were saying that it exacerbates jealousy issues. So often, they have jealousy psychoses. And I've seen them. Jealousy psychoses, they're real. He was overly jealous: 'Where's the fucker? I'll kill him.' And he's there with a gun in his*

hands—loaded, you know. He would call me: 'Come pick me up, dad.' I'd go to his place, but he was gone by the time I got there. He's going around with the gun. And I'm trying not to go in front of him, but sometimes he turns around, he passes his loaded gun in front of me. So at one point, I'm able to take it away from him. And then at one point he pulls out a knife. And then I manage to take the knife away.

While being physically assaulted was a rare experience among the participants who took part in this study, the experiences of the few who endured it were sometimes so intense that they warrant consideration. Not unlike Jonathan, River (friend) explained how she had recently been involved in a vicious argument with her friend while he was on conditional release. The injuries she suffered from this incident were still visible during the interview. In fact, they were so severe that she had to take several breaks during our encounter. The graphic nature of the following excerpt is not intended to serve sensationalist purposes. Rather, it highlights some of the possible downsides of maintaining a relationship with someone who has a history of illegal activities, particularly violent ones:

R: But when [the beating] happened, I wasn't even able to move my leg.

Do: Oh.

R: Like—I wasn't even able to walk. And the guy who did this to me thought I was joking. He was laughing at me. He was telling me: 'Stop faking, stop faking.'

Do: After he hit you?

R: Because I… That's what annoyed people the most: it's that he left me bathing in my blood. He pushed me. I fell on my back and hit my head. I bounced back up and I said: 'My son—my son—please.' It pissed him off that I stood up because the last time he went to jail it was because he had hit a guy three times with a baseball bat and he had put him in a coma. He was pissed off that he did the same to me and that I stood up. The guy hadn't. He had hit me three times when I stood up. But I fell back and blood started to squirt [from my head]. And then there was a pool of blood everywhere around me—and he thought it was funny. And there was another girl there and she was trying to run away because she was afraid that if I died he would hurt her. So she tried to escape. But I blacked out—that's what I've been told […]. His brother was around me cleaning the blood. So like, the guy was like: 'Come on, go in the bath, go in the bath.' I wasn't able to walk […]. My leg wasn't moving anymore. And I was crying, crying […]. And after that, they put me in the bath. They left me in the bath. There was no warm water anymore—only cold water. And I stayed in the bath and blood kept dripping off my head.

As stated in the introduction of this section, for many, collateral consequences are part and parcel of the experience of being related to someone who has engaged in offending. Given that most of them remain in these relationships in spite of the various hardships, it is logical to wonder about their views vis-à-vis offending and deviance. Are they somehow favourable to it, which could explain the maintenance of these relationships? Or are they rather unfavourable? Either way, how did these subjective positions emerge? This is the focus of the following section.

Repertoires and Attitudes

Most social theories of crime and desistance stipulate that, in order to influence the conduct of those who offend toward social conventions, relatives have to be prosocial role models. In general, this not only entails that they must not be involved in illegal activities, but also that they perceive such actions as 'bad' and reprehensible. As it seeks to understand how the experiences of relatives are shaped by their relationship with someone who offends, the analysis presented in this chapter could not be complete without considering these issues. To do so, the current section is subdivided in two parts. First, the analysis focuses on participants' previous experiences with deviance and delinquency. Together, these shape the repertoires from which these people can make sense of the world in which they navigate, and which include attitudes vis-à-vis offending and convention. These are the focus of the second part of this section.

Personal and Vicarious Experiences with Deviance and Offending

Obviously, participants have other life experiences besides the relationship with their loved one, which forms the backdrop of this study. For approximately half of the sample, these actually include previous exposure to offending and, more generally, to deviance. While these might seem rather pointless to the exercise undertaken in this chapter, their exploration is in fact warranted. Indeed, these past experiences are central as they have not only shaped participants' pasts in a very concrete sense, but have also affected how they perceive the world they inhabit and their sense of what is right and what is wrong. In sum, they have provided respondents with certain dispositions (Lahire, 2003) that were integrated to their repertoires As briefly introduced in Chapter 3, the concept of repertoires was inspired by the work of

Swidler (2001), who defines it as the personal "toolkit" people use to make sense of their experiences. Specifically, repertoires are built from the various cultural and social experiences individuals have over their life course, and through which they learn several types of capacities. These not only include the capacities to be certain kinds of selves and to signal particular group membership, but also to constitute specific views of the world, a particularly important element in this thesis. In line with this conceptualization, the present section focuses on the various experiences respondents have had over their life course and how they have shaped their repertoires. Special attention is paid to the ways by which these past experiences have informed their perceptions of what is right and what is wrong and have moulded their attitudes toward moral norms.

The past experiences reported by respondents took two main forms: (1) personal and (2) vicarious. In the former, they described how they have been personally involved in a deviant conduct. In the latter, they talked about how they have known or spent time with third parties who were involved in such actions. While for some these vicarious experiences occurred in the context of their personal life, for others they took place in their professional/academic life. In order to ease the reading of results, this information is collided in Table 6.

Table 6

The repertoires of relatives

Name	Beginning of relationship[a]	Past experience with offending /deviance
Kara	After	Personal deviance; Vicarious: Professional
Norma	After	Vicarious: Third parties
Laura	Before	None
Deanna	After	None
Rosa	Before	Personal delinquency
Mia	After	None
Philip	Before	Personal deviance
Kathryn	Before	Vicarious: Professional/academic
Paule	After	None
Dorothy	Before	None
Jonathan	Before	Personal deviance
Mildred	Before	None
Louise	Before	None
Inara	Before	None
Isabella	Before	None
Charles	Before	Personal deviance. Vicarious: Professional
Ellen	After	Vicarious: Third parties & Professional
River	After	Personal offending. Vicarious: Third parties

Notes. [a] Indicates whether the relationship between participants and the person who has offended started before or after the discovery of offense.

Personal experience with offending/deviance

Only a handful of relatives reported having been personally involved in offending or deviant activities. Among those who did, this experience tended to be fairly limited in scope and time and seldom reached formal illegality. Kara (wife) for instance recounted how she had alcohol use problems when she was younger, a difficulty she overcame when she was 24. Since that period of her life, she has participated in Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) meetings (see Table 1, Chapter 3). For his part, Charles (father) talked about a different form of dependence, gambling, which similarly led him to join the Gamblers Anonymous (GA)

movement.[43] In his own view, this personal experience had equipped him with a means to understand his son's conduct, albeit partly:

> *I know what it's like [to be in my son's position] because I've exploited these flaws myself. When you're a compulsive gambler, you're also a liar and a manipulator. I was in a relationship at the time and I would gamble. I played the slot machines. At that time you could still smoke in bars—I've never smoked in my life—I would come home and she would say: 'My God, you smell of smoke.' I made a story up and I told myself I'd never get caught again, so I got a gym membership. I gambled, took a shower at the gym, changed my clothes and came home. Never did cardio nor strength training. That's it, you know—I can recognize these traits in my son.*

Of all participants interviewed, only two had personally been involved in what could be considered illegal conduct. Before coming of age, Rosa (mother) was sent to a reform school after being arrested for delinquency. In her words, this experience had not only shaped who she became, but had also influenced her understanding of offending. While only short-lived, River (friend) also recounted having taken part in illegal activities of a lucrative nature. Because these actions occurred when she was an adult and she got caught doing it, she even spent some time in a provincial jail. As will be explored further below, her past experience with offending extends beyond this personal involvement.

Vicarious experience with offending/deviance

Out of the eighteen relatives that were met in this study, four had previously been friends with, spent time with, or dated individual(s) involved in offending actions. Through her narrative, Norma (wife) explained how such an experience had shaped the way she thought about illegal conduct and the people who take part in it. By comparing her vicarious experience with that of her siblings, she offered an insightful analysis:

> *N: On my father's side of the family they're…well, they're not all delinquents, but it wasn't something that was unknown […]. My sisters were younger [than me] when my parents got divorced, so they don't have the same relationship with my father's side of the family that I have. For me, it's not abnormal [to offend]. It's another life choice, but it's not… I don't lose my mind over it—as opposed to my sister. If you talk to her*

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[43] To be sure, gambling is not de facto a deviant activity. In Charles view, however, it became a problematic part of his life, to the point where he perceived it as deviant.

about someone who's been to prison she loses her mind [...]. I asked her to come see [my husband in prison]. She wants to hear nothing about it. Those who are prison can simply die there.

Do: Oh yeah?

N: Yeah, yeah. Even my mother, you know. She'd let them breathe and that's about the only right she'd give them.

Along similar lines, River (friend), who also reported personal involvement in illegal activities, described having considerable vicarious experience dating back to her childhood:

When they were younger, my father and my uncle were taken away [from their families]. They've been in foster care all of their lives. And my uncle is the one who really took the wrong turn. He was always in jail—in and out, in and out—even today. I think since my son was born—my son's 21 months old—my uncle must've gone back like five times. It's like non-stop. So the first time I stepped into a prison I was like five [years old]. I was dropping clothes for my uncle [...]. And at one point I had no news from my father. I later learned that he was in prison during my adolescence, so that's why I had no news. As I was growing up, prison has always been like—normal.

In addition, River explained how most of her social world was in fact implicated in illegal endeavours. When depicting her friends and acquaintances, she said: "*I know all kinds of criminals. I know pimps. I know people who are in the Wolfpack. I know arms dealers. I know drug dealers. I know thieves, you know. I know Associates.*" Offending was so entrenched in her life and she spent so much time (legally) helping out her friends who were incarcerated that, unbeknownst to her, they called her "*the Prison Queen*." To be sure, River's story was largely unrepresentative of the stories of the other participants who took part in this study. As will be seen below, however, recent events in her life have prompted her to begin revising her views on offending, and to envision a different future for herself. Despite its idiosyncrasies, her experience was, in many ways, similar to that of the other participants of this study.[44]

As seen in Table 6, several relatives described having vicarious experiences with offending/deviance through their professional and/or academic endeavours. Ellen (girlfriend) for instance described how her job at a courthouse had provided her with insight into

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[44] As described in Chapter 3, River was also recruited through *Relais Famille*. In this sense, she too felt she needed help and support with regard to her relationship with people involved in offending.

offending and into the intricacies of the criminal justice system, two aspects that often need to be dealt with when maintaining a relationship with someone who has acted illegally. Kathryn (daughter) similarly explained how both her academic and professional contexts had provided her with a lens through which she could make sense of her experience:

> *[When I learned about my father's offenses], I had taken classes and I was working with people who had several sexual disorders—so I had worked with that a little. I had kind of been exposed to what it was. It might've helped me understand certain things. Not to justify them, but to understand better.*

Overall, a little over half of the participants reported having no past experience with delinquency, deviance or offending. In fact, most of them described being "*straight*" people whom, as Laura (wife) put it: "*Lived by the book*." This personal characterization as law-abiding citizens led these people to seek certain kinds of social environments. As Mia (girlfriend) explained: "*I am uncommonly calm, serene and Zen. It's my life—I don't want to have violence [around me]*." Of course, without previous experience with any form of illegality, these relatives possessed repertoires that were much different than those of the relatives presented above. Some questions remain, however. First, do these different repertoires actually lead to different attitudes vis-à-vis offending? Second, do they influence the choices and actions of relatives in any concrete ways? While the second question will be explored in the following chapter, the next section analyzes the first.

Attitudes Toward Deviance

The most striking finding one faces when analyzing the narratives of participants is how they almost unanimously position themselves against the offending conduct of the person they love. This is not to dismiss, however, the subtleties of their attitudes and the leniency of certain participants with regard to certain forms of deviance. This balance between the favourable and not-so-favourable attitudes among respondents is presented over the next pages.

Favourable attitudes toward deviance

When they spoke in general terms, i.e., when they were not specifically referring to their loved ones, a handful of relatives expressed a lenient attitude toward offending and

otherwise deviant actions. As stated above, this was not the most common position within the sample. Its analysis is nonetheless warranted, as it characterizes the subjective experiences of some of the people met in this study and, as such, can provide a better understanding of their experiences. Interestingly, all but one of these participants, Paule (girlfriend), had past personal or vicarious experiences with deviance and/or offending. As argued above, these experiences had forged repertoires, which allowed these respondents to more easily displace the line that separates 'right' from 'wrong.'

This capacity for leniency often operated within very specific parameters. For instance, the 'favourable attitudes' of many respondents principally concerned a specific type of deviance: substance use. This was the case for Kara (wife), whose professional experience as a social worker had led her to work with individuals living with HIV and others who struggled with substance use problems. During her career, her interventions had been grounded in harm reduction, an approach that favours an empathic view of substance use and other non-normative activities. Combined with her past personal issues with alcohol, this professional experience had fostered the development of a lenient attitude toward substance use: "*I worked in harm reduction. Everyone can use [drugs or alcohol]. All of my clients could use—even those who were behind bars. We'll work on harm reduction*."

Jonathan's (father) narrative similarly suggested a certain tolerance vis-à-vis substance use. For him, however, the parameters were much more circumscribed than for Kara. Indeed, he admitted to being open to the use of soft drugs, such as marijuana. Resting on his past personal experience with drugs, he specified being favourable to the extent that one's responsibilities were fulfilled: "*You can smoke pot, but you can be at work nonetheless, you know*." This attitude also extended to deviance/small delinquency, so long as it was of a short duration and followed by quick readjustments. Norma (wife) held a comparable attitude toward substances, and admitted that she could "*close her eyes on a magic cigarette smoked once in while*." She further admitted to having a lenient view toward certain forms of offending. By opposition to what she absolutely abhors, she described her more favourable attitude in the following passage:

> *If [my husband] had killed people or raped women and children, I could understand—because these are crimes that I would have a hard time forgiving. I would have a hard*

time being with someone who has hurt children. Well—[…] I'm not saying it's right—but he stole money. He has never—well he has hurt people—but they were all in the [criminal] milieu. But you know, he has never hurt innocent people […]. That might explain why I don't judge what he has done as much. Because he has never hurt children—he has never harmed a child. I don't know…

While she did not report previous experiences with offending and/or deviance, Paule's (girlfriend) narrative also contained hints of a lenient attitude toward such behaviours. However, two important distinctions exist between her subjective positioning and the ones presented above. First, her narrative encompassed contradictory ideas. On the one hand, she was judgmental toward individuals involved in deviant lifestyles. For instance, she frequently referred to her boyfriends' exes and friends as "*crooked*" people and contrasted them with "*legit*" people such as herself. This dichotomous take between 'clean' and 'dirty' was very present in her narrative. On the other hand, she admitted to being fascinated with everything that related to crime. She said: "*You know, I'm intrigued by everything that has to do with prison. You know, I'd like to know how it was like [when my boyfriend was incarcerated]: Is it like in the movies? Like what we see?*"

Second, her position toward offending also differed from others' in that her leniency was geared specifically toward her boyfriend's offending, which she saw this way:

It's like—it's his job. You know, what I want is that when he comes home at night, well, that he puts it aside. It doesn't concern me [...]. Like someone who has a job, no matter what the job is, you know. You do your job and when you come back at night it's over. And that took him by surprise because he didn't expect me to react that way. I might be a bit naïve, but it's my way of saying: 'It's your job.' Of course, I've had questions: Am I putting myself in danger? Me or [my son], you know.

In line with her extensive personal and vicarious experience, River's (friend) attitude vis-à-vis offending was very different from those presented hitherto. Indeed, her leniency was not circumscribed within particular parameters: it extended to everyone and anyone, for any type of offense. As presented above, she considered offending to be "*normal*," an attitude that seldom led her to question people's illicit ventures. This being said, however, River also described having recently started to feel tired of being so open in her view of offending. While she has not yet managed to change it, she said:

> *I'm starting to try to [...] disconnect from that world—because I'm trying to reintegrate the so-called normal society. Because I'm like tired of finding it normal that you've been to prison. Or you know, it's like let's say you tell me of a crime that you've committed—for me that's normal [...]. If you told that to anyone else, the person would be like: 'Go away, I don't want to talk to you anymore.' For me it's like: 'Ok, it's nothing what you've done—I know people who've done much worse.'*

This reassessment of her attitudes is, in fact, the main reason why she chose to become a member of *Relais Famille,* the organization where most of the recruitment occurred. As such, it could also be said that this is also the reason why she has been included in this study. As seen thus far, River's story contrasted with the stories of the other participants on almost every point: from her extended personal and vicarious experience with offending to her laid-back attitude toward it. Because she was actively seeking to modify her view, however, her experience also converged with the others in important ways. This will become clear over the following pages and in the next chapter.

Unfavourable attitudes toward deviance

While some relatives were lenient in regards to specific forms offending and deviance, under some circumscribed conditions, the overwhelming majority of respondents were unfavourable to such conduct. As opposed to 'lenient' participants, only a small percentage of those who were resolutely 'unfavourable' had past experiences with offending and/or deviance (see Table 6). One notable exception to that observation was Charles (father), who had professional experience with delinquency through his career working in a high school. As opposed to Kara (wife) who had developed an open attitude through her career, Charles' experience fostered a negative view of deviance. His narrative highlighted how he largely disapproved of both substance use and delinquency. Concerning the former, he stated:

> *It's a scourge. And I say this to anyone who'll listen—or anyone who won't listen, for that matter. I totally disagree with our Boy Scout in Ottawa—Justin [Trudeau] not to mention names—who want to legalize [marijuana]. For two reasons: because of a son who has started to use and who was led to other things. And also here [at the high school where I work]. Over the past 10-12 years a retired police officer has been coming with a dog to go around the offices [...]. He comes unannounced, 10 to 12 times a year. It'll be legalized [...]. You know—I can't be for that.*

His attitude toward delinquency was particularly well put in his description of a particular event:

> *I even participated in a [public debate]. It was a debate between community workers and me. The community worker was saying: 'Do you think you're solving the youth's [delinquency] problem [by expelling him from your school]?' I was saying: 'I'm not solving the youth's problem, but I'm making sure the others are safe. And for me, the collective good should come before individual good [...].' As long as I'll be here, that's how it'll be. It's zero tolerance. It's true for those who bully and it's true for those who [sell drugs]. So, I've had to face delinquents like that. And their parents—one parent told me: 'If my child commits suicide, I'll always hold you accountable.' I remained imperturbable... Sometimes I could be cold in certain situations. But when it came down to protecting the more vulnerable, I always advocated for the vulnerable.*

In addition to the general views on norm- and law-breaking presented thus far in this section, the nature of the interview naturally led participants to focus on the offending and deviant conduct of their loved one. As a matter of fact, with the exception of Paule (girlfriend) and River (friend) whose attitudes were more flexible, all participants were unfavourable to these specific illicit endeavours. Despite the fact that she had a lenient attitude vis-à-vis deviance in general, Kara (wife) for instance believed that:

> *Everyone can use [drugs], even if they are incarcerated—everyone but my husband, you know. And he doesn't understand. But I tried to tell him that it doesn't have the same impact and that I'm not paid to be with [him]—it's a choice. You know, [I have] zero [tolerance].*

Norma (wife) shared a similar position. While she admitted to a certain level of tolerance toward substance use, she had a much less lenient attitude toward her husband's current offending actions. While she tolerated his past actions, particularly since he had not hurt innocent women or children, she added:

> *I would like it if he would've never done what he has done—it's not something I condone. But if I knew—if I had the slightest doubt that he'd go back into that life—into that pattern when he comes out [of prison], I wouldn't be here anymore. Ok, you did stupid things when you were younger. You're paying the bill. Don't fall back, however. Because you know: to err is human, to rise is divine. Don't make the same mistake twice—big boy—or else, I'm out. I couldn't live with that—I won't and he knows it. It was clear before we got married: 'If you come out and your intention is to*

go back to that milieu—to take that life back—we won't get married because this [relationship] will never go anywhere.'

Of course, this unfavourable take toward the illegal ventures of their loved one was also present among participants who held a negative view of deviance in general. Again, the majority of these respondents had no past experiences with offending and/or deviance. Mia (girlfriend) for instance expressed how she was not willing to endure any form of deviant conduct, how in her life she'll tolerate "*zero violence, zero drugs*." When talking about the beginning of her relationship with her boyfriend, she recounted how she had to make that clear:

> *I don't want to be with someone who sells drugs, who uses them, who hangs out with disreputable people. So when I met [my boyfriend] and he told me a bit about that, I said: 'I'd like to make something clear: I don't want any of that in my life. If in the near future you feel like [doing it] again, I don't want you to be in my life. I don't want us to date. I don't want us to see each other. Might as well put an end to it right now.'*

In a similar vein, Dorothy (mother) could not understand how her son could have been involved in illegal actions, a conduct that went so deeply against her personal values: "*When my son started doing that, it was unconceivable—not my son, you know. He started to do things that ran counter to what I am—to what I've taught him*." In fact, her take on offending is so negative that she hoped he would be held accountable for his actions: "*Honestly—it might not be too nice of me to say—but I wish he gets a long [prison] sentence. One that'll allow me to rest.*"

Mildred's (mother) attitude toward her son's demeanour was analogous to Dorothy's:

> *He had a lawyer from legal aid. He might have been badly represented, but at that time I believed someone had to stop him. And it's not true that I'll pay for a super lawyer so that he can pull through once more. There had been several incidents already. You know, I thought he needed to learn his lesson.*

In a similar vein, Inara (girlfriend) viewed her boyfriend's illegal ventures in a very negative light, reacting strongly upon the discovery of his actions:

> *[I told him:] 'You know, you can't do that!' [...] You know, I was completely overwhelmed and I was like: 'Ok. Look, you don't talk to me about it anymore.' And I told him: 'Look, you told me you had stopped—well you stop. And if I hear that you go back, it's not gonna work.'*

Inara's attitude went even further as she admitted that her romantic interest in her boyfriend, one of the cornerstones of their relationship, had been affected by this discovery: "*I was like: 'Lord. Yeah… Ok… Great! You just [dropped] my interest a bit, you know.' It was like a big turn off.*"

In sum, while a few participants had generally lenient attitudes toward some forms of minor delinquency and deviance, the vast majority of them viewed the offending conduct of their loved ones in a very negative light. For many, persistence in such actions was even presented as a major hindrance to their relationship. The analysis of collateral consequences and attitudes hitherto presented might leaver readers wondering how it is at all possible for participants to persist and remain in these relationships. As is the case with many aspects of life, things are always more complicated than what meets the eye. The following section begins excavating the other end—the 'positives'—of that complex relational coin.

The Kinds of Relationships that Bind Relatives and the People Who Offend

Notwithstanding the collateral damages they have endured and their negative take on the offending conduct of their loved one, what lie at the heart of the relationships described by participants are interpersonal connections similar to those most of us experience over our lives (for a similar argument among wives of incarcerated men, see Fishman, 1990). In order to understand and contextualize their experiences, this section analyzes the kinds of relationships that were depicted during the interviews. Counterbalancing the collateral consequences previously covered, the portraits painted below focus on the emotional and interpersonal aspects of the relationship. Of course, their experiences varied, as participants were involved in different forms of relationships. However, an important point of convergence was observed between their narratives: all of them described their social bond around the theme of love. The following analysis presents how these themes took shape among the romantic, familial, and friendly relationships that were depicted.

Love, in All its Forms

As shown in Table 1, seven women participants were involved in a romantic relationship with a man who had been involved in illegal activities. Five of them were aware

of their partner's offending before they entered the relationship. For example, both Kara's (wife) and Norma's (wife) love stories started when they became pen pals with their respective husbands who were serving life sentences. As such, while not knowing the specific offenses of their partners, these wives were at least cognizant of the fact that these men had acted illegally at some point in their past. Although their partners were not incarcerated when they first met, Mia (fiancée), Ellen (girlfriend) and Paule (girlfriend) similarly knew about the illicit activities before romantically engaging with these men. The opposite was true for Laura (wife) and Inara (girlfriend). Both of them actually discovered the offending in the course of their relationship. This occurred after 22 years of partnership for Laura, and after 4 years for Inara. In fact, the illicit acts had not only taken place since the beginning of their relationship, but were still ongoing when they learned the bad news. Despite describing these events as a "*sledgehammer blow*" (Laura) that left them "*completely overwhelmed*" (Inara), both of them eventually chose to pursue the relationship with their partner.

Whether they learned about the offending conduct prior to the inception of their romantic relationships or after, these women described the interpersonal connections with their partner in similar terms. Perhaps unsurprisingly, most of them described their relationships through the theme of love. Kara (wife), for instance remembered:

> *And when he met me, [he told me] it was the first time someone loved him unconditionally. I fell in love with him when I met him in person. I told myself :'Oh my God. I'm fucked.' I knew I would spend the rest of my life with him—it's like, I fell in love.*

The love at first sight trope[45] was not uncommon among these women. Inara (girlfriend), recounted how she felt "*an automatic, love at first sight"* upon first seeing her boyfriend, a man she later described as "*truly her soul mate*." Others, like Mia (fiancée), depicted their relationship in esoteric terms, seeing it as "*meant to be*" or even as "*pure*." In fact, even negative events such as incarceration were understood in a positive light. This was the case for Ellen who perceived her boyfriend's recent incarceration as the catalyst for her "*pure*" relation:

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[45] Tropes are "agreed-upon stories referred to in words or phrases through 'commonly recurring literary and rhetorical devices'" (Cuddon and Preston, 1998; as cited in Sandberg, 2016).

E: You know, when you're with someone [who is incarcerated] and that we take away the physical, all that's left of your intimacy are the conversations—the vulnerability of showing who you are […]. Because the connection I have with him is different from any other, you know. He truly is my best friend.

Do: Yeah.

E: He knows. He calls me [and says]: 'You'll get your period, right?' [I say:] 'Nooooo.' I look at my calendar, fuck, I'll get my period in three days (laughs). You know—he knows when I'll get my period. He knows when I drank coffee. He knows when I exercised. You know, he knows everything about me. Same thing with him. I know when he's not feeling right. I don't know what to tell him when he's not feeling right because he's in a place where it's a bit hard to…

D: Yeah.

E: […] I know him and he knows me. You can be with a guy for ten years and you would never have had the conversations that I've had with him. Because that's all we've got. That's it […]. So you establish a relation that is much more pure, if I can say so […], than what you would outside.

Biological kinships are often understood as being different from other types of relationships. As Harper Lee's character Jem once said: "You can choose your friends but you sho' can't choose your family, an' they're still kin to you no matter whether you acknowledge 'em or not" (Lee, 1960, pp. 84–85). Some of the participants underscored this idea. Norma (wife), for instance, specifically compared romantic relationships such as hers to the relationships mothers have with their children:

Really, [mothers] have no choice, you know. The wives, the partners, the girlfriends—we have a choice in a sense. We don't have to live with that situation. I think that mothers are really misunderstood—harshly judged in relation to that. It's like, I've seen guards who made life hard for mothers. It's like: 'Come on—she's his mother!' She has no choice, she gave him birth.'[46,47]

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[46] The idea that certain forms of relationships entail more freedom is explored in Chapter 5. While distinctions indeed exist, it will become clear that all forms of relationship can entail deep emotional connections that make it hard to make certain types of decisions.

[47] Another important aspect that distinguishes family from other types of relationships is their duration. Under 'normal' circumstances, fathers and mothers have known their children since they were born. Siblings and children have also built relationships since their births. In the interviews, this was often reflected by detailed accounts of lifelong interpersonal experiences. While some of the interviewees involved in romantic and friendly relationships also offered details of their relative's childhood and situated their lives on a longitudinal plane, they

As highlighted by Norma, mothers' relationships with their children often entailed a special interpersonal dynamic. In describing their relationships with their sons, the four mothers grounded their narratives in the themes of care and love. Rosa described a caring relationship with her 51-year-old son who has been diagnosed with Asperger's syndrome and who suffers from hearing impairment. Despite the hardships she endured as a consequence of his offending, she categorically refused to be labelled a "*collateral victim*." For her, the term "*natural caregiver*" was much more representative of her relationship with her son. Although they were experiencing rather chaotic moments with their sons at the time of interview, Dorothy, Mildred, and Isabella similarly described being involved in caring relationships with their sons.

Mothers often defined their love for their son by its unconditional nature. In spite of the hard times she was going through at time of interview, Mildred for instance admitted that she still deeply loved her son: "*We always see them as small children—he's still my baby*." Also at a fairly low point in her relationship, Dorothy explained: "*I think I'll never be able to give up on [my son]*." Isabella reported a similar experience when she admitted that she would always be there for her child, would always support him, and would always love him. Importantly, she maintained her relationship with her son despite the fact that her husband and her daughter had temporarily severed their own relationship with him.

While the social bonds between mothers and their offspring did reflect Norma's (wife) view cited above, the other forms of family relationships included in this study were similarly depicted around the themes of care and love. For instance, the narratives of the three fathers interviewed in this study largely revolved around their interpersonal connections with their child. Sharing numerous specific stories to illustrate his point, Philip (father) described a loving and caring relationship with his 21-year-old daughter. While the relationship was rocky at the time of interview, several of the central themes that emerged from his narrative were positive, highlighting events they had shared as a family. In addition to believing that she had "*always been loved*" and "*sheltered*" as a kid, he remembered:

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could never do so with the depth and personal touch provided by family members. These narratives were by nature limited by what they had been told or had heard about the lives of their loved ones.

P: I brought her everywhere. We travelled. We went to Orlando. There's a theme park there—Disney—we went there.

D: Yeah.

P: We went there for a week—no, four days. We went to the Hard Rock Café. It cost a lot, but you know. We would take the water-taxi and go to the amusement park everyday. It was nice—I've always had good contacts like that.

The caring theme invoked in Philip's interview was also very present in both Jonathan's (father) and Charles' (father) narratives. Jonathan recalled having been very present in the lives of his three sons, including the one who ended up engaging in illegal activities: "*And then I became involved in the Cub Scouts. I did everything, you know. Everything I could to get involved […]. And to take care of them*." Charles similarly recounted how he had taken care of his son over the years, even well after he became an adult and moved out of the familial home. While not willing to "*treat him like a child*" anymore, Charles nonetheless described being ready to help whenever necessary. He also depicted a loving relationship: "*You know [my son] has always known that his mother and his father—no matter what—we love him and we always will*." Emphasizing the unconditional nature of that love, he later added: "*As parents, the love we have for our children is unconditional, you know. Unconditional*."

Two other forms of familial relationships were represented among participants: children and siblings. In continuity with the portrait depicted thus far, both of them described their personal relations with the person who had offended in positive and loving terms. Notwithstanding the emotional predicaments she was learning to deal with, Kathryn (daughter) believed that her father "*ha[d] always been a good father"* who *"ha[d] always been there for [her*]." She contemplated her relationship in these terms: *"[I told him:] 'With me, it'll be good times […]. That's what it'll be—it'll be a relationship of good times*.'" She later explained how she wanted her relationship to remain a daughter-father relationship: "*I'm still his child—that'll never change. As I said earlier, I want to keep the role of a child*."

When talking about her relationship with her younger brother, Louise (sister) recalled always having been close to him and having had a lot of "*fun*." She recounted: "*It was really going well—he was truly adorable, my little brother. Yeah, like we had a lot of fun and it was*

great." Although things have changed in her family since her brother had engaged in an illegal act, she still described a loving and caring relationship:

> *So, it's like, now I want to be there [for him], you know. Like, I want to deploy all the energies that I can to help him in his process, so that he can [...] stay connected with the benevolence that's inside of him.*

The final type of relationship included in this study is friendship. While not often included in studies on relatives of people involved in illicit activities (see Chapter 2), friendly relations are important and can act as an important source of support. Much like the other participants in this study, these social bonds were also imbued with emotional attachment. This was particularly well illustrated by Deanna who, while describing her relationship as "*unusual*," also perceived it as grounded in trust and in love. She met her friend, a 36-year-old incarcerated man, while she attended AA meetings in the penitentiary where he was serving his sentence. Upon their meeting, she felt an "*impulse*" to help him and offered to accompany him through his journey in the criminal justice system. Looking back on the almost 7 years of their relationship, she described their beginnings in the following words: "*I can't explain rationally why I had that impulse, that willingness to help this person. But very rapidly, I realized that there was a connection that was bigger than us*." Over the years, she developed a strong and positive relationship with him and described a deep trusting bond between them:

> *D: You know, I would tell you that I... Well I think you understood that with time the attachment [between us] has become very important, you know?*
>
> *Do: Yeah.*
>
> *D: He's very, very, very present in my life—there are no two ways about it. I've had more contacts with him than with a lot of people in my social circle. You know, there's my spouse whom I see everyday, but often I've had more contacts with [my friend].*

While she had several relationships with individuals engaged in illegal endeavours over the years, River's narrative revolved mainly around two of her friends. Although she described fairly complex relationships, which have generated important collateral consequences (see the victimization section above), River talked about her relationship with her ex-boyfriend in some positive terms. These revolved mainly around the themes of friendship and parenthood. For instance, she described how she had managed to remain present and support him through his previous two-year incarceration. After a year and a half of the second incarceration he was

serving at the time of interview, she could not sustain her romantic tie to him. Despite the rupture of the romantic bond, she reported still feeling close to him: "*I've known my son's father since I was young, you know. But after all that happened, you know, it's like he doesn't want to let me go, and all. And like, you know, we are trying to come together because we have a child together—it's like we've always been friends.*"

Following the violent incident that recently happened with her other friend, River described a complicated relationship to which she was trying to put an end at the time of interview. This was hard to achieve, however, as she described a relation not entirely unlike the ones depicted by the other relatives. Indeed, she admitted to having been in love with him in the past, a love that had remained unrequited. Despite this, she recounted having recently become very close to him and his family, going to diners with them and bringing her son so that he could play with his family members' children. As already explored in this chapter, River's experience is different than that of the other relatives met in this study. Its idiosyncrasies offer a different perspective of what it can mean to be related to someone who has offended.

Conclusion: The Ambivalent Experience of Relatives

Notwithstanding the differences between their experiences, one particular idea permeates the narratives of participants: I cannot condone what you have done, but I love you. Hidden behind this phrase is ambivalence, a phenomenon that emerges through participants' relationship with someone who had offended. The analyses presented in this chapter suggest that the ambivalence of respondents revolve around two poles: the 'negatives' and the 'positives' of their relationship. On the one hand, they endure the collateral consequences associated with their loved one's offending, a conduct they largely decry and are unwilling to accept in the confines of their personal lives. On the other hand, all participants report deep emotional attachments—predominantly in the form of love—to those who have broken the law. It is the coexistence of these contrasting forces that generates ambivalence, more specifically inter-component ambivalence (see Chapter 2).

The dichotomy between an unfavourable attitude toward the offending of a loved one (i.e., the 'bad') and strong feelings toward that person (i.e., the 'good') was pervasively

present in the narratives of participants, regardless of the type of relationship in which they were involved. Among parents, unconditional love confronted the "*surreal*" idea that their offspring acted against the law, a conduct that went against everything they had ever sought to bequeath. This is well exemplified throughout Charles' (father) interview, particularly in this passage, which was introduced earlier: "As parents, the love we have for our children is unconditional, you know. Unconditional. We can't endorse [their illegal conduct], but we love them."

The form of emotional connexion described by parents combined with the unacceptable nature of offending actions was also present among participants involved in other forms of biological kinships. Louise (sister), for instance explained how while family was the "*most precious*" thing in her life, she could not fathom how her brother could have been involved in such a violent act since they "*were not raised in a family that taught [them] to resort to violence, nor to avenge [them]selves*." As a daughter, Kathryn similarly loved her father to the point of "*putting him on a pedestal*," but could not "*condone*" nor "*forgive*" his conduct.

The opposition between unfavourable attitudes and positive feelings was also present among romantic partners and friends. After her boyfriend admitted having been involved in an illegal scheme, Inara (girlfriend) described having experienced a great deal of ambivalence:

> *[When he told me about his illegal activities] I was like: That can't be. I can't be with someone like that, who's gonna constantly risk leaving—what actually happened two months later. But it had been like four years, you know, that we [had been together]… So we had time to become attached to one another—to make plans. And I had time to become pregnant in the meantime also.*

While the love described in the narratives of romantic partners and friends was not described as unconditional as was the case with most biological kin, it was nonetheless deep and sincere—certainly enough to generate ambivalence. This was precisely the case with Deanna (friend) who described numerous sufferings in her relationship, while simultaneously depicting it as intense, profound, and deeply meaningful to her.

As highlighted throughout this chapter, the experience recounted by one participant contrasted with the others on several points. In addition to having a significant experience with

offending, River (friend) explained how she viewed it as a run-of-the-mill type of conduct. In spite of this, she too experienced ambivalence. Having grown up surrounded by people involved in illegal activities, she took great pride from being accepted and respected by these people. For her, the 'positive' element of her ambivalence thus emanated not only from the emotional attachment she felt in some of her relations, but also from the respect and honour she got out of them (see Topalli, 2005). Growing older and recently becoming a mother further led her to take stock of the numerous—and sometimes brutal—consequences such relationships have generated in her life. While she had spent most of her life endorsing a favourable view toward offending, these social experiences with law breaking were slowly encouraging her to shift her attitude. The 'negative' elements of her ambivalence therefore not only concerned the collateral consequences she had suffered, but also her reviewed take on illegal conduct.

The finding that all participants, including River, experienced ambivalence in the confines of their relationships with someone who had been involved in offending might appear fairly banal. As will become clear over the next chapter, it is not. Ambivalence is an uncomfortable experience, one that people generally seek to eradicate from their lives (Hobfoll, Freedy, Green, & Solomon, 1996; Newby-Clark, McGregor, & Zanna, 2002; van Harreveld, van der Pligt, & de Liver, 2009). To do so, various strategies can be put in place. The following chapter will demonstrate that this is precisely what participants did. The implications of these strategies for the social theories of crime and desistance will be broached in the Conclusion of this thesis.

Chapter 5

Relatives’ Management of Ambivalence

The analysis presented in the previous chapter has highlighted how being in a relationship with someone who engages in offending can generate conflicting attitudes and feelings, an experience understood as inter-component ambivalence. Taking advantage of the depth of the qualitative data used in this study, the following pages delve deeper into the experiences of participants and examine the kinds of work they do with their ambivalence. Based on previous research, the analysis seeks to examine how they manage the tension that exists between the positive and negative aspects of their relational histories. This chapter begins with a description of some of the specificities of the ambivalence experienced by the relatives of those who break the law. The remainder of this chapter is dedicated to the two main strategies they deployed to manage this tense state: narrative strategies and strategies of action.

The Specificities of Relatives' Ambivalence

In order to contextualize this chapter's analyses and findings, some of the specificities of the ambivalence experienced by participants need to be underlined. First, while all of them described experiencing ambivalence at some point, this phenomenon varied over time. In line with previous work on relatives that highlights the dynamic nature of relatives' relationships with people who offend (Fishman, 1990; Leverentz, 2014), ambivalence waxed and waned over the course of relational histories. The analysis indeed suggests the existence of sensitive time points during which it was most likely to emerge. The first of these periods coincides with the discovery of offending. As they learned about this conduct, many participants experienced the incongruence between their love for the person and their unfavourable attitudes toward their conduct.

After this initial sensitive period, ambivalence was found to take various paths, often contingent on the conduct and demeanour of participants' loved ones. When that person failed to change and persisted in their illegal ventures, ambivalence tended to be maintained. Similarly, it could surface anew when reprehensible actions resumed after temporary lulls. In opposition, ambivalence tended to diminish greatly with the cessation of conduct that was perceived as wrong. While this was clearly the outcome all participants hoped for, many did

not benefit from that turn of events. In these moments of persistence and recidivism, ambivalence often crept back into their lives.

Second, the analysis suggests an interaction between the time-varying nature of ambivalence and relationship features. Indeed, every participant who discovered the illegal actions while they were already engaged in a relationship with its perpetrator (see Table 6, Chapter 4) reported ambivalence upon discovery. This de facto includes parents and other biological kin, but also two romantic partners, Laura (wife) and Inara (girlfriend). Of course, individuals who chose to engage in a romantic or friendly relationship while cognizant of the offending acts were less likely to report ambivalence upon discovery. However, for some like Kara (wife), learning about the extent and the nature of these actions could nonetheless cause surprise and even foster ambivalence. As presented in the previous chapter, when she started interacting with her husband through correspondence, Kara was aware that he was serving a life sentence. Despite knowing that he was not "*serving life for having drank holy water*," she nonetheless described having been unable to "*process [the fact] that he could be that aggressive*" upon learning about the specific actions that had led him to his incarceration. She described feeling as though he "*was talking about himself in the third person*," as if the man she was in love with was not truly the author of this rap sheet.

Among participants who entered their relationship after learning about the offending, ambivalence was most frequently experienced over the course of the relationship, as the conduct of the other person evolved. To follow Kara's narrative, ambivalence came back into her life a few years after the inception of her romantic relationship. At that point, she had realized that her then husband-to-be had lied to her on several occasions and that he was still involved in illegal activities while incarcerated.[48] Being strongly unfavourable toward her partner's offending, this was unacceptable to her, and she "*wouldn't spend her life with*" someone like that. She vividly remembered that day around Easter: her objection to his demeanour was so strong that she wanted to put an end to their union. Yet, at the same time she "*loved [him] so much*" that she felt she "*would die if she left [him]*." The ambivalence she

[48] This particular event was covered in the previous chapter (see the supervision/control role section). The same stories can be used to explore various facets of the experiences of participants, as is the case here.

felt at that moment was entirely attributable—at least in her view—to her husband's conduct. This type of 'episodic ambivalence' was not unusual among romantic partners and friends. Deanna (friend) for instance reported having recently been distraught by her friend's illegal escape while under parole. Similarly to Kara, however, she also described how, during that period, she felt "*afraid*" of "*losing him*," of losing the relationship they had built over the years and in which she was emotionally invested. She even reported being "*scared that [he] would stop loving her*."[49]

This episodic ambivalence was, of course, not the exclusivity of romantic partners and friends; parents and other biological kin also experienced it. For example, Isabella (mother) recounted a recent instance when her son breached his probation conditions, which left her feeling discouraged and worried that he would step back and resume his illegal activities. At the same time, however, she described how her love for him remained unconditional. Like Isabella, several parents saw no real lulls in the occurrence of the undesired conduct. Their children consistently engaged in it. This persistence tended to generate constant ambivalence, a state well exemplified by Philip (father). Despite his sustained efforts to help her in changing her ways, his daughter persistently engaged in delinquent acts. While he described her conduct as insufferable, he still loved her and wished their relationship could resume.[50] Interestingly, none of the romantic partners and friends described this constant form of ambivalence. This difference between parents and friends/partners is possibly attributable to the types of relationships in which participants are involved. The unconditional nature of the love described by parents might make it harder for them to use last-resort strategies such as severing their relationship in comparison with friends and partners. This idea is examined further below.

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[49] Several romantic partners and friends also reported experiencing ambivalence when their expectations concerning their relationships were broken. Because it is not related to the offending conduct, this form of ambivalence is not explored in this study. For research on ambivalence within the context of romantic relationships, see Kachadourian, Fincham, and Davila (2005), King (1993), and King and Emmons (1991).
[50] As described in the previous chapter, Philip's daughter had chosen to put an end to their relationship. This did not, however, affect his emotional attachment to her, nor the ambivalence he felt toward her and her offending.

On Managing Ambivalence

According to research, ambivalence is generally perceived as an uncomfortable state (Newby-Clark, McGregor, & Zanna, 2002). While it varies in degrees of intensity, and can even be completely ignored under certain circumstances, it is often hard to so simply shrug it off. When it relates to things that matter deeply to people, ambivalence becomes an unpleasant experience requiring resolution (Hobfoll, Freedy, Green, & Solomon, 1996; Newby-Clark, McGregor, & Zanna, 2002; van Harreveld, Rutjens, Rotteveel, Nordgren, & van der Pligt, 2009; van Harreveld, van der Pligt, & de Liver, 2009). When they live the strain of this condition, individuals have been found to expend more cognitive efforts, and to process information regarding the object of their ambivalence more thoroughly (Jonas, Diehl, & Brömer, 1997; Maio et al., 2000). The resolution of this experience can be accomplished by favouring one side of the contradiction that underlies ambivalence or, in some cases, by completely distancing oneself from its object (Pratt & Doucet, 2000).

The analysis presented in Chapter 4 has demonstrated that the relationships that participants maintain with their loved ones are precisely one of those 'things' that are truly important to them. The following pages thus focus on how respondents handled the ambivalence they experienced in their relational context. In line with findings from the ambivalence literature, participants were found to accomplish such management by favouring one side of the contradiction over the other, generally trying to tip the balance of ambivalence towards its positive, emotional element. As will be seen, the effective management of ambivalence was associated with an increased capacity to make choices with regard to the relationships that participants were involved in. Indeed, when the strategies they employed tilted the balance of ambivalence towards its positive side, participants often opted to maintain their relationship. On the contrary, when their unfavourable attitudes—the 'bad'—overtook the 'good,' respondents were more likely to put an end, albeit temporarily, to the relationship.[51] However, the resolution of this tense state was not always possible. When it could not be resolved, they tended to oscillate, not clearly knowing what to choose between maintaining their relationship and severing it.

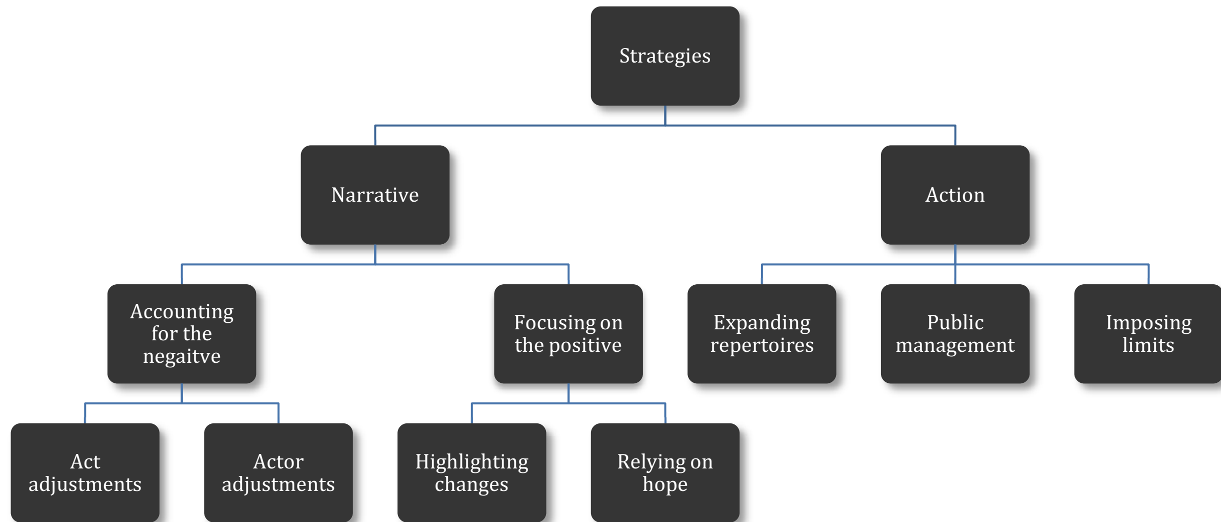
[51] As stated before, this was a rare occurrence within this study.

In line with propositions developed in Chapter 1, the analysis revealed that participants resorted to two main types of strategies in trying to reduce their ambivalence. These, along with their specific elements, are presented in Figure 2. As seen, the first strategy is narrative in nature. Globally, it aims to construct subjective coherence around the two contrasting forces of ambivalence. Best described as a bipartite strategy, it encompasses two main goals, which are grounded in different temporal horizons (for similar findings, see Christian, 2011). On the one hand, it seeks to account for the negative—to explain why and how the offending conduct came about. When devising these narrative understandings, participants tended to look to the past: they searched for answers in the history of the person they love, in their relational history, or, in some cases, in their personal history. On the other hand, resorting to a narrative strategy also entailed emphasizing the positive, focusing on the good deeds and agreeable personalities of the person who had offended, and on one's emotional attachment to that person. In contrast to accounts of the negative, focusing on the positive chiefly entailed looking from the present forward, and grounding one's narrative on hope.

In trying to shift the balance of their ambivalence, participants also devised strategies of action. As seen in Figure 2, these comprise three main tactics. First, several respondents actively sought to expand their repertoires. Through this strategy they sought to better equip themselves in order to make sense of their experience. Second, many engaged in the public management of their ambivalence. By purposefully choosing to divulge or to hide information to specific individuals, participants limited the public experience of their ambivalence, thus limiting its impact on them. Third, several opted to assert their position vis-à-vis offending by imposing clear limits on their relationships. These strategies are thoroughly examined in the following sections. Special attention is paid to the elements that influence their use. These include: (1) the type of relationship binding participants to their loved one; (2) the repertoires of participants; and (3) the evolution of the offending/undesired conduct over their relational history.

Figure 2

The strategies of ambivalence reduction used by relatives



The need to resolve the tension generated by ambivalence is true regardless of the specific moment of its emergence. In this sense, the strategies employed are as dynamic in nature as ambivalence itself and they can be used at different points over time. Moreover, an amalgam of strategies can be employed, with some being more drastic and less frequently used and others being more insidious and quite common among participants.

Narrative Strategies

When faced with the realization that someone they love had engaged in actions they cannot justifiably condone, participants tried to make sense of that new reality. While this process occurred in a large part within their psyches, it was also negotiated narratively. This negotiation not only occurred with third parties in the context of their 'regular' lives, but also with me during the interview. In fact, making sense of both the positive and negative aspects of their relationships was so important, that participants spent a significant amount of interview time on this issue. Several events were even recounted to make their subjective understandings clearer to their audience.

Before examining the narrative strategies used by participants, a caveat is warranted. The analysis presented in this chapter is, of course, not intended to undermine the subjective views and accounts of the participants who took part in this study, or to take position concerning their 'truth' (Presser, 2008). Rather, its goal is to analyze how participants comprehend the offending conduct of the person they love and the kind of 'work' such narratives do (Frank, 2010). As will be seen, accounts, narratives and stories are powerful devices that can result in various intended—and sometimes unintended—outcomes. The next section begins this endeavour by analyzing how participants accounted for the conduct they considered undesirable.

Accounting for the negative

Accounting for the negative is best understood as a strategy that alleviates the importance of the undesirable conduct in one's view. Specifically, it entails making sense of that conduct—to *account*[52] for it. In line with the work of Condry (2007; see also Cohen, 2001), participants did so through two main tactics: act and actor adjustments. While the criminological literature has typically observed these strategies within the narratives of those who break the law, they can also be mobilized in second-order narratives. Through act adjustments, participants sought to minimize the nefarious aspects of the act in and of itself, a strategy that globally took the form '*it* wasn't that bad.' For their part, actor adjustments were used to convince the audience that the perpetrator of the undesirable conduct is 'not the *kind of person* who engages in such actions' (Cohen, 2001).

While Condry (2007) contends that relatives resort to these strategies in order to "evade moral blameworthiness […] on behalf of the offender" (p. 104), it is noteworthy that the participants met in this study did not try to deny their loved one's responsibility for their conduct. Although they did sometimes minimize the gravity of these actions or gave reasons for their occurrence, they nonetheless recognized, and in some cases even highlighted, the responsibility of the perpetrator. Through the simultaneous recognition of responsibility and

[52] Scott and Lyman's (1968) definition of account is used in this study: "By an account, we mean a statement made by a social actor to explain unanticipated or untoward behaviour—whether that behavior is his own or that of others, and whether the proximate cause for the statement arises from the actor himself or from someone else." (p. 46).

accounting of offending, participants were able to maintain control over their experience because they are 'in the know' and are thus able to "*stay aware*" (Laura, wife) for the future. As will be seen further below, this also allowed them to reduce their ambivalence.

Sources of information

Making sense of actions that one considers morally reprehensible was no easy feat for participants. While the illegal conduct of strangers can quite simplistically be understood as resulting from a deeply-rooted criminal personality, things are not so simple when the perpetrator of that conduct is someone one loves and cares about. As exemplified by the narratives analyzed in this study, accounting for untoward actions often required relying on external sources of information.

While a diversified combination of such inputs was found in the accounts of participants, all of them at minimum utilised the narrative of their loved ones as a source of information (see Condry, 2007; Fishman, 1990). As they were neither present when offending occurred, nor personally involved in it, participants had little choice but to do so. Through their interactions with the perpetrator of the conduct they sought to understand, participants were presented with the raw material with which they had to contend. That material often included much more than a factual and objective depiction of events: it also included the protagonist's personal take and his/her account of what happened.

As Condry (2007) highlighted, we know very little about what the people involved in illegal actions actually share with their relatives. The literature on their narratives, however, provides insight into the way they think and understand their reality and, therefore, into what they could be sharing. In addition to basic description of events, feelings, and actions, this likely includes justifications and neutralizations (Maruna, 2001; Presser, 2008; Sykes & Matza, 1957). Of course, participants are not mere gullible receptacles; they can gauge the credibility of these primary narratives. In order to make sense of the negative, they therefore have to switch their role from audience member to commentator (Condry, 2007) and devise their own narrative about what happened.

In order to make sense of the offending, respondents often relied on other sources of information, besides the narrative of their loved ones. One of the most convenient of these

inputs was their personal repertoire. As seen in the previous chapter, several participants described having past personal and vicarious life experiences with offending and/or deviance. While this did not mean that they were in favour of offending, let alone accept it in their lives, these repertoires had somehow prepared them to understand how one could get involved in such conduct. In comparison with those who had no previous experience, it was often easier for these participants to make sense of their loved ones' actions. Of course, this does not entail that they were easier to accept or that their experiences were less difficult to bear.

Act adjustments

In this study, only a handful of participants[53] resorted to act adjustments to account for the offending of their loved one. When they did, however, they took four distinct forms, three of which are well-known techniques of neutralization: denial of the victim, denial of injury, and appeal to higher loyalties (Sykes & Matza, 1957). The fourth type, comparative adjustment, was also found in the narratives of the relatives met by Condry (2007). Through the words of participants, each of these strategies is reviewed in turn.

Denying the victim

Condry (2007) found that relatives of individuals involved in serious offending rarely denied the victim as a form of act adjustment. She attributed this finding to the seriousness of the offenses that needed to be accounted for. While this hypothesis is tenable, particularly within the confines of her research, findings from the current study suggest that few relatives engage in victim denial, regardless of offense type. In fact, the only participants[54] who used this technique in this study were related to someone who had engaged in serious offenses. Importantly, however, none of them denied the 'existence' of the victim, nor did they believe that the victim completely deserved what had happened to him/her. Rather, they focused on certain characteristics of the victim as a means to depict them in an unfavourable light, thus minimizing the importance of the offense they had suffered. Deanna (friend), for instance, insisted on the fact that her friend's victim was also involved in illegal ventures. When explaining what had happened, she said: "*It's a drug deal that went wrong. [My friend] just*

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[53] *n* = 7.
[54] *n* = 4.

had real bad luck because he only stabbed [him] once. And that's it. But the victim didn't want to go to the hospital because he was also in this [business]. So, you know—he bled to death."

When she described her husband's offending, Kara (wife) similarly focused on his victims' characteristics: "*His victims were all female prostitutes he found in clubs*." Later, as she talked about her experience assisting some of his court hearings, she recounted how she had perceived some of his victim's testimonies as exaggerations:

> *I wanted to hear them testify. I wanted to see them because sometimes there are differences between what you read and what they say […]. Like there's this one girl who testified—what she said and what was written was not the same thing at all. What's on paper is 100 times worse than what she testified. You know, her testimony is nothing in comparison.*

Laura (wife) similarly discredited the victims' testimony:

> *L: There are things that [my husband] heard and the victim had lied […]. They asked one of the victims if he had made a pass at my husband.*
>
> *Do: Yeah?*
>
> *L: And [the victim] said no. But there had been advances.*
>
> *Do: There had been advances?*
>
> *L: […] My husband told me he had been very surprised. You could not imagine.*
>
> *Do: When there were advances?*
>
> *L: Yeah, yeah. [My husband] told me that [the victim] had [grabbed his crotch].*

Laura's denial of the victim was further elaborated when she added that some of the victims never admitted having been victimized until she confronted them. She even recounted how they had acted as though nothing had happened over several years, despite her sporadic queries. This concealment was so illogical for her that she still held a grudge against them:

> *I have a lot of inner anger because they were aware of the [victimization] and they didn't talk. I had been hanging out with the family for eight years before I met my husband—there was never any talk of [my husband's offenses]. Let's say that your uncle has assaulted you, do you throw yourself in his arms when you see him? And if you're aware that your brother has assaulted your son, do you throw yourself in his arms when he comes over? I have a real hard time with that—that's the anger I have inside of me.*

Denying the injury

Some participants[55] denied the injury caused by the offending of their loved one. This strategy was very similar to Sykes and Matza's (1957) original description: through their accounts, participants wondered about, and eventually minimized the extent to which anyone had truly been hurt by the illegal act. This idea was well expressed in Laura's (wife) account:

> *L: My daughter's room is downstairs—in the basement. [The victim] said that [the abuse] often happened in the basement's room. Damn, the room is right there! Right next to my daughter's room! Through all this violence that was committed, it was done gently […]. You know what I mean?*
>
> *Do: Yeah, yeah I know.*
>
> *L: Because we never heard him screaming—never saw him crying. Never have we… And, you know, he'd jump into [my husband's arm] whenever he'd see him. There was nothing—nothing that foreshadowed that he was being abused.*

While she did not deny injury in all of her husband's misdeeds, Kara (wife) nevertheless resorted to this form of act adjustments. In describing one specific offense, she said:

> *One time, there was this guy who owed him money and [my husband] had to collect. And huh, he wanted to break his legs. But he realized that if he broke his legs, the guy couldn't go to work. So they crucified one his hands on a tree, and they called his wife to tell her to bring the money. You know, it's funny in a sense (laughs)—depending on your sense of humour. But you could also say that it's a bit sick.*

The idea that such acts are, to some extent, funny, reiterates the benign nature of the harm it has caused. This interpretation of action as comical was also present in Norma's narrative, which simultaneously integrated a denial of the victim:

> *You know, he never hurt innocent people when he was robbing and everything. On the contrary, sometimes it's hilarious: police reports describe how he'd go in banks [with] no glasses on, no cap, nothing. And before pulling out his gun, he'd tell the girl at the cash register: 'Look, don't rack your brain. I won't hurt you. If you stay calm, everything will be fine.' And he'd say: 'It's a hold-up.' And you know, [he'd have his] gun in his hand. And when he'd leave, he'd tell the girl he was sorry. And he would tell her: 'You won't get hurt.' You know, I'm no thief, but I'm like, fuck [he was reckless]!*

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[55] $n = 3$.

You know, if I'd rob a bank—though I have no intention of robbing a bank—I'd try to hide so that people don't recognize me too much.

Appealing to higher loyalties

As was the case with the other act adjustment strategies, very few participants appealed to higher loyalties in their accounts: in fact this strategy was only used by one participant. Individuals who do so generally argue that the demands of a group warranted the sacrifice of legal and social norms (Sykes & Matza, 1957). This was well exemplified in this excerpt from Mia's (girlfriend) narrative:

The [man] standing before me is someone who doesn't regret what he did. We've talked about this—he says that he did what he had to do at that time. He's convinced that he needed to [threaten his victim] for his own safety and for the safety of his wife and children.

Of particular interest in this passage is the fact that the offense perpetrator is an important source of information from which participants' accounts can be built. As discussed above, and as seen here, this not only includes factual information about offending, but also interpretations and ways to make sense of the offending conduct. While she was seemingly reporting her boyfriend's account, Mia did much more than that: she integrated it into her own account of what happened. After explaining how she would not tolerate violence in her life, she explained how she viewed his violence "*differently*" because he "*couldn't keep on living in constant fear for his family and his children*." This appeal to higher loyalty—one that seemingly came from the words of her boyfriend—was convincing enough for her to integrate in her own view.

Comparative adjustments

When they used comparative adjustments, participants[56] minimized the severity of their loved one's action by emphasizing its relative 'mildness' in comparison with other offenses or by comparing it to the action of others who have 'done worse.' As an example of the former, Rosa (mother) described feeling fortunate because her son could have taken part in much worse conduct:

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[56] $n = 3$.

Concerning my son's voyeurism… Fortunately [the police has] shown that he has never been in contact with anyone—didn't chat [with anyone] either. Just talking about [this possibility] gives me the shivers. [He] never met anyone, never spoke to anyone on the phone. Never, never, never. And he has never assaulted anyone.

While his son was officially charged with conspiracy to commit murder, Charles (father) resorted to comparative adjustment by explaining how his son, *as opposed to* his co-defendants, had not been physically present when the violent incident had occurred:

And [the victim] was beaten—badly beaten. [He was] beaten, beaten [hard]. He still carries the consequences today—neurological […]. [The incident] has been caught on camera, you know. At the motel [where it happened], there are cameras everywhere. But it's clear that [my son] is not in the room when [the beating happened]. He hasn't lifted a finger. He organized the meeting and the two other guys told him to get out.

Norma (wife) also compared her husband's action with the 'worse' actions of others:

But, you know, he never hurt innocent people […]. That might explain why I don't judge what he has done as much. Because he'd never hurt children. He never harmed a child. I don't know… I don't see the drama as much. I'd never date Guy Turcotte.[57] *I'd never have kids with him either.*

Through this narrative strategy, Norma argued that certain actions are worse than others, and that, comparatively, her husband's actions were not so 'bad.'

Actor adjustments

As opposed to act adjustments, the overwhelming majority of participants used actor adjustments in trying to make sense of the offending. In this narrative strategy, these people constructed developmental accounts that depicted the person they love as fundamentally 'good' by focusing on external elements such as mental health, substance use, and friends. The specific forms of such accounts were found to vary according to the type of relationship in which the narrator was involved. While biological kin tended to focus on mental health and personality difficulties, the narratives of romantic partners and friends tended to take the shape

[57] Guy Turcotte has been at the heart of a highly mediatised criminal case in Québec, one that has left marks on popular thought. Turcotte is a cardiologist who stabbed his two children to death after learning that his wife had an affair. He then tried to put an end to his own life by ingesting washer fluid. The combination of his familial background, the brutality of his act, and the suicide attempt has made this case an easy reference in numerous debates. Several individuals who were interviewed in this study have mentioned this case.

of a sad tale (Goffman, 1961). While both of these strategies mitigated the responsibility of their loved ones, none of the participants met in this study actually denied that responsibility. Before delving into the specificities of actor adjustments, this admission of responsibility is examined.

"My head's not in the sand:" Recognizing responsibility

Of course, denying the involvement of someone in an illegal action would be a powerful strategy to reduce one's ambivalence. As stated above, however, none of the participants did so. In fact, when they tried to make sense of the actions they considered reprehensible, they incorporated themes that actually underscored the responsibility of their loved one. As the following lines will demonstrate, these included: (1) personal choice and (2) the quest for the subjective perks of offending.

While not the most common theme within the narratives analyzed, some participants depicted the offending conduct along the lines of personal choice. This was the case with Norma (wife), who acquiesced with her husband's new take on his conduct:

> *You know, at the beginning it was always someone else's fault, except his. Now he […] says: 'I'm the one who went into those banks. It wasn't my third neighbour. It wasn't my mother.' And you know, it's all well and good to be blaming everyone else, but he has made choices also.*

Echoing some of the central ideas in the work of Katz (1988), the narratives of several participants emphasized their loved ones' attraction(s) to offending, an emphasis that simultaneously acknowledged their responsibility. Mildred (mother) for instance accounted for her son's conduct by underscoring his desire for easy and fast money:

> *M: He thinks we're a bunch of idiots*
>
> *Do: Really?*
>
> *M: […] He doesn't understand why we work like that—to maybe be able to go on vacation once a year. Or, you know, just to pay our stuff. Or a little extra here and there. He doesn't get that. What he wants is easy money. And he told me he'd never work eight-to-four and have a quiet life. He needs the adrenaline that comes with it. He needs the easy money […]. And I think that he's willing to do a lot for that.*
>
> *Do: To pay for what kind of life?*

M: Well, partying, going out, travelling—but without working too hard for it.

This excerpt from Mildred's narrative highlights another aspect that participants often associated with the offending conduct: thrills and excitement. When tackling their son's conduct, both Jonathan (father) and Dorothy (mother) recognized this. After admitting to "*having a hard time understanding why [his son] goes on that side of the track*," Jonathan pursued: "*It's as if he's looking for the adrenaline of mischief.*" For his wife, their son's offending was partly attributable to his desire to feel "*the thrill of doing things that are not right—to look tough—and also to impress tough people rather than to impress those who are not offenders*."

Along similar lines, other participants accounted for the illegal acts by describing how the person they love valued themselves through the gaze of others. Here, the emphasis was on issues such as pride, recognition, respect, status, and affection. In addition to fast money, Mildred (mother) believed this was an important force behind her son's conduct:

> *M: It's as if he's a gangster, you know. He has this pride and that's what he wants to be: a gangster. He thinks that's cool. And [that was the case] even when he was young. We would watch movies and he'd always be rooting for the bad guy. I couldn't understand. We'd argue with him: 'This can't be!' You know? He always identified with the bad guy, the outcast. The person for whom none of us had any sympathy—well he'd root for him.*
>
> *Do: Why?*
>
> *M: Maybe he identified [with them]. He knew he was different. I don't know. Anyway, he thinks that's cool. He always found that cool. I'm telling you, in the first years [of his incarceration], he was proud. He'd put pictures up on Facebook with the barbwire around him […]. And when he'd call his friends, it was funny. He thought it was funny.*

Some participants also highlighted how their loved ones perceived their personal abilities as limited and how this view favoured their involvement in illegal ventures. While this could be intertwined with concrete social impediments such as lack of formal education, the subjective aspect was seen as central in driving offending. River (friend) for instance explained:

> *My son's father has always told me that he didn't think he'd be able to do anything better [than offending]. Like, he's too old now—it's too late. In his head it's like he's never gonna be able to have a trade, you know? Anyway, he thinks he's never gonna be*

able to do anything better. In general, that's how the majority [of people involved in offending] think. They're already thinking about how they can do it better next time so that they don't get caught. Because the majority of them hasn't even finished high school.

A final subjective element was often emphasized in the accounts of participants, one that actually lies at the heart of this thesis: their loved one's attitudes toward deviance/delinquency and toward conventional life. This was well exemplified by Norma (wife) who explained how her husband's offending was rooted in his old attitudes:

N: When I met him, he thought his substance use wasn't an issue. [He believed he was using] only because he enjoyed it. He thought he could stop whenever he wanted. Smuggling [drugs] inside prison wasn't a crime [in his mind]—it was a question of survival. You know, to live. Not to survive, but to live well.

Do: To live well?

N: Yeah [...]. He needed to be able to buy his own food and to prepare good meals and buy designer clothes. You know, 100% thug life, [going] 100 miles an hour. That was the way he thought. [Prison] guards were all crooks, dirty bastards. Nothing in the system was good, not even the dogs, you know. He was like, really, really closed off to authority.

The elements put forth in the excerpts presented in this section fostered a two-pronged outcome. On the one hand, they provide participants with a sense that they understand how someone they love could have offended. On the other, they highlight the responsibility of that person by focusing on the role of agency: he/she has engaged in such actions because he/she wanted to or because he/she got something out of it. This recognition of responsibility left several participants feeling empowered by knowledge. Like Laura (wife), they were not dupes who had their "*head[s] in the sand*"—they were in the loop. Being aware of the past in fact prepared them better for the future and gave them some level of control over their next decisions. Along those lines, Laura explained that by being "*aware of everything [her husband] had done*" she could keep her "*eyes wide open*." As will be seen in a later section, participants often used this knowledge to impose restrictions on relationships, a strategy of action that seeks to avoid repeating the mistakes of the past.

Mitigating responsibility through a retrospective reading of action

While the accounts devised by participants acknowledged the responsibility of their loved one, they also alleviated it. In order to encompass this duality, the concept of mitigation is used in this study. Notably, it was preferred over the concept of denial (Condry, 2007), which supposes a more significant dismissal of responsibility than what was expressed by any of the participants met. Mitigation accounts instead "attenuate the moral connection between behavior and the self" (Warren & Messinger, 1988, p. 174). The analysis suggests that this was accomplished through actor adjustments. As they used this narrative strategy, participants built accounts around a retrospective reading of action that reconstructed the biography of the person they cherish (Scott & Lyman, 1968). By situating the deviant and illegal actions in their broader longitudinal contexts, they were able to transfer a part of the blame onto external factors, thus alleviating their loved ones' responsibility for their actions. These accounts effectively 'adjusted the actor,' presenting them as different from 'real criminals.'

While the basic structure of their accounts was the same, the analysis uncovered an important distinction between parents and non-parents.[58] The accounts forged by parents were intertwined with autobiographical elements and overwhelmingly emphasized the role of mental health and substance use. In contrast, non-parents' accounts were mostly free of self-referential elements and overwhelmingly took the form of a sad tale (Goffman, 1961), which focused on major difficulties in childhood, parental neglect, and life adversities. Participants from both groups also acknowledged the impact of peers, and some also blamed "*the system*" for their loved one's offending. Of course, over time, the specific actor adjustments overlapped and influenced one another in complex ways. In fact, for some it was the interplay between these elements that best accounted for the illegal actions.

Parents: a walk down memory lane

The distinction between the accounts developed by parents and non-parents reflects the nature of their relationships and the roles they endorse. Parents have a long common history with the person who has acted illegally, one that precedes, coincides with, and outlives that

[58] In this analysis, Louise's (sister) narrative was included in the parental category. While she was not a parent, she described endorsing a role that resembled that of other parents.

conduct. This aspect of their relationship is a double-edged sword: while it equips them with privileged knowledge on the development of their loved one, thereby placing them in a strategic position to make sense of her/his offending, it simultaneously makes them potential actors in it. In addition to the understandings they have to build, they are thus forced to take a good look in the mirror and ask themselves what kind of parents they have been. While none of the parents interviewed took full responsibility for the actions of their offspring, all of them wondered about their personal role in it. Some revealed being unsure as to what they "*ha[d] transmitted*" (Rosa, mother) to their children and wondered "*what more they could've done*" (Dorothy, mother). Most came to the tentative conclusion that they had simply done their best.

The reasons why parents are particularly sensitive to the notion of personal responsibility can be partly located within broader cultural, political, scientific, and even popular discourses. As Condry (2007) pointed out, families, especially parents, form the primary socializing and learning site and, as such, are seen as responsible for teaching children how to be 'good,' law-abiding citizens (see also Hirschi, 1969; Sutherland, 1947). When youths act in ways that fail to respect social norms, many are inclined to search within the familial context for the source of this 'undesirable' conduct. When that conduct transgresses legal boundaries, this tendency is exacerbated, and extends to the conduct of adults. This is, of course, fairly unsurprising. Decades of research in criminology have located the roots of many forms of deviance and delinquency within the family (Farrington, 2010). This knowledge has trickled down into practice and been transmitted to the families afflicted by that reality and lay people alike. While a non-negligible portion of individuals who engage in offending acts do carry the burden of family problems, what these global discourses hide is that a large share of them do not (Condry, 2007; Levi & Maguire, 2002).

As stated, the majority of the parents met in this study wondered whether they—as caregivers, teachers, and nurturers—might have been somehow responsible for their offspring's conduct. This sense of personal responsibility influenced the types of actor adjustment parents mobilized. Rather than solely having to make sense of the offending conduct of their children, they also needed to decipher the extent to which they were responsible for that conduct. The accounts they shared in the confines of this study thus

focused on the numerous difficulties they faced during the development of their child and on the matching efforts they deployed in trying to overcome these hardships.

Parents' narratives typically charted the important events in the life of their offspring along with their related difficulties. In several instances, these depictions started in childhood, with some going as far back as birth. This tendency to account for offending through complete life histories was overwhelmingly present among parents whose offspring had been involved in deviant, delinquent, or otherwise 'problematic' conduct from a very young age. Mildred's (mother) narrative opened precisely on this idea: "*Ok, well, this kid has always been a challenge*." This overture resonated with Philip's (father): "*My daughter has always been someone who has a hard time socializing—she's clingy—things have to work her way. We realized very early on that she had a problem, you know.*" For some, the illicit ventures started when their children were well into adulthood. While these participants, like Rose (mother), Charles (father) and Louise (sister), could have focused on that specific period, looking for answers lodged in the adult years, their accounts were also rooted in the childhood and adolescence of the person they support. As presented above, the actor adjustments parents used to make sense of offending focused on four main elements: (1) mental health; (2) substance use; (3) friends and (4) the 'system.' As will be seen in the following pages, in addition to providing tentative explanations for illegal actions, these elements can serve as powerful narrative devices to reduce feelings of personal responsibility.

Mental health. The narratives of all participants who were included in the parental category[59] focused on mental health. The severity of this issue varied, ranging from depressive symptoms to pervasive developmental disorder and borderline personality disorder. Understandably, this form of actor adjustment is very effective in mitigating the responsibility of the individual who has engaged in offending. Isabella's (mother) narrative evocatively highlighted this. After recounting how the family doctor had noted certain autistic tendencies in her son, she stated: "*That's why [offending] is not 100% his fault. Not the acts in themselves, but the reasons why he fell into this*."

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[59] $n = 8$

Mental health issues were so prevalent in the accounts of parents that only one case could be located where no formal mental health diagnosis had been given. Even for this parent, however, mental health played an important role in the offending conduct. While he could not put a name on it, Philip (father) believed that something was fundamentally wrong with his daughter, that "*one of her fuses ha[d] blown*." To support this personal hypothesis, his account incorporated claims from non-medical experts, a reliable source of information. For instance, he recounted how during one of his daughter's court hearings, the judge had acknowledged her fragile mental health by saying: "*She doesn't have a mental disorder, but she has something. We all know this.*" When later probed about what he thought the judge meant by that "*something*," he specified:

> *P: Well, she's not happy. You know when you have a hard time socializing like that… She can't make any real friends, you know. She has had good friends, but I don't know. At school she'd eat lunch in the bathroom. I don't know what she has. I can't name you an illness or anything like that.*
>
> *Do: That's ok.*
>
> *P: But it's like when she lies—there's a name for that. There's a word for that, but I can't remember what it is. Someone who lies and who believes themselves. I wonder if that's what she has. You know, even her second-grade teacher was telling us how she would lie and believe her own lies.*

In addition to mitigating the responsibility of the perpetrator of the offending conduct, accounts that focus on mental health also mitigated participants' responsibility. If actions are attributable to an uncontrollable element, no one can entirely be blamed for it. This is well exemplified in Mildred's (mother) narrative. Pursuing her account introduced above, she highlighted how, in her view, mental health issues have affected her son's conduct: "*He was hyperactive. They said it was attention-deficit, impulsive-aggressive type. It's always been difficult—since before kindergarten, since daycare. I'd get frequent phone calls for discipline problems: he had bitten another child or attacked another child*." Through mental health, she simultaneously tackled her personal responsibility in her son's delinquent conduct. Indeed, she added: "*I didn't realize [my son] was different until I had another child and saw how different they were.*" The comparison between her son and her daughter recurred later in Mildred's narrative, when she further emphasized how his conduct was attributable to something wrong inside of him, something outside of her purview:

M: I raised them both the same way, and my daughter is completely different […]. She's the complete opposite, you know. She's studious. She just turned 19. She just finished her first year in university. She didn't drink alcohol before the age of 18, you know.

Do: Yeah.

M: She's barely starting to go out in bars and to have fun, you know. Her room was always clean and tidy and we have a nice relationship—we're close.

In fact, mental health can be such an effective strategy to reduce feelings of self-responsibility, that some parents described being genuinely relieved when a diagnosis was given. A similar phenomenon has previously been described among individuals receiving a diagnosis of mental health 'problems.' Indeed, according to Fee (2000), "diagnostic categories are now social objects – points of personal and collective significance" (p. 75). Individuals not only use them as pillars upon which to build their personal narratives and direct future action, but also as a means to account for what was 'wrong' with them in the past. For several individuals, like Wurtzel (1995), diagnoses allow one to "connect [one's] internal torment to something outside [oneself]" (Fee, 2000, p. 80). In this study, parents used mental health diagnoses in much the same way: as 'proof' that the true 'problem' lied outside of their child, thus outside of anyone's control. By providing an efficient way to account for offending and a way to defuse self-blame, diagnoses thus fulfill the two goals of this actor adjustment strategy. Dorothy's (mother) narrative demonstrated this quite evocatively:

D: You know, for a long time you wonder what more you could have done [as parents]. But I couldn't have done anything more—I did all that I could. I didn't always think that way, though…

Do: No? When did that happen? Well, given your experience?

D: I'd say when we got the borderline personality disorder diagnosis.

Do: Hum.

D: It was like: 'Ah! Ok! This explains a lot of things.'

Do: Yeah.

D: It also made it so there was nothing I could do—I'm powerless against a diagnosis like that. It helped me realize even more how powerless I was. Maybe it wasn't my fault after all. Slowly, you know.

While mental health could help participants make sense of their loved one's offending, using it to mitigate self-responsibility had its limits. In the following excerpt, Louise (sister) clearly expressed how she accounted for her brother's act through the evolution of his psychological issues. At the same time, as opposed to Mildred and Dorothy, she admitted feeling responsible for not having done enough to help him through his trouble, a deed that might have prevented his violent actions. Interestingly, as the exceptional sister in this category, her narrative separately addressed notions of self- and parental responsibility. In her view, they have all failed him:

> *Do: How do […] you understand what happened?*
>
> *L: Well, of course I have my comprehension. But it's really like mine. You know, […] my brother was very fragile and sensitive […]. He's 20 years old and it's like the age at which he's searching for his place. He's sensitive. He had been bullied for a few years—I don't know how it happened because there's a point at which he stopped opening up about it and he became very closed off. It's as if I […] didn't know what to do in front of his distress. It's as if I would've liked for my parents to do something. But they didn't know what to do either. I'm from an African family who doesn't ask much psychological help—it's not well received. So nothing was put in place to take care of that. But we could see that, you know, he had difficulties speaking—he stuttered a lot. So there were problems like that that appeared [and] it was getting worse. He had a hard time finding work, also. He didn't know what to do in school. Huh, when he finished high school, he didn't know what to do in Cegep[60]. He would always wake up late, miss classes […]. [There was] a lot of reclusion. And even with us—he would talk to us less and less […]. It's as if no one around [him] knew what to do. It's as if he was stuck […] in great suffering and in distress that led him to do what he did. But it's really intense. Because, you know, sometimes I tell myself I wasn't raised in a family where we were taught to resort to violence, or to avenge ourselves […]. So there's a part of me that doesn't understand. But I'm under the impression that he did what he did because he had no resources left. And he was stuck in deep internal suffering. And, you know, I've seen people commit suicide because of bullying on TV […]. But I have the impression that he did the opposite of that. So, that's what I understand. But I don't know if that's what happened or something else.*

Again, this analysis is not intended to question the actual existence of psychological disturbances or its role in the illegal actions. While not perfect, invoking mental health issues

[60] Cegeps are pre-university and technical colleges that are part of Québec's educational system.

was a powerful strategy to not only make sense of someone's offending conduct, but also to alleviate feelings of personal responsibility. As will be seen in the next section, another external force could do similar work on parents: substance use.

Drugs as the "main enemy." When they accounted for the offending by highlighting the role of substance use, participants generally expressed the idea that the person they care about was fundamentally changed when under the influence[61]. Doing so allowed parents who used that strategy to deflect blame onto the substance, partially sparing the perpetrator of illegal actions. In this sense, it served a function similar to accounts focused on mental health issues. For example, Dorothy (mother) explained how her son became different once he started using drugs. After explaining how he son "*ha[d] never really stopped using over the years*," she said: "*Maybe none of this would've happened [without drugs]. I'll never know. It's as if there's still a bit of [my son] inside of him. He has like two personalities—and it's not the one I'd like to win that takes over*." Her husband Jonathan (father) shared a similar understanding of their son as a person: "*When he's not using [drugs] you see that he's stuck between a rock and a hard place. Between everything we've instilled in him and the bad things*." In addition to highlighting how this type of actor adjustment can be used to shift responsibility onto substances rather than onto the offense perpetrator, these excerpts suggest that it can serve as a deflector of self-responsibility. We, as parents, are not entirely to blame for our son's conduct: we have shown him the right way, but drugs have blurred the map.

In addition to changing the person, parents blamed drugs because they generated a strong need for fast money. Through his account, Charles (father) explained how his son "*has always used drugs [...] always smoked pot, hash*" and how it eventually escalated to cocaine use when he was "*31 or 32 years old*." While he had been able to maintain his life in order and to remain "*functional*" in his work and family life, "*everything changed*" when he turned 46 years old because "*he started using more cocaine*." According to Charles, it was all downhill from there. His son started to need increasing amounts of money to be able to sustain his new lifestyle, one that not only included drugs, but also escorts. Charles recounted how after losing his wife and his job, his son has become desperate to the point where he started to adhere to

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[61] $n = 3$

the idea that if "*drugs had put him in shit*," they were also "*gonna get him out of shit*." While partly blaming himself for not having intervened at that point as he "*knew what [his son] meant by this*," Charles mainly blamed drugs for his son's illegal ventures.

Again, substances were an important form of actor adjustment in the accounts of parents, one that acted very much like mental health issues. The next section examines how parents also integrated their offspring's friends when trying to make sense of their illegal acts.

"Show me your friends and I'll tell you who you are." Over the years, people forge relationships outside of the familial nest, some of which are greatly influential. Unsurprisingly, parents were well aware of that phenomenon, particularly when they perceived these outsiders as a 'bad influence' for their offspring. The accounts participants[62] built often highlighted this influence, suggesting that their children might not have acted illegally if they had had different friends. Peer influence was particularly present in Philip's (father) account of his daughter's conduct. After describing her difficulties making friends as a child, he depicted her early adulthood as a period during which things took a turn for the worse. In his own words, she suddenly became "*popular*" because "*she had a car*." Despite his warnings, she befriended people who "*liked her not because of who she was, but because of what she had*," people whom moreover "*had [criminal] records*." In Philip's understanding, these friends were instrumental in his daughter's offending:

> *She met these people—one of them was wanted [by the police]. The other [had] this [problem], the other that [problem]. They were all… I mean they were all crooks. But my daughter's a part of that. So one night they needed money. [My daughter] had used her credit card all summer [so she had no money left]—how could she have such a large limit on her credit card at her age? I think she had like 4000 bucks or something […]. And one night, the gang's smartass said: 'I know this place, there's an old man with $35,000 in his safety box. We're gonna go get him.*

As previously argued, one of the advantages of developmental accounts is that they allow for the integration of several types of actor adjustment, thereby generating a more comprehensive portrait of the conduct to be explained. While these typically emerged over the entirety of the interview, some excerpts offer a glimpse into this integration. This was the case

[62] $n = 6$.

with the following passage of Dorothy's (mother) interview in which she combined substance use and peer socialization:

> *Do: What did [your son's] social circle look like?*
>
> *D: Well, one little boy was a pot dealer at school. And one time he made another friend who stayed [in a nearby town]—apparently his mother was wealthy. And I didn't like that kid. I had nicknamed him the spectre—he really looked like a spectre (laughs). He looked as though he was never there. And black—his hair was black. And his face… There was nothing emanating from him—an infinite emptiness […]. [My son] was attracted to him because of what he represented. He had so much stuff at home. And when I'd see him appear, I always told my husband: 'Well, here comes the spectre.' He used drugs, that's for sure. He used—how do you call it? Speed. That's how it all started. Speed, and then coke.*

While several parents accounted for their offspring's conduct through peer socialization, others did so through their offspring's lack of socialization. While no causal inference can be drawn, this specific form of actor adjustment was only noted in the narratives of mothers whose sons had been involved in offenses of a sexual nature. Reminiscing on her child's trajectory, Rosa (mother) explained:

> *You know, he's very lonely. And he has always been very lonely […]. When he was 3 years old, he was with other kids and he liked it. But with time, he put that very far from him. He has no friends—no friend at the moment. In high school he had made some friends, but he pushed them away slowly. His friends would call him and he wouldn't call back. Friends would arrange a meeting with him somewhere—to the movies, a hockey game in the backyard—he wouldn't go.*

When talking more specifically about his loneliness and how it affected his life and his tendency to spend a lot of time around computers, she added: "*One time he lost his job because [of] his difficulties with interpersonal and human relationships. Because he doesn't like humans—he likes cats and computers. Besides that, forget it.*" Isabella, whose son was accused of similar offenses as Rosa's son, also explained how her child had no friends, at least in the physical world. In fact, the only friends he had were the ones he had made online, those same friends whom he had illegally shared pornographic material with.

As was the case with the elements presented above, shifting blame onto 'bad' friends allowed participants to preserve the idea that their children weren't all *that* bad, that they had somehow been dragged into deviance against themselves. They, as parents, were again not

entirely responsible either. Indeed, their children often pursued these friendships in spite of their multiple warnings. One final element had a similar effect in the accounts of many parents: 'the system.'

'The system.' At one point or another in time, all parents had to deal with one of the various systems responsible for the management of unlawful actions. In addition to the personal distress associated with this experience (see Chapter 4), some of them[63] recognized how 'the system' had affected their offspring. While some saw the positive aspects of their child's incarceration, seeing it as a moment to reflect upon oneself and as an effective neutralizing agent, many believed it had changed their offspring for the worse. In their view, the system that should have 'made their child better' had not only failed to deliver its promise, but had also contributed to the persistence of the offending conduct. In this sense, this narrative strategy is similar to one of Sykes and Matza's (1957) neutralization techniques: condemnation of the condemners. This form of actor adjustment was well exemplified by Isabella (mother), who blamed the correctional services for her son's current judicial predicaments. In her eyes, the system had failed to provide him with the close supervision and management he needed, which led him to breach the conditions of his parole.

Blaming the system can also be combined with other types of actor adjustments. In Mildred's (mother) account, it fitted particularly well with notions of peer socialization:

> *I couldn't understand how a 19 year-old kid could end up in a maximum-security federal institution. What do you want to teach him? To become a better criminal? Come on! Make him work! He spent 4 years watching TV. He can talk to you about all of the series and movies that were on TV [...]. But he didn't do anything. He didn't finish high school. He didn't enrol in a professional course. He didn't read, really. He didn't do anything besides watching TV and working out once in a while. And listen to the stories of others and learn how he could've done better than what he did [...]. So, I don't understand what the system is about. Put him on a farm, make him work! Make him learn a trade. He has to get up in the morning. He has to work. He has to deserve his food, you know. Show him some values—how to reintegrate society after [his prison sentence]. I don't understand how this works. At 19, you put him with a criminal who's killed and what [do you expect]? No, you can't put them together.*

[63] $n = 4$.

This section has examined the main actor adjustments that parents mobilized in trying to make sense of the offending of their offspring. As stated throughout, these accounts can be understood as doing dual work for this group of people. On the one hand, they suggest that the perpetrator of the illegal endeavours is not entirely responsible for these actions, that he/she is not entirely *that* kind of person. On the other hand, these accounts also had the power to alleviate parents' own sense of personal responsibility. This idea is explored in more depth in the following section.

The powerless 'good parent.' As stated above, when they tried to make sense of the offending of their loved one, all parents had to come to grips with the role they might have played in these actions. While actor adjustments could be mobilized to do that work, this narrative strategy remained limited, leaving many parents unable to fully expel doubts about their self-responsibility. The developmental/longitudinal structure of their account actually served as an additional strategy in reaching that goal. Through their walk down memory lane, parents were not only able to tentatively account for the incomprehensible conduct, but also to depict the role(s) they had taken along the way. What then emerged from their narratives was a deep sense of powerlessness, the idea that they had always done everything they could. While they generally focused on their offspring's offending conduct—a second-order experience—important shares of interviews touched upon their own conduct and experience. By highlighting the times they had "*hired a clown*" (Philip, father) on their offspring's birthday and had woken up in the middle of the night to "*fix their car*" (Jonathan, father), parents narratively borrowed from the 'good parent' trope the idea that 'good' parents are there for their children at any cost. Jonathan clearly expressed this in the following passage:

> *And later you're told that you should've severed the relationship right away [when the offending occurred], you know. That's easy to say—very easy to say. But between saying it and doing it, there's a huge step. And sometimes it takes a while before you're able to climb up that step, you know. It takes years because we love our kids and we want them to succeed in life. Sometimes we think we're helping them, but in the end we're not. It takes a while before it sinks in with you—because we want them to make it.*

When depicting themselves along the lines of the 'good parent' trope, participants sometimes highlighted how their other children had turned out perfectly 'fine' and how they

had been leading "*normal*" lives free of deviance and delinquency. Similarly to Mildred (mother) who above explained how her daughter was the complete opposite of her son, Dorothy (mother) presented her son's younger brothers as good citizens leading unproblematic lives.

In addition to past deeds, parents also used their current conduct as a means to narratively alleviate feelings of self-responsibility. While this could be classified as a strategy of action, what is of specific interest here is the narrative interpretation that accompanied the action. Mildred (mother) for instance described having recently imposed restrictions on her relationship with her son, a decision she believed might lead him to change his ways. When asked to talk about how she foresaw the future, she said: "*I'm taking it one day at a time. I still have hope that [my decision] will whip him and that our relationship's important enough to bring him back on the right path*." While Louise's experience was the opposite of Mildred's on many levels, she also constructed her present actions as a means to alleviate her self-responsibility. As seen above, despite using various narrative strategies, she still partly blamed herself for having let her brother down when he was suffering. For her, being present now might open up the way to redemption: "*Well, [family] is what's most precious […]. There's a part of me that blames myself for not having deployed everything I had before [his offense] happened. And it's as if I really want to make up for it somehow*."

As stated above, an overlap can exist between the narrative strategies and the strategies of action employed by participants. Before exploring the latter in more depth, the following section focuses on the narrative strategies used by non-parents.

"The biggest thing is that his father ran off when he was young": Sad tales among non-parents

When they tried to account for the offending conduct, non-parents[64] employed a strategy much similar to that of parents: they reconstructed the biographies of their loved ones. As opposed to parents, however, the actor adjustments they mobilized largely deflected responsibility from the offense perpetrator to his/her familial environment. Indeed, in all of

[64] This relational category includes romantic partners, friends, and Kathryn, the only child (i.e., daughter) who took part in this study ($n = 10$).

these accounts, the offending conduct was depicted as being attributable to parental neglect, abuse, violence, and substance use, which have in turn led to a life of problems that have never been adequately dealt with. In this sense, the accounts of non-parents shared many elements with Goffman's sad tale, "a selected (often distorted) arrangement of facts that highlight an extremely dismal past, and thus 'explain' the individual's present state" (Scott & Lyman, 1968, p. 52). Through this reconstruction of the past, non-parents focused on a series of events and circumstances which, taken together, alleviated their loved ones' responsibility.

The contours of the sad tale. Elements of the sad tale were easily detectable in the accounts of all non-parents[65]. This was very well exemplified throughout Kara's (wife) interview, which literally began with her husband's placement under child custody when he was 9 years old because "*his father [was] incarcerated for sexual offenses*." Using her personal experience as a barometer for what she perceived as a "*normal*" childhood, she pursued:

> *K: He comes from a family where everyone's been to prison. At home, there was no familial frame, no structure. His mother was deaf, so she was already handicapped—unable to converse with the kids. [It was] an extremely violent family.*
>
> *Do: Yeah?*
>
> *K: Yeah, his father… On Saturdays in my home—I was thinking about that yesterday—on Saturdays we would take out our mattresses and use them as trampolines. My father thought it was cool. And he'd buy us ice cream sandwiches and we'd watch hockey night. [In my husband's family], they would tie his mother to a chair and it was: who's gonna beat up his mother. Because if [he] didn't beat up his mother, he was gonna be beaten. That was a Saturday night in my husband's home. You see, we don't have the same—I was raised in a comfortable background. He didn't know when he was gonna eat. You know, red neck and all. My husband also has an aboriginal background—he's metis on both his mother's and his father's side. But that's always been a taboo within the family. He had a grandmother who was Ojibwe, and who had some contacts with the children. She's the only sane relationship my husband has had, if you will. Well, because she was a native, he has never had the right to see her […]. And his mother had a serious drinking problem. All of her children have been placed [under child custody]. She wasn't much better [than his father], but [my husband] has placed his*

[65] *n* = 10.

mother on a pedestal. It won't do any good if I tell him: 'Well I think your mother wasn't much better than your father. You wouldn't be where you are if you'd had a happy childhood and if someone had listened to you.' You know what I mean? My husband was telling me about that one time, when he was 7-8 years old: his father had dogs. And he had to kill the dogs because they were too old. And they had had little puppies, so he had to kill the female and the male. He told [my husband]: 'You're gonna kill the female and the male, we'll only keep the puppies.' And [my husband] didn't want to [kill them so] he hid them. When his father found out about it, he got him good—[my husband] got the beating of the century. [His father] forced him to kill the two animals and he buried them after. You know, it was always like that at home.

The sad tale told by Kara did not end there: it was scattered across her entire narrative and included much more than familial neglect. In addition to the violence he suffered, she explained how his personal interests had always been tamed. In the following excerpt, Kara highlighted how the repression of her husband's self-worth had combined with numerous forms of familial violence to form the classic contours of a sad tale, one that explained why he had ended up where he was (i.e., serving a life sentence):

K: You know, he's an artist but that's never been valued, you know. It's incredible what he can do. Look, like this jewellery (she shows me her earrings and necklace).

Do: Oh yeah?

K: He made them for me. My handbag—he made it for me because I wanted a bag.

Do: That's really cool!

K: I'm telling you, he's super artistic. But that's never been nourished […]. It doesn't excuse what he did, but he's also from a family where… Like his brother: [my husband] had an older brother who sold him to a pedophile. [He did it] for the money. And [my husband has] been sexually abused. I was telling him the other day, I said: 'You can't be good if you've been bad all your life. If everything around you has always been [bad].' Like even his relationships—it's always been like that.

As seen in an earlier section, Norma (wife) acknowledged her husband's responsibility in his illegal ventures. At the same time, however, she narratively mitigated the extent of his role through the sad tale. In an account very similar to Kara's, she said: "*He's from a pretty dysfunctional family—there are sex workers in the family, his brother went to jail. When they were young and had no money, his mother would take them shopping—but they wouldn't pay*

for the clothes.” Responding to a query concerning the dysfunctional nature of the family, she stated:

> *[It’s been dysfunctional] since he was born. [His] parents would fight on a regular basis […]. Both of them have strong personalities. His mother has used [drugs] for as far back as he can remember—I think he started smoking with his mother. Because she’d smoke her joint, and one time he tried […]. You know, that was his everyday life. His mother’s in her seventies and she’s still using.*

Elements of the sad tale could serve to account for the offending of individuals raised in a range of socioeconomic realities. When talking about her boyfriend’s childhood, Inara (girlfriend) described a very wealthy family in which children could get whatever they desired. The downside of this luxury, however, verged on the sad tale:

> *He was raised in a very wealthy family—very controlling also. [It was a] typical African family who had chosen [my boyfriend] as his father’s successor. So, he had a pretty big responsibility on his shoulders. [He] didn't have much choice concerning his area of study—he had to go into international commerce to take his father’s business. [He was] daddy’s favourite. [The family was] very strict—[he was] beaten frequently during his childhood.*

The harshness of the parental discipline, his succession in the familial business, and the importance of money were recurring themes in Inara’s narrative. They culminated into her account for her boyfriend’s recent engagement in illegal activities:

> *[He wanted to] fill a big lack of affection and of recognition—particularly from his father. He was always under the impression that he was deceiving his father: either because we were together or because he didn't want to study in the [the] area [his father had chosen for him]. [He was] always [looking for] recognition—the one his father never gave him.*

The accounts non-parents developed were not limited to elements located in childhood. In fact, these were often construed as the tip of the iceberg, as the stepping-stone from which more problems emerged. This was well exemplified in Ellen’s (girlfriend) account:

> *I think that […] when you don't have an upbringing where, you know… We’re all victims of our childhood. And depending on how your personality was at the beginning and how your parents are gonna affect you, it’ll, you know… Some will end up with psychological problems; some will end up with relational problems; some will end up being drug dependent. It’s like—we all have certain problems.*

One of the most common 'problems' that followed difficult childhoods was making 'bad' friends, an actor adjustment that was also used by parents. Paule (girlfriend) for instance explained how unusual she was in her boyfriend's life: "*I'm like an exception in the types of relationships he has had before. [He has always been surrounded by] crooks, so I'm like the only legit [person] to have been part of his life*." Echoing this excerpt, Kara (wife) believed in the influence of friends on conduct. When talking about strategies to reduce risks of recidivism, she argued: "*The help needs to be healthy. Because if you have help, but everyone enable them or is as bad as them, you know… If you go back in a milieu where people use [drugs, it won't get better]. My father always said: 'You don't go to the whorehouse to listen to the piano player.'*"

For others, becoming friends with 'bad' people was heavily attributable to the criminal justice and correctional systems. Pursuing her account, which was introduced above, Ellen (girlfriend) explained how 'the system' enabled her boyfriend to develop certain friendships and to lose others. The following excerpt from her narrative echoed the 'condemnation of the condemners' illustrated in the accounts of parents:

> *So, you go to [prison] and you come out even more minded, you know. [You have made new] acquaintances—they're probably all from street gangs or, you know, criminalized, if you will. And if you want to survive in there, particularly if you're alone, you [don't have much choice but to become close to these people]. I was looking at his correctional report and it was all bullying and this and that—because there was no one to help him. What did he do? Well he went after someone who had something, you know. It's the survival of the fittest in there. So he served his 22 months, but he didn't have many visits—I read in his reports that his mother would visit him like once a month. And he'd call her once a week. When you're isolated from the population for so long and that you're in a hostile environment, your head gets, you know—you become fucked up a bit. And he came out. And when he came out, well his sister had a [new] boyfriend—she was getting married. He couldn't stay at his mom's because she was running a place for people with intellectual disabilities. Someone with a criminal record couldn't live there, so she bought an apartment building where he could stay. You know, [he has] a small three-and-a-half.*[66] *[His] rent was paid—good for him. But he didn't have a job an no one would hire him. He tried to go to school, but you know, when you don't have the money to get to school… You know, he got very isolated. He*

[66] Québécois name for a one-bedroom apartment.

> *found that very hard. You know, it's like [he had] been gone for two years. [He] came back and people ha[d] evolved and [he was] all alone. I know he told me he had been depressed for a little while, you know. It was hard [for him]. When he came out, his brother—who's also into crime, pretty intensely—[the authorities] want to get him a dangerous offender status, so… On the day where [my boyfriend] did what he did, his brother [had asked] him to go somewhere to steal some pot in a barn. [My boyfriend] was like: 'No, I'm going to play basketball with my friends.' And you know, he [wasn't seeing] his friends much because they had their own lives and all. You know, when you're in a criminalized environment [it's hard to keep friends like that]—his friends were all church friends, so [they] had a hard time following him or identifying with him and he took the backseat with these people—those who were the good people for him. He started hanging out with his brother and they finally went to steal that pot in that barn.*

The accounts of non-parents shared many similarities with the accounts of parents. In addition to pointing fingers at peer socialization and 'the system,' both understandings accomplished similar work. Indeed, whether through 'a walk down memory lane' or through the 'sad tale,' both groups alleviated the responsibility of the person they cherished for the offending acts, presenting them as different from the kinds of people that would really do things like that. The analysis highlighted one major difference between parents and non-parents, however. As opposed to parents, only a handful of non-parents had to tackle their personal responsibility in the illegal ventures of their loved ones. As will be seen in the following section, this was all a question of timing.

Self-responsibility among non-parents: a question of timing. As opposed to parents who expended great narrative efforts in exploring their responsibility in the offending conduct of their offspring, non-parents seldom did so. Some went as far as to explicitly underscore the fact that they had nothing to do with it. For Norma (wife), it was clear that she was "*not responsible for where [her husband was] at right now*."

A handful of non-parents did however wonder about the extent of their personal responsibility. Interestingly, this was only found among participants[67] who were involved with their loved one when they became aware of the illegal actions (see Table 6, Chapter 4). As opposed to those who chose to engage with someone while cognizant of their offending, these

[67] $n = 3$.

non-parents generally questioned their responsibility for not having seen what was happening under their rooftops and, consequently, for not having been able to prevent or stop it. The accounts they developed contained fairly thorough explanations for these failures. This was the case with Inara (girlfriend), who explained why she had never questioned her boyfriend's wealth. After explaining how financial success had never been important to her, she added:

> *Well, from the outset […], I'm not the kind of person who watches other people's comings and goings when I feel that trust has been established, you know. Having someone's news from dusk till dawn, all the time [is not really mu thing]. So during our first year [together], I had no reason to have doubts about his whereabouts—I had met his friends. [They were] students with whom he hung out, and all. There was nothing that could tell me [that he was involved in offending]. I knew he had a friend in [a nearby city]—I had met him. He was one of his really close friends. Besides, at one point we started the procedures for his permanent residency and he had sent me all of his papers: [he had given my his father's papers] and everything because I was taking care of it a bit, you know. I ended up seeing how much money his parents were making. So, you know, his lifestyle [was], like, normal because there were a lot of zeros [on these papers]. So, [I was] like: 'Ok,' you know. [If] his father buys him a car, that's not surprising—there was nothing that could make me believe that some of that money was coming from elsewhere.*

Kathryn (daughter) engaged in a similar narrative that sought to alleviate her responsibility for not having been able to prevent her father's offending. For her, it was a question of inexperience: "*Well, of course I felt guilty to some extent—for not having seen any signs. But, you know, at the same time, I wasn't working in that [domain] when I was younger. So I could not necessarily see*." Laura (wife) also wondered about the extent of her responsibility in not having seen what was happening in her home. Similarly to Inara and Kathryn, she mitigated that feeling by describing how 'normal' things seemed at the time:

> *How could I have detected anything? We're sitting in the living room, watching a movie, and the [victim] is telling us about the problems he thinks he has and all. Well, he's not talking about abuse or anything like that, [but] look, [my husband was telling him:] 'You should seek therapy—go—release whatever it is that you have to release.' Someone who's an abuser won't encourage the kid he's abusing to seek therapy, where he risks being exposed. So how could I have seen the clues?*

Non-parents' strategy to tackle self-responsibility was different from that of parents in that the former did not tend to wonder whether they were responsible for the occurrence of the

conduct itself. Rather, they wondered if they were responsible for not having detected—and eventually prevented—it. This was slightly different for Laura (wife) who at one point also pondered whether she had somehow pushed her husband into sexual abuse. To solve these questions, she had opted to confront her husband directly:

> *L: I asked myself a lot of questions when it all happened […]. I felt guilty. I had a feeling of guilt at one point: was [the offense] caused by me? I asked myself a lot of questions, but I had no answers. And no one could give me those answers.*
>
> *Do: No, no.*
>
> *L: Besides him. It took me some time […] before I could ask him directly: 'Listen, have I done anything wrong in all this? Did I push you toward the victim? Without necessarily wanting to?' That's when my feeling of guilt left—it's when he told me: 'Not at all.' He said: 'You have nothing to do with that.' He said: 'I'm the only guilty one.' That's what he told me. Listen, I even asked him if he was gay. I said: 'Are you gay? You assault children—young men. Are you gay?' [He said:] 'No, I'm not gay. I'm hetero.' He says he doesn't know what it is. [Today, I don't feel guilty anymore].*

The excerpts presented in the previous pages suggest that participants exerted considerable narrative energy in order to come to grips with the offending conduct of the person they love. The two strategies they mobilized to do so, act and actor adjustments, had several outcomes, some of which have been presented above. To begin, they provided participants with an understanding of how someone they care about so deeply could have done things that are so fundamentally against their beliefs. Of course, this is not to say that the accounts were utterly convincing for them. As observed in the methods chapter and as seen in many passage presented thus far, most participants reported not truly understanding any of what had happened. These accounts were important, despite their tentative nature. As seen, for some participants they served as a means to alleviate doubts concerning personal responsibility. Finally, and of particular importance in this thesis, these accounts decreased the importance of the 'negative' aspect of their ambivalence. By explaining the offending conduct through act and actor adjustments, participants were able to shift responsibility on external factors and to minimize the harm done. This in turn assuaged the 'badness' that could be associated with the person they love. The next section explores how narratively emphasizing the 'goodness' of these people could also be used as a strategy to reduce ambivalence.

Focusing on the positive

The second narrative strategy used by participants emphasized the other end of their ambivalence. Indeed, rather than trying to make sense of the offending, these sought to put forth the positive aspects of the person they cherish, the reasons why they were so emotionally attached to him or her. Through this strategy, participants rejected definitions of their loved one that mainly centered on what was 'wrong' about them. Lying at the heart of this strategy is the idea that their daughter, father, boyfriend, friend, and husband are much more than individuals who have acted 'badly': they are fundamentally good people.

In opposition to strategies that aim at accounting for the bad, focusing on the good did not dwell on the past. Rather, it was a forward-looking tactic, one that was grounded in the present and contemplated the future. As seen in Figure 2, two specific methods were found to be associated with it. In the first, participants focused on the present and highlighted the extent to which the person they love had changed. In the second, they devised narratives of hope in which the future was expected to be better than the past. Again, the use of these strategies depended on the type of relationship. Moreover, their use was dynamic in nature: it echoed the loved ones' conduct and the evolution of the relationship.

Moving on: highlighting changes

For the participants whose narratives focused on how the person they love had changed[68], the past was somewhat irrelevant. It was often constructed as a distant reality that had to be accepted if one wished to move forward. The idea of moving on was well expressed by Kara (wife) who, within the first few minutes of her interview, specified: "*Being with [my husband] is a personal choice—I know what he did—I'm aware of what he did, and I'm ok with what he did. I'm not ok in the sense that it's ok, but I can live with it*." When he talked about his son's offending, Charles (father) drew from his personal experience with the Gamblers Anonymous movement to formulate a narrative that echoed Kara's:

> *I remain pretty stoic in relation to all this, you know. It's like the past […]. In the [GA] movement we have a prayer that's called the Serenity Prayer: 'God grant me the*

[68] $n = 7$.

serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference.' So things for which I can't do anything, well, I accept them.

The narrative construction of a clear separation between a former reality and the present allowed participants to focus on the here and now and to build a narrative around the positive aspects of the person they love. Kathryn (daughter) for instance dismissed any definitions of her father that exclusively revolved around his past conduct:

> *My father is more than the acts, more than what he did. He's also a generous person who gives his time and who's present, you know. He […] has always been there for me—has always been there for his family […], you know. He has always been there for his friends and all. So he's still a good person despite everything.*

In large agreement with her stepdaughter, Laura (wife) stated: "*Yeah, he hurt people, but he's a damn good person. He's a good guy. He's a good husband. He's a good father. He's a generous man. If I remove what happened and I only look at the person, he's worth it, you know*."

As shown above, none of the participants denied the offending, which prevented them from simply expunging these less brilliant pasts from their narratives. Instead, when focusing on the positive, many participants constructed a narrative of change, which propelled the negative in a distant epoch and highlighted the current goodness of the person they cherish. This was well exemplified in Kathryn and Laura's interviews. As opposed to his previous life of "*denial*" (Kathryn), Laura recounted how her husband implemented changes as soon as he was formally accused: *"[He] took charge of his life. He went into private therapy […]. He went into support groups. He did restorative justice—name it, he has done it.*" Kathryn similarly believed that her father "*ha[d] worked really hard*" on his wellbeing. In fact, he had changed so much that he had "*taken full responsibility for his actions*" (Kathryn) and had "*pleaded guilty*" (Laura) from the beginning. For both this wife and daughter, he was such a good, changed person, that he had pleaded guilty to avoid "*further victimizing*" the victims and "*to protect [them]*" (Laura). In fact, his goodness had even "*penalised*" him since he "*got a harsher sentence because of [the plea he took]*" (Kathryn).

While participants involved in various types of relationships focused on the positive as a narrative strategy, this was particularly present among romantic partners, a finding

previously reported in the literature (Fishman, 1990). Highlighting the numerous changes in her husband's demeanour and attitudes, Kara (wife) offered the most eloquent illustration of this strategy. In her own view, his evolution is so positive that he could be the "*poster child for correctional [services]*":

> *When I met him, his security code was at 24, I think—he had the highest security code [in the federal correctional system]. He was incarcerated in a super max […]. Today, he [has] a minimum [code]—[he has achieved] all of that in ten years. For someone with such a heavy past [this is impressive]. Within a month he'll be in [a minimum security prison], so he's doing super well, you know. We couldn't get conjugal visits when we [first] met because of his past [offenses]. Now, he's doing super well. Last time, in front of the conditional release [board], his case management team was [overly positive about him]. I was sitting there and I thought: 'Damn, might as well take out the violins. He's not that perfect, you know.' But, no, he's not the same man today.*

By focusing on the current 'good' side of the person they love and on the extent to which they have changed, these participants favoured the positive side of their ambivalence. As exposed through these excerpts, however, this narrative strategy was more prevalent when the demeanour and conduct of the offense perpetrator were not considered reprehensible in the present.[69] When things were 'going well,' it was indeed easier to keep the focus on the bright side and to construct a positive narrative. In fact, for several of these participants, the present was so good that accounting for the negative was fairly unproblematic.[70] As introduced earlier, individuals who engaged in this strategy also tended to remain in their relationships. Unfortunately, life was not that easy for everyone. When their loved ones' conduct remained reprehensible in their view, participants could mobilize another forward-looking strategy: they could rely on hope.

Hoping for a bright future

Offending, deviant or otherwise undesirable conduct was of course not confined to the past. Several participants had to deal with its ongoing manifestation. Despite the hardships that

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[69] All participants met in this study talked about the 'good' sides of the person they love. To be considered as a strategy in this analysis, it had to be predominant or to be emphasized significantly.

[70] This does not entail that the past was easily acceptable or that it was painless for relatives. It was, however, easier to account for conduct that was strictly located in the past than one that was ongoing or persistent.

often accompanied the persistence of untoward actions, very few participants actually considered severing their relationship. When they talked about their relationship with someone who had offending, these people[71] were found to rely on a different narrative strategy. Since they could not dismiss the ‘bad’ nor focus exclusively on the ‘good,’ they instead portrayed their loved one around the theme of duality, a contrast that was clearly illustrated by Jonathan (father):

> *Without substance use you can see that [my son] is stuck with the duality of everything we’ve taught him—that we’ve transmitted—and the bad things [...]. So he’s stuck with that duality. And he’s stuck with that group of morons like him, who’ve been involved in all sorts of nonsense. But he doesn't have the criminal streak. If he did, he wouldn't ask [us to] buy presents for his children. He wouldn't ask me [to do this for him]. He wouldn't write love letters to his kids. So that’s it—that's why I say he has a good heart. But he doesn't know it yet, that he has a good heart.*

In a similar fashion, Paule’s (girlfriend) narrative highlighted the duality that animated her boyfriend. This theme was so central to the way she understood him and their relationship that a large share of her interview focused on how her partner had both “*the bad boy and the good boy*” inside of him. In fact, she described his good side as being closer to his true self:

> *He has a very careless attitude. But he also has another side. It seems like the careless attitude is only the façade—it’s to protect himself for some time. And on the other side—well on the emotional side—it’s as if it’s like his real self.*

Of course, this duality theme taps into the ambivalence of participants itself. Through its narrative reiteration, however, they were able to restate the positive aspects of the person they love, despite the difficulties they experienced. This, in turn, allowed them to construct a narrative of hope. Through it, they envisaged that the future would emerge from the good aspects of their loved one. However, as hope is rooted in a distant and unknown future, this tended to be used as a last-resort strategy. Accordingly, the participants who ‘focused on the good’ through hope also tended to be unsure about the future of their relationship. Many of them hesitated between maintaining their relationship and putting an end to it. This was the case for Paule (girlfriend). Still focused on the “*two sides*” of her boyfriend, she nevertheless envisioned their future optimistically because she “*believe[d] in his potential*.” However,

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[71] $n = 8$.

since hope is not a guarantee, she remained careful in her thinking: "*Will his [bad side] eventually come back? Is he currently making efforts to be nice and the mean side will come back? On the one hand, you know, my heart dares hope that no. And there's my head that's saying yes*."

As suggested in these excerpts, reliance on hope is a strategy that was mobilized by individuals engaged in all types of relationships. In this study, however, it was especially present in the narratives of parents. Highlighting the link between parental relationships and this narrative strategy, Jonathan (father) explained: "*As parents, you always hope that they pull through and you try to help them—without really understanding why because there's no one to guide you*." For some, this narrative of hope even included events that relatives typically seek to avoid such as incarceration. In such instances, parents hoped that formal sentencing would be a harsh enough lesson to dissipate the duality that overpowered their child. This idea was clearly expressed by Isabella (mother) who hoped her son's current incarceration would "*serve as a lesson for the future*." For her, as for many other parents, "*without hope, you die*."

As we have seen previously, the narratives of participants touched upon their personal responsibility in the offending conduct of their loved ones, in the 'negative.' As will be seen in the following section, many of them also wondered about the extent of their responsibility in 'the positive.'

The 'positive' and personal responsibility

When they focused on the positive aspects of the person they love, several participants engaged in a narrative exploration of their role in that 'good.' In fact, participants often viewed their presence and support as an important factor in bringing out the positive lying within the perpetrator of illegal actions. For instance, Louise (sister) explained how, in addition to feeling somewhat responsible for her brother's violent act, she wanted to be there for him so that "*he [could] stay connected with the goodness inside of him*." When talking about her boyfriend's incarceration, Ellen (girlfriend) similarly explained how she "*couldn't let him do it alone*." She went to great lengths in order to fulfill what she considers her responsibility:

> *So, I did a lot of research, you know. Well, because I wanted to know what I was getting into also. So, you know, I looked into what to do to try to avoid recidivism and all that. And they were saying that having contacts with the exterior—with family—is really important. Visits are really important […]. So that's why I visit him three times a week.*

Along the lines of Ellen's narrative, several participants also perceived their role as important as they "*trie[d] to show [them] the right way to do things*." Sometimes, this required making hard choices, even if these are temporary. Kathryn (daughter) for instance explained how she believed she had helped her father in becoming a better person by choosing to put a momentary end to their relationship upon discovering his illegal actions:

> *I had to show him, you know […]. At the beginning he was telling me: 'If you help me [and stay], it'll help me, blah blah blah.' But, I know that humans change in suffering. He has suffered enough to give himself a kick in the butt.*

Kathryn's stepmother, Laura (wife), similarly saw herself as a catalyst for change in her husband's demeanour: "*I think knowing that he could lose his daughter and that he could lose me has forced him to put things into perspective. He wanted to set up a plan so that he could bring us all back together*."

Among some participants, these narratives leaned toward the 'saviour' trope, which typically defines someone as a redeemer agent. While highlighting how her husband did not need her anymore to be 'good,' this except from Kara's (wife) interview also suggests that her role had been central in his path to redemption:

> *The guy who's in front of me today is not the guy who used to bullshit all the time […]. And I find that hard sometimes, because I'm not on a pedestal anymore. Look, I used to be God [to him].*

For participants who relied on hope, responsibility was constructed around a hopeful narrative in which they expected that their support would be enough to spark the good within the person they love. Like Mildred (mother), they "*still ha[d] hope that […] their relationship [was] important enough to bring [them] back on the right path*." While her relationship and her fiancé's conduct were not evolving the way she would have liked them to, Mia envisioned her responsibility in similar terms: "*But we are engaged—I know he needs support, you know. And I know the love we have is sincere*." Like Mildred (mother), parents hoped that their past

teachings and the values they had bequeathed would eventually resurface and "*bring [their child] back into the right path*," "*into [their] path*."

While the analysis might lead one to believe that the use of narrative strategies occurred fairly easily among participants, this was not the case. Indeed, limited personal repertoires and public reactions often impeded this process. The next section focuses on the strategies of action participants mobilized in order to deal with these issues.

Strategies of Action

To start, it is important to reiterate that the narratives explored in this thesis were often tentative and remained fragile for many participants. The effective reduction of ambivalence nonetheless depended on their maintenance. The strategies of action covered in this section favoured such protection by fostering an environment in which participants' narratives could exist and even flourish. This occurred through three specific strategies. First, by actively expanding their repertoires, participants were able to increase their knowledge, thus feeding their accounts of the offending conduct and supplementing their positive depiction of the person they love. Second, they were able to maintain and protect their narratives by selectively picking their audience. Third, participants defined rules and imposed limits on their relationships, a strategy that established the boundaries within which they were willing to function. These strategies are reviewed in the following sections.

Expanding repertoires

The analysis presented in Chapter 4 has suggested that some participants enjoyed a relative advantage over others. Indeed, those who had past personal and vicarious experience with deviance could more readily make sense of the illegal endeavours of their loved one. In line with the idea of normative socialization upon which this thesis rests, findings suggest that this is not an irreversible state of affairs: participants are not strictly bound to their past experience. Indeed, when their past experiences failed to provide them with ways to wrap their heads around the offending conduct, several participants described how they actively sought to

expand their repertoire.[72] In a certain way, people who engaged in this strategy of action were looking for a glimpse into a universe that was alien to them. While this strategy was limited, leaving several struggling in their quest for sense, it nonetheless acted as a compass toward understanding. In concrete terms, participants were on the lookout for experiences that would provide them with three forms of information: the causes of illegal and deviant actions, the factors that protect against recidivism and persistence, and the experiences of other relatives.

In their quest for comprehension, participants described consulting a variety of entities they thought might help them expand their personal repertoire. As such, the construction of sense was a negotiated process between various actors, which went beyond participants and their loved one. Important entities in this process were self-help groups such as *Relais Famille*. Indeed, as seen in Table 1 (Chapter 3), close to 90% of the sample were members of this organization. As described in the methods chapter, this community group offers several services and activities that can orient its members who search of meaning. In addition to practical information on how to navigate the criminal justice and correctional systems, thematic conferences address current knowledge and research on offending. Of course, academic knowledge and real-life experiences are different realities. To overcome that discrepancy, conferences in the form of testimony are frequently proposed. When combined, these sources of information acted on participants, allowing them to construct sense around their personal experiences. This was expressed by numerous respondents, but was particularly clearly put in Laura's (wife) narrative:

> *L: And what [my husband's family] doesn't know is the importance of supporting an inmate […]—the importance it has [for their reinsertion]. Look at the testimonies we heard at Relais [Famille]. Like the one from the [man who had offended]. He has given his family a real hard time [when he was offending], and they've always been there [for him no matter what]. Listen, [in] the first letter [my husband sent me after he was incarcerated] he was worried right from the start. [He asked me]: 'Will you be there when I come out?' The guys inside [prison] were telling him: 'You'll be very lucky if she's still there later. She'll be gone.'*
>
> *Do: Yeah?*

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[72] $n = 11$.

L: I said: 'What right do they have to talk that way? Do they know me? They don't know me.' So I wrote in the letter: 'They're just jealous [people] who envy you. They're jealous—because you have someone by your side.'

Relais Famille also distributes documentation highlighting the importance of social support in the desistance process. These pamphlets often include hints as to how to be and how to act as someone who supports those who have broken the law. Dorothy (mother) explained how, in her desire to "*take all means possible to help her son*," she used "*survival guides for parents and relatives of inmates*." Her husband Jonathan (father) had also used those in his repertoire expansion: the information they contained had influenced his conduct toward his son because it changed his understanding of desistance. When talking about the financial help he provided for his son, he said: "*I give him 60 bucks per month. We said we wouldn't give him anything but in every guide we read they say that we have to help them if we want them to have a chance at rehabilitation—so we yielded on that.*"

As depicted in Table 1 (Chapter 3), participants took part in other self-help groups such as Al-Anon, Gamblers Anonymous, and Alcoholics Anonymous. While their mission is not specifically geared toward offending, all of them are concerned with 'problematic' conduct and some respondents used their teachings in the construction of narratives. Along the lines of the Serenity Prayer introduced above by Charles (father), these organizations are largely grounded on the importance of recognizing what belongs to oneself and what does not. In other words, they emphasize the need to take responsibility when the shoe fits. After attending meetings in these self-help groups, several participants had gained new insights into the offending of their loved one. This was the case not only for Charles, but also for Dorothy (mother) who still took part in Al-Anon's activities and who no longer believed she was the cause of her son's illegal actions.

In addition to self-help organizations, numerous participants consulted the works of professionals in the criminal justice system. This process often started with the consultation of pre-sentencing and correctional reports, through which participants learned the facts surrounding the offending of the person they love from the point of view of law enforcement. While factual information does not offer readily made accounts, they nonetheless paint a more complete portrait from which understanding can emerge. For instance, through her boyfriend's

correctional reports, Ellen (girlfriend) had been able to better understand how his social isolation had led him to resume his illegal activities upon his previous release from prison. The details found in these reports were sometimes so personal that they left some of its readers uncomfortable. This was the case with Rosa who explained: "*With the pre-sentencing reports, I learned a lot of things about my son's life that I didn't necessarily want to learn or know, you know—it's his life […]. So, you know, I mean… that was really difficult for me.*"

In addition to written reports, participants also tried to expand their repertoire by consulting various professionals such as psychologists, psychiatrists, and social workers. In some cases, these specialists were consulted for their professional opinion on the person who had engaged in offending activities. As seen in a previous section, some participants included formal diagnoses in the construction of their accounts. Besides this use, professionals were also approached for their general knowledge on 'offenders' and on their 'typical functioning.' For instance, Mia (fiancée) explained how she had met with a specialist when she could not understand her boyfriend's demeanour upon his release from prison. In her words, she now "*ha[d] more knowledge concerning the feelings [of men who have engaged in illegal actions] because she [had] spoke[n] with a social worker*." When asked to elaborate on the knowledge thus gained, she offered a clear depiction of how specialists' views can be borrowed and implanted in one's own account:

> *I think it was the week when [my boyfriend] came home [from prison]. I told [the social worker]: 'Listen, I'd like you to explain this to me.' And then I told her [that my boyfriend wasn't spending time with me]. So, that's when she told me: 'I don't have official statistics, but 90 to 95% of guys who come out of prison act that way with their spouse.' She says it's the pressure of finding work—especially because they have a criminal record, which makes it even harder […]. They're so afraid it won't go well financially and that they won't be able to fulfill their duties. And [they're] also afraid that they will have to face retaliatory measures from the halfway house. Some guys are even afraid that something'll happen and that they'll go back to prison. Others don't care. But, as she was telling me, those guys have huge, huge, huge pressure on them. And often spouses have to deal with events like that, and they say: 'I have waited for so long—why am I not your priority?' That's one thing—she also sent me a document that talks about the couple and intimacy in prison and all that.*

As noted by Mia, participants also perused through a variety of documents, including books and scientific articles, in order to expand their repertoires. In Mia's view, the

information she gathered from these sources "*explain[ed] a lot of things*." This consultation of the literature was particularly useful for those who wondered whether their loved ones might have personality or mental health issues. After explaining how she had always struggled understanding her son's reasoning process, Rosa (mother) described how a particular book had changed her outlook: "*So I read that book because it was advertised in the newspaper—I got the book [as soon as I saw that ad]. That was [...] a year and a half ago. I read it—I devoured it and now I understand my son even better*."

In a similar fashion, participants consumed a range of cultural goods such as documentaries and journalistic reports in their attempts to expand their experiences with offending. In this process, many looked for depictions of others who had been through hardships that were similar to theirs. When she was traversing a particularly difficult epoch in her son's life, Dorothy (mother) recalled how the news had made her realize that she wasn't alone in this journey: "*You know Lafleur? Guy Lafleur? He had [publicly] said that he was done with his son [who had been in trouble with the law]. That was [when things were also difficult for me]. That's when I told myself: 'I'm done helping him*.'" While this strategy could be comforting for participants, it did not necessarily entail that the offending was easier to comprehend, as also expressed by Dorothy: "*I was watching the news earlier about the boy who shot everyone. The mother was saying that she had tried everything to get him hospitalized—it had never worked. It's a bit similar to [my son's] journey. But I don't know what makes things go haywire. I don't know*…"

In their quest to expand their repertoire, participants used a final source of information: me. Aware of my academic trajectory and research interests, these people saw me as a credible and readily accessible actor who could bring them closer to a comprehensive account of the demeanour of the person they love. Whether in the midst of conversation or at the end of the interview, these participants questioned me on offending in both general and specific terms. After thoroughly telling me how she wanted to "*help*" her boyfriend in becoming a better person who would walk the "*right path*," Paule (girlfriend) asked me the million-dollar question: "*Being in that field, do you think he can be saved?*" Near the end of our conversation, Mildred (mother) shifted the interview in a similar direction:

I'm under the impression that [my son] doesn't feel like he fits into society neither. And I understand that it's hard for him to go to school—he has taken medication his whole life to go to school [...]. But not everyone with an attention deficit ends up in prison, so there's gotta be a way to do something with [his] life anyway, you know. Do you have a lot [of participants whose loved one has] an attention deficit diagnosis?

Methodological limitations make it impossible to explore the extent to which these participants integrated my answers into their narratives. The presence of this particular strategy in the context of interview is nonetheless important as it underscores the pervasive nature of participants' attempt to expand their repertoire.

While this section focused specifically on individuals with limited repertoires, those who had past personal and vicarious experiences also consulted various sources of information. Rather than trying to expand repertoires, these were used to confirm the validity of their current knowledge and, more importantly, the validity of their accounts. Ellen (girlfriend) used cultural goods to support her view that offending is rooted in one's childhood:

Sure, my boyfriend has to help himself—I can't do it for him. But I believe in giving second chances to people who've made a mistake. Because at that point things have happened to them. And […] if you don't try to understand what happened, it'll never change, you know. I was watching something on pedophilia one time. There were ten pedophiles in a circle and [they were telling one of them]: 'You've done that to a 5-year-old girl? You're so disgusting.' And: 'You've done that to a 2-year-old child?' And they were realizing that the ages at which they abused children was the age at which they were themselves abused, you know. Or I was watching this other documentary one time—I think it was in Europe somewhere. There's a place where people with sexual deviances toward children can go and ask for help without being convicted […]. And one of them was saying: 'I'm not doing it on purpose—I can't resist it. I don't want to be like that. Being like that is disgusting.' And he said: 'If someone asks me to babysit their child, I'll tell them that I'm uncomfortable because I have certain feelings.' Whatever, he said: 'People will look at me and they'll never want to talk to me again. But if you ask an alcoholic to go to the bar and he tells you that he stays away from bars because alcohol doesn't suit him, the other person will say that they respect that.' So it's like you have to learn to recognize patterns to be able to correct them for the future—or else you're just repeating history over and over again.

As we have seen in the first sections of this chapter, making sense of the offending of a loved one and of one's relational experience with that person was crucial in reducing ambivalence. Expanding one's repertoires is a strategy of action that can efficiently nourish this process, particularly when that repertoire was limited to begin with. In some cases, however, this strategy led to unexpected outcomes.

The risks of expanding one's repertoire

Trying to expand one's repertoire can be a risky business. Obviously, the actors that participants consulted had different experiences with and views on offending and deviance. When they used this strategy of action, some participants were thus sometimes confronted with conflicting narratives concerning illegal actions and the ways they should be handled. In opposition to the various guides he described having consulted, Jonathan (father) explained how other actors had repeatedly told them that he and his wife "*should've broken off any ties with their son from the beginning*." Of course this experience was confusing to this couple, particularly as they were trying to make sense of events and to establish a course of action.

In addition to adhering to different views, the actors that were consulted endorsed different roles toward relatives, a reality that shaped the narrative they share. While a social worker employed by correctional services is more likely to focus on the importance of social support in the rehabilitation of those who break the law, a personal psychologist is likely to focus on the importance of a stress- and hassle-free environment for the personal wellbeing of their client. After several years of trouble with her son, which led her to "*tip over the edge*," Mildred (mother) consulted a psychologist who gave her a different understanding of her role in his demeanour:

> *She made me realize that if I loved [my son], I had to stop. I had to close the door and send him positive thoughts—love him in my head. [She told me that] so long as I'm there, giving him money, he'll never learn—I'm harming him. In fact, […] she told me that I'm poisoned and that the only thing that might make a difference is if I break off ties with him for a little while, you know. A few months [to] see what he does on his own.*

As suggested in the above cases, the narrative of those who are consulted was often a response to what participants had shared with them. If they focused on what was 'wrong' in their relationship and in the conduct of the person they love, the message they received was

more likely to be unfavourable toward that person. For example, while Paule's (girlfriend) psychologist provided her with new means to comprehend her boyfriend's demeanour, she also shared a narrative around the toxic nature of their relationship. As argued above, this could be confusing:

> *I always believed in [my boyfriend's] potential, in the person he can be. [I have always seen] the good person who [is not readily apparent] from the outside. My shrink obviously perceives him as a huge narcissist who only thinks about himself. [She thinks that] this a relationship that'll demolish me and that'll [be bad for me] in the long run, you know…*

For some participants, being confronted with narratives that contradicted their views or that questioned the direction they wished to take in their relationship was unpleasant. Obviously, these narratives did not exclusively come from the sources of information consulted to expand repertoires – they often came from 'ordinary' people met on a day-to-day basis. In order to manage their exposition to these 'unwelcomed' narratives, participants employed a second strategy of action: they managed the public disclosure of their experience.

The public management of information

The actors participants consulted in trying to expand their repertoires sometimes challenged the narratives they were trying to construct. Obviously, such challenges often came from third parties such as family members and friends, but also from people who have very little to do with their experience. In order to protect and preserve their ambivalence-reducing narratives, several participants[73] described managing the public disclosure of their experience, a strategy previously highlighted in the literature (Codd, 2000; Condry, 2007; Granja, 2016; May, 2000). Two specific forms of information management were described. First, participants engaged in purposeful disclosure: when they perceived that someone would lend a favourable ear, they were willing to open up about their loved one and her/his offending. In such instances, participants found solace in sympathetic third parties who largely supported their choices. By being comforted in their understandings and perceptions, this strategy helped participants in staying focused on the 'good' side of their ambivalence. For instance, Mia

[73] $n = 12$.

(fiancée) described how she had shared her experience with various people in her social circle. As explained in the following passage, however, her strategy involved selecting a particular set of interlocutors, one that excluded some family members:

> *Some of my clients are aware of the situation for numerous reasons. As you can see, talking is not much of an issue for me, so often they'll confide in me. And when I feel that they might have an understanding of the situation, I tell them. [They ask me:] 'Will you see your boyfriend this weekend?' [I tell them:] 'Well, listen, the situation's a bit delicate—he's in a halfway house, blah blah.' So I'd say that the people who are close to me are very understanding. They're all like: 'It's a shame. I hope it won't be too hard. When's he coming out?' I feel like there's support there. I'd say that I find it harder to realize that people who are almost strangers [to me] support me, while my own family disapproves.*

Besides friends and family, many participants chose to share their experience through self-help organizations. To be sure, this finding is unsurprising as the main mission of these groups is to help people in need of support. Participants engaged with these organizations because they provided safe spaces where they could divulge their story. Because of its specific mission, a large share of them described taking part in the activities of the *Relais Famille*, notably in discussion and writing groups. After explaining how most of her in-laws had turned their back on her and her husband, Laura (wife) described the place this organization had taken in her life:

> *L: So now, my family, my immediate family is Relais [Famille]. Well, beside my husband and my daughter and my son-in-law.*
>
> *Do: Well, Relais [Famille] is a pretty sweet family.*
>
> *L: In my eyes, they're family.*
>
> *Do: How long have you been going?*
>
> *L: Three years [...]. [I started going] the day after my sister-in-law shut me out—it was a Monday [...]. I called Relais [Famille] and there was probably a discussion group that evening. I was in [another city], and [the coordinator] told me: 'You could come.' At first, I wasn't going. Then my sister-in-law came and she shut me out. I called [the coordinator] and I said: 'I'm coming.' [At the time] I didn't know if I was making the right choice—I was wondering: 'Am I making a good choice [by staying with my husband]? I might be alone in all that,' you know. And when [the coordinator] told me: 'You're not the only one going through this,' I told myself I had made a good choice. Because the way people had been talking to me concerning to the choice I had*

made… Particularly my sister-in-law—it's as if people we're gonna see me as a bad person because I was staying with [my husband]. And when I saw that I wasn't alone—the joy it brought me! I realized that I wasn't so far off the tracks. I'm not the only one going through this, a situation like that. And when I got to the discussion group—the first time you go there, it's not funny. I saw the others saying: '[I'm also going through a similar situation]. I thought: 'My God, I'm so happy about the choice I just made!' And that gave me the boost I needed to continue.

In addition to highlighting the importance of choosing one's interlocutors' wisely, this excerpt underscores the impact of unsupportive third parties on one's perceptions. Laura indeed explained how her sister-in-law's negative attitude toward her husband had led her to doubt her allegiance to the man she loved and to wonder whether she was a "good person." In order to avoid being confronted with such reactions, participants engaged in a second form of information management: secrecy. By restricting the extent to which they talked about their loved one and her/his illegal conduct, participants were able to avoid being exposed to unfavourable views and limited possible public confrontations. Again, this allowed them to focus on the 'good' and to keep the balance of their ambivalence geared toward the person they cherish. Isabella (mother), for instance, chose to omit details about her son's current situation to some of her family members living abroad. Despite being very close to him, they were unaware of his incarceration and of the illegal actions in which he had been involved. Her decision to mobilize secrecy was rooted in her fear of her kin's reaction and of their potential difficulty in carrying that "*burden*."

While she had selected a few trusted individuals in whom she could confide, Laura (wife) also used the secrecy strategy: "*I'm not saying that I'd talk about [it] with everyone, but I have nothing to hide. If they ask me, I'll talk about it. But if they don't, I won't go out on the front porch to notify the neighbours.*" Although this was hypothetical, she later added that her purposeful omission could actually turn into blunt lying if needed, a strategy that was described by Rosa (mother) in the previous chapter:

[My husband] asked me: 'Are the neighbours bothering you?' [I said:] 'No, the neighbours are not bothering me—not at all.' I haven't heard a word from the neighbours—nothing. They either didn't see it on the news or they know and they're discrete enough to shut their mouths. I don't know […]. Because they don't see my husband [around] anymore […]. And if they ask me questions, I'll say that he's away,

that I don't know when he's coming back—period. They don't have to know my life. Anyway, we don't interact.

Also wary of potential prejudice among third parties, Inara (girlfriend) described finding it hard to publicly handle her boyfriend's recent incarceration. In the following passage, she explained how she mobilized both divulgation and secrecy as strategies of action:

I: And, you know, whom should I tell? No one. The solution I found is [to say] that he's been deported because his documents have not been approved.

Do: Ok. That's what you tell people?

I: I have two friends who know [that my boyfriend is incarcerated]. But how do you want me to tell anyone: 'Yeah, he's in prison and I had to get an abortion two weeks later?' You don't say that to your mother.

Do: What do you think [people's] reaction would be?

I: [They'd say:] 'What were you doing? Why did you stay? What were you doing with that?' Literally.

By purposefully selecting their audience, participants were able to maintain control over their ambivalence or, at the very least, avoid any confrontations that might increase it. Participants used a third and final strategy of action to reach a similar goal: the imposition of limits.

"If you want this to work, you get your act together now!"

After learning of the offending actions, several participants established a series of rules and limits that aimed to restrain the conduct of their loved one. While these were not part of the original interview guide, most of them[74] naturally talked about the restrictions they imposed, which suggests the importance of this strategy in their experience. Through them, participants dictated the boundaries of what they were willing to tolerate, exposed the extent to which they could bend their narratives to maintain their relationship. When they told the person they love that "*this was the last straw*" and that they "*better get their act together*," participants were actively saying that while they might have been able to handle the 'bad' actions from the past, they were unwilling to tolerate more of them in the future. As previously

[74] $n = 14$.

explored, persistence made it progressively harder for participants to account for their loved ones conduct, and, as such increased ambivalence. By imposing limits, this is precisely what they sought to prevent.

The restrictions imposed by participants were largely covered in Chapter 4's section on the supervision/control roles participants endorsed in the context of their relationship. As seen, the most straightforward way to dictate the boundaries of their tolerance was to demand the complete cessation of offending activities. In many cases, threats of rupture accompanied that rule. Mia (fiancée) for example explained: "*[I told my fiancé:] 'If you feel like going back to drug dealing in the near future, I don't want you in my life. I don't want us to date, I don't want us to see each other. Might as well put an end to it right now.'*" The restrictions set in place by participants also took other specific forms, sometimes echoing the offenses of their loved one. Rosa (mother), whose son had been incarcerated for possession of juvenile pornography, had for instance imposed a 'no computer in the house' rule. She described preferring to endure the small nuisances that accompanied that rule than to "*have doubts*" about her son's conduct.

The imposition of rules and restrictions was a negotiation strategy largely rooted in the strength and importance of the relationship. If their loved one cared about them enough, he/she would comply with the new terms of the relation. However, as seen in the previous chapter, this strategy sometimes had a very limited influence on actual conduct. When the demeanour of a loved one failed to change, more restrictive rules could, of course, be imposed. For instance, several parents have recounted how, at times, they had chosen to expulse their offspring out of the familial home. While such actions were often temporary, they were depicted as an efficient means to signal disapproval. While participants hoped that it would eventually force the person involved in offending to come back on the 'right path,' even these last-resort measures sometimes failed to fulfill their promises.

When all else fails

Despite the various narrative strategies and strategies of action put in place, ambivalence could not always successfully be alleviated. In such cases, the negative irremediably outweighed the positive. As explored above, this was often the outcome of an

undesirable conduct that persisted over time and that resisted any restrictions, rules and limits imposed by participants. When they were unable to resolve the tension inherently left by ambivalence, some of them had no choice but to put an end to their relationship with the perpetrator of the reprehensible conduct. The interviews conducted in this study suggest that choosing this option is no small deed – participants depicted it as one of the hardest things that they had ever had to do. In fact it was so hard that it was a temporary or a loosely applied solution for many. For example, when they first became cognizant of the offending conduct of their loved one, both Laura (wife) and Kathryn (daughter) chose to sever their relationship with him (Laura's husband who is also Kathryn's father). At that time, "*they [simply] couldn't accept*" what he had done and could not imagine how their negative attitudes toward his actions could ever be overcome. Only upon reflection and after seeing the efforts deployed by the man they loved were they able to reintegrate his positive sides into their narratives and reinstate their relationship with him.

For others, like Dorothy (mother) and Jonathan (father), it was the repetitive nature of the undesired actions of their son that eventually forced them to sever their relationship with him. Again, however, this was a temporary solution. While they had cut all communications with him for a few months, they had recently resumed contacts because they "*love[d] [their son] and want[ed] him to make it in life*." After years of struggling with the ambivalence she felt toward her son, Mildred (mother) had very recently chosen to put an end to her relationship with him. As was the case with the participants presented above, however, she anticipated the temporary nature of that choice by admitting that she "*want[ed] to sever the bond for a few months*" only. Her decision to put an end to that relationship was hard on everyone, including her son, as she expressed in this passage:

> *A week and a half ago, he called my daughter because he wanted to talk to me. I had to tell him again—because he didn't seem to understand that it hurts me too much. [I had to tell him] that I couldn't communicate with him, that I didn't want him to call me back, that he had things to deal with on his side. And that, you know, when he comes into my path and that he lives according to my values, well then we could talk again. But for now, [I told him] that it hurts me too much and that I didn't want to see him, or talk to him.*

While her story ends here for us, Mildred's narrative nonetheless highlighted the difficulty of purposefully choosing to close the door on a loved one. This choice can only be made when every other strategy has failed.

Conclusion

Chapters 4 and 5 have exposed the results from the qualitative component of this thesis. Together, they have delved into the experiences of the prosocial individuals who maintain significant social ties with those who act unlawfully. In line with the propositions developed in Chapter 2, it has been shown that the antisocial nature of the offending conduct that taints their relationship influences them in two important respects. First, it generates internal conflict. Indeed, while participants described being strongly attached to the offense perpetrator, they simultaneously reported being firmly against her/his conduct, an experience that is best described as ambivalence.

Second, as it fostered internal conflict, the offending conduct of a loved one encouraged participants to engage in a series of strategies. Taking advantage of the richness of the qualitative data, the analyses exposed over the previous pages have indeed shown that, although some differences exist depending on the kinds of relationship in which they were involved, participants deployed two forms of such tactics. On the one hand, they engaged in serious narrative work, which mainly sought to emphasize the positive aspects of their relationship (i.e., their emotional attachment to their loved one), while diminishing its negative elements (i.e., the offending action). The narratives they thus formed not only depicted the offense perpetrator in a more positive light, but also depicted themselves as fundamentally good people. On the other hand, participants explained how they put several active strategies in place, trying to protect the narratives they had developed. When these two types of tactics were effective in reaching their goal, participants were more likely to maintain their relational tie with the person they loved. The potential repercussions of these findings for the social theories of crime and desistance that were presented at the forefront of this thesis will be explored in more depth in the Conclusion.

In sum, the qualitative study of this thesis supports the ambivalence hypothesis exposed in Chapter 2, at least among the prosocial relatives of those who offend. Indeed, it is

as their prosocial orientation confronts the offending conduct of a loved one—i.e., as they maintain a relationship that unravels at the confluence of the prosocial and the antisocial—that these individuals develop ambivalence. The experiences of these relatives are further influenced as they develop means to manage their internal conflict. Following the more general aim of this research endeavour, the following chapter examines whether this social point of convergence has similar repercussions among the other people involved in these relationships: the people who offend.

Chapter 6

The Ambivalence of Individuals who Offend and its Interpersonal Sources

The results of the qualitative study that were exposed in Chapter 4 demonstrate how being embedded in relationships that lie at the confluence of the prosocial and the antisocial can lead someone to experience ambivalence. In line with the hypothesis formulated in the Chapter 2, prosocial individuals who are significantly tied to people who act against the law were found to express conflicting views toward them: they simultaneously loved them and despised their conduct.[75] In sum, they experienced inter-component ambivalence, as they were conflicted between their attitudes toward offending and their emotional attachment to the perpetrator of such actions (Maio, Bell, & Esses, 2000; Priester & Petty, 2001).

As described in the methods section, this thesis was abductively grounded in its qualitative component. Following the theoretical thrust of its global project, the quantitative study thus seeks to examine whether a similar phenomena also exists among individuals who offend. Again, this proposition is not meant to curtail the differences that exist between those who break the law and their prosocial relatives. However, while being 'of two minds' about one's own conduct and being 'of two minds' about someone else's are most probably different experiences, it is the similarity between these experiences that is of interest to this project. Specifically, it is argued that because they also navigate in a social environment that exists at the convergence of conventions and norm-breaking, the people who break the law are also susceptible to ambivalence. This chapter thus examines whether the social bonds these individuals actively maintain lead them to express ambivalence. In order to properly tackle this question, a short review of the data from Quebec's Correctional Services (QCS), along with a descriptive analysis of ambivalence among the study sample is first provided.

The Social bonds and Ambivalence of People who Offend

As presented in Chapter 3, the quantitative study of this multiple methods design project was conducted using data that was provided by QCS. The dataset contains administrative data, as well as data from formal clinical assessments that were conducted by

[75] Because of the richness of the qualitative data, it was possible to push the analysis further and delve into the ways by which relatives actually manage their ambivalence (see Chapter 5). For reasons exposed in Chapter 3, this part of the qualitative analysis could unfortunately not be reproduced with the quantitative data used in this chapter.

criminal justice professionals with 16,526 men and women who have been incarcerated in a provincial jail between 2010 and 2013. Of this complete sample, a total of 1,318 individuals were evaluated twice. This methodological specificity is particularly interesting in the context of this study, as it allows for the construction of a statistical model that respects the temporal ordering implied in the ambivalence hypothesis. Indeed, according to this proposition, prosocial and antisocial bonds influence the likelihood of experiencing ambivalence. In modelling terms, this means that social bonds must thus be measured *prior to* ambivalence, a measurement necessity that requires data collected on two distinct occasions (see Chapter 3 for more details).

Taking advantage of its methodological strength, the multinomial analysis presented in this chapter is conducted on the restricted sample. The predictive variables of this model include four individual characteristics that are generally considered important variables in the criminological and ambivalence/attitudes literatures. These include: 1) age; 2) gender; 3) prior convictions; and 4) self-control deficits. In line with the project's overarching aim, a series of variables measuring the prosocial and antisocial bonds maintained by individuals who offend are also considered. With the exception of the antisocial relationships that are considered, these measures represent the types of prosocial bonds that were the focus of the qualitative component of this research endeavour. More specifically, these include: 1) work involvement; 2) romantic situation; 3) parental situation; 4) familial relations; 5) offending among kin; 6) friends favourable to offending; and 7) friends favourable to conventions.

The outcome variable included in the multinomial model designed to assess the ambivalence hypothesis is a measure of attitudinal positioning, which is intended to detect ambivalence among individuals who offend. To do so, two attitude scales, each representing one side of the moral norm continuum, are used. Indeed, while one of these scales measures the extent to which individuals endorse attitudes that favour conventions, the other assesses the extent to which they adhere to attitudes that are favourable toward offending. These two scales were combined to create a four-category variable reflecting attitudinal positioning (see Table 3, Chapter 3). As a result of this operationalization strategy, the women and men from this study can either be non-ambivalently favourable to offending (i.e., they are favourable to offending but not to conventions), non-ambivalently favourable to conventions (i.e., they are

favourable to conventions, but not to offending), indifferent (i.e., they are favourable to neither conventions nor offending), or ambivalent. In line with the theoretical frame of this thesis, which defines ambivalence as the "coexistence of positive and negative [feelings and/or attitudes] toward the same person, object or behavior" (Weingardt, 2000, p. 298), ambivalence was deemed present among individuals who are simultaneously favourable to offending *and* to conventions.

Importantly, this quantitative measure differs slightly from the ambivalence described by prosocial relatives. Indeed, as opposed to their inter-component ambivalence, which emerged because of an internal tension between a feeling and an attitude, the ambivalence examined in the quantitative study is intra-component in nature. While inter-component ambivalence is also possible among those who break the law (see Chapter 2 for a theoretical discussion on this issue), the QCS data allowed for the exploration of intra-component ambivalence, which is the internal tension that arises when individuals experience conflict between two opposing feelings *or* two opposing attitudes (Maio et al., 2000; Priester & Petty, 2001). Notwithstanding this slight distinction, both forms of ambivalence entail internal conflict, and both can have interpersonal sources.

For purposes of description, Table 7 presents the distribution of attitudinal positioning among individuals who are included in the study's restricted sample. As can be seen, a fairly large percentage of them are non-ambivalently favourable to offending (upper right box: 38.54%). On the other end of the spectrum, a smaller percentage of them are non-ambivalently favourable to conventions (lower left box: 31.49%). By contrast, indifference was present among only a small portion of the members from the restricted sample (upper left box: 8.12%). Finally, approximately a fifth of these individuals were judged to be ambivalent in their attitudes toward conventions and offending (lower right box: 21.85%). Albeit descriptive, these findings suggest that ambivalence is a pertinent concept, as it is a subjective reality experienced by a non-negligible portion of people who engage in offending actions.

Table 7

Number of individuals from the restricted sample (n = 1,318) adhering to each attitudinal position

Attitudes favourable to conventions	**Attitudes favourable to offending**			
	0	**1**	**2**	**3**
0 **1**	107 (8.12)		508 (38.54)	
2 **3**	415 (31.49)		288 (21.85)	

Notes. Numbers based on one set of imputed data. Percentages in parentheses.

As seen in Chapter 1, research suggests that the mechanisms social influence and the likelihood of experiencing ambivalence among individuals who offend might differ between females and males. Taking this into consideration, Table 8 presents the gender-specific percentages of sample members endorsing each category of the attitudinal positioning variable. While the majority of females (n = 57) are non-ambivalently favourable to conventions, the majority of males (n = 487) are non-ambivalently favourable to offending. Interestingly, however, similar proportions of both sexes are ambivalent toward offending and conventions. The issue of gender will be investigated further in the model presented below.

Table 8

Percentages of females and males from the restricted sample adhering to each of the four categories of attitudinal positioning (n = 1,318)

Gender	**Attitudinal positioning**			
	Favourable to offending	**Favourable to conventions**	**Indifferent**	**Ambivalent**
Females (n = 105)	18.10	54.29	10.48	17.14
Males (n = 1,213)	40.38	29.45	7.88	22.28

Notes. Numbers based on one set of imputed data.

In order to further contextualize results from the multinomial regression model examining the interpersonal sources of ambivalence, Table 9 presents descriptive information for all study variables within each of the attitudinal-positioning variable’s four categories. As

can be seen, the most notable differences revolve around the two extreme positions: the non-ambivalently favourable to offending, and the non-ambivalently favourable to conventions. For instance, post-hoc comparisons using the Tukey HSD test indicate that individuals who adhere to the former position score significantly lower on the work involvement scale (M = 0.42, SD = 0.86) than those who adhere to the latter (M = 0.87, SD = 1.08). Similarly, people who are exclusively favourable to offending have less satisfactory relations with their prosocial parents (M = 1.13, SD = 0.79) and family members (M = 1.18, SD = 0.82) than those who are exclusively favourable to conventions (parents: M = 1.34, SD = 0.85; family: M = 1.47, SD = 0.77). Unsurprisingly, members from the restricted sample who non-ambivalently favour offending have more friends who are also favourable to offending (M= 1.83, SD = 0.83) and fewer friends who are favourable to conventions (M = 0.81, SD = 0.69) than their favourable-to-conventions counterparts (offending-favourable friends: M = 1.19, SD = 0.83; convention-favourable friends: M = 1.19, SD = 0.80).

While these findings are fairly unsurprising, they lend credence to the operationalization of ambivalence chosen in this thesis. Indeed, as opposed to other measures of ambivalence, which combine individuals who are unambivalent by assigning them the same score, this categorical grouping strategy keeps them separate. This, of course, prevents merging together individuals who are, as clearly shown in Table 9, significantly different on several fronts (see Chapter 3 for a discussion on the measurement of ambivalence).

Table 9

Means and standard deviations of study variables among individuals adhering to each attitudinal position in the restricted sample (n = 1,318)

Study variables	**Favourable to offending**[a]	**Favourable to conventions**[a]	**Indifferent**[a]	**Ambivalent**[a]
Age	33.64 (10.30)	34.02 (11.51)	33.83 (10.23)	34.12 (10.86)
Gender				
Female (%)	3.73	13.76	10.32	6.24
Male (%)	96.27	86.24	89.68	93.76
Self-control deficits	.78 (.42)	.65 (.48)	.81 (.40)	.77 (.43)
Prior convictions	12.33 (12.29)	5.61 (7.08)	7.19 (7.75)	9.66 (10.28)
Work involvement	.42 (.86)	.87 (1.08)	.70 (1.05)	.71 (1.02)
Prosocial romantic situation	1.46 (.80)	1.53 (.79)	1.27 (.76)	1.51 (.75)
Prosocial parental relations	1.13 (.79)	1.34 (.85)	1.27 (.84)	1.27 (.83)
Prosocial familial relations	1.18 (.82)	1.47 (.77)	1.41 (.81)	1.37 (.78)
Offending conduct among relatives	.50 (.50)	.43 (.50)	.36 (.49)	.49 (.50)
Friends favourable to offending	1.83 (.83)	1.19 (.83)	1.32 (.76)	1.55 (.77)
Friends favourable to conventions	.81 (.69)	1.19 (.80)	1.04 (.73)	1.05 (.75)
Number of individuals[b]	508 (38.54)	415 (31.49)	107 (8.12)	288 (21.85)

Notes. [a] Standard deviations are based on one imputation of the dataset; [b] percentages in parentheses.

Of particular interest to this thesis, people who are ambivalent seem to fall somewhere in the middle between these individuals who endorse opposite attitudes vis-à-vis social norms. Post-hoc comparisons suggest that this is true for their past involvement in offending actions. Specifically, while ambivalent individuals from the study sample engaged in fewer illegal acts (M = 9.66; SD = 10.28) than those who are exclusively in favour of offending (M = 12.33; SD = 12.29), their involvement significantly exceeded that of individuals who are favourable to conventions (M = 5.61; SD = 7.08). With regards to social bonds, a central consideration to the present research endeavour, individuals from the ambivalent group share similarities with both individuals who are exclusively favourable to conventions, and individuals who are exclusively favourable to offending. For instance, they are comparable to those who are favourable to conventions in their relation to work, and, as such, are significantly more involved in work (M = 0.71, SD = 1.02) than those individuals who are favourable to offending. A similar finding is true with regard to familial relationships: ambivalent sample members report significantly better prosocial family relationships (M = 1.37, SD = 0.78) than those who are non-ambivalently favourable to offending. Also in line with the means of individuals who are favourable to conventions, ambivalent members befriend more individuals who are favourable to conventions (M = 1.05, SD = .75) than those who favour offending. Although they report having fewer friends who are in favour of offending (M = 1.55, SD = .77) than their non-ambivalently-favourable-to-offending counterparts, ambivalent people also have a significantly larger number of such friends than members who are in favour of conventions. For purposes of transparency and comparison, Appendix E presents the descriptive statistics for each attitudinal positions in the total sample. As can be seen, a highly similar portrait emerges among this group, with ambivalent individuals also falling in the middle between their prosocially-oriented and antisocially-oriented counterparts.

The Interpersonal Sources of Ambivalence

The impetus for examining ambivalence among individuals who offend was grounded in the abductively derived hypothesis according to which individuals who navigate at the confluence of the prosocial and the antisocial are likely to experience internal tension. As seen in the previous section, a non-negligible portion of members included in the study's restricted sample indeed experience ambivalence in their attitudes toward offending and conventions.

While this is important background information, a more elaborate model is required to assess whether the likelihood of ambivalence among those who offend is actually affected by their antisocially and/or prosocially-oriented relationships. Table 10 thus presents results from the multinomial logistic regression analyzing how the social bonds of members from the study's restricted sample are related to their attitudinal positioning. Because it is the main focus of this thesis, the ambivalent group is the reference category. Concretely, this means that all coefficients and relative risk ratios[76] presented in Table 10 are to be interpreted in comparison to the probability of being ambivalent toward moral norms.

Table 10

Results from multinomial logistic regression predicting attitudinal positioning among individuals from study's restricted sample (n = 1,318)

					95% CI	
	Coef.	**SE**	***p***	**RRR**	**Lower**	**Upper**
Non-ambivalently favourable to offending						
Age	-.012	.009	.175	.988	.972	1.005
Gender (1 = male)	.417	.349	.232	1.518	.766	3.008
Self-control deficits	-.051	.187	.785	.950	.659	1.371
Prior convictions	.020	.008	.018	1.020	1.003	1.037
Work involvement	-.187	.082	.023	.829	.706	.974
Prosocial romantic situation	.041	.103	.694	1.041	.851	1.275
Prosocial parental relations	-.019	.113	.868	.981	.786	1.225
Prosocial familial relations	-.133	.119	.261	.875	.694	1.104
Offending among kin	-.157	.160	.324	.854	.625	1.168
Friends favourable to offending	.274	.100	.006	1.315	1.082	1.599
Friends favourable to conventions	-.293	.115	.011	.746	.595	.935

Notes. The reference category is the non-ambivalently favourable to offending group. Unstandardized coefficients reported. SE = standard error; RRR = relative risk ratio; CI = confidence interval for relative risk ratios. -2 Log likelihood based on one set of imputed data.

[76] Relative risk ratios are generally interpreted as odds ratios. Specifically, for each unit change in the predictor variable, the relative risk of being in the comparison group as opposed to being in the referent group (in this case, being ambivalent) is expected to change by a factor of the parameter estimate (UCLA: Statistical consulting group, 2018).

Table 10 con't

Results from multinomial logistic regression predicting attitudinal positioning among individuals from study's restricted sample (n = 1,318)

	Coef.	SE	*p*	RRR	95% CI Lower	95% CI Upper
Indifferent						
Age	-.003	.013	.801	.997	.972	1.022
Gender (1 = male)	-.588	.415	.157	.556	.246	1.254
Self-control deficits	.268	.297	.367	1.308	.730	2.342
Prior convictions	-.033	.016	.037	.967	.937	.998
Work involvement	-.078	.119	.512	.925	.733	1.168
Prosocial romantic situation	-.411	.153	.007	.663	.491	.895
Prosocial parental relations	-.035	.168	.835	.966	.695	1.341
Prosocial familial relations	.117	.178	.509	1.125	.794	1.593
Offending among kin	-.546	.251	.030	.579	.354	.947
Friends favourable to offending	-.350	.156	.025	.705	.519	.957
Friends favourable to conventions	-.119	.168	.481	.888	.639	1.235
Non-ambivalently favourable to conventions						
Age	.006	.009	.517	1.006	.989	1.023
Gender (1 = male)	-.751	.296	.011	.472	.264	.842
Self-control deficits	-.391	.186	.036	.676	.469	.975
Prior convictions	-.061	.012	.000	.941	.920	.963
Work involvement	-.018	.080	.825	.982	.840	1.150
Prosocial romantic situation	-.074	.110	.500	.928	.749	1.152
Prosocial parental relations	-.024	.116	.839	.977	.777	1.227
Prosocial familial relations	.051	.124	.679	1.053	.826	1.342
Offending among kin	-.075	.169	.656	.928	.666	1.291
Friends favourable to offending	-.525	.110	.000	.592	.477	.735
Friends favourable to conventions	.017	.116	.881	1.017	.811	1.277
-2 Log likelihood	324.35		.000			

The findings presented in Table 10 highlight the existence of several distinctions between individuals who are ambivalent about social norms and those who endorse different attitudes toward offending and conventions. In terms of individual characteristics, while age plays no significant role in the likelihood of being in any comparison group in this analysis, being male significantly decreases the likelihood of being non-ambivalently favourable to conventions in comparison with being ambivalent (RRR = .47, p < .05). This finding echoes the gender distribution presented in Table 6, which shows that women endorse attitudes that

are exclusively favourable to moral norms at a much higher frequency than they express being ambivalent. Also in terms of individual features, having self-control issues reduces the relative risk of being favourable to conventions in comparison with being ambivalent by a factor of .68. Finally, previous convictions influence the likelihood of being in each of the three comparison groups in comparison with experiencing internal conflict: while having been convicted more times in the past increased the relative risk of being non-ambivalently favourable to offending ($RRR = 1.02$, $p < .05$), it decreased the likelihood of being strictly favourable to conventions ($RRR = .941$, $p < .001$) and of being indifferent ($RRR = .97$, $p < .05$).

In line with the general aim of this project, the most interesting findings from the multinomial regression pertain to the various prosocial and antisocial relationships that members of the sample maintain. The findings reported in Table 10 first show that being personally involved in conventional work significantly decreases one's chances of strictly seeing offending in a positive light in comparison with being ambivalent. Specifically, for each unit increase in the 0-to-3 work involvement scale, that relative risk decreases by a factor of .83. In the restricted sample, virtually none of the variables assessing traditional kinship (i.e., romantic and familial relationships) exerted a significant impact on the likelihood of being in one of the comparison group as opposed to being ambivalent. One exception to this finding is being involved in a satisfactory and prosocial romantic relation, which decreases individuals' relative risk of being neither favourable toward crime nor favourable toward conventions in comparison to viewing both positively ($RRR = .66$, $p < .01$). Another exception relates to having family members who are involved in illegal activities. Indeed, study members who fulfill this social criterion have a lower probability of being indifferent in comparison with being ambivalent. Specifically, their relative risk is decreased by a factor of .58 in comparison with those who do not have family members who engage in offending. The large non-significance of these results is interesting and intriguing. Indeed, they run counter to the findings from the qualitative study, which showed that many of the prosocial individuals included in this multinomial model personally experienced ambivalence as they maintained relationships with someone who had offended. The Conclusion of this thesis will explore these contrasting results between individuals who offend and those who love and care for them are.

While many of the social bonds measured do not significantly influence the likelihood of being in one of the three comparison groups in opposition to being ambivalent, a different pattern emerges with regard to the two friendship variables. Indeed, as seen in Table 10, having friends who are favourable to offending and friends who are favourable to conventions is an important feature of the social life of individuals who perceive both law-breaking and social norms in a positive light. For instance, befriending people who engage in illicit actions or otherwise see such conduct positively, increases one's likelihood of being non-ambivalently favourable to offending. This effect is rather strong: each one-unit increase in the 'friends favourable to offending' scale is associated with a 31.5% increase in the relative risk of being non-ambivalently favourable to offending in comparison with being ambivalent. By contrast, having such friends in one's social circle decreases one's chances of being exclusively favourable to conventions and of being indifferent. Again, these effects are quite important: for each one-unit increase in that scale, the relative risk of being in favour of conventions diminishes by a factor of .59, while that of being indifferent diminishes by a factor of .71. Finally, befriending people who are involved in conventional pursuits and who more generally favour this type of conduct reduces study members' chances of being unambiguously in favour of offending. Indeed, the relative risk of being in that comparison group as opposed to being ambivalent is decreased by a factor of .75 for each unit increase in the 'friends favourable to conventions' scale.

Ambivalence through predicted probabilities

While the results presented in Table 10 are informative, they are hard to interpret as they only concern the relative risk of endorsing each attitudinal position in comparison to the reference category. As a result, they cannot provide information concerning the influence of predictor variables on the group of interest—ambivalence—in absolute terms. In order to palliate this shortcoming of multinomial regression and to present results in a more meaningful manner, it is recommended to expose findings in a visual manner (StataCorp, 2011). Following this suggesting, a series of graphs will thus be examined.[77] Specifically, each

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[77] The confidence intervals presented in all graphs are based on the delta method to approximate the standard errors (StataCorp, 2011).

of them illustrates the predicted probabilities of belonging to each of the four categories of attitudinal positioning at meaningful values of the predictor variables. Additionally, because males and females endorsed each attitudinal position in different proportions, gender-specific results are presented throughout. All graphical representations were made using Stata 12's margins command (see Long & Freese, 2001; Williams, 2012).

Age

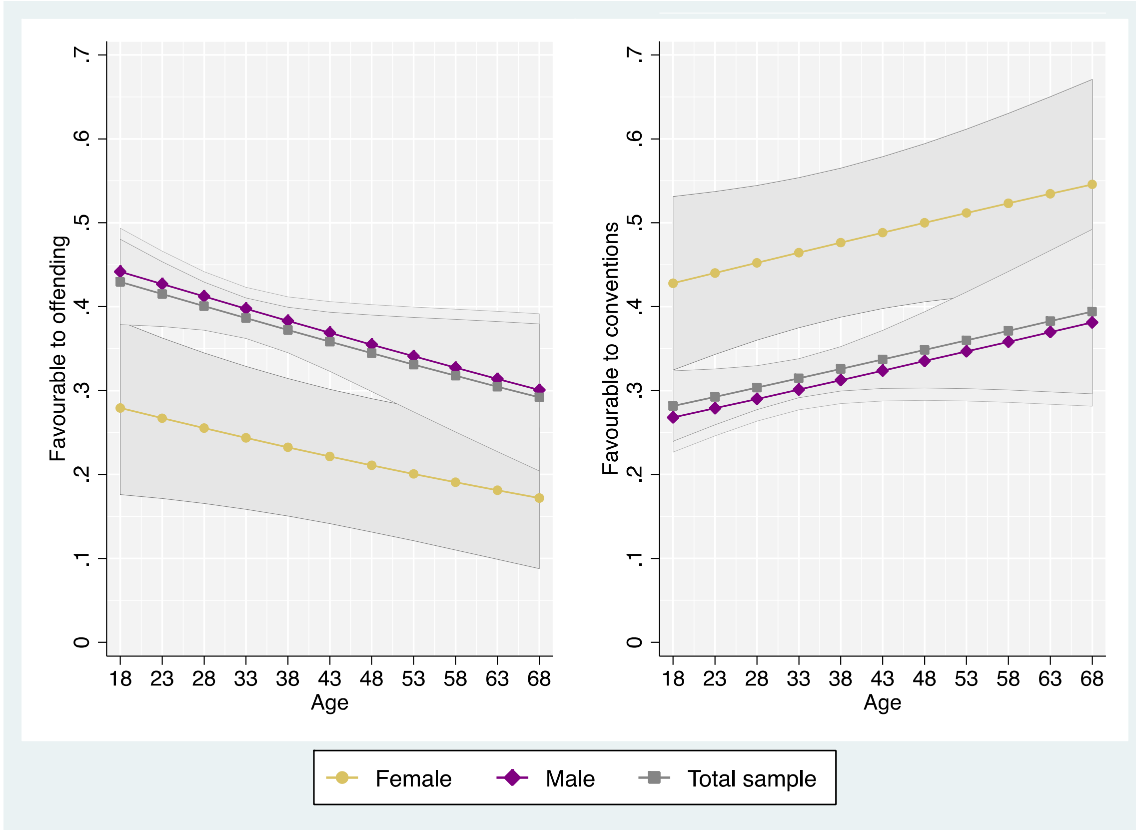
Figure 3a and 3b expose the impact of age on the predicted probability of adhering to each of the four attitudinal positions.[78] The left-side panel of Figure 3a shows that, as they age, individuals become less likely to be non-ambivalently favourable to offending. While this trend is true for both genders, males endorse these attitudes at a higher rate than females. The opposite trend is observed in attitudes that are non-ambivalently favourable to conventions. First, as they age both females and males become more likely to endorse this position. In this case, however, females are always more likely to be favourable to conventions than males.

Figure 3b shows that age has a very limited impact on the predicted probabilities of being indifferent to both offending and conventions. Among females, that likelihood decreases by about 4% between the ages of 18 and 68. Concerning ambivalence, the visual depiction on the right panel of Figure 3b suggests that the probability of being favourable to both offending and conventions increases slightly with age among males: between 18 and 68, that likelihood increases by 3.4%.

[78] In order to efficiently visualize the effects of predictor variables on the predicted probabilities of belonging to each attitudinal positions, the scales of the y-axis are tailored to these four positions. As seen in Table 9, larger portions of the study sample fall into the two 'non-ambivalent' categories. As such, their predicted probabilities, plotted on the y-axis, are always higher than those of the indifferent and ambivalent categories.

Figure 3a

Impact of age on the predicted probabilities of being favourable to offending and to conventions (*n* = 1,318)



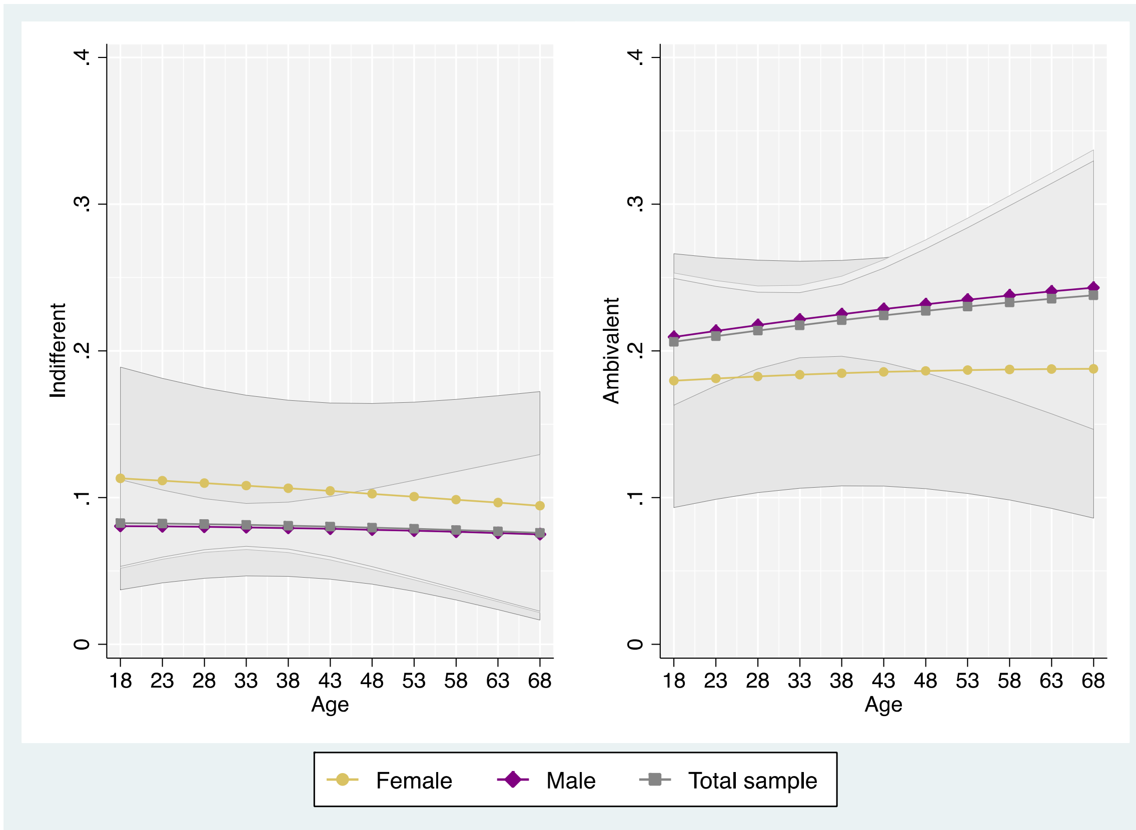
Prior convictions

Figures 4a and 4b visually expose the influence of prior convictions on the predicted probability of endorsing each of the attitudinal positions. The left-side panel of Figure 4a shows that an individual's likelihood of non-ambivalently perceiving offending favourably increases as her or his rate of past offending conduct increases. While it starts levelling off at around 50 prior convictions, this effect is rather strong: in comparison to someone who has no offending experience, an individual with 40 previous convictions is, on average, 2.3 times more likely to endorse this attitudinal position. For an average individual with 85 previous convictions, that predicted probability is almost 3 times higher. Again, this trend holds true among both males and females, though the latter are proportionally less likely to endorse such a pro-offending attitudinal position. The right-hand panel of Figure 4a illustrates the opposite

effect: when they have no prior convictions, the probability of being non-ambivalently favourable to conventions is 58.33% among females and 40.65% among males. That probability drops below 5% for both genders at 55 previous convictions, and becomes virtually null among individuals who have engaged in 70 prior offending acts.

Figure 3b

Impact of age on the predicted probabilities of being indifferent and ambivalent (*n* = 1,318)



While the probability of being indifferent is small among the study sample, prior convictions further decrease that probability, as seen in Figure 4b. Among women, that likelihood starts to level off after 10 previous convictions, while it drops down sooner among men. The right-hand panel of that figure suggests a more complex relationship between past illegal conduct and ambivalence. Among sample members without a history of offending conduct, males are more likely than females to be ambivalent about offending and conventions. That probability increases steadily and proportionally in both genders until reaches its peak among males who have 25 prior convictions, and females who have 40 of

them. Beyond these peaks, the likelihood of being ambivalent again decreases steadily, reaching 17.81% among females with 85 prior convictions, and 12.94% among males with the same rate of previous convictions for illegal acts. These results suggest that the most ambivalent individuals are not the ones who have never engaged in offending conduct, nor those who have done so extensively. Rather, that ambivalence is more present among individuals with moderate illicit experience.

Figure 4a

Impact of prior convictions on the predicted probabilities of being favourable to offending and to conventions (n = 1,318)

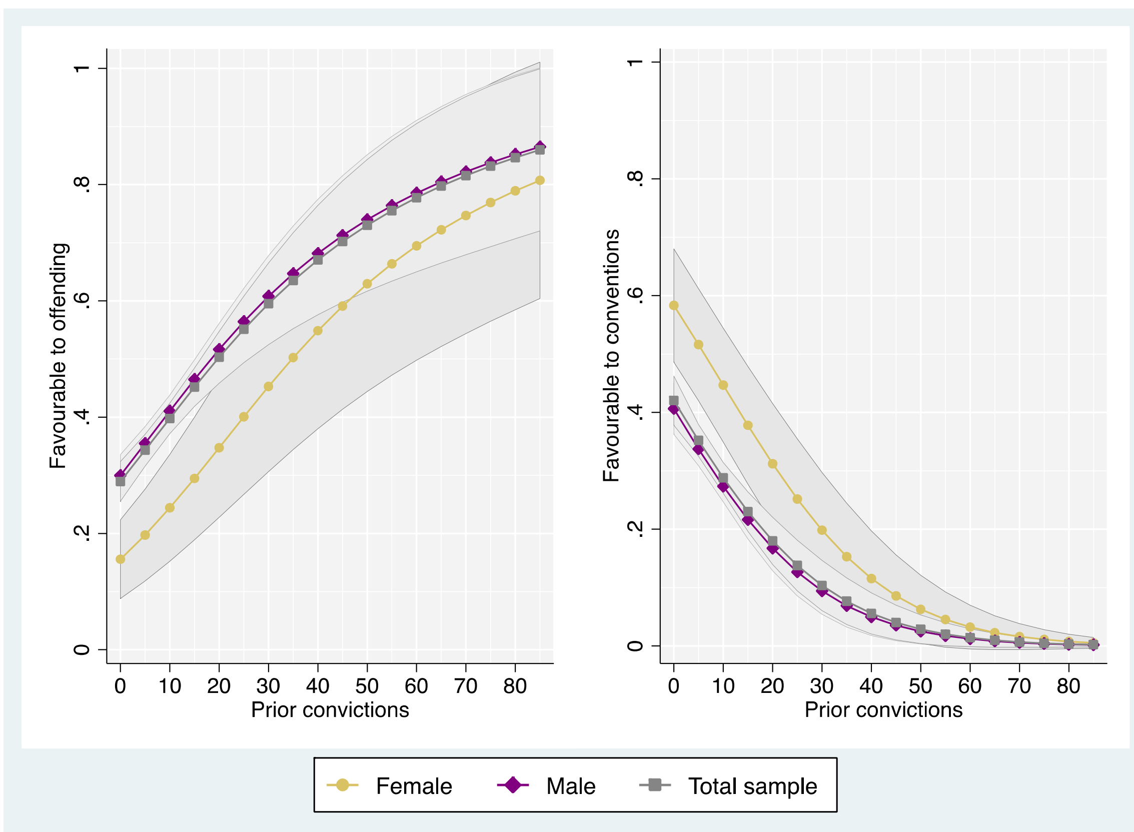
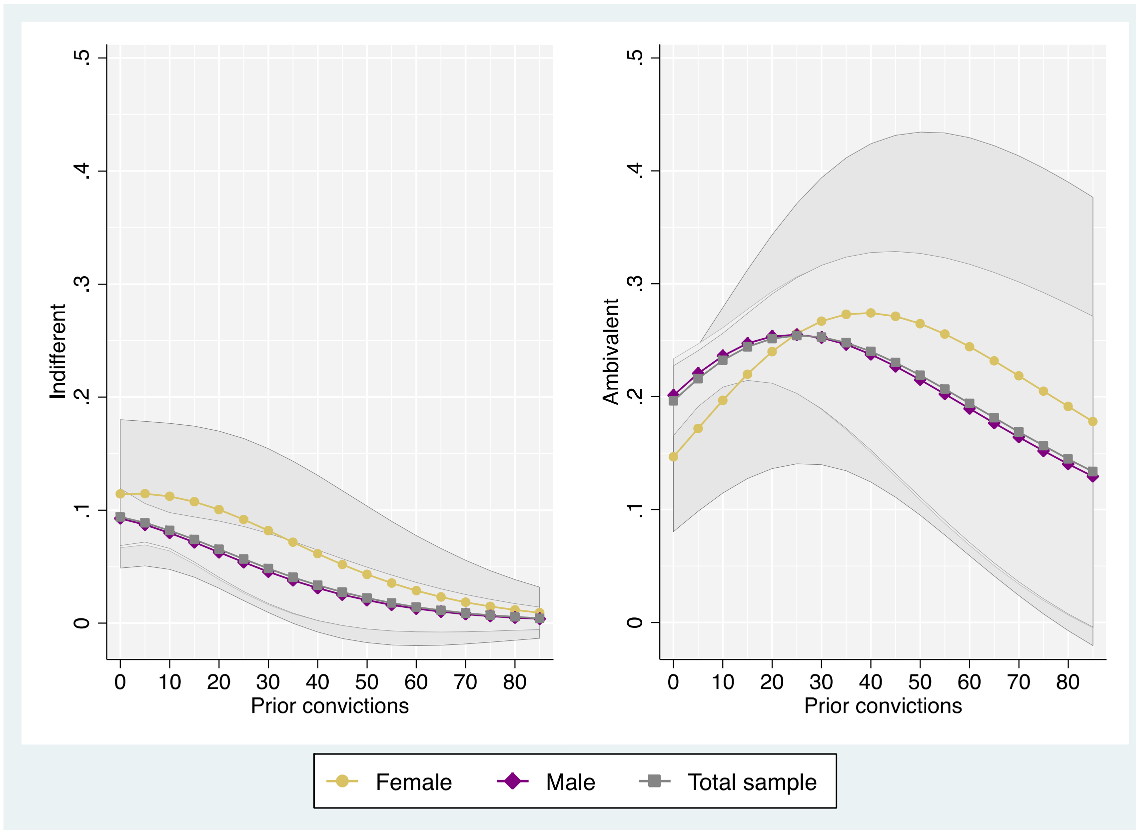


Figure 4b

Impact of prior convictions on the predicted probabilities of being indifferent and ambivalent (*n* = 1,318)



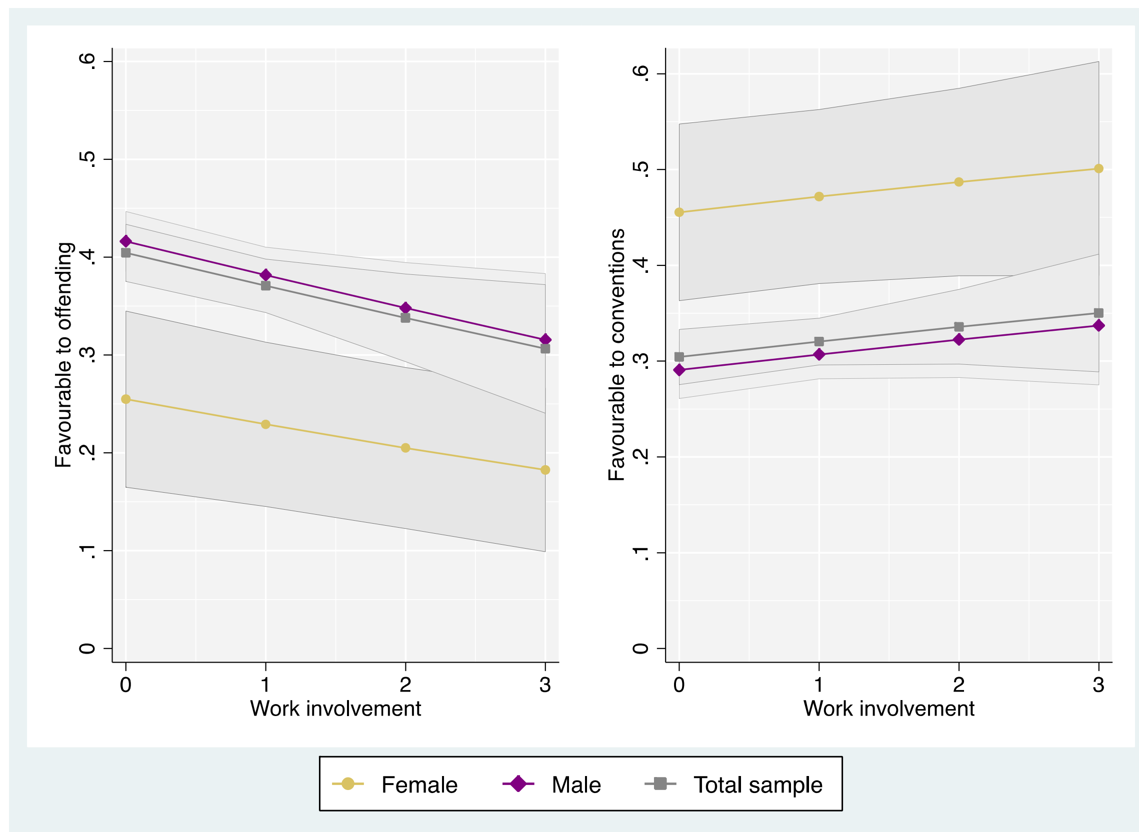
Work

As seen in the multinomial regression model presented above, being involved in a conventional professional pursuit is an important factor for understanding the attitudes of individuals who have acted unlawfully. To further explore this finding, Figures 5a and 5b propose a visual representation of the predicted probabilities of adhering to each of the four attitude positions, at each level of the work-involvement scale. The more one is involved in a professional endeavour, the less likely she or he is of endorsing an attitude that is non-ambivalently favourable to offending. On average, the probability of falling into that attitudinal category is almost 10% lower among sample members who are very involved in their work (i.e., with scores of 3), in comparison to those who are not at all engaged in a professional trajectory (i.e., with scores of 0). The right-hand panel of Figure 5a depicts the opposite effect on the probability of non-ambivalently being favourable to conventions.

Notwithstanding the fact that that likelihood is higher among women, individuals who are more involved in work pursuits are more likely to consider conventions in a positive light than those who are not.

Figure 5a

Impact of work involvement on the predicted probabilities of being favourable to offending and to conventions (*n* = 1,318)

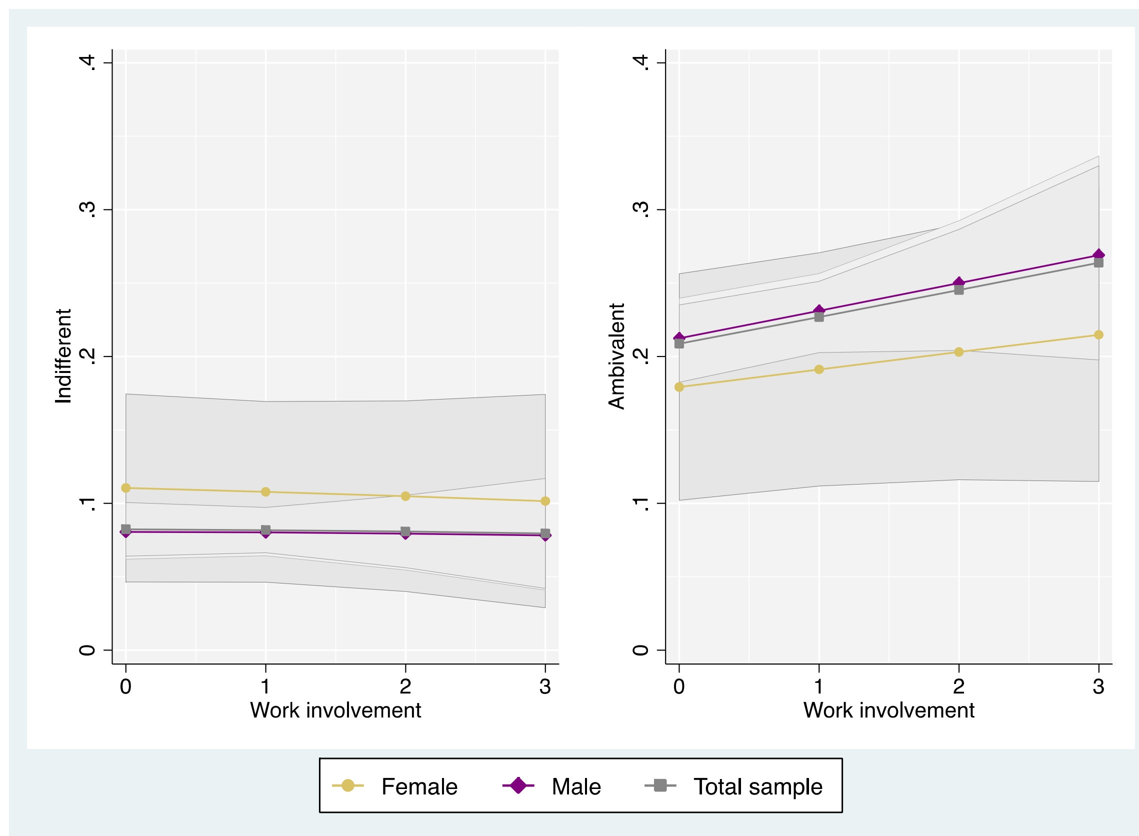


The left-side panel of Figure 5b visually suggests that work has no impact on the probability of being indifferent toward both offending and conventions. Indeed, that likelihood is, on average, very similar among individuals who are very involved in their professional endeavours and those who are not at all so: among individuals who score 0 on the work involvement scale, the probability of being indifferent is 8.24%, while it is 7.95% among those with a score of 3. However, when it comes to ambivalence, the right-side panel of that same figure shows that individuals who are more engaged in a positive work trajectory are more likely to be ambivalent vis-à-vis conventions and offending. Similar to the probability of being

favourable to conventions, individuals who are highly involved in a professional pursuit are almost 1.3 times more likely to be ambivalent than those who are not.

Figure 5b

Impact of work involvement on the predicted probabilities of being indifferent and ambivalent (n = 1,318)



Friends

Because this thesis is interested in the incorporation of individuals both in manifold social relationships, and in those spaces where conventionality meets deviance, the next series of graphs focuses on the complete friendship networks of sample members. Specifically, they depict the simultaneous impact of having friends that are favourable to offending *and* friends that are favourable to conventions, on the probability of endorsing each of the four attitude

positions. In order to avoid overcrowding each graph with lines, thus making them visually indigestible, these graphs are presented separately, by gender.[79]

As exposed in Figure 6a, befriending both individuals who are in favour of offending and those who are in favour of conventions influences the likelihood of being exclusively favourable to offending. For individuals of both sexes, the more one has friends who positively perceive illegal pursuits, the higher the probability that he or she will non-ambivalently perceive offending in a positive light. However, as demonstrated with the two series of parallel lines in Figure 6a, that probability proportionally decreases as an individual has more friends who hold a positive view toward conventional actions. For instance, for an average male with a score of 1 on the 'friends favourable to offending' scale, his predicted probability of being non-ambivalently favourable to illegal actions is 38.45% if he scores 0 on the 'friends favourable to conventions' scale, whereas it is 21.96% if he scores 3 on that scale. In other words, the probability is 1.75 times greater among the former individuals than it is for the latter. A similar phenomenon appears among females: the predicted probability of seeing offending conduct in an exclusively positive light for women with a score of 1 on the 'friends favourable to offending' scale and a score of 0 on the 'friends favourable to conventions' scale is almost twice that of women who score 3 on the 'friends favourable to conventions' scale.

The influence of friends on the probability of being exclusively favourable to conventions is depicted in Figure 6b. As can be seen, the influence exerted by friends on this attitudinal position is the opposite of the one just presented. Among both males and females, having more friends who are favourable to offending decreases the likelihood of seeing conventions in a highly positive light, whereas having more friends who are in favour of normative pursuits increases that likelihood. Again, the importance of the role played by friends is most evident in the difference between the two extreme positions. In comparison to a man who entertains relationships with many friends favourable to illegal conduct and with no friends favourable to conventional activities, a man with the opposite friendship profile is 4.6 times more likely to perceive conventions in a positive light. Among women, a similar image

[79] As was the case with the graphs presented above, results from the total restricted sample are very close to results from the male-only group. For the purpose of clarity, they are not presented in the following series of graphs.

emerges: under the same conditions, females are 2.8 times more likely to non-ambivalently be favourable to conventions.

Figure 6a

Impact of friends on the predicted probability of being favourable to offending among males (*n* = 1,213) and females (*n* = 105)

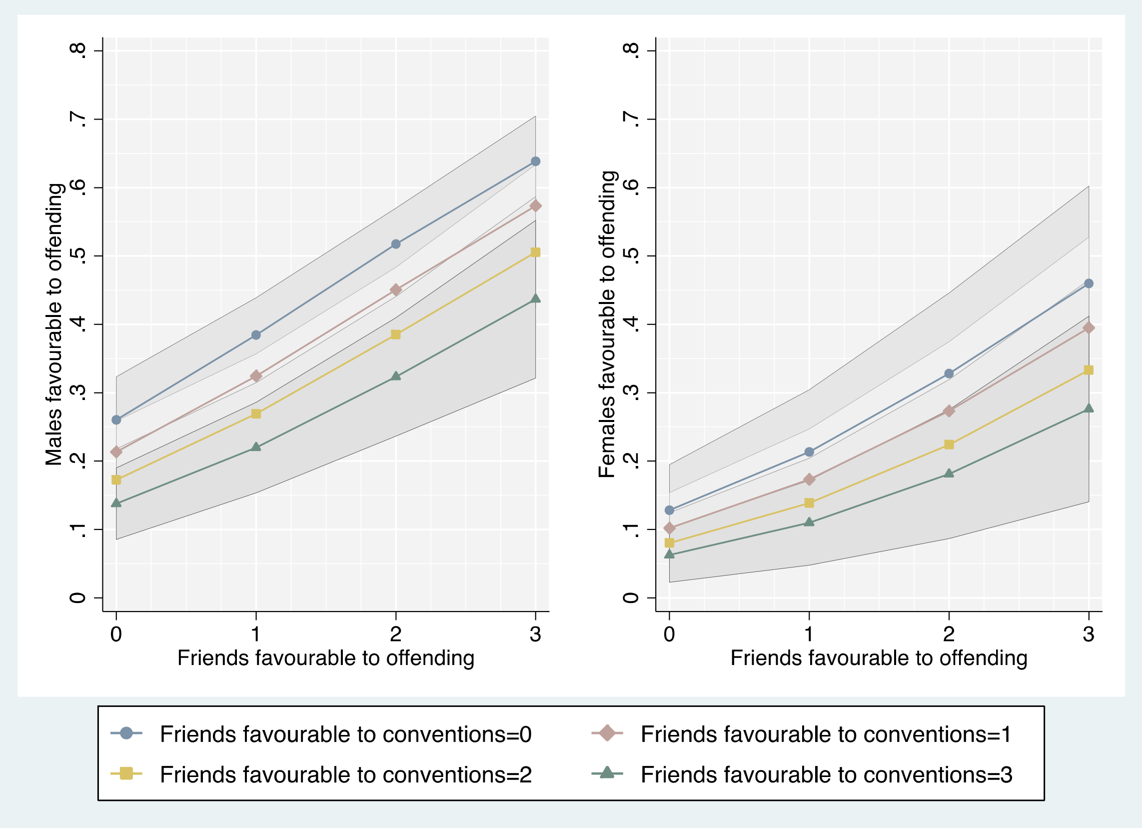


Figure 6c offers a visual representation of the influence of friends on the probability of being indifferent toward both offending and conventional conduct. As can be seen on both panels of that graph, and in line with the multinomial regression results presented in Table 10, having friends involved in offending plays a larger role than having friends involved in conventions in the likelihood of being indifferent, particularly among males. Indeed, among men with no friends engaged in offending, friends involved in conventions influence the predicted probability of being indifferent. However, that influence is rather small, ranging from 11.82% among men with no 'conventions-favourable friends' to 9.80% among those with a lot of 'conventions-favourable friends.' As shown on the left-side panel of Figure 6c,

the lines overlap greatly as values on the 'friends favourable to offending' scale increase, supporting the idea that friends engaged in illegal acts are more influential for the development of an indifferent attitude than friends engaged in normative conduct. Among females, the influence of friends expresses itself in a slightly different fashion: while they barely influence the probability of being indifferent at scores of 3 on the 'friends in favour of offending' scale, friends involved in conventions exert an influence among women with lower scores. Despite this difference between genders, results suggest that the individuals who are most likely to be indifferent regarding both conventions and offending conduct are those who maintain no friendships with either 'type' of friend.

Figure 6b

Impact of friends on the predicted probabilities of being favourable to conventions among males (n = 1,213) and females (n = 105)

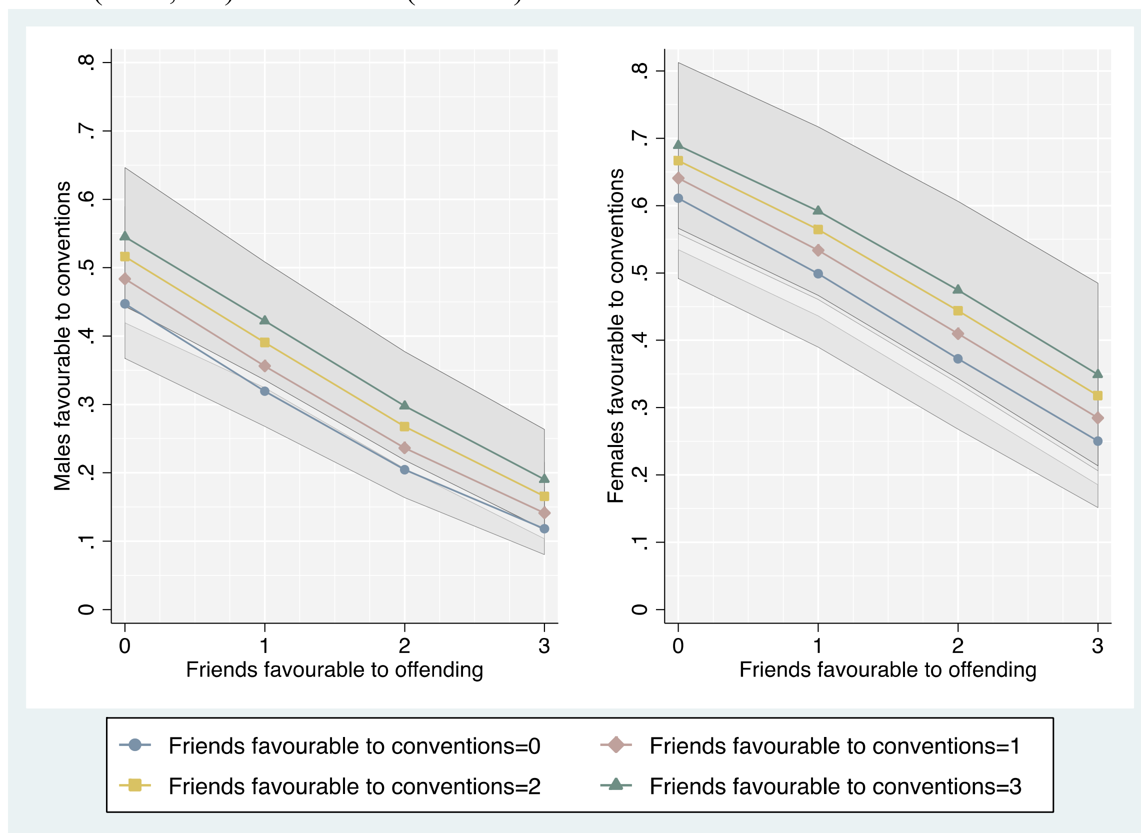
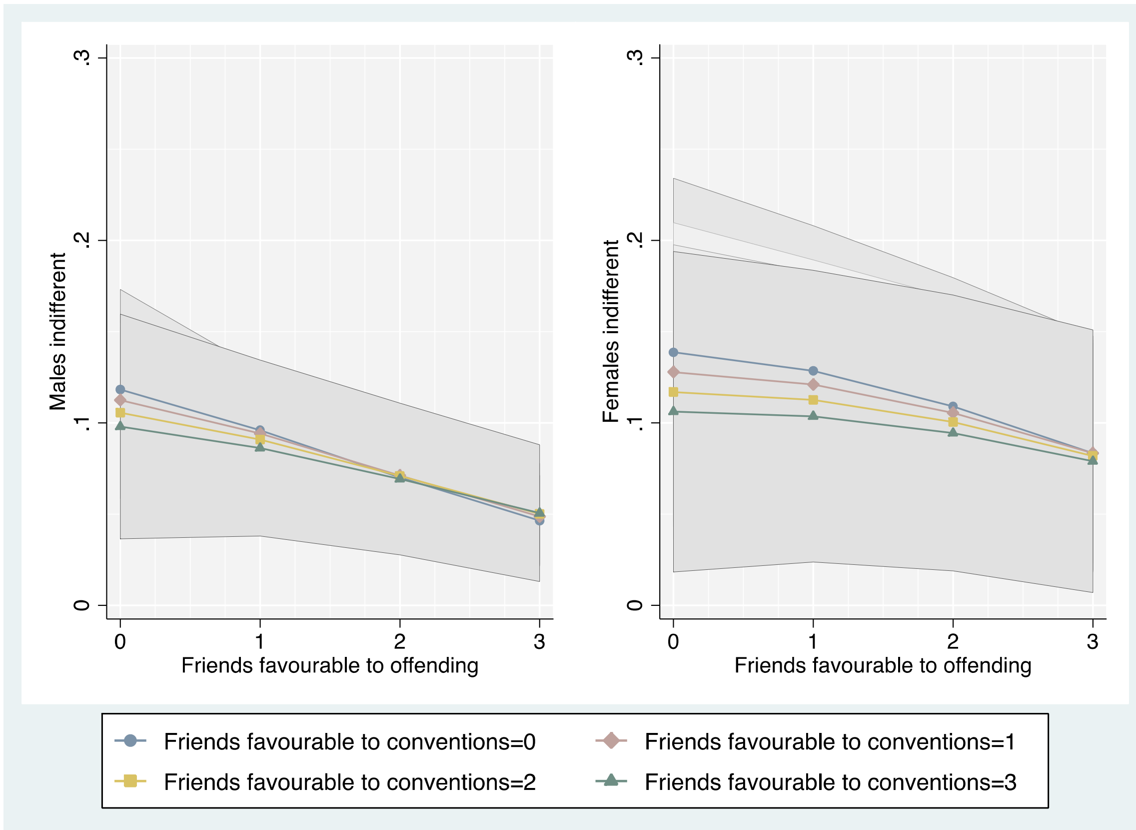


Figure 6c

Impact of friends on the predicted probability of being indifferent among males (n = 1,213) and females (n = 105)

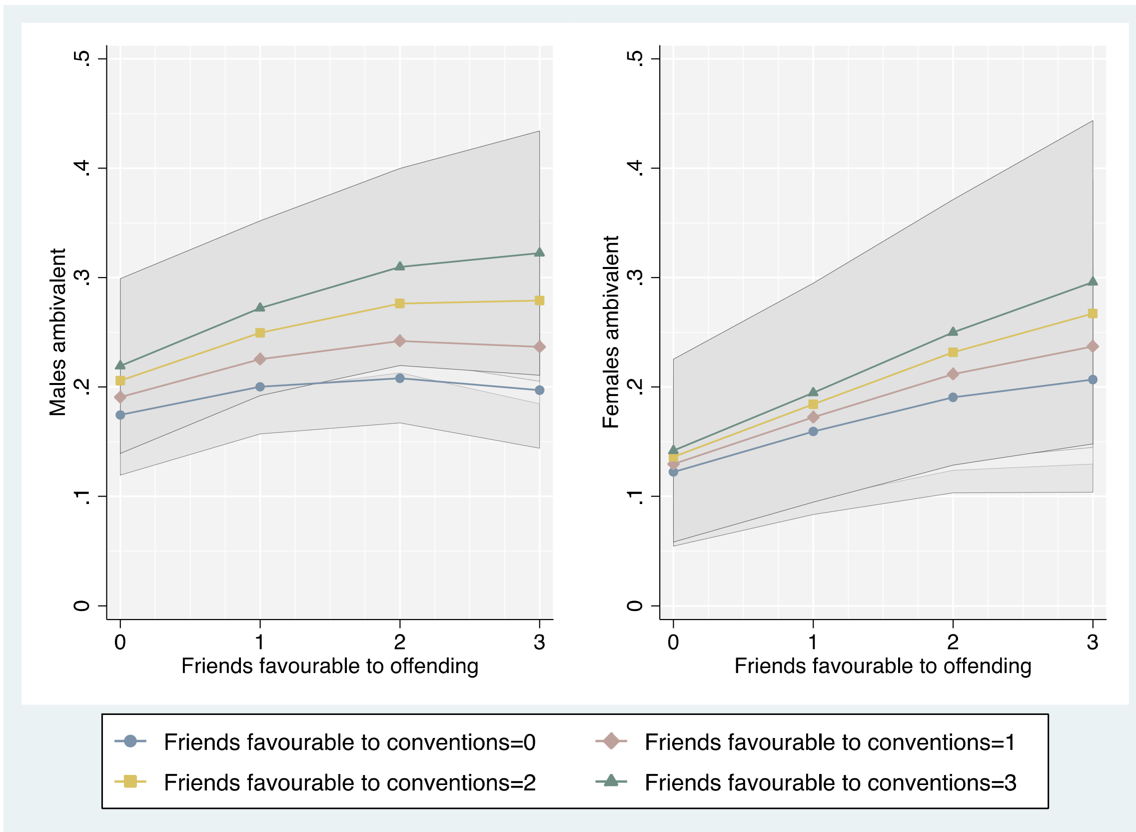


A visual inspection of Figure 6d suggests that friends play a different role vis-à-vis ambivalence, as compared to with other attitudinal positions. As opposed to the other positions in which one 'type' of friendship increased probabilities and the other decreased it, or in which one of them played no major role, the likelihood of being ambivalent actually peaks when sample members maintain both types of friendships simultaneously. In comparison with males with scores of 0 on both friendship scales, those with scores of 3 on both are 1.8 times more likely to be ambivalent. However, as opposed to being indifferent, the influence of friends favourable to offending tapers off between scores of 2 and 3. Similarly to their male counterparts, the predicted probability of being ambivalent is higher among women with numerous friends in both the favourable-to-offending and favourable-to-conventions categories, than for women without any such friends. While the likelihood of the former

situation is 12.23%, the likelihood of the latter is 29.58%, an increase of over 17 percentage points.

Figure 6d

Impact of friends on the predicted probability of being ambivalent among males (*n* = 1,213) and females (*n* = 105)



As suggested by results from the multinomial regression model, romantic, parental and familial relationships, as well as offending conduct among relatives, played a very limited role in sample members' probability of adhering to each of the attitudinal positions. As such, these results will not be covered in further detail here. For transparency purposes, however, their associated predicted probability graphs are presented in Appendices F, G, H, and I.

Conclusion

Just like the qualitative component that was presented over the two previous chapters, the quantitative study exposed over the previous pages followed the general aim and the

theoretical thrust of this thesis. Following the propositions outlined in Chapter 2, it specifically sought to assess the ambivalence hypothesis among individuals who break the law. As it focused on their experience of internal conflict toward moral norms, this chapter has shed light on the grey areas of the lives of these people. Regarding their subjective outlooks, we have seen that while the majority of sample members endorsed non-ambivalent attitudes vis-à-vis offending and conventions, a non-negligible portion of them fall somewhere in the middle, being simultaneous favourable to both. As the analyses dug further, it was shown that they navigate at the confluence of eclectic interpersonal bonds and life experiences. Indeed, results suggest that the people involved in illegal pursuits who simultaneously perceive offending and conventions in a favourable light exist in a 'grey area,' that is, in a middle ground somewhere between 'pro-conventionality' and 'pro-criminality.' Sharing elements of the social life of their non-ambivalent counterparts, they had some previous experience with law-breaking, but not too much, were involved in professional pursuits, and befriended some people who were favourable to offending, as well as some who were favourable to conventions.

However, as many of the prosocial relationships included in both the qualitative and quantitative components of this thesis played no role in the likelihood of experiencing ambivalence among those who offend, results from the multinomial regression provide only partial support to the ambivalence hypothesis. While it is true that the manifold social ties of individuals who break the law can foster ambivalence, findings also suggest that some forms of relationships may be more influential than others. Importantly, these results underscore the importance of considering the social environments of people who act illegally in a flexible manner as this might considerably influence their subjective outlooks. These insights are explored further in the Conclusion.

Conclusion

This thesis was about the internal tensions that emerge when an individual who breaches moral norms and another who values them are intimately connected. It was about the social space thus created, where the prosocial confronts the antisocial, and how it influences all those who come to navigate within it. This thesis was about their uncertainties and oscillations. It was about their ambivalence.

As described previously, the research project presented in this manuscript was driven by a theoretical thrust that was abductively generated by its qualitative component. After my numerous encounters with people who love and care for individuals who offend, I quickly realized that their experiences were significantly shaped by these relationships. I became confronted with the duality that underlay their narratives, a duality that opposed a strong intimate connection to a disdain for a conduct they saw as reprehensible. I also grew aware of the various ways by which they handled this tension, through which they made sense of the untoward actions of their loved one and explained their relationship with that person. As I grasped the importance of this phenomenon and began to comprehend it as ambivalence, I was struck by the parallels between the experiences of these relatives and those of delinquents long ago depicted by Matza. Albeit using different words, he described how these people could drift between conventions and norm-breaking, adhering to attitudes that alternatively support each form of conduct. I was also reminded of Sutherland's work, which highlighted how individuals who offend are often embedded in mixed social environments where adherence to moral norms oscillates, and where breaking rules and respecting rules coexist.

As I integrated these reflections with my reading of the social theories of crime and desistance and of the literature about relatives, I argued that the influence that operates between individuals who offend and their prosocial relatives is bidirectional. More importantly, I proposed that this influence occurs at the confluence of the prosocial and the antisocial, and hypothesized that this is likely to generate ambivalence among all individuals who enter this point of convergence.

Although it was driven by its qualitative component, this project relied on a multiple methods design that also included a quantitative study. Importantly, however, despite the different strategies on which they are based, both components followed the same general research aim, seeking to assess the ambivalence hypothesis among individuals who offend and

their prosocial relatives. While the methodological design used in this study was a very useful tool to study a complex phenomenon that was argued to manifest itself in two groups of individuals that are seldom considered within the same research project, it was not without its limits. Before moving on to the integrative results narrative (Morse & Maddox, 2013), and to embark on specific discussions pertaining to the qualitative and quantitative studies[80], it is pertinent to take stock of these limitations.

First, one of the main limits of the data used in this thesis is that its two sources—the qualitative and the quantitative—are not linked. The members of *Relais Famille* whom I interviewed were not the relatives of the incarcerated individuals from the Quebec Correctional Services' (QCS) data (on the pertinence of such data, see Jardine, 2017; Weaver, 2016). It was therefore not possible to examine the relational dynamics between these people, notably how the ambivalence experienced by one member of a dyad would influence the other.

The second limit pertains to the fact that each study focused on one specific unit of analysis. Indeed, because each study was dedicated to either one of the two groups that are examined in this thesis, their respective strengths could not be applied to both. On the one hand, the qualitative design allowed for an in-depth analysis of ambivalence, a strength that could only be capitalized upon among relatives. Indeed, while Chapter 5 examined the outcomes of internal conflict, a pertinent examination in the context of this thesis, a similar analysis could not be replicated using the quantitative data. Because of this methodological imbalance, the presentation of results is somewhat unbalanced: while this thesis focuses on both groups of individuals, many more results pages have been devoted to relatives than to individuals who offend.[81] On the other hand, while the quantitative data permitted an assessment of complex social environments and allowed for the objective measurement of

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[80] Because they are based on two or more independent studies, multiple methods designs can include two types of discussions (Morse & Maddox, 2013). First, a results narrative, which integrates findings from all components of the project and shows how they are connected to one another, can be presented. Second, discussions specific to each of its components can be developed, which allows for a more precise interpretation of findings and a finer integration of results with the literature. Both discussions are presented in this Conclusion.

[81] Of course, it is also important to underscore that, because the data on which it is based is narratives (i.e., words), the demonstration made in the qualitative study necessarily requires more space than a quantitative demonstration.

ambivalence, this could only be done among those who break the law. This, of course, is unfortunate, as the advantages of each method could have truly enriched the comprehension of ambivalence *and* its outcomes among individuals who engage in offending and their loved ones. Extending the strategies employed in this thesis, future research should aim to include both of these groups in qualitative and quantitative inquiries about internal conflict.

Of course, these limitations were counterbalanced by the strengths of the methodological strategy. In fact, in addition to its theoretical relevance, this research project adds a clear methodological contribution to the criminology literature. Indeed, as it included both a qualitative and a quantitative component, it can act as a blueprint for future studies on ambivalence, particularly with regard to the issue of measurement. Indeed, the qualitative analyses have shown how interview data can be used to detect underlying conflict between attitudes and/or feelings. It has also demonstrated how the richness of participants' words allows analysts to look for the outcomes of ambivalence, and search for the ways by which they make sense of the inner tensions they experience. On the other end of the methodological spectrum, the quantitative component has shown how, despite its highly personal and subjective nature, ambivalence can also be quantitatively assessed. In fact, not only did this study demonstrate this possibility, but it also showed how it could be done with existing and psychometrically validated scales. Indeed, while its measurement could certainly be refined in future studies, the two attitude variables that were combined to assess attitudinal positioning are routinely integrated in criminological studies. Inspired by its theoretical thrust, the measurement strategy used in this research project suggests that it might be worthwhile to consider these two attitudes as inextricably linked and to further explore how they overlap.

Ambivalence Among Individuals Who Offend and their Prosocial Relatives

This research endeavour has sought to examine the ambivalence hypothesis among individuals who engage in offending and the people who love and care for them, a proposition that involves two distinct components. First, the analysis has focused on ambivalence itself, examining the extent to which the people of interest to this thesis actually experience this state of internal tension. As demonstrated over Chapters 4 and 6, ambivalence was detected among those who break the law and their prosocial relatives. As argued in Chapter 2, because they

have different roles vis-à-vis the offending conduct, the ambivalence experienced by individuals from both groups is likely to express itself differently.

As audience, relatives described inter-component conflict. On the one hand, they talked about the hardships; about the emotional, interpersonal, and physical blows they had endured. They shared their views on morality and social norms, and also expressed their attitudes vis-à-vis offending and deviance, only to admit their unwillingness to accept such conduct in the confines of their present and future lives. On the other hand, they described the numerous benefits that resulted from their close social connection with the person they cherished. They recounted the good times they had over the course of their relational histories, and talked about the love that defined their relationship. As they told me about the 'good,' the 'bad,' and everything in between, they described being stuck in limbo, simultaneously loving the author of the unacceptable act, while also hating her/his conduct, thus experiencing the "dialectic push and pull of internal conflict" (Weingardt, 2000, p. 298) that defines ambivalence.

As perpetrators, the individuals who break the law were, by contrast, found to experience intra-component ambivalence. To be sure, this difference between individuals who offend and their loved ones is partly due to the methodological strategies that could be used in the quantitative study. As described in Chapter 3, no data on the emotional attachment of those who offend was made available through the data generously shared by QCS, which constrained the measurement of ambivalence. Notwithstanding this caveat, analyses have shown that a non-negligible portion of those who offend simultaneously hold opposite attitudes toward social norms. While they perceive conventions and normative conduct in a positive light, they are also favourable to offending and norm-breaking.

In sum, as hypothesized in Chapter 2, ambivalence was noted among both those who break the law and their loved ones. However, as seen in the results chapters, the prevalence of this experience varied between the two groups. Indeed, while virtually all participants in the qualitative component talked about their conflicting views toward the person who had offended and his/her conduct, approximately one fifth of those included in the quantitative study were categorized as ambivalent toward moral norms. This, of course, does not invalidate the ambivalence hypothesis among the people who offend, as it did not anticipate that *all* of them would report internal conflict. Indeed, the second part of this thesis' main proposition

argued that it is specifically those who find themselves at the convergence of the prosocial and the antisocial who are likely to do so.

Secondly, the analysis indeed also needed to examine the interpersonal sources of ambivalence in order to assess the entirety of this thesis' hypothesis. Among relatives, this task was fairly straightforward since all participants were recruited *because* they maintained a relationship with someone who had offended. As demonstrated in Chapter 4, it is precisely because these individuals were largely unfavourable toward the offending of their loved one that they experienced ambivalence. In sum, their internal conflict emanated from the confrontation between their prosocial orientation and the antisocial demeanour of the person they loved and care for. This finding is in line with previous research on the interpersonal sources of ambivalence and with one of the central propositions made in Chapter 2. Indeed, it demonstrates how the experience of internal conflict can emerge from interpersonal conflicts in attitudes, and that this pathway to ambivalence is likely among the prosocial relatives of those who offend (Lahire, 2003; Parsons, 1951; Priester & Petty, 2001).

Results from the quantitative component of this project suggest that the convergence of the prosocial and the antisocial also favours the development of ambivalence among individuals who offend. Indeed, Chapter 6 has demonstrated how being involved in conventional professional pursuits, as well as simultaneously having friends with a prosocial orientation and friends with an antisocial orientation increases one's likelihood of being ambivalent vis-à-vis moral norms. However, while this supports the hypothesis examined in this thesis, there were some unexpected findings. Indeed, the quantitative models also demonstrate that maintaining prosocial relationships with romantic partners and family members—those individuals who constitute the bulk of the qualitative sample of this project—plays a negligible role in the development of ambivalence. These findings are in line with Giordano, Cernkovich and Holland (2003) and Weaver (2016) who found that friendships are an important source of influence on individuals well after adolescence. However, the fact that most of the prosocial relationships that were central to the qualitative component had virtually no impact suggests that ambivalence is a complex phenomenon that might have different interpersonal sources for different actors, depending on their role vis-à-vis offending. As audience of this conduct, prosocial relatives might need nothing more than their relationship

with a loved one who breaks the law to experience ambivalence. As perpetrator, those who offend are more likely to be embedded in heterogeneous social environments that encompass a range of prosocially- and antisocially-oriented individuals, which might complicate the interpersonal pathway to ambivalence. Findings from this project indeed suggest that, while all types of relationships can generate ambivalence among the people who love and care for those who offend, some forms of social bonds might actually be more influential than others among offense perpetrators. Although this remains in line with the propositions developed in Chapter 2 as they anticipated that friends would play an important role in the development of ambivalence, the quantitative dataset used in this thesis could not be used to examine the intricacies of this possibility. It is certainly an interesting and important avenue for future research.

Interestingly, gender did not significantly alter any of the findings that were reviewed above. For instance, both men and women experienced ambivalence, a finding that was true in the qualitative and the quantitative components alike. Interestingly, however, a gender imbalance was noted in both samples, albeit in opposite direction. On the one hand, prosocial relatives were overwhelmingly female, a characteristic that is not only representative of the gender distribution of *Relais Famille*, but also of research on relatives more broadly (Comfort, 2008; Condry, 2007; Girshick, 1996; Granja, 2016; Jardine, 2017). As explored in more depth further below, this disparity is probably due to women's higher likelihood of taking on caring roles (Codd, 2007). This hypothesis is reinforced by the fact that the three men who shared their experiences in the qualitative study were fathers who were deeply involved in caring responsibilities, much like the 15 women who were interviewed (see Chapter 4). This is also in line with previous research on the interpersonal sources of ambivalence (Connidis & McMullin, 2002). Notwithstanding the gender imbalance of the qualitative sample, the antisocial orientation of the person they loved led both men and women to experience ambivalence. Findings from Chapter 5 further show that, in trying to manage that state of internal tension, both similarly mobilized narrative and active strategies.

On the other hand, the quantitative sample was overwhelmingly composed of men, a descriptive elements that is unsurprising in criminology (Reitano, 2017). Again, despite this gender imbalance, both men and women experienced ambivalence, albeit in marginally

different proportions. Of further interest to this thesis, the interpersonal sources of ambivalence were the same among both genders: females and males who were involved in conventional professional pursuits, and who befriended individuals with an antisocial orientation and individuals with a prosocial orientation were more likely to experience internal conflict vis-à-vis moral norms. This suggests that the mechanisms of social influence work similarly for men and women, a finding that is also in line with the work of Giordano, Cernkovich and Rudolph (2002).

In sum, while the findings from the qualitative and quantitative studies that were exposed over the previous chapters support many of the propositions entailed in the ambivalence hypothesis, there were some unexpected results. As we near the end of this thesis, it is pertinent to explore both the implications of the confirmatory findings, and to ponder upon the challenges that were brought to light. Taking advantage of the multiple methods design, each component is reviewed in turn in order to facilitate the integration of their findings in their respective literatures.

The Ambivalence and Tolerance of Offense Perpetrators' Relatives

As argued above, many of the propositions made in Chapter 2 found support in the qualitative analyses that examined the experiences of relatives. This section extends beyond these findings to explore how they are relevant to the social theories of crime and desistance in two ways: (1) highlighting the limits of social control; and (2) unveiling the unexpected outcome of ambivalence.

The Limits of Social Control

Theories of social control posit that being strongly attached to conventional people, namely people who are not involved in norm-breaking conduct and who view such actions unfavourably, constrains individuals from participating in crime (Hirschi, 1969; Sampson & Laub, 1993). As shown in Chapter 1, while these theories have found good empirical support, studies have largely relied on data collected from the viewpoints of those who break the law—the 'controlled.' Results from Chapter 4 add nuance by examining the experiences of the 'controllers,' paying special attention to the kinds of roles they fulfill in the context of their

relationship with someone who offends. As seen, several people from *Relais Famille* described how their roles of support, management, and supervision had exerted significant impacts on their loved one, sometimes even bringing them back on the 'right track' after years of straying. Some even recounted events that unambiguously echoed the 'good-wife effect,' often associated with the propositions of Sampson and Laub (1993): these women 'saved' their partners because they showed them how to be 'good' citizens and provided them with motivation to abide by the law.

While these findings lend support to social control theories, offering further insights into how control concretely takes place on a daily basis, results also point to some of the theories' limits. In spite of their best efforts, and despite having a strong will to change the person they love, many participants were unable to control her/his offending. As seen, this inability often led them to experience significant emotional turmoil, on top of enduring the costs associated with cycles of re-arrest and re-incarceration.

While participants involved in many different relationship types reported facing the persistence of unlawful action, this was particularly present among parents. Here, this finding brings nuance to the importance of childhood bonds in fostering conventional conduct put forth by social bond theory (Hirschi, 1969), and which has been supported by research (Johnson, Giordano, Manning, & Longmore, 2011). Again, these parents described how their offspring's problematic conduct had actually begun during childhood in spite of their unrelenting determination to bequeath conventional values and raise conforming citizens. In fact, as seen in Chapter 4, many of them depicted how their other children had 'turned out perfectly fine,' as a token of their good parenting skills and their ability to foster strong emotional attachment. The finding that these parents were unable to keep their 'problematic child' on the right path after childhood, is, however, in accordance with the findings of Sampson and Laub (1993), who found that parenting practices during the early years were not significantly associated with later offending trajectories.

The finding that parents were particularly likely to report such failures of control might also be attributable to the nature of the bond that connects them with their child. Indeed, as seen in Chapter 4, all parents described their relationship as centred on the notion of unconditional love, a finding that is in line with Condry's (2007) work. The unmitigated

aspect of this emotional attachment is likely to foster a higher tolerance to what is otherwise perceived as unacceptable, and a stronger capacity to suffer through adversities before deciding to sever the tie that generate these hardships. While this can only remain a hypothesis in the confines of this thesis, the finding that parents were particularly likely to rely on hope as a narrative strategy reinforces its validity (see Chapter 5). Indeed, as they projected themselves into a better future, one in which their offspring would not be involved in reprehensible actions, they were able to remain centered on the positive and simply keep going. The hypothesis according to which parents can suffer through more before quitting is further supported by previous research. Indeed, studies have found that many parents maintain their responsibility vis-à-vis their offspring during incarceration (McCarthy & Adams, 2017) and that parental relationships are more likely to outlive the offending of a loved one than friendships and romantic partnerships (Leverentz, 2014). Together with the results exposed in Chapter 4, these findings bring nuance to the propositions of social control theories, by suggesting that even when they are willing to endure the undesirable, relatives might still be powerless in their attempts to control the conduct of those who break the law.

One could argue that the failures of control noted among the parents who took part in this study are due to a specific characteristic of their offspring: their age. The children of all participants who reported being unable to curb offending were indeed in their early adulthoods. While parents' controlling abilities are likely to be more influential during their offspring's childhood (Hirschi, 1969), adolescents and young adults are often thought to be less amenable to such influence. Research suggests that, as individuals who offend mature into adulthood, an internal process of "emotional mellowing" sometimes occurs (Giordano, 2016, p. 19). The improvement in parent-child relations that follows this process has been associated with changes in offending conduct (Johnson et al., 2011). These findings thus suggest that parents might regain some influential power over the demeanour of their offspring once they have weathered the early adult years. It is therefore possible that, if they maintain their support over time, the parents who have shared their experiences in this thesis might eventually be able to influence their sons and daughters, a proposition that is in line with social support theory (Cullen, 1994).

The fact that several participants involved in different types of relationships reported being unable to 'control' the offending conduct of their loved one might also be an outcome of the methodological strategy used in this thesis. As described in Chapter 3, recruitment was done mainly through *Relais Famille*, a community organization specifically aiming to provide support and help to individuals who are related to someone who has offended. Generally speaking, the people who seek 'help and support' are not those whose lives are in perfect order (Condry, 2007; Leverentz, 2014). As such, it is possible that the sample of individuals who shared their experiences with me in this thesis is not entirely representative of all of the prosocial relatives of those who break the law. As many actively sought comfort through the services of *Relais Famille*, these people may over-represent those who are desperate because the actions of their loved ones are 'uncontrollable.' In this sense, Sampson and Laub's 'controllers,' those who are able to cut individuals out of their crime-inducing environments, might not be as well represented in this sample.

This being said, other relatives are also likely to be share similarities with those who have shared their experiences with me, and thus be largely unfavourable to offending (on this point, see Matza, 1964; Sutherland, 1947). While maintaining a relationship with someone involved in actions that are perceived as reprehensible is a convoluted feat, many people nonetheless manage to do so. As suggested in Chapter 5, this requires an efficient handling of the ambivalence that emerges from such social experiences.

Tolerance as an Unexpected Outcome of Ambivalence

Chapter 5's analyses showed that the ambivalence of prosocial relatives could emerge at different points in their relational history to an offense perpetrator. Many of those whose personal repertoires could not help them comprehend offending conduct, i.e., who had limited previous experience with offending and/or deviance, experienced ambivalence at the moment of discovery. For them, it was simply unconceivable that someone they loved so dearly could do such a thing. For others, ambivalence emerged later, as the reprehensible actions persisted through time despite warnings and threat of relational rupture. The dynamic nature of ambivalence resonates with previous research, which suggests that relationships with those

who offend constantly have to be renegotiated as the reprehensible conduct ebbs and flows (Fishman, 1990; Leverentz, 2014).

Regardless of the moment at which ambivalence emerges over the course of their relational history, relatives were found to manage their ambivalence by employing two strategies: strategies of action and narrative strategies. Though the concrete changes brought forward by these strategies in the social and subjective lives of these individuals have underlined the analyses throughout, they have not yet been thoroughly examined. In this section, it is argued that, together, these changes lead to an unexpected outcome of ambivalence. Before delving into this proposition, however, the following pages describe the similarities between the strategies used by relatives, and some aspects of the social life and subjective outlooks of those who break the law.

The first change that results from the strategies of action deployed by relatives concerns their social life. As they sought to protect the positive elements of their relationship, participants purposefully avoided or even severed ties with anyone who challenged the legitimacy of that relationship. For similar reasons, they also forged new social bonds with individuals more likely to both be sympathetic to their predicaments and support their choices. The idea that people would actively modify their social contexts when trying to maintain relational perks such as emotional attachment is certainly not new to criminology. In line with the notion of stakes-in-conformity that is central to social control theories (Hirschi, 1969; Sampson & Laub, 1993), researchers like Warr (1998) and Wright and Cullen (2004) have shown that individuals who offend alter their friendship networks in order to maintain their relational 'side bets' and the various investments they have made in their relationships with prosocial others. What is interesting about the qualitative analyses presented in Chapter 5, is the existence of a mirror phenomenon among these prosocial others. Indeed, to a large extent, the people I met were willing to sacrifice their social world in order to maintain the 'side bets' they had accumulated with the person they loved, who had acted unlawfully.

The second important change that participants experienced as a consequence of the strategies used to reduce ambivalence concerns their personal, subjective outlooks. Indeed, it is through narrative work that they were able to account, albeit tentatively, for the offending conduct of their loved one and for the hardships it introduced into their lives. To be sure, a

large share of the narrative strategies presented in Chapter 5 could be categorized as classical neutralizations (Sykes & Matza, 1957): though it did not concern their own actions, participants essentially provided reasons for the offending of their loved ones. However, the findings are more in line with the notion of narrative than they are with neutralizations. As Maruna and Copes (2005, p. 284) pointed out: "The individual use of specific neutralizations should be understood within the wider context of sense making that is the self-narrative process." The strategies deployed in the confines of this study echoed this distinction in that they went far beyond the explanation of offending actions (Presser, 2009). Indeed, these narratives were as much about untoward conduct as they were about the participants themselves. What rests at the heart of these strategies is their self-identity and sense of self-worth: they are morally decent people (Presser, 2008).

Narrative criminologists further argue that narratives are important because they are co-constitutive of reality: they are not mere subjective representations of events, they can motivate, enable, or constrain action (Fleetwood, 2016; Maruna, 2001; Presser, 2010; Sandberg, 2016). As argued in this thesis, this was the case for the narratives developed by participants. By blaming external causes such as mental illness and substance use, by displacing the offending onto some distant past, by highlighting how their loved one had changed or how they were going to, participants essentially became capable of moving on. They became able to make a decision about their relationships and, importantly, to tell a narrative that justified that choice. Though it does not relate to the prosocial relatives of those who offend, research suggests that the narrative strategies used by the participants in this study might actually be necessary for them to maintain their relationship with someone who has offended. Ferraro and Johnson (1983), for instance, found that victims of domestic abuse maintained their relationship with the abuser so long as their narrative accounted for what had happened to them. While the work of Maruna (2001) concerns those who offend, he has shown that individuals who persistently engage in illegal endeavours tend to create scripts of condemnation, emphasising their powerlessness over their contexts of action. In contrast, desisters are more likely to embrace redemption scripts, through which they essentially re-write their biographies, casting the blame for their past troubles onto external factors and minimizing their deviance. In fact, Maruna argued that such narrative work might actually be a

necessary condition in order for desistance to take place and be sustained over time: in order to become ‘conventional’ citizens, individuals who have offended must essentially reconstruct themselves into good people. Again, the findings exposed in Chapter 5 suggest that a similar process of narrative development might also be necessary among the prosocial relatives of offense perpetrator.

As argued in Chapter 1, the social and subjective changes experienced by prosocial relatives might have important implications for the social theories of crime and desistance because they shape the conditions in which these people exert influence on those who offend. Indeed, as they implement strategies that allow them to maintain their relationship with someone who has offended, participants enter a zone of *ambiguous tolerance*, where tolerance is defined as “the ability or willingness to tolerate the existence of opinions or behaviour that one dislikes or disagrees with” (Oxford Dictionary, 2018). Effectively, they are insinuating that they can eventually ‘get over it’ and that they will stay by their loved ones’ side through thick and thin. Of course, while not a common experience within this study, results have shown that relatives can also opt out of their relationships, in which case such allusions are annulled. The social theories of crime and desistance, however, focus on active, and not broken, social bonds. Among those who have the potential to act as agents of influence (i.e., those who maintain their relationship with those who break the law), ambiguous tolerance is indeed the zone in which they navigate. As suggested by the work of Maruna, this might be a necessary part of social influence: to be able to support those who act unlawfully, one might *have to* become tolerant vis-à-vis such activities, to be open to their occurrence. This is the unexpected outcome of relatives’ ambivalence.

The proposition according to which prosocial relatives navigate a zone of ambiguous tolerance raises an important question for criminology: What are the resulting consequences for the mechanisms of social influence that operate among those who offend? While this thesis cannot provide an answer to such an inquiry due to data limitations, the literature points to two possible, yet opposing possibilities. The first possible consequence is an increase in offending, a hypothesis that is grounded in Sutherland’s (1966) ideas around social impunity and differential associations. People who break the law are influenced by their prosocial relatives’ reactions vis-à-vis offending: while unfavourable reactions decrease the likelihood of

offending, favourable reactions increase it. As opposed to what Sutherland's followers have posited (most notably Akers, 1973; Burgess & Akers, 1966), these reactions are not strictly limited to attitudes that actively support/denounce deviance and law-breaking. Rather, they include all choices—support, rejection, and abstentions—that are made by relatives. By delinquent associations, Sutherland did not simply mean 'associations with others who offend'; he meant all choices that are favourable toward those who engage in offending. Findings from this study suggest that, as their strategies of ambivalence-reduction allow them to maintain their favourable view toward the person who has offended, relatives choose to support him/her. Although they are largely against law-breaking, their "interests for abstract justice […] are subordinated to other normative interests [such as] love and loyalty toward one's relatives" (Tremblay, 2010, p. 38 author's translation). According to this view, by choosing to maintain their relationships, and thus failing to punish an untoward conduct, prosocial relatives are essentially divulging definitions that are 'favourable to offending,' and, as such, that might increase offending altogether. This hypothetical irony of social control is also in line with Martinez and Abrams (2013) and Breese, Ra'el and Grant (2000) who found that the high expectations held by supportive relatives might actually be a burden. As they seek to reinstate law-abiding conduct, these people encourage unrealistic goals, which create a self-fulfilling prophecy and foster recidivism.

While this hypothesis is in line with some of this thesis' findings concerning the limits of social control, it might overlook the potential benefits of social support. In contrast, the second possibility, grounded in social support theory (Cullen, 1994), points to the 'support at all costs' hypothesis. According to this idea, maintaining a relationship with someone who has offended in spite of the ebbs and flows of their untoward conduct, and providing him/her with relentless support is the surest way to promote desistance. In her study on the processes of desistance among women, Leverentz (2014), for instance, found that these women described their family's ongoing support—the portion that had survived the hardships associated with their cycles of recidivism—as being central to the termination of their offending. As they started to get their lives together, these women saw the help they received from their prosocial relatives as being instrumental in motivating their change.

These findings are in line with Giordano's writings (2016; 2002), which suggest that desistance is an ongoing and interlocked process in which the person doing the offending has to be active and open to change in order for law-breaking to cease. It is thus when they become open that these men and women will become receptive to support. Of course, support needs to be provided at these moments of openness. These propositions are further supported by Braithwaite's (1989) theory of reintegrative shaming, according to which desistance is fostered by the active reintegration of offenders into their community. In fact, Cullen's (1994) Presidential address to the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences essentially argues that most theories of crime actually endorse the 'support at all costs' hypothesis: even though they might be unfavourable toward offending, it is through the prosocial relatives' unconditional maintenance of relationships, and the persistence of their support, that desistance might have a chance of taking hold.

Of course, if the 'support at all costs' hypothesis is true, it follows that the relatives of those who offend might end up navigating a zone of ambiguous tolerance for quite some time, a feat that is not always easy to accomplish. As seen in Chapters 4 and 5, managing ambivalence and, by extension, becoming tolerant can be a taxing experience. For some, ambivalence might even become so burdensome that it leads to relational rupture. If Cullen is right about the necessity of social support in promoting desistance, then ambivalence should certainly be seen as a threat to support. Perhaps ironically, providing support to the supporters may actually be the best strategy to neutralize that threat. This proposition, along with its social and political implications, is explored further in the final section of this Conclusion.

While these two possibilities can only remain hypotheses in the context of this thesis, they deserve further attention. Indeed, findings from this study suggest that examining the experiences of prosocial relatives is important as they shape the conditions in which those who offend can actually be influenced. As seen, being in a zone of ambiguous tolerance could go one of two ways: while one increases re-offending, the other decreases it. Providing clear answers to these hypotheses is an important avenue for future research, particularly since they have the potential to point to different practical and policy implications.

Before moving on to the ambivalence of those who offend, it is important to circumscribe the findings of this qualitative study. First, as opposed to the results from the

quantitative component, no offense-type-specific findings have emerged from the analyses of the narratives of the members of *Relais Famille*. While others have found certain types of accounts to vary between relatives who supported individuals engaged in different types of offenses (e.g., Condry, 2007), the various strategies analyzed in this thesis were used similarly among participants. Of course, this might be due to the recruitment procedure used in this study, which did not include a selection criteria concerning crime type. Future research should pay special attention to this issue and seek to gain a better understanding of the generalizability of findings. Second, as explained in Chapter 3, the overwhelming majority of people who took part in this study were women, a fact that echoes the gender distribution of the members of *Relais Famille*. Indeed, throughout my interactions with these members as a volunteer, I encountered only a handful of men. In addition, the last official profile of this community organization suggests that most of its participants are women. Again, as I recruited most of the study participants through this self-help group, the gender distribution of my sample might reflect that of *Relais Famille* (for a discussion on the gender distribution of self-help groups, see Condry, 2007). Yet, it might also reflect broader trends in support of individuals who offend. Indeed, previous studies on relatives have been conducted on samples that were overwhelmingly female (Comfort, 2003, 2008; Girshick, 1996; Granja, 2016; Jardine, 2017), and some have even argued that the "burden of responsibility is gendered" (Codd, 2007, p. 260). Though three of the participants in this study were men, the generalizability of findings to individuals of both genders is unclear. Moreover, all of the male respondents I met were fathers, a non-negligible precision that might, again, reflect parents' higher likelihood of 'sticking around' through thick and thin. Concerning gender, it is also important to note that while most participants were female, a diametrically opposed portrait emerged among the individuals who were cared for. Indeed, as described in Chapter 3, with the exception of Philip's daughter, all of these individuals were men. Again, while this is a fairly common descriptive feature in the literature (Christian, Martinez, & Martinez, 2015), it is unclear to what extent the findings of this thesis are representative of the experiences of individuals who support women who have offended (see Casey-Acevedo & Bakken, 2002).

Finally and as stated before, none of the participants who took part in this study had completely or willingly chosen to sever their relationship with their loved one. This is a

limitation of the data, one that prevents any inference from being made concerning the particular experiences of these people. Indeed, based on the interviews I conducted, it is hard to stipulate how relational rupture operates between individuals who engage in offending and their prosocial relatives. This study's findings suggest that this could happen when strategies fail to reduce ambivalence. The accumulation of relational problems over time could also lead to a breaking point where even the relational positives become insufficient to justify the continuation of the relationship. As suggested by the qualitative findings, the threshold of tolerance for ambivalence might also differ according to different types of social relationships, an idea that was examined above. Future research should focus on this thesis' blind spots in order to examine whether the relational lives of both individuals who engage in offending, and their prosocial relatives, hides complexities that were not uncovered over the preceding chapters.

Ambivalence and its Interpersonal Sources Among Individuals who Offend

This thesis has argued that, because individuals who offend also often navigate at the confluence of the prosocial and the antisocial, ambivalence is a likely experience for them too. Before moving on to the findings that specifically relate to ambivalence and to the unexpected elements that arose in the quantitative analyses, the following pages discuss the broader findings of the quantitative study. Specifically, they address how the results relate to both the propositions presented in Chapter 2, and to the social theories of crime and desistance. Combining insights from criminological theory, and findings from the qualitative study of this thesis, the potential outcomes of ambivalence among individuals who break the law are explored in the conclusion of this section.

Although the results presented in Chapter 6 support the basic proposition that people who offend can become ambivalent, this was not the most prevalent subjective position in the quantitative sample. In fact, over two-thirds of these people were resolute in their views. First, a large portion of them strictly perceived deviance and law-breaking in a positive light, a profile that resonates with Matza's (1964) views on the "extraordinary delinquent" (p. 29). In line with the archetypal image of the procriminal individual, these people had numerous convictions, were not involved in legal professional pursuits, and had many friends who, like

themselves, engaged in offending. Second, at the opposite end of the spectrum were individuals who were unambiguously favourable to conventions. In comparison with individuals who endorsed other types of attitudes, these individuals navigated in a rather conventional social environment: they were involved in satisfactory professional endeavours and their friends were involved in prosocial activities. Lastly, a minority of individuals included in this study were favourable to neither offending, nor conventions. As suggested by the social ties they maintained, or, rather, by the inexistence of their social ties, these individuals echoed Merton's (1938) retreatists: they seemingly escaped society and rejected its moral norms.

Overall, these results are in line with the notion of normative socialization among those who offend: their relatives shape their views on offending and conventions (Lahire, 2003; Sutherland, 1947; Swidler, 2001). Of course, they also provide considerable support to many of the propositions related to the social theories of crime and desistance that were reviewed in Chapter 1. For instance, professional involvement and friends were found to play a considerable role in the attitudinal positioning of the individuals of the quantitative sample. These results replicate the findings of numerous previous studies, particularly those that have assessed the relationship between friendships and attitudes, a relationship that is central to social learning theory (Carson, 2013; Eichelsheim, Nieuwbeerta, Dirkzwager, Reef, & Cuyper, 2015; Matsueda, 1982; Simons & Burt, 2011; Tangney et al., 2012).

However, as stated above, many of the social bonds that were considered exerted no impact on attitudinal position. For instance, echoing the limited control abilities that were reported by parents in Chapter 4, none of the prosocial family relationships that were included in the quantitative model significantly influenced the subjective views of the people who offend. Romantic partners exerted a similarly negligible impact. Though unexpected in this study, this latter finding is in line with Mandracchia and Morgan (2012), who found no significant relationship between romantic relationships and attitudes toward offending. Overall, the findings presented in Chapter 6 suggest that the social bonds maintained by the people who offend influence them in various and complex ways, some of which have been proposed by social control (Sampson & Laub, 1993) and social learning theorists (Akers, 1973; Sutherland, 1947).

Before delving into the ambivalence experienced by the members of the quantitative sample, one important issue must be considered: gender. Indeed, the findings exposed in Chapter 6 highlighted an important difference between the subjective realities of men and women. Overall, women were much more likely to be favourable to conventions than they were to be favourable to offending. These findings are in line with studies that suggest the existence of gender-specific trends in attitudes. Based on the idea that women are more likely to be concerned with issues of safety and security than men, Simons and Burt (2011), for instance, found that women were more likely to be committed to social conventions than their male counterparts. Interestingly, however, the women who were included in the present study reported being indifferent and ambivalent vis-à-vis both conventions and offending in proportions that were similar to men. While these findings point to some important similarities between males and females, notably with regard to ambivalence, they also suggest that future studies on attitudes among people who offend should be sensitive to the issue of gender.

While not the most commonly held attitudinal position in this study, a little over a fifth of the quantitative sample reported being ambivalent about offending and conventions. Extending Matza's (1964) work on youths, these findings suggest that adults who engage in illegal endeavours can also become on the fence about moral norms, simultaneously adhering to their precepts and being able to see the perks of actively breaking them. In line with the propositions exposed in Chapter 2, ambivalence among these adults emerged from heterogeneous social contexts (Visser & Mirabile, 2004). Indeed, navigating somewhere between those who are 'pro-offending' and those who are 'pro-conventions,' ambivalent individuals were involved in rewarding professional activities and had friends, many of whom were prosocial, as well as many of whom were engaged in deviant and unlawful activities. The fact that offenders navigate in mixed social environments is not a new proposition in criminology (Carson, 2013; Elliott, Huizinga, & Menard, 1989; Elliott & Menard, 1996; Haynie, 2002; Mcgloin, 2009; Sutherland, 1947; Warr, 1993), and research has generally found that being embedded in diverse milieus can significantly affect one's subjective views. What the current study adds to this body of work is the utility of understanding individual attitudes as being more than an all-black or all-white element of subjective life. Rather, it is

pertinent to conceive of them as possibly falling in a middle ground, and to consider how complex social environments can actually foster that internal bipolarity.

Based on the ambivalence and criminology literatures, it was argued that two interpersonal pathways to ambivalence are particularly likely among those who offend: an interpersonal conflict in attitudes (Parsons, 1951; Priester & Petty, 2001) or being embedded in a heterogeneous social milieu (Visser & Mirabile, 2004). Although the findings presented in Chapter 6 are in line with these propositions, data limitations prevented their thorough examination. It is thus impossible, based on the quantitative study, to assert the precise social pathways that lead to ambivalence among individuals who offend. As we near the end of this thesis, it is also important to acknowledge that other mechanisms could explain the diverse social milieu in which ambivalent individuals navigated. For instance, this finding might actually reflect a process of self-selection, by which individuals who are 'of two minds' about moral norms choose to engage with both prosocially- and antisocially-oriented individuals. As ambivalent people are 'fluent in both languages,' understanding both 'prosociality' and 'antisociality', it might make sense for them to maintain relationships with people who embrace either orientations. Future research should focus on these issues in order to understand the specific mechanisms by which ambivalence emerges among those who break the law.

The Outcomes of Ambivalence Among Individuals who Offend?

As explained over the previous chapters, the richness of the data used in the qualitative study allowed for the examination of the outcomes of ambivalence among prosocial relatives, an analysis that could not be replicated in the quantitative study. To be sure, this methodological limitation prevents any conclusions to be drawn concerning the repercussions of this experience of internal conflict for the people who break the law. However, the combination of previous research in criminology, and of findings from the qualitative study allow for the elaboration of certain hypotheses. By the same token, these can be translated into promising avenues for future research. These concern two distinct lines of inquiry: 1) the management of ambivalence; and 2) its outcomes among offense perpetrators.

As exposed in Chapter 5, the prosocial relatives of individuals who break the law engage in a series of strategies to manage their ambivalence. By and large, the tactics they mobilize allow them to give explanations to the offending conduct, and to keep a positive view of the person they love. As stated before, these findings resonate strongly with Sykes and Matza's (1957; see also Maruna & Copes, 2005), and with narrative criminologists (Presser, 2009; Presser & Sandberg, 2015), who propose that the people who offend account for their conduct. Doing so further allows them to neutralize the severity and repercussions of their actions. The results from the qualitative component of this project suggest that, because it emerges at the confluence of the prosocial and the antisocial, ambivalence is a particularly sensitive state for the development of narrative strategies. This could also be the case among offense perpetrators. As ambivalence was found to have important interpersonal grounds in Chapter 6, this hypothesis is further supported by Maruna (2001) and Copes (2003) who found that offenders with more social attachments are more likely to do narrative work and neutralize their illicit activities. While the quantitative data used in this project could not be used to assess this possibility, future research should seek to evaluate whether offense perpetrators who are ambivalent are more likely to rely on narrative or other kinds of neutralizing strategies than those who are not.

Findings from Chapter 5 have further showed how the strategies of ambivalence reduction allowed prosocial relatives to maintain their relationship with an offense perpetrator. In this sense, it can be argued that the ambivalence they experienced was intertwined with their conduct and choices. Although the quantitative dataset could not be mobilized to explore this, it is pertinent to wonder about the ambivalence of those who break the law and its interconnections with their choices and actions. Is ambivalence somehow linked to offending and/or desistance? If so, how? Of course, these questions are important for criminology, and research provide some preliminary answers to these inquiries. In his work on deviance, Parsons (1951; see also Toby, 2005) has, for instance, argued that ambivalence promotes movements into and out of norm-breaking. This resonates with Burnett (2004) and Carlsson (2017), who have recently proposed that ambivalence is an inherent part of the desistance process. Indeed, as proposed by Giordano (2016), as people who offend begin to envision a new self, they might also start to reflect upon their personal attitudes, their social relationships,

and their conduct. It is as they go through this unsettling process that ambivalence would emerge. Because ambivalence is a destabilizing state, setbacks and cycles of recidivism would be a normal part of that process. As Burnett (2004) put it: “The […] offender seems to sit on a pendulum of ambivalence, moving first towards desistance and then towards persistence as his or her orientation is swayed by the weight of alternative desires and rationalizations. There are strong parallels with the push and pull of addictive habits. The zig-zag path toward desistance is one result of ambivalence” (p. 169). Again, this is an area ripe for future research.

Implications for Theory and Practice

As this thesis is focused on the role of ambivalence in the experiences of both people who offend and their prosocial relatives, the potential implications of its findings for criminology unfold around these two groups of people. These are reviewed in turn.

This section on implications could start by highlighting the theoretical relevance of considering prosocial relatives’ experiences in order to understand the mechanisms of social influence that operate between them and the people who offend. However, this argument has already been made, and its validity has been demonstrated throughout this entire manuscript. As such, it is hoped that this argument has been integrated by this point. The implication that will now be explored rather concerns social life and policy. In line with past research on relatives, findings from this study have shown how being related to someone who has engaged in offending can be a difficult endeavour. As if this experience was not enough, many participants whose voices were heard in the pages of this manuscript described feeling abandoned in a complex organization they barely understood. They told countless stories of the times they visited their loved one in prison only to be treated as second-class citizens, and of unintelligible journeys through the maze of the criminal justice system. Though anecdotal, these tales uncover the socio-structural reality in which offense perpetrators’ relatives navigate, a reality where, albeit ironically, they receive very little support. In the province of Québec, for instance, there is only one community organization—*Relais Famille*—that provides specific services to these individuals. Though a part of the broader Canadian Families and Corrections Network, it must manage to survive year after year with minimal resources, while essentially functioning thanks to the work of dedicated volunteers. This state of affairs is

not circumscribed to the space and time in which this study took place; many researchers have also pointed to this lack of support (Brooks-Gordon & Bainham, 2004; Codd, 2007; Jardine, 2017). In fact, to summarize the lack of support's extent, it is pertinent to paraphrase Mills and Codd (2008), who aptly wondered: who supports the supporters?

The general lack of support provided to the relatives of those who offend often commingles with a dual discourse on responsibility. On the one hand, they are portrayed as an important actor in offenders' "successful reintegration" (Correctional Service Canada, 2013). On the other hand, when things go awry and their loved one re-offends, they are often depicted as partially responsible. In fact, Codd (2007) even went as far as to argue that, by officially portraying them as important actors in the re-entry process, governments are placing an unjust burden on their shoulder: "To some extent, therefore, it follows that the government could 'shift the blame,' deflecting issues of recidivism away from discussions of the failures of negative, disintegrative punitive practices, towards making it not only a failure of the individual offender, but also a failure of his or her [relatives]" (pp. 259-260). Given the gender distribution of these networks of informal support, this "burden of responsibility" is also most likely gendered (Codd, 2007; Comfort, 2003), adding a weighty burden to women's supportive roles. Though the outcomes of these broad critiques are unclear, individuals who the relatives of people who break the law could benefit from increased social and financial support, and from policies that recognize the burdens associated with these experiences. Although this help is much needed by these supportive individuals, its repercussions on recidivism might depend on the consequences of the zone of ambiguous tolerance that was examined above. While much research supports the 'support at all costs' hypothesis, there is some merit in considering how unwavering support could also have unintended effects.

As this thesis looked into the experiences of ambivalence among both the people who offend and those who support them, through both quantitative and qualitative methods, it points to the relevance of this concept in the study of social influence. In addition to the numerous avenues for future research that were proposed throughout this Conclusion, this relevance plays out on two fronts. First, on the theoretical level, ambivalence is a useful concept for understanding the reality of those who offend and those who support them. Moreover, as argued in Chapter 2, this concept can be integrated into the social theories of

crime and desistance. For instance, social control theorists could examine how investments made with prosocial bonds increase stakes in conformity, but also how being invested in conflicting social bonds might raise ambivalence. As demonstrated above, and as argued throughout, these theorists could also easily integrate the impacts of ambivalence among those prosocial bonds into their understanding of control. The ambivalence of relatives could also be particularly relevant to social support theory, as it highlights the difficulties and inherent contradictions that are associated with the act of supporting someone who has offended. The second point of relevance concerns risk assessment and the prediction of offending. As others have already pointed out, if the nuances and complexities of social and internal life are taken seriously, risk prediction can only remain tentative (Bushway & Paternoster, 2013). Since attitudes are considered one of the "big four" predictors of crime (Andrews & Bonta, 2006), considering their ambivalent nature might significantly complicate prediction.

Finally, ambivalence might have practical, and by extension policy, implications for the treatment and counselling provided by the criminal justice system to those who offend. Carlsson (2017) for instance argued that ambivalence is an intricate and convoluted part of desistance and, as such, "would-be desisters" (p. 339) should be helped in handling its emergence. Along similar lines, Burnett (2004), a former probation officer, has developed a thorough practical 'guide' on how ambivalence can be used to support and encourage desistance. Although counselling is not recognized as the most efficient method to reduce recidivism (see Andrews & Bonta, 2006), Burnett specifically proposes it as an appropriate method for working through the complexities and inherent contradictions of ambivalence. In fact, one-to-one encounters are presented as a perfect context in which this experience can be explored and completely acknowledged. In line with the 'support at all costs' hypothesis, Burnett further recommends providing unrelenting support even through cycles of recidivism and lulls in motivation. Findings from this study further suggest that ambivalent individuals' favourable view toward conventions could also be capitalized upon in the context of one-on-one counselling. These ideas are in line with strength-based approaches such as the Good Lives Model (Ward & Brown, 2004; Ward & Marshall, 2004).

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At its heart, this thesis has focused on the subtleties of subjective experience and social life. We have seen how, over time, many of those who offend, and their prosocial relatives, come to navigate at the confluence of social conventions and deviance. During these moments of opposition, which may extend for a few seconds or numerous years, they become entangled in contradictory emotions, feelings, and thoughts. As many criminologists long ago suggested, delving into the troubles and discomforts that are inherent to social life appears to be a worthwhile endeavour.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Qualitative interview guide – initial probe, themes and follow-up questions

ID: ____________________
Date: __________________
Length: _________________
Location: __________________

Interview Guide

1. INITIAL QUESTION:

Can you tell me about [the person who has offended] and tell me her/his story?

2. THEMES AND FOLLOW-UP PROBES:

1. **Making sense of the offending conduct of a loved one**
    a. How do you understand this conduct?
    b. How do you explain it?
    c. What does it mean to be a "delinquent"?
2. **Beyond offending – making sense of the individual**
    a. How would you describe [the person who has offended]?
    b. What do you see in [the person who has offended]?
3. **Collateral damages**
    a. How did the offending conduct affect you/still affects you?
    b. How did it affect others in your social circle?
4. **Relationship**
    a. How did you meet [the person who has offended]?
    b. How did the relationship develop?
    c. What does this relationship mean to you?

5. **Previous vicarious and/or personal experience with deviance/offending**
    a. Besides your relationship with [the person who has offended], have you ever had any other experience with deviance/delinquency? Can you tell me more about that?

3. SOCIODEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION AND SHORT QUESTIONNAIRE

How old are you?

What is the highest level of education that you have attained?

What is your current position/job?

Are you a member of *Relais Famille*? If yes, for how long have you been a member?

How long have you known [the person who has offended]?

How old is [the person who has offended]?

What is the highest level of education that [the person who has offended] has attained?

What is [the person who has offended]'s current position/job?

What is the current correctional status of [the person who has offended]?

On a scale of 1 to 3, 1 being a little and 3 being a lot, to what extent do you know [the person who has offended] related to the following aspects?

Tastes/interests/passions?

History of offending conduct?

Time schedule—work/professional level?

Time schedule—leisure level?

Social network?

Appendix B

Comparison of study variables between individuals included in and those excluded from the restricted sample

Study variables	Restricted sample (n = 1,318)[a]	Individuals excluded from restricted sample (n = 15,208)[a]	*p* value[b,c]
Individual characteristics			
Age	33.88 (10.78)	35.85 (11.99)	.000
Gender			
Female (%)	7.97	11.63	.000[d]
Male (%)	92.03	88.37	
Prior convictions	9.22 (10.49)	6.11 (8.55)	.000
Self-control deficit	.74 (.44)	.58 (.49)	.000[d]
Social bonds			
Work involvement	.65 (1.00)	.99 (1.15)	.000
Prosocial romantic situation	1.48 (.79)	1.64 (.78)	.000
Prosocial parental relations	1.24 (.83)	1.35 (.87)	.000
Prosocial familial relations	1.33 (.80)	1.51 (.81)	.000
Offending conduct among relatives	.46 (.50)	.40 (.49)	.000[d]
Friends favourable to offending	1.53 (.86)	1.29 (.82)	.000
Friend favourable to conventions	1.00 (.76)	1.23 (.81)	.000
T0 attitudes			
Attitudes favourable to offending (T0)	1.59 (.78)	1.38 (.79)	.000
0 (sample %)	5.77	11.38	
1 (sample %)	42.11	47.10	
2 (sample %)	39.76	33.66	
3 (sample %)	12.37	7.86	
Attitudes favourable to conventions (T0)	1.50 (.73)	1.78 (.75)	.000
0 (sample %)	8.65	5.67	
1 (sample %)	38.01	24.80	
2 (sample %)	47.95	55.67	
3 (sample %)	5.39	13.87	

Notes. [a] Standard deviations are based on one imputation of the dataset; [b] Wilcoxon rank-sum test to account for ordinal and non-normal variables; [c] All tests are based on one imputation of the dataset; [d] test on the equality of proportion using large sample statistics.

Appendix C

Correlation matrix of study variables among individuals from the restricted sample (n = 1,318)

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Age	1.00								
2. Gender	-.09**	1.00							
3. Prior convictions	.42**a	.11**	1.00						
4. Self-control deficits	.01	.04	.15**	1.00					
5. Work involvement	.06*	-.05†	-.14**	-.08**	1.00				
6. Prosocial romantic situation	-.14**	.01	-.12**	-.20**	.08**	1.00			
7. Prosocial parental relations	-.10**	.04	-.13**	-.13**	.11**	.13**	1.00		
8. Prosocial family relations	-.08**	.01	-.18**	-.12**	.14**	.16**	.53**	1.00	
9. Offending conduct among relatives	-.05†	-.08**	.08**	.11**	-.09**	-.01	-.11**	-.11**	1.00
10. Friends favourable to offending	-.20**	.07**	.10**	.07**	-.27**	-.05*	-.09**	-.11**	.18**
11. Friends favourable to conventions	-.12**	-.02	-.24**	-.12**	.22**	.17**	.26**	.33**	-.15**
12. Attitudes favourable to offending	-.01	.16**	.30**	.10**	-.18**	-.02	-.10**	-.17**	.09**
13. Attitudes favourable to conventions	.02	-.11**	-.24**	-.12**	.20**	.06*	.12**	.16**	-.06*

†$p < .10$; *$p < .05$; **$p < .01$ (two-tailed tests).

Notes. Spearman's rho reported, unless specified otherwise. All variables were extracted from the first assessment (T0), except for the two attitudes scale, which were extracted from the second assessment (T1). Correlations based on one imputed dataset for missing values. [a] zero-order correlation.

Appendix C con't

Correlation matrix of study variables among individuals from the restricted sample (n = 1,318)

Variables	10	11	12	13
10. Friends favourable to offending	1.00			
11. Friends favourable to conventions	-.22**	1.00		
12. Attitudes favourable to offending	.35**	-.20**	1.00	
13. Attitudes favourable to conventions	-.30**	.22**	-.57**	1.00

Appendix D

Comparison of study variables between individuals excluded from and individuals included in complete case analysis

Exogenous variables	# missing values	Individuals excluded from complete case analysis (n = 1,002)[a,b]	Individuals included in complete case analysis (n = 15,524)[b]	*p* value[c]
Individual characteristics				
Age	0	35.60 (10.10)	35.70 (10.84)	.763
Gender	0			.034[d]
Female (%)		9.28	11.47	
Male (%)		90.72	88.53	
Prior convictions	9	7.54 (10.25)	6.28 (8.65)	.000
Self-control deficits	61	.68 (.44)	.59 (.44)	.000[d]
Social bonds				
Work involvement	54	.74 (1.06)	.98 (1.15)	.000
Prosocial romantic situation	73	1.51 (.78)	1.64 (.78)	.000
Prosocial parental relations	32	1.12 (.86)	1.36 (.87)	.000
Prosocial family relations	129	1.23 (.87)	1.52 (.81)	.000
Offending conduct among relatives	458	.43 (.50)	.41 (.49)	.123[d]
Friends favourable to offending	186	1.39 (.83)	1.30 (.82)	.000
Friends favourable to conventions	61	1.03 (.77)	1.22 (.81)	.000
T0 attitudes				
Attitudes favourable to offending	26	1.57 (.78)	1.39 (.79)	.000
0 (sample %)		6.09	11.25	
1 (sample %)		42.32	46.99	
2 (sample %)		39.82	33.78	
3 (sample %)		11.78	7.99	
Attitudes favourable to conventions	28	1.62 (.77)	1.77 (.75)	.000
0 (sample %)		9.38	5.69	
1 (sample %)		27.35	25.33	
2 (sample %)		55.19	55.24	
3 (sample %)		8.08	13.73	

Notes. Means and standard deviations reported, unless otherwise specified. [a] one set of imputed data was used to replace missing values for individuals who would have been excluded from complete case analysis; [b] standard deviations are based on one imputation of the dataset; [c] Wilcoxon rank-sum test to account for ordinal and non-normal variables; [d] test on the equality of proportion using large sample statistics.

Appendix E

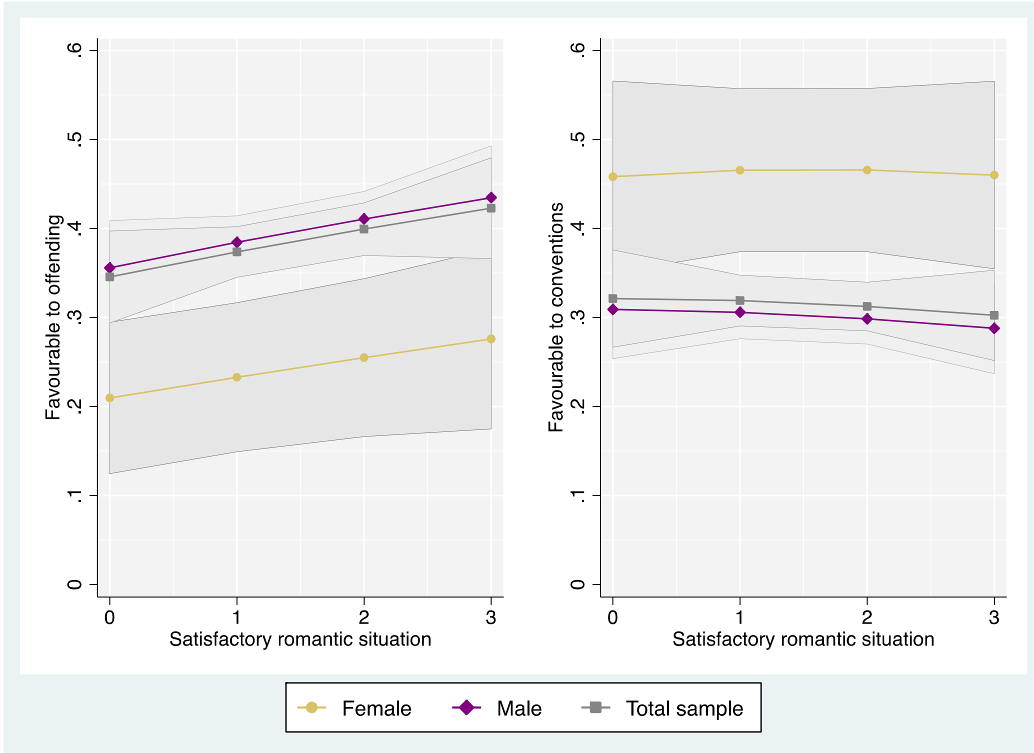
Means and standard deviations of study variables among individuals adhering to each attitudinal positioning in the total sample (*N* = 16,526)

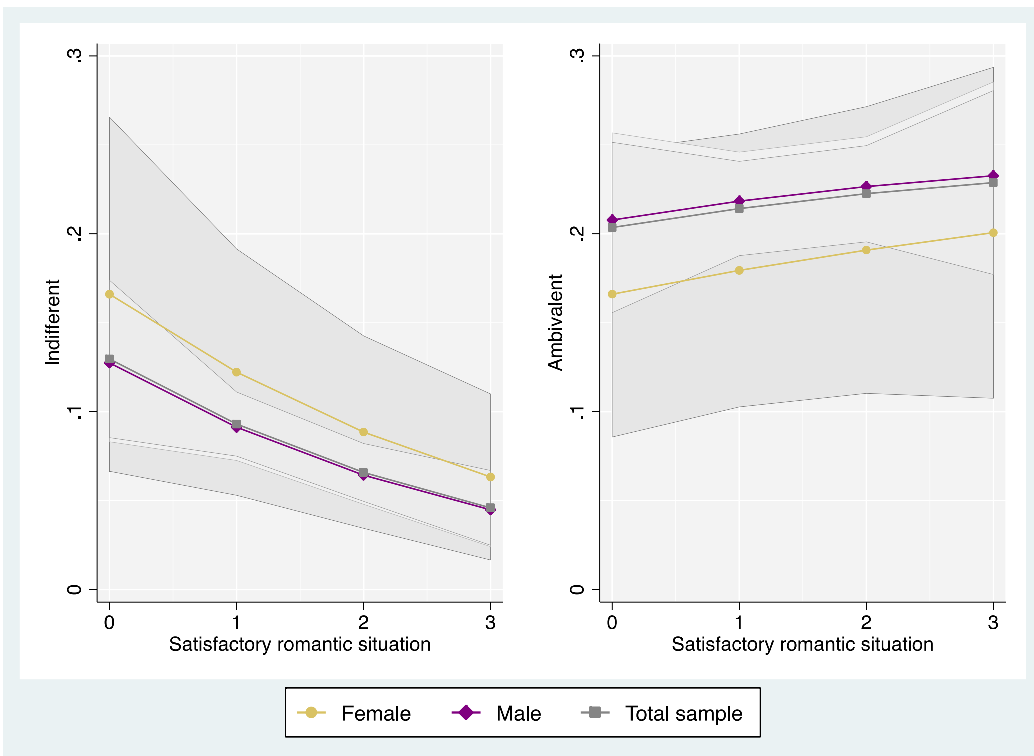
Study variables	Favourable to offending[a]	Favourable to conventions[a]	Indifferent[a]	Ambivalent[a]
Age	35.39 (11.33)	35.89 (12.27)	35.95 (11.85)	35.44 (11.65)
Gender				
Female (%)	6.15	14.50	11.20	9.52
Male (%)	93.85	85.50	88.80	90.48
Self-control deficits	.74 (.43)	.49 (.50)	.67 (.47)	.63 (.48)
Prior convictions	10.95 (11.54)	3.82 (5.93)	6.26 (8.01)	7.39 (8.81)
Work involvement	.45 (.89)	1.26 (1.18)	.79 (1.04)	.88 (1.11)
Prosocial romantic situation	1.46 (.81)	1.73 (.77)	1.52 (.76)	1.62 (.77)
Prosocial parental relations	1.05 (.82)	1.51 (.88)	1.27 (.81)	1.32 (.83)
Prosocial familial relations	1.15 (.82)	1.69 (.78)	1.41 (.75)	1.48 (.78)
Offending conduct among relatives	.52 (.50)	.34 (.47)	.42 (.49)	.44 (.50)
Friends favourable to offending	1.81 (.83)	1.02 (.73)	1.29 (.70)	1.45 (.76)
Friends favourable to conventions	.79 (.68)	1.44 (.82)	1.11 (.69)	1.15 (.74)
Number of individuals[b]	3,854 (23.32)	8,194 (49.58)	1,331 (8.05)	3,147 (19.04)

Notes. [a] Standard deviations are based on one imputation of the dataset; [b] percentages in parentheses.

Appendix F

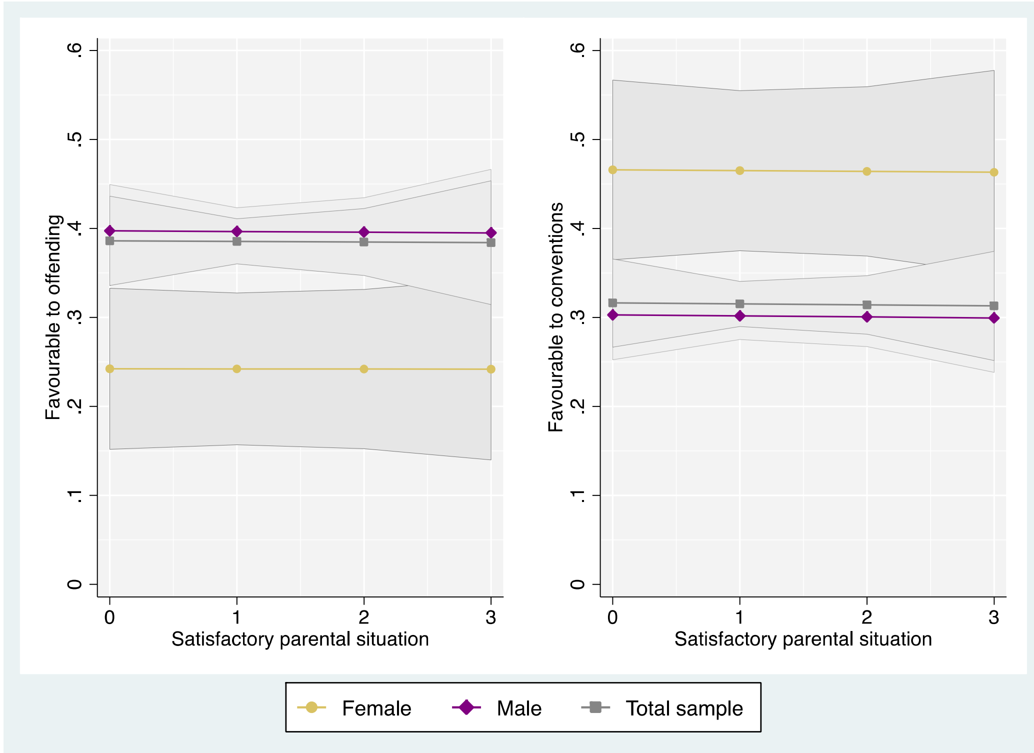
Impact of romantic situation on the predicted probability attitudinal position (n=1,318)

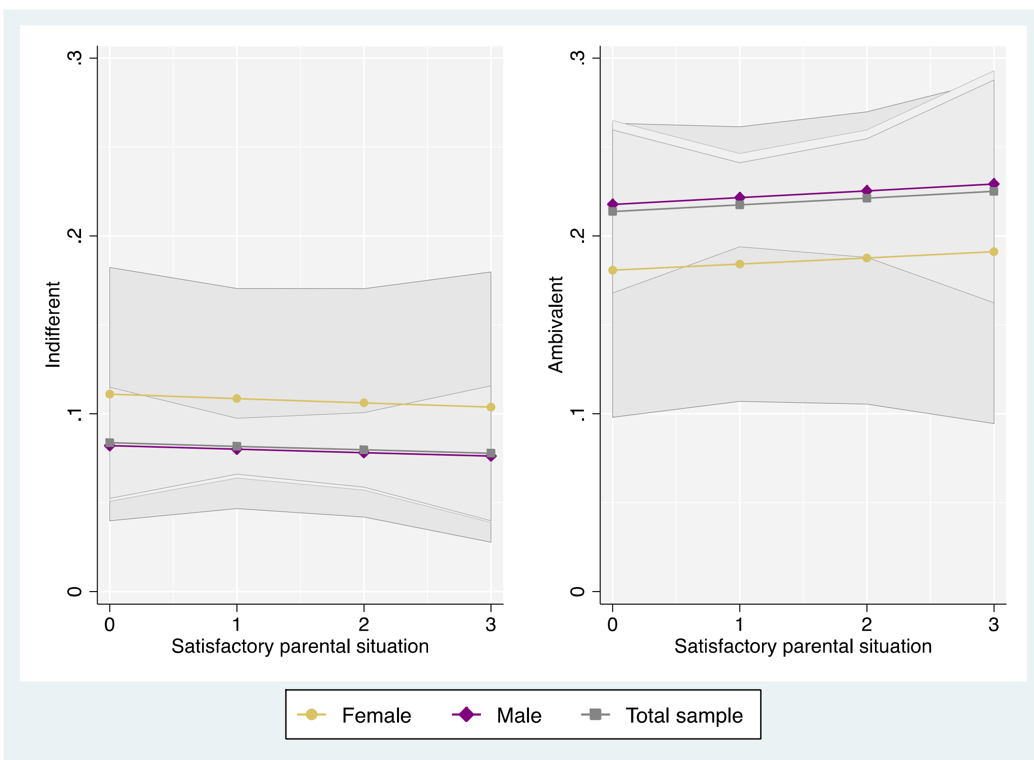




Appendix G

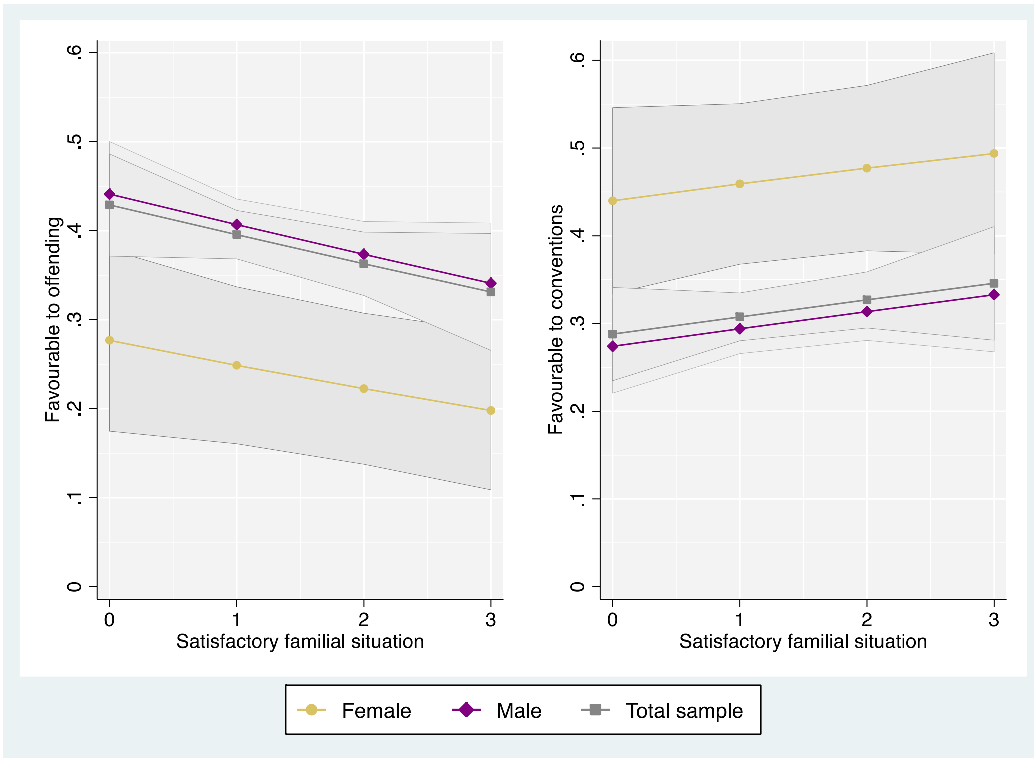
Impact of parent relations on the predicted probability of attitudinal position (n = 1,318)

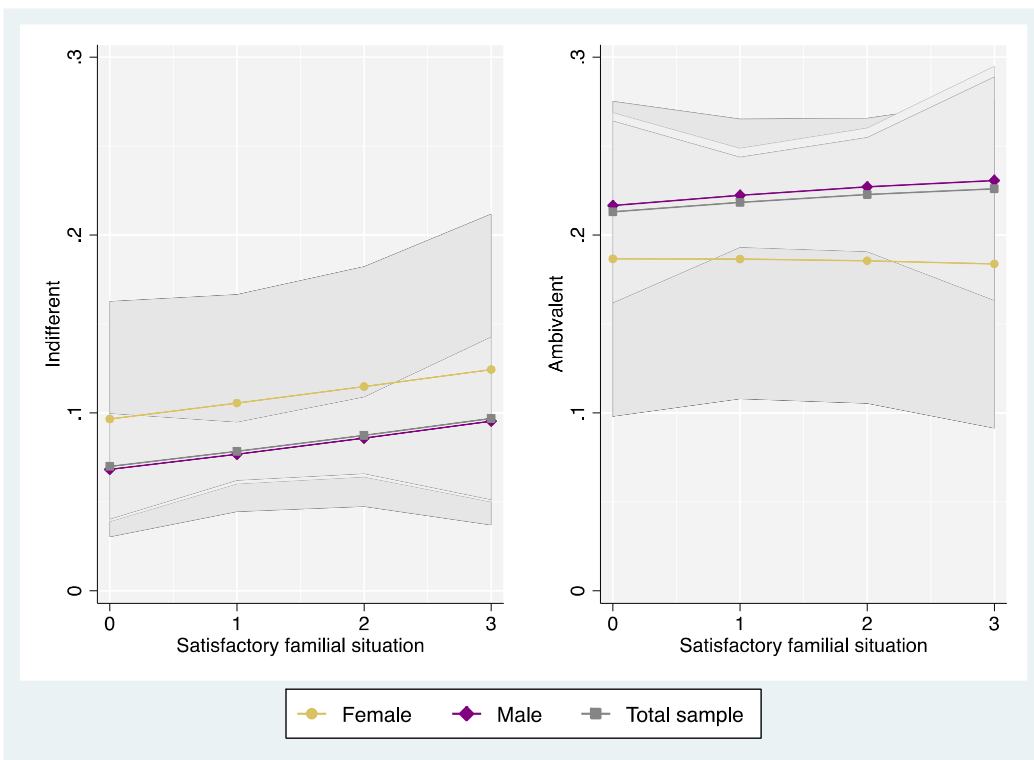




Appendix H

Impact of family relations on the predicted probability of attitudinal position (n = 1,318)





Appendix I

Impact of offending among kin on the probability of attitudinal position (n = 1,318)