"Feeling like Rapunzel, You Know?": A Narrative Inquiry of Youth, Boredom, and Deviance

by

Carolina Gutierrez Cadavid

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Examining Committee:

Chair of Examining Committee	Dr. Carla Cesaroni
Research Supervisor	Dr. Tyler Frederick
Examining Committee Member	Dr. Christopher O'Connor
Thesis Examiner	Dr. Steven Downing

The above committee determined that the thesis is acceptable in form and content and that a satisfactory knowledge of the field covered by the thesis was demonstrated by the candidate during an oral examination. A signed copy of the Certificate of Approval is available from the School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies.

Abstract

In a late modern society, the presence of placelessness and meaninglessness can be overwhelming to individuals, especially youth. Jock Young's theory of human behaviour suggests that individuals engage in crime to rid themselves of boredom. Understanding the role that boredom plays in criminal offending is important, as it can help uncover how youth choose to spend their time and who they spend their time with. By using a narrative storytelling approach of inquiry, this thesis focuses on the lived experiences of youth collected by virtual interviews with 16 university students. An emphasis for this research is placed on how youth recall, examine, and reflect on their lived experiences with boredom, leisure time, and their environment. Findings from this research suggest that boredom is common among youth and can lead to various behavioural outcomes.

Keywords: youth; boredom; deviance; narrative inquiry; late modernity

Author's Declaration

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CAROLINA GUTIERREZ

Statement of Contributions

I hereby certify that I am the sole author of this thesis and that no part of this thesis has been published or submitted for publication. I have used standard referencing practices to acknowledge ideas, research techniques, or other materials that belong to others. Furthermore, I hereby certify that I am the sole source of the creative works and/or inventive knowledge described in this thesis.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Context

Steinmetz et al. (2017) state "there is perhaps no experience in late modernity more universal than boredom" (p. 342). Boredom has been described as a state of mind or feeling that is experienced by rich and poor, young and old (Dursun, 2016). Specifically, boredom is typically considered a routine feature of adolescence (Weybright et al., 2019). Understanding the role that boredom plays in criminal offending and other types of youth deviance is important to understand, as it can aid in shedding light on how youth choose to spend their time. More recent research has started to examine the impact of boredom, specifically on youth and its behavioural outcomes (e.g., Newton, 2001; Wegner, 2011). However, more in-depth qualitative research that highlights how youth can reflect on their past behaviours associated with boredom is needed. Boredom is an academically neglected topic (Bench & Lench, 2013; Goldberg et al., 2011). Most of the existing research pertaining to boredom has been conducted using the Boredom Proneness Scale (Farmer & Sundberg, 1986) or a related quantitative measure. The Boredom Proneness Scale, is composed of a set of questions that work to measure how an individual can become bored or loses interest, rather than more in-depth qualitative explorations that aim to understand the meaning behind boredom and boredom as an experience or signal (Fahlman et al., 2013).

This thesis research provides insight of how boredom feels and its outcomes while understanding the associations between the lifestyles of youth, boredom, leisure time in their daily surroundings, and the choices they make that can possibly lead them to a moment or reoccurring involvement in crime. As noted by Katz (1988), the lived experiences and sensuality of criminality lays the foreground for understanding the dynamics of an offender's choices. While attempting to understand how boredom can possibly lead to deviant behavioural choices

and outcomes, the overarching purpose of this study is to explore and understand any possible behaviours, feelings, and experiences, which can revolve around boredom, that can be criminal, deviant, or more socially acceptable.

Justification

Being able to clearly define boredom and its associated behavioural implications is important for understanding the life choices that young people make for themselves. Elpidorou (2017) highlights that there are six manners in which boredom can negatively impact personal and moral development: negative affect and subjective well-being, life satisfaction, lack of meaning in life, potentially harmful conduct, problematic social relationships, and reduced autonomy. Thus, as Elpidorou (2017) emphasizes, boredom plays a pivotal role in personal affect and distribution of leisure time. What is worrisome is that youth boredom has been increasing among adolescents, which can lead to risky behaviours (Weybright et al., 2019). For example, findings from Weybright et al.'s (2019) almost decade long cross-sectional U.S. based study on historical trending of self-reported boredom by youth has shown that boredom increases amongst adolescent between the ages of 14 to 18 years of age. Specifically, boredom increases greatly amongst female adolescents and that boredom peaks for male adolescents when they are around 16 years old (Weybright et al., 2019). Additionally, Weybright et al. (2019) suggest that boredom is associated with sensation seeking tendencies. Further, Margo (2008) notes that boredom may lead youth to seek activities that will lead to some form of excitement, which can impact the choices they make and what they choose to do with their time. On a broader level, Katz (1988) asserts that criminals seek stimuli, excitement, and a sensual experience that can come from crime, which can relate to the idea of boredom acting as a signal for some form of excitement. Similarly, Young (2007) argues that late modernity creates a culture of

preoccupation, meaning that people are overly accustomed to wanting excitement or to be occupied when there is unstructured time. This culture of preoccupation may lead individuals to deviate from acceptable norms of conduct in order to feel some form of excitement apart from everyday mundane life.

In addition, it is important to understand the relationship between boredom and the socioeconomic class that a youth belongs to. For example, Malizia (2018) highlights that boredom proneness and lack of daytime activities are significant predictors of youth deviance. A study conducted by Mori (2002), which was commissioned by Nestle and the Kids Clubs Network, found that teenagers believe individuals their own age commit crimes because they have nothing to do and nowhere to go, which is connected to boredom. Certain youth who have nothing to do and nowhere to go, typically do not have access to youth facilities and decide to spend their time on the streets (Fitch, 2009). Additional research, as Elpidorou (2017) suggests, should be directed at uncovering how a youth's socioeconomic status influences how they decide to spend their free time in relation to boredom. Young (2007) notes that late modernity highly impacts youth and those within the lower and middle socioeconomic classes. Young (2007) also acknowledges that boredom is at the front of late modernity and acts as a signal that reaffirms that a void needs to be filled with some form of excitement (see also Ferrell, 2004).

In summary, boredom is a research area that lacks abundant literature; however, boredom itself holds a variety of related factors that can influence behavioural outcomes. It is important to consider how boredom affects behavioural outcomes of youth, such as risky or criminal behaviours. Theorists such as Katz (1988) and Young (2007) suggest that individuals engage in crime to fulfill a need for excitement in a manner that would not be acceptable in society. Moreover, the retrospective approach of this thesis nicely allows for one to understand and

reflect on their past, present, and future. Most existing research on youth boredom does not utilize a retrospective approach, thus this research places importance on youth being able to reflect and retell their lived experiences.

Guiding Questions

This thesis is guided by the following research questions:

- How do young people reflect on boredom, leisure time, and peer relationships as an influence on past behaviours?

- How does boredom, unstructured leisure time, and peer relationships influence deviance and crime from adolescence to young adulthood?

- In relation to boredom, does a young person's environment and socioeconomic status matter in terms of their behavioural outcomes?

- What life changes are important during the maturation process of youth that can potentially aggravate or alleviate the presence or experience of boredom?

- Does late modernity, particularly feelings of placelessness and meaninglessness in connection with boredom, within a constantly changing society, influence what youth can do with their time? If so, how?

- In connection with boredom, how and when can crime and deviance be fun for youth?

Thesis Overview

This chapter has provided a general discussion of boredom, justifications for this research, and introduced the guiding questions of this thesis. Following this is chapter two, the literature review, which provides a broad look at the conceptualization of boredom and its various aspects, the shared connection between youth, boredom, deviance, and crime, as well as the gaps in the existing literature on boredom. Chapter three is the theory chapter, which

explores the theoretical frameworks, Newton's (2001) boredom theory of youth criminality and Young's (2007) theory of human behaviour in a late modern period. Chapter four, the methodological approach, explains how semi-structured qualitative interviews along with photograph elicitation are used within this thesis research. In chapter five, the findings, participant characteristics and participant reflections from the narrative interviews are examined. In chapter six of this thesis, a discussion of the participants' reflections occurs to understand how boredom experienced by youth, in conjunction with other various factors, influences their behavioural outcomes. Following this discussion, the limitations of the study, future directions for further research, and a conclusion takes place.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

While there is an abundant amount of existing literature and academic research on the subject of juvenile delinquency, what existing literature and academic research lacks a focus on is youth boredom. In this chapter, I first provide an understanding of how boredom is defined by past and current scholars and the connection boredom has to offenses committed by youth. Next, I present a review of the conceptualization of boredom and its key concepts. What follows after is a presentation of an integrated working definition of boredom. Following this, a review of the shared connection between youth, boredom, deviance, and crime, as well as the limited existing qualitative research surrounding boredom and the gaps in existing literature on boredom will be examined.

The Conceptualization of Boredom

Boredom has been defined in various distinct manners in academic literature, which makes the conceptualization, comprehension, and study of it challenging (Damrad-Frye & Laird, 1989; Martin et al., 2006; Goldberg et al., 2011). Bench and Lench (2013) note that defining

boredom is a difficult task, and as to why people experience boredom is still not fully understood. Greenson (1953) acknowledges that boredom is easier to describe than to define, while Farmer and Sunderberg (1986) describe boredom as a common emotion experienced by all. However, a standardized, operational definition of boredom has yet to come to existence and be agreed upon by the larger community of researchers. Boredom research has made steps towards creating a set definition by inducing boredom within studies; however, there is still active discourse as to what boredom truly is and what its markers are to signify 'true' boredom (Raffaelli et al., 2018). From a review of the existing literature, there appears to be two main ways that boredom is conceptualized: as cognitive and behavioural and as an emotion.

Cognitive and Behavioural Perspectives of Boredom

Lipps (1903) defined one of the first psychodynamic definitions of boredom, which understood that "boredom is a feeling of unpleasure arising out of a conflict between a need for intense mental activity and lack of incitement to it or inability to be incited" (as cited in Eastwood et al., 2012, p. 483). From Lipps' definition, we can see that boredom can be viewed from two approaches, cognitive and emotional; discussion on the latter will occur in the following section. Research on cognitive approaches to boredom indicate that the experience of boredom involves recognizing one's cognitive attention or lack thereof (Eastwood et al., 2012), which could suggest that repetitious and dull situations and actions can lead to boredom (Hill & Perkins, 1985). Speaking more to Eastwood et al.'s (2012) point of recognizing boredom, boredom itself can act as a signal and alerts an individual that they are not satisfied or being stimulated (Newton, 2001; Westgate, 2019). In contrast to this, Bench and Lench (2013) propose that boredom should be viewed as an absence of a signal to continue to be engaged. This signal acts as a recognition of a stimulus as being either a potential threat or reward, both require

increased attention from the individual (Bench & Lench, 2013). Building off of Lipps' definition

of boredom, Fenichel (1935) adds that one's lack of incitement or inability to be incited is due to

a "lack of stimulation or a state of mind preventing the bored individual from selecting or

engaging in a stimulating activity" (as cited in Raffaelli et al., 2018, p. 2452). Killingsworth and

Gilbert (2010) found that when people are thinking about what is not happening during the

activity they are engaged in or what is happening currently, they typically become unhappy.

Therefore, to be bored from a psychodynamic perspective, is for an individual to long for activity

yet be unaware of what it is they want and to look for outside help with their current situation

(Eastwood et al., 2012).

Existing research has shown that there are a few attributes associated with boredom

through the cognitive perspective. Factors in this process include brain activity, misperception of

time, stimulation, and maturation. Boredom affects one's perception of time, with the potential

for one to feel like time is standing still or has passed quickly when it has not (Eastwood et al.,

2012; Greenson, 1953; London & Monello, 1974). Perone et al. (2019) examined activity levels

in the left and right frontal brain quadrants, one becomes more active when it is searching for

stimulation, and the other one becomes more active when there is a negative reaction or emotion,

respectively. Perone et al.'s (2019) research highlights that those who are more prone to being

bored experience more activity in the right frontal brain, meaning that they do not cope well with

boredom. Goldberg and Danckert (2013) found a positive relationship between boredom

proneness and depression amongst individuals, but the relationship is stronger amongst those

who have suffered from a moderate to severe brain injury. Goldberg and Danckert (2013)

findings suggest that a failure to recognize external stimuli as relevant to an individual and

therefore worthy of their attention is what causes boredom. Isacesu et al. (2017) suggest an

immature frontal brain cortex can lead an individual to experience boredom. Individuals with a mature frontal cortex hold higher levels of attention control and are less likely to remove themselves from their environment and find themselves bored (Isacescu et al., 2017).

This research on brain structure introduces the idea that certain individuals are more prone to boredom than others, thus viewing boredom as a behavioural trait (Farmer & Sundberg, 1986; Goldberg & Danckert, 2013; Vodanovich, 2003). For example, Farmer & Sundberg (1986) cite boredom as a predisposition some individuals have that holds important individual differences. From Farmer and Sundberg's (1986) work came the Boredom Proneness Scale, a 28-item scale that was developed in response to fill the research gap on boredom in the fields of psychology, education, and industry. Farmer and Sundberg's (1986) study utilized the Boredom Proneness Scale, which led to results that have shown that those who are prone to boredom are more likely to experience distractibility (as well as depression, loneliness, and hopelessness – to various degrees), perceive common tasks as requiring more effort than usual, and are unlikely to be motivated or possess autonomous orientation (p. 14).

Additionally, existing research on boredom as a behaviour has shown that boredom can lead to negative (Dahlen et al., 2005; Lambie & Randell, 2011; Mercer & Eastwood, 2010; Tze et al., 2015) and positive behavioural outcomes (Harris, 2000; Loukidou et al., 2009). Such negative behavioural outcomes include risk-taking or deviant behaviours like engaging in drug use (Lee et al., 2007), unsafe sexual intercourse (Miller et al., 2014), and academic truancy (Mann and Robinson, 2009). On that latter negative behaviour, Mann and Robinson (2009) found that 59% of students they surveyed said lectures are boring 50% of the time they are in class which leads them to engage in truancy.

It is common for most to assume negative behaviours emerge from boredom, however positive behaviours as a result of boredom can occur as well. Such positive behaviours can be moments of reflection (Carroll et al., 2010), relaxation (Harris, 2000), instances of turning points in one's life (Jervis et al., 2003), and spurs of creativity (Harris, 2000; Mann & Cadman, 2014). For example, Jervis et al. (2003) had a study participant express that they got bored of their substance abuse and decided to better their life by becoming sober and enrolling back into school (p. 48). Also, while it may seem peculiar as to how boredom can lead to creativity, Mann and Cadman's (2014) research shows that individuals who completed mundane and boring tasks were found to exhibit more levels of creativity when completing a creative task that followed the boring task. Thus, if we are able to better understand the manner in which to utilize boredom to our advantage, positive behavioural outcomes can be a strong possibility over negative ones.

In addition to the psychological research on boredom focusing on cognitive and behavioural approaches to boredom, such research also encompasses an environmental perspective to boredom. Mikulas and Vodanovich (1993) and Smith (1981) understand boredom to be a negative feeling that possesses environmental traits. Csikszentmihalyi (1990) asserts that meaning and interest in one's environment should define boredom (as cited in Binnema, 2004). Similarly, Vodanovich states that people who are more likely to become bored do not see their environments as rich or lively (as cited by Gosline, 2007). For example, Liam Payne from the popular British/Irish boy band One Direction, recalled a time early in the band's career where they were removed from a hotel in England after throwing plates out a hotel room window (Baxter, 2020). The band's management had placed them in a hotel room, told them not to leave and thus, boredom ensued amongst the five teenagers (Baxter, 2020). Baxter's argument is that this deviant incident can be linked to the qualities of the environment. The conceptualization of

boredom through a cognitive and behavioural perspective, which includes a brief environmental view has been outlined. Now, the second manner that boredom is conceptualized through is an emotional perspective, which will be discussed in the following section.

Emotional Aspect of Boredom

Another perspective on boredom is to view it as an emotional state (e.g., Izard, 1977; Scherer, 1984). Research on boredom as a felt emotion has indicated that it encompasses low and high arousal emotions, the former would consist of sadness while the latter would consist of frustration (Harasymchuk & Fehr, 2010). To further understand boredom under the concept of arousal, it has been defined by Shaw (1996) as "a state of under stimulation, under arousal, lack of momentum, or a lack of psychological involvement associated with dissatisfaction in the task situation" (as cited in Belton & Priyadharshini, 2007, p. 580). Most research focuses on boredom as an overall low arousal state, consisting of an unpleasant feeling with little to no interest or challenges one can experience (Geiwitz, 1966; Mikulas & Vodanovich, 1993; O'Hanlon, 1981).

Within this emotional perspective on boredom, there is a collection of work that considers the situations and experiences that can cause that negative emotional state (Newton, 2001; Westgate, 2019). Barbalet (1999) suggests that boredom arises from an emotional state that indicates some form of absence in meaning in one's current situation. On this notion, van Hooff & van Hooft (2016) view boredom as an emotion that interacts with routine activities, such activities can involve tasks that feel useless, meaningless, and unchallenging (van Hooft and van Hooff, 2018; van Tilburg & Igou, 2017; see also van Tilburg & Igou (2011) and van Tilburg et al. (2019). Similarly, Eastwood et al. (2012) note that bored people will attempt to amuse themselves. Further explained, since boredom can occur in any situation that youth cannot

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change or have any control over, youth often feel somewhat vulnerable to the situation, and this can result in negative outward behaviours and negative emotions (Newton, 2001).

Jumping from boredom being felt in situations that lack meaning and usefulness resulting in a negative emotional state, Fenichel (1951) argues boredom should be recognized as a feeling that one gets when they are not doing what they want to be doing. In this case, boredom acts as a signal that current activities are unsatisfactory (Bench & Lench, 2019; Westgate, 2019). To rid oneself from these unsatisfactory activities, Bench and Lench (2019) contend that individuals enter a "seeking state" where they seek out new experiences that result in new emotional responses (pp. 243-244). These emotional responses can either be positive (e.g., happiness, success, relief) or negative (e.g., anger, sadness, anxiety) (Bench & Lench, 2019). What remains unknown, based upon if boredom is an overall emotion or state, is how boredom comes to be and the outcomes of boredom. Thus, it can be suggested that boredom can arise for a variety of reasons and has been identified as a signal, feeling, emotion, and state. Hinting at the possibility for an integrated definition of boredom, this possibility is presented and explained in the following section.

Working Definition of Boredom

Having a working definition of boredom is valuable for exploring the possible behavioural outcomes of boredom. Eastwood et al. (2012) and Wegner (2011) have definitions of boredom that are useful for this research. One of the most developed and accepted definitions of boredom is by Eastwood et al. (2012), who define boredom as:

> the aversive state that occurs when we (a) are not able to successfully engage attention
> with internal (e.g., thoughts or feelings) or external (e.g., environmental stimuli)
> information required for participating in satisfying activity, (b) are focused on the fact

that we are not able to engage attention and participate in satisfying activity, and (c)

attribute the cause of our aversive state to the environment. (p. 482)

Eastwood et al.'s (2012) definition emphasizes the role of the environment and the

inability to have one's attention engaged. Wegner's (2011) definition of boredom is also useful.

Wegner (2011) defines boredom as: "a complex phenomenon that is described as anxiety about

the absence of meaning or loss of purpose in an activity or situation, accompanied by feelings of

dissatisfaction, irritability, restlessness, stress, and a sense of entrapment" (p. 19). Wegner's

(2011) definition is useful because it emphasizes the loss of meaning and the association of

negative feelings.

While Eastwood et al. (2012) and Wegner (2011) possess similarities and differences

with their definitions, neither definition of boredom is the widely agreed-upon definition.

Raffaelli et al. (2018) note that the term 'boredom' is used diversely, proving difficult to

examine and hold reliable throughout all studies that use the term (p. 2460). Since there is no

confirmed or fully agreed upon definition of boredom or manner on how to study boredom, it is

suggested that a great focus should be placed on what individuals *themselves* describe it to be,

and most importantly, what its outcomes are for each individual. As stated by Newton (2001):

Although it is important that the meaning of boredom be established, we must not

however get bogged down with its contradictions or lose sight of what it is we as

researchers are trying to understand and eventually trying to reduce. The most significant

aspect of boredom that needs to be researched and understood is the effect of boredom

rather than its meaning. (p. 42)

The complexity behind the meaning of boredom should continue to be studied (Newton, 2001);

however, what is of major importance for this thesis is trying to understand the behavioural

outcomes of boredom from a youth's perspective. What will now follow is an overview of what is known about the connection between boredom, crime, and deviance based on relevant research findings.

Youth, Boredom, Deviance and Crime Connection

For the purpose of this thesis, it is important to understand how youth respond behaviourally to boredom, including possible criminal and deviant behaviour. Freeman (1993) highlights that young people do not like being bored and will try to do anything to avoid boredom, as they view it as an unpleasant experience (as cited in Newton 2001, p. 48). For example, Anderson et al.'s (2010) survey of English and Welsh youth that committed recent offences found that boredom was the most common circumstance as to why they committed such offences. Additionally, the Offending, Crime, and Justice Survey found that the main motivation for being involved in criminal damage was boredom, followed by the reasoning 'for the buzz' (as cited in Simmill-Binning et al., 2007). Newton (2001) found that youth who are viewed as high sensation seekers are more likely to experience boredom and crime (p. 61) (also see Katz, 1988).

Moreover, Newton's (2001) document analysis suggests that youth are highly susceptible to boredom, which is worrisome as youth crimes tend to peak between the ages of 18 through 20. Boredom can lead youth to engage in risk-taking behaviour or serious acts of crimes (Bengtsson, 2012; Vivian & Schnierer, 2010), such as assault or homicide. In 2012, six teenagers were charged with assault after beating a man told police it was because they were bored (Perry, 2014). A year later, two other teenagers were charged with murder after shooting a person, simply because they were bored on their summer vacation (The Associated Press, 2013). With regard to risk-taking behaviour, such behaviour is an alternative to youth doing nothing and can alleviate boredom, yet it may lead to conflict and further risk-taking behaviour (Barbalet, 1999;

Bengtsson, 2012; Biolocati et al., 2018; Newberry & Duncan, 2006). Bengtsson (2012) argues that the relationship between risk-taking and boredom is cyclical yet problematic, as youth are creating action in their lives through risk-taking to cease boredom. When the risk-taking action ends, boredom commences, youth resort to risk-taking again, and the cycle continues (Bengtsson, 2012). Therefore, based on the aforementioned research findings, a relationship between boredom and youth crime and deviance does exist and has been exemplified in research studies and real-life events.

Youth, Boredom, Socioeconomic Status, and Behavioural Outcomes

An important theme in the research on the connection between boredom and deviance is the role of socioeconomic status. Poverty tends to produce factors that affect how youth can be or are raised (Birckhead, 2012). Webster and Kingston (2014) have found that high levels of poverty are linked to increased levels of negative behaviours, like criminality, among youth. The absence or presence of structure within a youth's daily activities and leisure time can be dependent on their socioeconomic status. For example, youth who belong within a higher socioeconomic status may have more structured activities and other positive factors in their lives that help to prevent boredom, unstructured leisure time, and negative peer relationships (Martz et al., 2016). Additionally, Martz et al. (2016) found a link between high socioeconomic status of youth and boredom, where youth from a high socioeconomic background experienced low levels of boredom. This is due to parents having more disposable income to put towards their children to be involved in structured activities to avoid unstructured leisure time (Martz et al., 2016). Conversely, Jonsson (2001) highlights that youth from a higher socioeconomic status can experience high levels of restlessness and boredom, which can lead to deviant and criminal acts. For example, Jonsson (2001) found that acts of arson, vandalism, and theft are being committed

in rich gated suburban communities where upper-class youth reside. It is suggested that young people from a higher socioeconomic class can at times feel alienated from their parents and the rest of society which can lead to negative behavioural outcomes. Overall, it is important to understand the complex relationship between one's socioeconomic status and how it impacts one's life and propensity toward boredom.

Qualitative Perspective on Youth Boredom and Deviance

It is uncommon to find qualitative research within the field of boredom research. Wegner's (2011) in-depth qualitative work focused on the connection between youth boredom and risky behaviours, youth with a low socioeconomic status, and sought to understand environmental influences. Wegner's (2011) research explored how youth narrated their involvement in risk-taking activities, utilizing a narrative approach to interview youth in focus groups (age range 13 to 20) in South Africa. A narrative approach to storytelling through photographs was employed, Wegner (2011) asked the youth participants to bring pictures from direct moments where they were having fun, which allowed for an examination of their environment and peer groups. Wegner's (2011) research found that boredom is a concern as it can result from a youth's environment. As well, Wegner (2011) found that a lack of structure in a youth's life can lead to boredom. The presence of boredom can lead to delinquency, as a relationship between delinquency and unsupervised social and leisure activities with peers exists (Agnew & Petersen, 1989). Ultimately, Wegner's (2011) research illustrates a need for more qualitative exploration into the realm of youth boredom and deviance.

Gaps in Literature

Examining research on boredom has revealed a number of gaps in the literature. Previous literature primarily examines boredom as a trait and utilizes quantitative methodologies. To date,

research has failed to fully consider narrative approaches to understanding youth boredom and to examine how youth describe and recall their own experiences with boredom, with the exception of the Wegner (2011) study.

This thesis attempts to branch off of Wegner's (2011) study and fill in the gaps left behind from existing youth boredom research. Like Wegner's (2011) study, this thesis focuses on a youth's environment to determine if it is a factor in youth behavioural outcomes but makes a contribution by incorporating a retrospective approach and providing a Canadian perspective.

In building off of Wegner's (2011) research, this thesis considers a wider range of socioeconomic backgrounds by not exclusively recruiting among low socioeconomic youth. Second, Wegner's (2011) research solely focused on 'leisure boredom', rather than my focus on boredom in a wider range overall. Third, a major focus of Wegner (2011) was between boredom and 'risk behaviour,' with no actual focus on the direct connection between boredom and criminal, deviant, or more socially acceptable behaviours. Unlike Wegner (2011), this thesis explores behaviours, feelings, and experiences (either criminal, deviant, or more socially acceptable) that revolve around boredom. Lastly, it is important to note that Wegner (2011) has no direct connection to criminological theories. This thesis makes a contribution by drawing connections to criminological theories. The next section discusses these guiding theoretical perspectives.

Chapter 3: Theory

One of the aims of this thesis is to engage in an inductive process of theory building that draws from previous theoretical insights (Charmaz, 2011). In this chapter, the two theories that are used to guide this thesis research and help answer the previously mentioned guiding research questions are Newton's (2001) boredom theory of youth criminality and Young's (2007) theory

of human behaviour in a late modern period. Within the discussion of Young's (2007) theory of human behaviour, other works from scholars that have similar perspectives to Young (2007) are explored. What will first be examined is Newton's (2001) boredom theory of youth criminality.

A Boredom Theory of Youth Criminality

Newton (2001) presents a strong sociological argument that focuses on the direct connection between boredom and youth crime, which stresses the importance of boredom as a major social factor that has been ignored across disciplines. Newton (2001) suggests that boredom should be "seen as a multidimensional construct which can be described as an emotion, an adverse drive, a negative transitory state, or even perceived as a protective shield against criticism, ridicule or failure" (p. 73). Newton's (2001) theory suggests that boredom leads to the direct and indirect occurrence of criminal acts, as she has found that an inability to find employment, engagement in monotonous activity, one's presence in a dull environment, having a desire to challenge social norms, finding one's self in a spur of the moment with friends, the absence of desirable leisure activities, a predisposition to sensation-seeking behaviour can all lead to boredom amongst youth. Newton's theory is useful for a number of reasons. First, Newton (2001) argues that boredom should be seen as an *integration* of feeling, a transitory state, a situation, and the need for action or some form of attention. This approach is in line with my broad working definition of boredom as a negative cognitive and emotional state, and as a dull meaninglessness situation and/or feeling that can be linked to certain behavioural outcomes. Additionally, Newton's broad view of boredom pushed this thesis to ask young people to offer their own outlook on boredom and describe the specific way that boredom is experienced.

Second, drawing from the criminological research, Newton (2001) outlines a valuable set of propositions about the connection between boredom and youth crime: criminal behaviour is

learned from others, sensation seeking personalities are predisposed to drift towards activities that create arousal, individuals will tend to drift in and out of crime, boredom and deviance typically occur during school hours and leisure time, and that most youth will grow out of criminality as a result of maturation (p. 27). This thesis explores these propositions by utilizing a reflection based narrative approach to understand how boredom, unstructured leisure time, and peer relationships influence crime and deviance during adolescence through a youth perspective.

A third element of Newton's (2001) integrated criminological approach that is important to this thesis is Newton's views on the role of poverty and socioeconomic status. She argues that "some individuals may engage in criminal acts to either finance their entertainment or *to act as entertainment in itself*" (p. 72). In addition to some individuals engaging in crime to fund their entertainment or act as their entertainment itself, Newton's (2001) theory notes that some individuals in society drift towards criminality as their lives are filled with uncertainty and a general sense of meaninglessness. This argument draws our attention to how young people with access to fewer resources might be particularly prone to boredom. However, although this perspective is valuable, Newton's (2001) work does not give much consideration to upper and middle class youth. Thus, raising the question about the dynamics between the varying classes. This thesis explores in more detail how varied class backgrounds and access to resources shapes the possible behavioural outcomes in relation to boredom, which can include crime and deviance, as suggested by Newton's (2001) theory. What follows next is a discussion of scholarly work that discusses the impact of a late modern period in relation to boredom and behavioural outcomes of boredom.

Perspectives on Late Modernity and Boredom

This thesis also draws from a range of unique perspectives that directly or indirectly are focused on the impact of late modernity on young people and crime as a means of reducing boredom and finding meaning during this period. The late modern period is said to be unique because while consumerism and modes of endless amounts of entertainment and buzz have increased, so has boredom (Steinmetz et al., 2017). As Steinmetz et al. (2017) note, "boredom is therefore not only an affect, but a site of conflict between (1) what is and what could be as well as (2) autonomy and power. Boredom therefore creates moments pregnant with the potential for transgression" (p. 355). Within this context, drawing from the works of Katz (1988), Ferrell (2004), and primarily Young (2007), this thesis takes seriously the idea that crime can be a source of sensation seeking, fun, and meaning for youth. To date, minimal research has directly considered how late modernity influences what young people can do with their time. Thus, it can be suggested that some youth who are committing crimes are bored and drift in and out of delinquency for fun, out of a need or for both reasons. Further, the impact of boredom is not exclusive to young people experiencing poverty. Drawing from the work of Bernstein (1975) and Ferrell (2004), youth who are financially stable and conform to most social norms may still commit crime for fun and the need of doing something different from their structured mainstream life. The remainder of this section explores these theorists and perspectives in more detail.

Bernstein (1975) is one of the first theorists to focus on these late modern dynamics around boredom. In relation to boredom, Bernstein (1975) argues how the feeling of boredom even exists in an increasingly exciting world. Bernstein's (1975) work draws attention to how youth can be bored in what many would describe as a modern and advanced society. Bernstein

(1975) makes two general yet meaningful points: 1) boredom can lead to anything and 2) every young person is different. How youth engage in activity to rid themselves of boredom varies, for example partaking in drug usage or taking day trips to some place new, in behaviours and activities done, yet the common underlying factor in all of these behaviours and activities is the need to feel something other than boredom (Bernstein, 1975). In terms of late modernity, what is relevant to note is that the social activities that youth can or cannot be a part of can be seen as a culturally conditioned response to the oppression created by capitalist modes of production that we as a society have allowed for and followed. For example, certain youth are able to follow norms created by society and live a mainstream life, while other youth who are blocked from mainstream norms are seen as 'different' and are oppressed, which can direct them towards different lifestyle choices. Bernstein's (1975) work will be used to consider the range of behaviours that can result from boredom during this modern era, criminal and otherwise.

The second theorist to highlight is Jack Katz. Katz's (1988) research found that crime can be best understood by examining how it feels to an offender and what the ultimate goal of committing the criminal offence is to them. More so, Katz (1988) also found that crime provides a thrill that criminals so desperately seek. Katz (1988) focuses on the seduction of crime and what committing a crime can feel and look like to an offender that makes it so attractive. Although Katz (1988) does not speak directly to boredom, the assumption points to boredom as an underlying dynamic. Katz's (1988) work is useful for focusing this thesis on how crime and deviance can be a source of fun and pleasure.

The third theorist to examine is Ferrell (2004) who is another guiding theorist used within this thesis. What makes Ferrell's (2004) work useful to this research is that Ferrell (2004) argues that boredom is interwoven into the experiences of everyday life, specifically a "collective

boredom institutionalized within the practice of everyday life" (p. 290). This thesis aims to explore how this institutionalized "collective boredom" is experienced by young people and how it relates to involvement in crime and deviance. More so, Ferrell (2004) argues that there are individuals in society whose goal is to "'rupture the normalcy' of everyday boredom" (p. 292). Ferrell's (2004) ideas draw our attention to question if certain crimes are committed to get rid of boredom itself instead of being committed intentionally towards victims of crime.

The final theorist to discuss is Young (2007). The theoretical perspective of Young (2007) argues that boredom is the opposite of crime, and crime is a symptom of the problem that is related to an ongoing feeling of having no purpose that comes from having nothing to do. Young's (2007) work also draws our attention to the class dynamics of the late modern period and how they interact with feeling a lack of purpose. Further, Young's (2007) boredom connection to sensation and meaning seeking raises questions related to late modernity and youth.

Young (2007) argues that we live in a world that is constantly changing and is far from a meritocratic state, which leads to a sense of vertigo, instability, relative deprivation, and for people within society to feel ontologically insecure. According to Young (2007), we currently live in a period of late modernity, in which previous transitioning points that allow people to feel secure, such as having a job and a marriage, are now blurred, leaving the lower and middle classes feeling a sense of being useless or searching for meaning in anything. With this in mind, understanding and studying the attraction to criminality, like Katz (1988) states, is essential in a late modern society. The feeling of vertigo in what we consider to be a late modern society, leads crime to become common and something that anyone can do or take part in. Young (2007) highlights that current issues in society stem from an ever changing and insecure society that has

a "fear of falling" (p. 13). This fear is based on a pluralistic state that comes from a world torn by crisis, which creates criminality from social and individual disintegration (Young, 2007). In a late modern society, boredom is something to be avoided at all costs (Steinmetz et al., 2017, p. 355).

Furthermore, Young (2007) places a large focus on the response to oppression, anomic state, humiliation that results from globalization and the vertigo that it creates between the higher and lower classes in society that leads to a process of othering. Importantly, Young (2007) focuses on economic, social, moral, and cultural insecurities placed upon the middle and lower classes and the strain and vertigo felt amongst these classes, which can lead to criminality. I suggest that the feeling of vertigo and a sense of one shifting in life can be tied to poverty and crime. Additionally, Young (2007) notes that crime can be fun and can create a form or sense of meaning. As a state of late modernity allows for one to feel uncertain and insecure at all stages in life. The overall negative feelings that individuals carry with them, leaves them to feel a sense of having no meaning in life or being unsure of what their purpose is. This sense of meaninglessness can lead to individuals engaging in crime to obtain a sense of meaning. What individuals do in a society that is ontologically uncertain is to attempt to go against the mundane, which can be achieved through crime and deviance (Young, 2007). Importantly, it can also be suggested, based on Young's (2007) theory of human behaviour, that crime can be not only fun, but also out of an overall *need* for meaning and something to do. Thus, there is a need to explore boredom less as a risk factor for deviance, but as more as a phenomenon that is deeply connected to how society is structured and the search for meaning in a late-modern world.

In this thesis, the work of Young (2007) and the other scholars reviewed in this section draws attention to the importance of boredom and its implications on youth behaviour in a late

modern period. Specifically, this thesis works to explore if and how feelings of placelessness and meaninglessness in a constantly changing society influence what youth can do and choose to do with their time. This is examined through a reflexive and retrospective approach with a mixed group of university students that reflect on different periods in their adolescence.

Chapter 4: Methodological Approach

This chapter provides an overview of the methodological approach used within this thesis research. To understand the lived experiences of youth in relation to boredom and their behavioural outcomes of boredom throughout the ages of 14 to 17, a qualitative narrative approach via semi-structured interviews with the use of photograph elicitation was used within this thesis. This chapter discusses this qualitative narrative approach and further discusses the benefits of qualitative semi-structured interviews and photograph elicitation. This chapter also discusses how the data was collected and analysed.

A Qualitative Approach to Researching Boredom

This thesis utilizes a qualitative narrative approach. Such an approach has been previously used by Wegner (2011) to study the connection between youth boredom and crime. Narrative perspectives emphasize the importance of stories. Narratives are important because they organize the information in terms of past and present, which allows for a natural story-telling process that can reveal change over time (Creswell et al., 2007). Specifically, a focus on the past, present, and future is important for this thesis as retrospective interviews are utilized. Structure can be built and easily understood through a timeline of events and life sequence, which draws this thesis towards a narrative approach to research. Warren (2011) asserts that when speaking about a certain topic, individuals form stories around who they are and identify as. This notion is pertinent to this thesis as a research goal is to understand and listen to the lived

experiences of youth and their relationship to boredom and other various factors. By being able to focus on the content within youth narratives, richer data collection can be possible by listening to how youth describe their lives through what they think of themselves, their worlds, and their stories. Thus, the goal is to be able to ultimately understand the world through their lived experiences.

This thesis utilizes in-depth qualitative interviews in order to comprehend the lived experiences of youth. Qualitative interviews can allow for researchers to be able to understand the experiences of a participant and how these experiences may have impacted or shaped their lives (Warren, 2011). Warren (2011) emphasizes the importance of qualitative interviews as it allows researchers the ability to understand the experiences of participants and how these experiences may have impacted or shaped their lives. By creating an open dialogue with participants, they are enabled to share their lived experiences and express how they view their own realities. This is key as the guiding questions within the interview guide (see Appendix A for the interview guide) for this thesis focus on how youth participants reflect on their adolescence and divulge information about their personal life and relationships. Additionally, the semi-structured nature of the interview allows for the participants to have control over what they deem as salient when recalling their past. However, during the research process, it is important to collaborate with the youth I interview to fully understand the meaning of their stories, which creates validity and reflexivity within the analysis and is situated well within the semi-structured nature of the interviews (Creswell et al., 2007). Additionally, employing qualitative interviews with the youth allows for rich descriptions of their social world to come to light (Warren, 2011). One of the main goals of this research is to capture the youth perspective of stories retold from

the youth themselves, as people form stories around who they are and identify as when speaking about a certain topic (Warren, 2011).

The Use of Photograph Elicitation

Photograph elicitation was used within the semi-structured narrative interviews to assist in participant recall of their adolescence. The use of photographs can provide insight into a youth's environment, specifically to understand where they spent their time, who they spent their time with, and what they spent their time doing. When youth participants divulge this information, it helps to uncover and understand their behavioural outcomes in relation to boredom. Thus, this thesis explores whether a youth's environment is influential with respect to their behavioural outcomes.

Existing literature has shown that a youth's environment – stimulating or not – can lead youth to experience boredom (Smith, 1981; Fisher, 1993; Mikulas & Vodanovich, 1993; Eastwood et al., 2012). Thus, recognizing and understanding a youth's environment is important in an attempt to gather rich detail from the recollections of one's lived experiences. Various forms of elicitation can be useful in order to try and obtain as much detail as possible about one's past environment, thoughts, and behaviours. For example, Bloch (2015) found that by interviewing participants at the scene of their crimes it allows for the creation of place-based elicitation, which provides rich detail about the participants' expressions and narratives of their crimes. However, interviewing participants at the scene of the crime can be challenging and was not done for this thesis. Instead, borrowing from Wegner (2011), this thesis utilizes photographs to assist in stimulation and elicitation of memories and details from youth participants. Previous studies that have used photograph elicitation methods have indicated that photographs elicit memories differently than through verbal interviews (Clark-Ibañez, 2004), help elicit memories

that are difficult to access or verbalize (Smith et al., 2017), enhance a participant's ability to retell and reflect on narratives associated with memories (Loeffler, 2004), have the potential to create wider dialogue (Leonard & McKnight, 2015), and tap into memories that can be overlooked or deemed unimportant (Cooper, 2017). Therefore, the photographs work to try and bring them back to that place and recall their environment, feelings, and behaviours that came along. Alongside interview elicitation, the use of photograph elicitation allows for rich and thick descriptions of their social world based on what the youth share in qualitative interviews (Warren, 2011). By using a narrative interviewing method accompanied by photograph elicitation, the participants are able to lead the discussion as they generate their own story of their past in a reflection-based approach. Now that the methodological approach has been discussed, what follows next is an explanation of how the data was collected.

Data Collection Procedures

Data was collected by interviewing students from a university in Ontario, Canada. Youth were recruited through course announcement posts that contained the recruitment poster via the university's learning platform, Canvas, by criminology professors at the university. The recruitment flyer was attached to the announcement post to provide more information to students who were interested in participating in the research. Youth eligible to participate and be interviewed were in the age range of 18 to 22 years old. This age range was chosen as these youth are free to consent on their own for the study and more importantly, they can reflect on their youth more recently in order to capture the change of their lives over time thus far. Youth that were interested in participating in the study contacted the researcher to be part of the study via email. Virtual interviews with the youth were conducted and recorded through Google Meet and simultaneously transcribed using the Google plugin extension, Tactiq. Participants

interviewed were asked to reflect on their lives between the ages of 14 to 17 years old during the interview for each question, unless asked specifically to focus on the present or the future. Additionally, participants were asked to bring one photograph of themselves from when they were younger. Questions 8 to 11 on the interview guide specifically require the participants to engage in photograph elicitation via the photograph of themselves from when they were in the age range of 14 to 17 years old (see Appendix A for the interview guide). These questions prompted participants to reflect on the event or situation that is captured in the photographs and evoked recollections of where they were, who they were with, and what occurred in the photographs. Additionally, participants were asked to explain how they felt whilst looking at their photograph. From this use of photograph elicitation, a great amount of rich data was given by participants which hinted at aspects of maturation.

After the interviews were complete, transcriptions using the Tactiq plugin were edited for any mistakes in overall syntax by listening to the recordings. The transcription process was a critical aspect of data analysis, as it allowed for a more intimate familiarity with the data. Following the interview transcription, the interview data was analyzed for shared similarities or differences in participant reflections using the qualitative research software, NVivo. A form of inductive coding was utilized amongst all participant interviews to put together shared similarities from participant's recollections of their youth from each narrative, which allows for the meaning making process to be as natural and holistic as possible. During the open coding process, rather than having a list of predetermined guiding codes, coding came from a neutral, objective place which allowed for salient themes in participant reflections to emerge on their own. Price (2010) describes the open coding process as an interpretive and intuitive process between a researcher and raw data (which consists of words, phrases, actions, or events) where

the data is analyzed through questioning and comparison by the researcher to understand a phenomenon and to limit potential subjectivity held by the researcher (p. 2). As transcripts were reread several times, there was a vast number of themes found within participant reflections that were then coded in NVivo. These themes were then classified and grouped into separate categories with parent and child codes present. Following this, an interpretation of the participation reflections took place to allow for the meaning making process to begin. Prior to discussing the participant's reflections and overall findings, a discussion of the participant characteristics will take place in the next chapter.

Chapter 5: Findings

In this chapter, a discussion of participant characteristics and reflections of boredom, leisure, and peers takes place. Participant characteristics that were identified included participant age, gender, student status, socioeconomic status, and family dynamics, amongst others. Turning towards participant reflections, throughout the narrative interviews, participants reflected upon their experiences with boredom. These reflections include the meanings and feelings of boredom, a retrospective look at boredom, reflections of boredom and leisure time, reflections of peer influence, the importance of socioeconomic status, boredom and late modernity, a youth's environment, the maturation process and important life changes, behavioural outcomes of boredom, and crime and deviance as fun amongst youth.

Participant Characteristics

In total, 16 current undergraduate university students participated in the narrative interviews for this study. Regarding gender, 15 of the participants identified as female, leaving one participant identifying as a male. In regard to immigrant status and race, one participant openly identified as an immigrant, one as Indian, and one as half White and half Black, while 13

participants did not disclose their immigrant status or racial background. Regarding sexual

orientation, only one participant disclosed their sexual orientation as gay, while the rest of the

participants did not disclose their sexual orientation. With regards to age, four participants stated

that they were 19 years old, eight participants stated they were 20 years old, and four participants

stated they were 21 years old. In regard to socioeconomic class, more than half of the

participants stated they grew up in and are still part of a middle class and less than half of the

participants stated they were from a higher or lower class. Almost all of the participants stated

they had working parents. With respect to family dynamics, three participants stated they were

raised in single family homes, one participant had parents that were divorced, one participant had

parents that were divorced and later remarried, and two participants specifically stated they were

raised by a single mother and one participant specifically stated to have a stay-at-home dad,

while the remaining participants disclosed that they were raised by both their parents. In similar

relation to family dynamics, around half of the participants identified as being close to their

family members and parents. In regard to geographical location, all participants stated they were

raised and still reside somewhere in Southern Ontario. Understanding the background

characteristics of the 16 participants is imperative to then be able to contextualize the narratives

of each participant and their reflections that occurred within the study.

This thesis focuses on analytically exploring and outlining the reflections that emerged in

the interviews related to youth, boredom, leisure time, and deviance. During the interviews,

importance was placed on how youth define boredom, their behavioural outcomes of boredom,

and if they viewed boredom as being inherently negative. Additionally, external factors, such as

peer influence and parental guidance and supervision was also explored in relation to

behavioural outcomes. To extend on the literature review, an analysis that primarily examines

the themes that came up within each of the narrative interviews conducted is what follows. These findings serve to highlight participant reflections of their young adolescence related to youth boredom and areas for future research.

Participant Reflections

Throughout the interviews, participants reflected on their lived experiences during their adolescence. With respect to reflections of boredom, discussion of the meaning and feelings behind boredom, the relationship between boredom and leisure time, a youth's socioeconomic status and environment in relation to boredom, the connection between boredom and late modernity, and behavioural outcomes of boredom occurred during the interviews. Looking towards reflections of their peers, peer influence towards boredom was not prominent but peer influence towards engagement in criminal or deviant act as a means to relieve boredom was present. Additionally, the notion of crime and deviance as fun was discussed amongst participants in the interview.

The Meaning and Feelings Behind Boredom

As suggested in the interviews, all participants have felt bored or experienced boredom throughout their younger teenage years, specifically between the ages of 14 to 17. However, there appeared to be a small portion of participants that expressed they did feel boredom but never to a large extent due to being preoccupied with friends and engaged in other activities. For example, participant six explained this occurred "because we'd always meet up like in a big group of us…my class, we're about maybe 20 kids in our IB program and we're all pretty close…we made plans to meet up". Similarly, participant seven expressed that they did not feel boredom when outside of their home with friends because they were isolated in their house for the majority of the time, so they made the most of their time outside of the house with friends.

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Participant seven had also explained that boredom was not felt because they were studying or preoccupied with something else preventing themselves from being bored. However, both participants expressed that when they did feel bored, they would want to do anything to get rid of the feeling. This action of wanting to do anything to get rid of boredom appeared throughout all the interviews and will be discussed later on in the section.

When asked to describe boredom, participant responses consisted of describing boredom as a feeling, as a need for stimulation, differing in perspectives of time duration, and leading to self-improvement. Additionally, some participants provided examples of experiences of boredom and what emotions these experiences of boredom had elicited from them. In contrast, there were a few participants who expressed that boredom was hard to define. For example, participant two found it difficult to define boredom, saying that when they feel bored it is not bad and it is not good but more so an "in-between feeling".

Boredom as a feeling was defined by participants through two main responses, boredom as a neutral feeling and as a negative feeling. Three participants defined boredom as a neutral feeling, one of them expressing that when they feel bored, it "feels like I'm just here", as suggested by participant nine. Similarly, participant 10 referred to boredom as a tranquil feeling, where they explained that when they are bored, it feels tranquil, and they expressed that it is "nice to just exist for a minute". Additionally, one participant explained that when they felt bored, "I'm not sad, but it's just like, I'm not happy because like, I'm not doing anything". The findings of boredom as a neutral and tranquil feeling are quite interesting as they contrast boredom literature that suggests boredom acts as a signal for a need for something to occur to evade boredom. These findings appear to suggest that some individuals do not experience this signal, and some enjoy the boredom feeling.

Moving from boredom as a neutral feeling, other participants described boredom in a negative manner. These participants expressed boredom as dull, as an unwanted feeling, as not good, and explicitly as a negative feeling. There were five participants who defined boredom as a dull feeling. For instance, participant six explained that this dull feeling as boredom led them to not "feel like doing anything. You don't feel like doing school work…I didn't feel like reading books". Other participants described the dull feeling attached to boredom as bland or that when they were bored with friends, they would just sit in silence and stare at each other.

With respect to boredom being seen as an unwanted feeling, four participants defined boredom as so. Some participants explained that to them, boredom never felt good, they never enjoyed being bored, and did not see it as being good. Participant five expressed that when they get bored, they are "constantly looking around for something to do because it was just like this uneasy feeling" that they had and wanted to get rid of. There were 14 participants that agreed that boredom can be seen as a negative feeling, suggesting that boredom can result in nothing positive, mental health issues, and feelings of frustration, annoyance, dread, and sadness. For example, participant nine stated that boredom is "negative in the sense that you're not getting any positive out …I don't think being bored is anything good. It's just non-productive". As well, participant seven explained how boredom "kind of feels like I'm wasting my life away. I have a purpose but haven't really found that yet. I don't like being bored". Another participant explained that when they are bored, it is frustrating, and they likened the experience to the world ending. In contrast, there were two participants who did not view boredom as a negative feeling. One participant suggested that boredom is not always negative. The other participant reasoned that there were worse things that exist than boredom or being bored.

Looking at feelings as a result of boredom, a few participants discussed emotional outcomes of boredom that they have experienced. Specifically, feelings of anxiety, loneliness, and isolation were mentioned by three participants. For example, participant seven recounted feeling anxious when bored, explaining that "when it comes to, feeling bored. It turns into anxiety because I don't feel like I'm being productive". Additionally, participant four expressed that when they felt there was nothing to do, they experienced feelings of loneliness and a feeling of needing connection in any form. Participant four went on to describe loneliness as a result of boredom, explaining that:

> I felt lonely. A lot of my time like especially in the older years of high school, … I would just like, watch Netflix in bed … because like there was a point where I was a little more like depressed. So I didn't really do that much with my time. So a lot of the time I would just feel like lonely.

Participant seven expressed a similar emotion when they felt there was nothing to do however, they referred to that feeling as isolation. Speaking further on boredom bringing up the feeling of isolation, they compare themselves to the classic fairy tale of Princess Rapunzel. They explain the comparison, stating:

> It's like feeling like Rapunzel, you know? And she's stuck in the tower and then she just tries to find anything that she could preoccupy herself like, baking or painting or playing some games. I quite relate to her a lot.

The occurrence of these emotional outcomes by the youth is interesting as existing literature on emotional aspects of boredom does not focus on these specific feelings on their own. In particular, participant seven's experience of boredom resulting in feeling isolated stood out amongst the other responses. Despite attempts to preoccupy themselves and stimulate themselves

while in a restrictive environment, participant seven was still experiencing boredom and resulted in feeling isolated. Further research on youth boredom should examine emotional outcomes of boredom to see if feelings like isolation, loneliness, disconnection, and anxiety are found amongst other youth.

Eight participants expressed that feeling bored or experiencing boredom acted as need for stimulation. Participants expressed that this need for stimulation made them feel restless or impatient. For example, one participant expressed that when they are bored, they feel stuck and are looking for anything to do to not feel bored. Speaking more on this feeling of restlessness, participant 15 stated that:

> When I get really bored, I get really like kind of impatient and I'm just…begging for something to do at that point and like I get kind of on edge and I'm…like, okay like let's figure out something to do like you know, I can only feel this way for so long eventually.

Participant 11 related the experience of feeling bored to the phrase "a monkey on your back", where an individual is in an uncomfortable situation and trying to get out of it. With these findings present, this thesis extends on existing research that suggests boredom acts as signal for needed stimulation when an individual is lacking said stimulation.

In some interviews, participants suggested that when they were bored, time either passed slowly or quickly. One participant claimed that boredom can be an experience felt for a split second, while two participants explained that when they experience boredom, it feels as though time is passing slow and is being dragged out for longer than necessary. For instance, participant three expressed that since they perceive boredom as time being dragged out, it pushes them to find "something to do because I don't want to feel like this anymore…, I have to find something". Additionally, some participants expressed that when they were bored, they felt as

though time was being wasted. For example, participant 15 viewed boredom as a negative feeling because they felt their time was being wasted by being bored, "when I get bored because I'm always just like, I feel like I'm wasting my time. Like I want to find something better to do".

Interestingly, participant seven had defined boredom as a means of self-improvement, where it acts as self-discipline. While discussing their life, through reflection on the negative behaviours carried out by their younger self, they explained that "boredom now even reminds me of how I reacted back then, and it's sort of like self-disciplining myself and kind of reminding yourself, don't go back there". Thus, it is important to understand how a young person views their own life changes.

A Retrospective Look at Youth Boredom

As mentioned earlier in this thesis, when discussing the methodological approach, a retrospective approach to the semi-structured interviews with youth participants took place. A retrospective approach to these interviews was chosen as it allowed the participants to reflect on their past, present, and future self. However, a great emphasis was placed on the participant's teenage years, specifically the ages from 14 to 17 as intended. This research benefited greatly from a retrospective interview approach as the participants were able to discuss their lives (formerly, currently, and what they expect to occur in the future) broadly, but also with specific regard to their environment, families, friends, and socioeconomic status. Additionally, a retrospective approach to the interviews allowed for youth to reflect on their past and current relationship with and desistance from crime and deviance (if any). Another benefit of the retrospective interview was the opportunity it allowed for participants to reflect and compare any similarities or differences in their behaviours from when they were younger to their current age. This was accomplished as participants were already in the mindset of recounting experiences

during their adolescence, thus making these comparisons of their behaviour easy for the participants.

The use of photographs within the interviews, in addition to the retrospective nature implemented, also appeared to be beneficial to this research as it allowed for easier memory recall from a participant's youth and generated more discussion from the participant with the use of prompting interview questions. Fifteen out of the 16 participants brought photographs from their past to the interview. One participant forgot to bring a photograph but had a picture in mind when asked questions related to the photograph. All of the participant's photographs were taken in a public setting, such as at the mall, at a community park, restaurants, at school or a school event, a concert, and in downtown city centres. Almost all the participants said that the people pictured in the photograph of them were friends, two participants were pictured with family members. Three participants mentioned that the activity taking place in the photograph was deviant or criminal. These acts consisted of either defacing public property, trespassing onto private property, or being a nuisance to a fast-food employee. The rest of the photographs brought by participants were not considered to be deviant.

When asked to discuss what emotions the photographs brought up, a range of emotions were expressed by participants. These emotions were either positive or negative. Positive emotions consisted of happiness and gratitude while the main negative emotion was sadness. Participants expressed feelings of happiness and gratitude occurred due to good memories the photographs brought up, recalling that the event in the picture was fun, and reminding the youth of their friends. For example, participant 11 expressed that the photograph they brought elicited a happy feeling, they explained that the memory was of "a really fun night and I'm still close with those two girls right now, so it's just like a nice photo of us when we were younger".

Additionally, another participant expressed gratitude when looking at their photograph, stating the photograph makes them "feel grateful" that they are still friends with people in the photograph. Participants who expressed sadness while looking at their photograph explained it was due to a desire to go back to the time the photograph was taken, missing how young they were, and missing being friends with people who are pictured in the photograph. For example, participant 10 expressed how their photograph made them miss being young, hanging out with their friends pictured in the photograph, and not having to worry about responsibilities, "I miss them, I miss being able to hang out with them. And like it was just nice. I didn't have to, like, worry about, like university. It was like high school". Based on the findings of certain emotions felt when reflecting on photographs of their youth, it is suggested that youth photograph moments of their life where they are in the company of people they like – at the time - and are engaged in activities that are deemed – at the time - fun, not boring. In other words, it can be suggested that youth capture the "highlights" of their life through photographs.

When looking at their photographs and reflecting on their youth, participant two noted that a lack of technology could be seen in their photographs. When prompted to discuss this observation a bit more, they went on to mention how "kids today will probably never have this". "This" referring to a childhood that is not consumed with technology. Participant two then mentioned that their generation is the "non-technology" side between the two, a technology generation versus a non-technology generation. However, they did mention that they grew up with Leapfrogs instead of iPads, a less technologically advanced tablet from their younger years. The notion of youth and technology use, and by extension of technology, social media use is discussed at further length within the boredom and late modernity section of this chapter.

Reflections of Boredom and Leisure Time

In terms of who participants were spending their leisure time with, majority of participants described their leisure time as being spent with friends, while two participants mentioned their leisure time was spent with their family. Leisure time spent with friends consisted of hanging out with friends, "enjoying each other's company", as described by participant seven. It was suggested by participants who spent leisure time with family that technology was used to connect and interact with family members. Conversely, a few participants disclosed that they spent part of their leisure time by themselves, either watching TV or exercising. For example, participant three explained that after they were done schoolwork or a shift at their job, they would "come to [their] room and like, try to relax and like be on my phone for a bit and then or like, watch Netflix". Participant four mentioned they would exercise by themselves by either going on walks or runs.

In regard to the setting of where their leisure time was spent, 11 participants explicitly stated their leisure time was spent in public places that were outdoors and in public settings, such as restaurants, malls, movie theatres, amusement parks, concerts, or driving around in their car with friends. For example, participant four and their friends spent their leisure time outside "playing basketball or biking around or…sometimes we would just walk around town". As well, participant 11 mentioned that they and their friends would "just drive around…go get food…When the majority of us got like our [licenses] we would just drive around and like listen to music and like go somewhere". Additionally, two participants described they had large friend groups and hanging out in public, either at an amusement park or camping outdoors, was a suitable option for them. Participant six explained that:

going to anybody's houses kind of off limits because we're not gonna have, you know, 15

kids at one person's house. So it's definitely always public places, definitely, you know,

Wonderland and the mall, I guess, were our go-to spots.

Ten participants explicitly stated that their leisure time was spent at home or a friend's home,

watching movies, playing games, and eating food and talking with each other. For example,

participant seven referred to hanging out at home, eating, and talking with their friends as a "get-

together". Additionally, participant 15 reasoned hanging out with their friend at a home setting

due to the short distance between their houses. Based on these findings, it is suggested there is

potential for boredom to be absent or not felt for a period of time due to the setting youth are

spending their leisure time in, in addition to who they are spending this time with. However,

there is potential for other factors to occur and induce boredom in these settings and amongst the

company the youth are with.

The levels of structure of leisure time varied amongst youth, as recalled by the

participants. One participant described their leisure time as structured. For example, participant

10 explained that when they and their friends "hung out and then decided what we were gonna

do it was pretty structured mostly". In contrast to this, participant 13 mentioned that there were

many ways they and their friends could spend their leisure time as it was unstructured.

Participant 13 specified that on the weekends, they "had free time, we would either go to a

friend's house or my house. And we would have parties and like to drink, it could either be like

parties or just like small hangouts". Two participants specifically referred to their leisure time as

being both structured and unstructured, mentioning that they had commitments and

responsibilities that provided structure but once those were taken care of, their leisure time was

unstructured. For example, participant four explained that after school, they had sport practices

they had to attend or sometimes they were "working but it was only a few hours. So like I would usually have the rest of the night to do whatever I wanted". It is suggested, based off these findings, that the level of structure of leisure time and the desires of how to spend such time led to various outcomes.

Similar to the levels of structure, levels of supervision with respect to leisure time varied amongst participants. Four participants expressed that their leisure time was supervised, with an adult figure actively or loosely watching over them and limiting what they could and could not do. Participant two, whose leisure time was supervised, explained that their "parents would always be watching just to make sure like nothing were to happen" and that they were not "even allowed to watch crime shows like either in those ages …I thought like the world was like rainbows and lollipops like that type of stuff till I was like 15". Seven participants expressed that their leisure time was unsupervised, due to either an adult figure working away from home, parents focusing on younger siblings, parents not actively involved in a youth's life, or always spending leisure time without adult supervision. For example, participant six explained their unsupervised leisure time occurred because:

> …my parents trusted me and I was the oldest. I have two younger siblings, so it just made more sense because I'm guessing I'm the more responsible one. So, you know, they can only have their eyes on so many kids at once, so it's definitely more on my younger sister's as opposed to me.

Also, participant 15 noted that if they were to hang out at a friend's house, their friend's parents "weren't quite as involved in their lives. So when we were at their house, it was often just …us alone and I was doing whatever we wanted". A similar sentiment was expressed by participant

11, who mentioned that when their friend's parent was not present in the home, it left them the opportunity to "do whatever there".

Some participants expressed that their leisure time was a mix of supervised and unsupervised, explaining that either an adult figure was nearby but not actively supervising, one parent working shift work and the other parent being unemployed, and supervision occurring through text message. For example, participant 16 had said their friends and them "didn't have any supervision around us…my mom or their parents might say hi to us if we were in a room but that is about it". Additionally, participant 15 explained that their mom did shift work, "she'd be gone four days at work and then she's off for five" and their dad was a stay-at-home dad but had his own side business. Therefore, participant 15 stated that the level of supervision of supervised leisure time "kind of depends on the day". Also, one participant referred to their unsupervised leisure time as "unstructured supervision", as they would text their parents their locations when in public to keep them up to date. These findings suggest that unsupervised leisure time and its behavioural outcomes vary amongst youth. There is potential for other external factors to lead or desist to specific behavioural outcomes, such as crime and deviance, as discussed in the follow reflection.

Reflections of Peer Influence

Throughout the interviews, participants appeared to have discussed peer influence towards crime and deviance more than peer influence towards experiencing boredom and feeling bored. However, two participants did express that they experienced moments of boredom amongst and perpetuated by their peers. For example, one of the two participants explained that when hanging out with friends, their friends would be on their phones and not actively engaging with them, thus boredom was felt by the participant. The other participant recalled feeling bored

whilst with friends, having felt their hang out was reaching a lull and resulted in boredom ensuing and also the participant feeling in a "funk". Discussion regarding peer influence and boredom was minimal yet discussion about peer influence and criminality and deviance was plentiful. Therefore, boredom can be seen as a lingering factor to peer influence and deviance.

With respect to the connection between peer influence and crime and deviance, six participants disclosed that when they were younger, they had deviant friends and detailed what deviant acts their friends engaged in. These criminal and deviant acts that their friends engaged in, ranged from smoking cannabis (all participants that discussed cannabis use, referred to cannabis as "weed"), drinking while underage, attending parties where underage drinking and smoking was present, theft, and being sexually promiscuous. For example, participant 15 recalled their friends (age 14 at the time) stealing alcohol from their older siblings. As well, participant 9 mentioned their friend had learned how to steal online, explaining their friend would go to the mall and take "the security tags off [items] because he found a way to get a rubber band and like take it off".

In addition to disclosing the criminal and deviant activities their friends engaged in, some participants detailed how their deviant peers influenced them to engage in deviant activities together. Participants explained peer influence occurred in various manners, through encouragement to commit deviance, through socialization, through emulation, and through wanting to fit in with friends who engaged in deviance. For example, participant four explicitly stated they smoked cannabis in an attempt to fit in with their friend group, stating that:

> I was kind of like an outsider like in the friend group that I hung around. I did a lot of that stuff that they did, like smoked a lot of weed. So like once in a while, I would smoke weed just to like fit in or like just be part of like the group.

Additionally, participant four recounted that their friends pushed them to smoke cannabis with them, explaining that "the people I hung around with that pushed me to do it. Like they were constantly smoking weed. Whereas I was just kind of like there in the background and they'd convince me". With respect to peer influence and sexual deviance, participant 11 explained that sexual promiscuity was seen as "kind of like the norm I guess within my friend group" and they saw their peers "obviously getting something out of" the sexually promiscuous behaviour, which led them to engage in the deviant act as well.

Throughout the interviews, two participants briefly discussed how older youth they were either friends or mutual friends with influenced them to engage in deviant or criminal acts. These older youth influenced participants to behave criminally or in a deviant manner by acting deviant or criminal around the participant and by telling the participant deviance and crime is a norm for youth. For example, participant 15 specifically recalled:

> …going to my one friend's cottage and her brother was in a room and I was telling a story and I was like, oh, like I hadn't puked in seven years or something and then her brother, he's like, aren't you going into high school this year? And I was like, yeah and he's like well, you're gonna start puking a lot more once you go out on weekends and party.

As well, participant four disclosed that their friends saw older youth defacing and graffitiing a play structure at a public park, so they did the same. Participants also expressed that even though they were not friends with some of these older youth, they engaged in deviance to be accepted and impress these older youth. For example, participant 12 mentioned they engaged in deviant behaviour with older youth, because they "felt like, like [they] should probably just copy what they're doing, so like I don't get kicked out or, like, they would think of me differently". Based on the findings mentioned within this section, it is suggested that the presence of deviant and

criminal peers influences the behavioural outcomes of youth and results in deviant and criminal behaviour. However, there is the possibility that other factors could interact with peer influence that may provoke or hinder deviant or criminal behaviour from occurring amongst youth.

There is a slight potential for a youth's peers to influence them to feel or experience boredom. Relationships with peers are seen to act as an antidote to boredom as peers can relieve or prevent boredom from occurring but in conjunction with peer influence and deviant and criminal peers, the presence of such peers is a risk for criminal and deviant behaviour amongst youth. Discussion of boredom felt amongst youth and their friends but not influenced by their peers and the behavioural outcome(s) of that specific scenario is discussed further in this chapter, in the section of a youth's environment. Additionally, what should be kept in mind is that peer influence is not the only factor that can lead youth to behaving in a criminal or deviant manner, other possible factors exist.

Importance of Socioeconomic Status

As mentioned within participant characteristics, more than half of the participants stated they are part of the middle class – currently and when they were younger. Less than half of the participants expressed that they were either from the upper or lower class. As well, almost all the participants mentioned they had parents that worked, with the exception of one participant who had a stay-at-home father. Some participants recalled their family experiencing financial issues when they were younger. These participants expressed that their families' either had barely enough or just enough money, a parent that was in-between jobs, and one participant mentioned they had to get a job to financially help their family. For example, participant 11 expressed that when they were younger, their mother was in-between jobs so their family "had some money but like there's times that it was kind of tight". As well, participant four explained that when they

were legally able to work, they got a job to financially help their mother by "helping with the grocery money, like paying rent…Obviously like money was tight like for food and all that type of stuff".

With the abovementioned findings in mind, 12 participants expressed that their socioeconomic status did impact what they could and could not do, while four participants said their status did not impact what they could and could not do. For example, participant three disclosed that their socioeconomic status impacted what they could do with their friends, recalling their friends and them "would think, like…if we had money like we could go…on a trip somewhere like really fun and or like we could go to the mall and…get everything we wanted". Additionally, participant five mentioned how their low socioeconomic status led to boredom and then crime. They stated: "my friends and I… since we didn't have a lot of money to go out and do things that we wanted all the time. We would…go to this convenience store, and I know this is bad, but just like around the corner, from our neighborhood and we'd always used to like steal like candies or like little foods". Participant five also expressed that the stealing they committed when they were in their adolescence occurred out of a need, in addition to being bored, due to a lack of money and food. They stated the stealing was done out of a need "at times for a small snack…sometimes you're like yeah actually like…I don't have lunch today so like I need to get like a bag of chips and a drink". These two quotes from participant five, who came from a low socioeconomic background, appears to suggest that having a low socioeconomic status restricts what a youth can and cannot do. It can be suggested that an absence of such restriction could prevent boredom and the potential for crime and deviance to be committed by said youth.

Conversely, the four participants that stated their socioeconomic did not impact what they could and could not do, did not provide examples as to how it did not impact what they could

and could not do. However, participant 15 did express that they were "fortunate enough" that their socioeconomic status did not impact what they could and could not do. The lack of examples given by these participants who claimed their socioeconomic status did not impact what they could and could not do, suggests a potential for boredom, crime, and deviance to occur for these youth despite having the financial means to keep themselves occupied. Focusing more on this notion of some participants being "fortunate enough" to have a socioeconomic status that did not impact what they could and could not do, the concept of financial privilege due to certain socioeconomic status was discussed by three participants. A youth's financial privilege was recognized through the lifestyle they live and their continued ability to play sports that were costly. For example, participant 15 discussed their awareness of their financial privilege as their family is able to live "very comfortably …go on trips every year". As well, participant 10 was aware of their financial privilege as their parents paid for them to participate in horseback riding, they explain "horseback riding which is like not that cheap of a sport. And I had the luxury of being able to do that so that was definitely noteworthy". Expanding on financial privilege, these participants also discussed how having a driver's license and a car could alleviate feelings of boredom, due to the barriers they eliminate and how much easier it allowed hangouts amongst their friend group to happen. One participant explained that if they had both items when they were younger, they would use them to drive to other public places with friends, eliminating a barrier they faced when they were younger. Participant 15, who did have a car and a license when they were younger, acknowledged that they were "fortunate enough" to have parents who were in the financial position to let their child drive one of their vehicles. They expressed how beneficial it was to have a car and a license to hang out with friends, stating:

I can't tell you how many times we would just go for a drive and then park at like our old

elementary school…I used to have a van so we could fit a lot of us in there and then we

would just sit and we'd get out. And once we were there, we were like, oh, let's go play

Frisbee on the yard or let's go play hopscotch or something. It would be easier to find

things to do.

Again, it appears that possessing a socioeconomic status, specifically one where a youth can

have a car and a license, does impact what youth can and cannot do. More so, it suggests that

aspects of a socioeconomic status that allow for such advantages like having a car and license

can alleviate boredom amongst youth and their friends.

Boredom and Late Modernity

Throughout the interview, participants expressed feelings and behaviours in their youth

that can be related to aspects of late modernity. These feelings and behaviours include instability

in a changing society and a longing to be original but comparing themselves to others at the same

time. Many participants expressed that they felt part of a constantly changing society when they

were younger, due to their family moving houses a lot, wanting to be part of changing trends,

and their parents telling them social norms were changing quickly. For example, participant four

expressed that their family constantly moving during their youth led to feeling instability and that

society was constantly changing. As well, participant three explained that they wanted "to be part

of that big thing that was new but like when the time came for me to actually be able to do that

there was this like other new better thing to do".

In addition to feeling part of a changing society and feeling instability, some participants

expressed a longing to be original and to stand out but struggled to do so, as they compare

themselves to others. For example, participant 11 recalled being on social media with their

friends, seeing new online trends and wanting to be part of the trend but then "after a while we get bored because you see everyone else do it and you just didn't want to be like the same way as everyone else. So you try to find your own things to do". As well, participant seven expressed that they felt like the "odd kid out" because they would be comparing themselves to other kids who would "have jobs, other kids would be hanging out and partying". Furthermore, through this comparison, they felt as though they had wasted part of their life, leading the participant to question "What am I doing with my life?", hinting at feelings of meaninglessness. From these participant quotes, it can be seen how boredom comes to be out of features of a late modern society. With respect to the first example, attempts to be original through participation in online trends results in boredom when the hype of said online trend dies down as it becomes overdone amongst the public and thus, its appeal is lost. With its appeal gone and the trend having been overdone, youth who do attempt to partake in it experience meaninglessness. Looking at the second example, comparing oneself to those who are perceived as not being bored as they are doing activities that are deemed as fun, leads to one experiencing feelings of meaninglessness and placelessness because they are not like the person, they are comparing themselves to.

With respect to feelings of meaninglessness and placelessness, 12 participants admitted that they experienced these feelings during their youth. From these 12 participants, two participants expressed that these feelings would occur when they would get in trouble by their parents for deviant behaviour they had engaged in, due to feeling bored. Furthermore, these two participants recalled that when they were younger, they would ask themselves "What are you doing?" and "What is my place?" and feeling like they had no purpose, when they would get in trouble by their parents for the deviant behaviour, they had engaged in. These two participants

related the deviant behaviour as a "cycle", that included boredom, meaninglessness, and placelessness.

Overall, from these findings, it can be suggested that participants recognize and have experienced aspects of late modernity – feelings of instability, meaninglessness, and placelessness – that were present during their adolescence. Additionally, participants expressed that boredom can be present in and also a result of such aspects. It appears as though some participants reacted to feelings of instability, meaninglessness, and placelessness in a deviant manner which seem to have resulted in additional feelings of instability, meaninglessness, and placelessness; it appears to be a cyclical process that is part of a late modern society.

Some participants discussed the addictive nature of technology and by extension, social media, specifically the TikTok app. The presence of boredom was mentioned to drive youth towards engaging with social media and technology. For example, participant 15 explained that they get "sucked into a blackhole" while on their phone watching online videos because they are bored. What appears to be suggested here is that the youth turned towards technology and social media to alleviate feelings of boredom but the nature of both had them hooked in an endless cycle of watching online videos and at times still feeing bored as they do not have any true meaning in what they are doing to masks the boredom. Participant 15 also discussed how sometimes boredom is perpetuated by the use of technology and social media amongst their friends when they would hang out. Explaining that they have experienced moments where their friends would be on their phones all the time and no conversation was being had amongst them thus, boredom was present. Participant 15 linked this specific situation to bringing about feelings of meaninglessness and placelessness.

There was specific discussion by some participants regarding how the TikTok app may be contributing to feelings of meaninglessness amongst youth, as it provides an alternate path to success and fame for youth. Some participants noted that youth are watching other TikTok users become famous and successful on the app for posting videos of themselves, either lip-syncing or dancing to songs – given the addictive nature of social media and social media apps and the presences of boredom that drives them to technology and social media. As mentioned above, the use of technology and social media are two methods youth use to relieve themselves of boredom. One participant spoke about the comfortability youth feel today with technology and social media use. Participant eight suggested that youth are "much more comfortable with whatever they want to do…are more willing to do whatever they want and just share it instantly…they're just more focused on being online". Participant seven sees the impact of this new version of a path to fame and success on youth, explaining youth replicate content they see famous TikTok users create and post online, as they are bored in their own life and seeing the excitement of fame and success as something they want. Participant seven suggests youth think "if they can do it, I probably [can] do it as well" however, participant seven suggests fame and success is "selective on what the type of content is being created". Adding to this notion, participant 10 expressed that "it can be…really, like gut-wrenching for like a young person who like wants to be that [a famous TikTok user]" but is unable to achieve fame like others are, thus leading to a sense of meaninglessness and boredom felt amongst youth. Participant eight spoke on this TikTok path to fame and success as being an alternative to the traditional path of success that was perpetuated as mandatory by society. They explain that they:

> …had to follow this straight path that society tells me to do. It has always been high
>
> school, uni, and your career. Now because of technology and like just everything

changing in society it almost kind of tells me that there is not that one straight path that I need to follow. I can do what I want.

Moving from aspects of late modernity, the next section looks at how a youth's environment influences experiences of boredom and behavioural outcomes of boredom.

A Youth's Environment

When reflecting on their youth, participants discussed different environments they grew up in and the makeup of these environments, in relation to boredom, crime, and deviance. Participants described the neighbourhoods they grew up in through a wide variety of characteristics. These characteristics vary based on if they were describing their town, neighbourhood, or house. Additionally, during the interviews, participants discussed the relationship between school and boredom and deviance. Throughout the interviews, the importance of community parks was noted, as many of the participants stated they would go to local parks with children's playgrounds with their friends and simply hang out there. While these playgrounds are intended for young children, there is potential for these parks to suit the wants and needs of youth.

With regard to the town that they grew up in, some participants described their towns as small and boring. Participant four described their town as small due to its size and explained its size "really really limited…what we could do". As well, given the small size of their town, participant four had to hang out with rude people, "that you kind of wish you didn't but you only did because there was not really anybody else". The other participants who described their town as boring explained that it was due to a lack of activities to do within the town. They explained that this impacted what they were able to do when they were younger. For example, one of the participants said they were always bored and wanted to do something or go places within their

town but there were not many things to do. As well, participant six explained that living far from local entertainment amenities, like the mall, led to feeling like there was nothing to do, which led to boredom.

Participants described their neighbours in a diverse manner, varying in amicability, age, family types, culture and race, and religion. In terms of neighbours being amicable, one participant described their neighbourhood as friendly and everyone knew each other, while the opposite occurred for one participant who expressed that they did not know anyone in their neighbourhood. Thus, when they got bored, it was hard for them to get rid of that bored feeling. With respect to the ages of their neighbours, one participant explained that their neighbourhood had children their age, which allowed for them to play together if they were ever bored (e.g., basketball, hopscotch, draw). While participant 15 noted that their neighbourhood consists of mostly older people, explaining that there were only two or three children in the entire neighbourhood, which at times left them feeling lonely and bored. However, they did mention their neighbourhood is currently diversifying as "lots of younger families [are] coming in". Looking at racial and cultural diversity, participant six said they lived in a "very multicultural neighborhood". Conversely, participant one mentioned their neighbourhood was not diverse, noting that it consisted of only "brown Asians…so it was very like not diverse at all". Participant one also mentioned that their neighbourhood consisted of Muslims and their neighbours were always religiously inclined…so there was like a few boundaries that I couldn't cross because everyone would like judge you". It appears through these findings that a connection to one's environment (e.g., sense of community and connection to others) is of significance in order to not feel bored. Having a connection to neighbours and having children in the neighbourhood around a similar age to play with appeared to hinder youth from experiencing boredom.

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Throughout the interviews, participants expressed feeling bored within the school and neighbourhood environment. In both of these environments, the participants were with friends. With regard to the school environment, four participants expressed that they did not have an interest in school. For example, participant five explained that they:

> …didn't like school at all and my parents hated that…me and my group of friends. We didn't like school at all…we would go to school, but like we would just, like, sit in the back and just like, talk amongst ourselves or…we just wouldn't pay attention at all."

When asked if they liked school, participant 10 explained that "it's not that I always liked it, but it's that I had to do it". This suggests a difference between liking school based on a youth's own accord versus liking and being in school because it is expected of them. Thus, the importance of having a connection to one's environment with respect to boredom appears again. Interestingly, participant three and their friends were able to anticipate when boredom would be felt or experienced in school, explaining "if we knew class was gonna be boring …if we knew there was gonna be a substitute or like the lesson plan for that class was just like we didn't want to … be part of it". This specific finding hints at the notion of quasi-boredom, which will be discussed in the reflection of behavioural outcomes of boredom.

Based on the findings, it is suggested that various environments in a youth's life may lead to boredom occurring or boredom being felt. Specifically, the characteristics of one's environment (e.g., town, city, neighbourhood), like the size of their town or city and the number of available activities to do may influence boredom to occur or be felt. Also, these findings suggest boredom may be felt in the school environment amongst youth who lack an interest in school. With respect to one's neighbourhood, these findings suggest a lack of cultural, racial, and religious diversity in one's neighbourhood environment may lead one to feel disconnected from

their environment and there is a possibility for boredom, crime, and/or deviance to occur. However, these findings also suggest a neighbourhood environment where people are friendly and there are individuals a similar age to a youth may deter youth from experiencing boredom or engaging in crime and/or deviance.

Maturation Process and Important Life Changes

The maturation process was a topic of discussion amongst many of the participants. Responses from participants regarding maturation and life changes included that as they got older, they matured, there was a change of priorities, responsibilities were gained, and they started to work on self-improvement, which lead to boredom being more uncommon. As well, participants also recognized current employment and education as a regulatory effect on their deviant and criminal behaviour and acknowledged the difference in such behaviour from when they were younger to now. The participants' disclosed that their current behavioural responses to boredom range from focusing on school and completing schoolwork, using technology (e.g., being on their phone), watching television, and engaging in physical exercise. Past behavioural responses to boredom include deviant and criminal behaviour like smoking cannabis, underage drinking, and sexual promiscuity. The findings discussed in this section will highlight how maturation and life changes had a direct impact on a youth's behaviour.

When reflecting on their maturation process, participants recalled a change or shift in their priorities occurred, which also shifted how often they felt bored. For example, participant three expressed that they have priorities, like schoolwork and their job, they have to take care of before they can engage in leisure activities and had little time to be bored. Similarly, participant 14 mentioned that their priorities have shifted from when they were younger, mentioning that school is more of an interest to them now than it was when they were younger, as they now turn

to school work as a means to alleviate boredom. With respect to participants gaining responsibilities as they got older, participants explained as they matured, responsibilities like a part-time job, education, and extracurricular responsibilities were gained. For instance, participant eight explained that as they got older, the more commitments they took on, in addition to school, like choir practice, musical practice, athletic council meetings, and a part time job, which all leave less time for boredom. In terms of self-improvement, three participants expressed that as they got older, they began to work on becoming a better person. For example, participant 11 claimed that as they got older, they recognized "the consequences of some of my actions back then" from when they were younger. As well, participant 15 expressed that as they got older, they were able to recognize the value in taking the time to better themselves.

Throughout the interviews, four participants expressed that employment acted as regulatory effect on their behaviour, while six participants expressed that education acted as a regulatory effect on their behaviour. For example, participant three said that having a job and starting university took priority over getting high and hanging out with their friends. Similarly, participant 11 expressed that starting university, having a job, and maturing overall, initiated a change within them however, they still "still smoke weed and drink sometimes but it's just not as often" as it was when they were younger. These responses are reflective of participants whose deviant behaviour became regulated as they matured. Specifically focusing on education, two participants expressed that since they started to mature, they have recognized the importance of education. For instance, participant five explained that they "take advantage of the opportunities that like university…has for students…I can put myself in a better position to be well off than like what I had thought I would have been" when they were younger. Likewise, participant 16 mentioned that as they grew older, they realized the importance of school for their future. From

these findings, it appears as though important life changes like a change in priorities, gaining responsibilities, improving oneself, starting post-secondary education, obtaining employment, and maturing in general are important life changes within the maturation process that participants went through. Additionally, the findings suggest that the specific life changes of starting post-secondary education and obtaining employment act as regulatory effects on the participant's behaviour outcomes in response to boredom as they have less time, more responsibilities, and more interests than when they were younger.

Positive Behavioural Outcomes of Boredom

When asked how they acted or what they did in response to experiencing boredom or feeling bored, a mix of positive and negative behaviours were mentioned by participants. This section will focus on the positive behaviours, as the negative behaviours consisted of deviant and criminal acts that have been touched upon briefly and will be discussed later on in this chapter. These positive behaviours that were a result of boredom include creativity, productivity, and being social.

There were some participants who described boredom as a motivator that led to creative behaviour and other productive behaviours to occur. Three participants expressed that when they are bored, they turn to creative activities like drawing, scrapbooking, and playing music. For example, participant four described themselves as an artist and mentioned that when they are bored, they like to "do some drawing to be creative". Similarly, participant six explained they like to scrapbook when they are bored. As well, participant 10 noted that when they are bored, they "play music…or like play guitar". Productive behaviour as a result of boredom included completing tasks, as mentioned by participant seven. They explained that when they are

experiencing boredom, they "get things done because I know that I procrastinate a lot of things because I always put school first and then like everything else second".

With respect to hanging out with friends when they are experiencing boredom, eight participants expressed that they would hang out with their friends when they would experience feelings of boredom. Additionally, five of these eight participants reported that feeling bored led them to making plans with friends or trying to come up with a plan to do something to alleviate boredom. For instance, participant 11 expressed they would make plans with friends to hang out, explaining they would "ask is so and so busy? Like let's go over to their house and hang out". In contrast to this, participant thirteen mentioned their friends and them would try to create their own fun as a response to boredom, by either "going to somebody's house or going to the mall or driving around town". From these findings, it appears that some participants recall hanging out with friends and actively making plans of what to do with their friends, during their time spent together. This behaviour by participants suggests that the notion of quasi-boredom is experienced amongst youth. Quasi-boredom appears to be feelings of boredom not felt yet by the youth, who are with friends, yet they are actively making plans to avoid feeling bored. This notion of quasi-boredom is interesting as it was not reflected in the existing literature on boredom and youth boredom. While the positive behavioural outcomes of boredom were discussed, the next section discusses negative behaviours of boredom, crime and deviance, and how youth explained this type of behaviour occurred for fun.

Deviance and Crime as Fun

The above section discussed positive behaviours of youth that occurred in response to boredom. This section looks at the negative behaviours of youth in response to boredom as a means to have fun. Such negative behaviours include criminal and deviant acts like smoking

cannabis, smoking shisha, drinking alcohol, being truant, and being sexually deviant. There was discussion around additional reasonings of the occurrence of these acts, participants stated that these acts occurred for fun to not be bored.

When participants were asked why these deviant and criminal acts occurred, 13 participants expressed that they were done for fun and six participants said they occurred for fun and to not be bored. All of these participants explained these acts occurred for fun because they were getting older and wanted to have new types of fun, the acts being fun at the moment, the acts being done out of excitement, and simply because they were just fun. For example, participant 12 expressed that their friends and them engaged in deviant behaviour like underage drinking, and smoking cannabis and cigarettes, for "a need for fun because we were getting older. We wanted to have fun". Interestingly, participant eight explained that their deviant act, smoking cannabis, was done "mostly for fun. We would brag about the experiences after". Participant 14 suggested that their deviant act, underage drinking, was done for fun and "there was really no other like huge reason why" it was done.

More than half of the participants agreed that boredom led to deviance occurring during their youth. Participant 13 provided some insight into this, as they explained that their friends and them acted deviant when they were bored because they "did not have anything else to do, so why not have fun and not be bored". For example, participant 15 recalled that they and their friends would "countdown the days to the weekend, because we'd be so bored during school. And we knew on the weekend we could start drinking and having fun together". Similarly, participant 16 mentioned them and their friends "shifted from having fun like going to the mall…to not having that much [fun] doing that, and we wanted to be like at shisha bars and like drinking and at parties to have fun and not be bored". Similarly, participant six mentioned that

they have "five more tattoos and all were done at the age of 17 in the span of like two months. That I think, if I recall, those were definitely because I was bored". Participant six also expressed that they had "fun" getting the tattoos, "when I was 17, I got my first tattoo, which my parents signed off on because I wasn't 18 yet, that was also just for fun". Overall, some participants described doing or being part of deviance and criminal acts strictly for fun, strictly to not be bored, or a combination of fun and a means to not be bored.

Chapter 6: Discussion & Conclusion

The findings of this thesis suggest that boredom is experienced by all youth at one point or another and that deviant and criminal behaviour committed by youth occurs based on a variety of factors, including but not limited to boredom, leisure time (unstructured and unsupervised), peer influence, socioeconomic status, for fun, and for a need. An in-depth discussion of the findings will occur in this chapter, with a focus on how these findings answer this thesis' guiding research questions and contribute to and extend on existing research on boredom, deviance, and criminality amongst youth. Additionally, this chapter concludes with an examination of research limitations seen throughout the study and discussion on what could be done for future research.

Discussion of Key Findings

To summarize some of the findings of this thesis, it appears that youth decide to act deviant based on a combination of factors, which includes but is not limited to boredom, unstructured and unsupervised leisure time, socioeconomic status, environment, peer influence, and for fun. It has been suggested through the findings that boredom, in conjunction with unstructured leisure time and peer relationships amongst youth work together to influence behavioural choices that can result in deviance and crime occurring between the ages of 14 to 17. Additionally, it appears that the environment and socioeconomic status of a youth does matter in

terms of behavioural outcomes. Throughout the findings, it appears as though the socioeconomic status of youth impacted what they could and could not do when they were younger. Some participants recognized the financial privilege they held due to their socioeconomic status, suggesting it allowed them to partake in activities that they may not have been able to participate in if they were part of a lower socioeconomic status. With respect to peers, youth suggest having deviant peers and the act of peer influence towards deviance led them to behave in a deviant manner. As well, it appears that crime and deviance is fun for youth when they are with their peers. Moreover, with respect to maturation, important life changes experienced by youth throughout the maturation process include starting post-secondary education and obtaining part-time employment are seen to alleviate the presence of boredom. In conjunction with boredom, late modernity and its aspects (e.g., a constantly changing society, feelings of meaninglessness and placelessness) does influence the behavioural outcomes of youth and how they choose to spend their time.

Influence and Reflection of Boredom, Leisure Time, and Peer Relationships

The findings of this thesis research provide insight into the lived experiences of youth participants with respect to their experiences of boredom and the behavioural outcomes of boredom. Understanding how youth participants defined boredom was of great importance for this thesis, participants described boredom as being either a feeling (negative or neutral), a need for stimulation, varying in perceived time duration, and a means for self-improvement. Throughout the narrative interviews, there were reflections by all participants on how boredom, leisure time, and peer relations influenced past crime. Reflections of boredom as an influence on past crime and deviance by participants suggest that engagement in deviant, criminal, and risk-taking behaviour was committed in an attempt to get rid of or alleviate themselves of boredom.

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However, some participants noted that boredom did not always lead to criminal or deviant behaviour. There were instances where boredom led to creativity (e.g., playing music, drawing, or crafting), productivity, being social (e.g., hanging out with friends), and other neutral behaviours (e.g., practicing good hygiene, watching online videos) occurring amongst these participants. Reflections by participants of leisure time as an influence on past crime and deviance suggest that unstructured and unsupervised leisure time can lead to crime and deviance occurring; however, leisure time is not the sole influential factor for such behaviour to occur. Other factors include boredom, peer influence, socioeconomic status, etc. Throughout most of the interviews, reflection on the influence of peer relationships with respect to participants having engaged in crime and deviance occurred. Based on the findings regarding peer influence, some participants suggest that they engaged in crime and deviance due to wanting to fit in with their peers, wanting to try the deviant and criminal acts being committed by their peers, being convinced to act criminal and deviant by their peers, and acknowledging that crime and deviance was a norm within their peer group.

Based on the findings, it appears as though participants respond to boredom differently at their current age than how they did when they were between the ages of 14 to 17. One of the guiding research questions posed at the beginning of this asked how boredom, unstructured leisure time, and peer relationships influence deviance and crime as youth transition from adolescence to young adulthood. Looking towards boredom, the participants' disclosed that their current behavioural responses to boredom range from focusing on school and completing schoolwork, using technology (e.g., being on their phone), watching television, and engaging in physical exercise. These responses contrast the deviant and criminal behavioural outcomes of boredom committed by participants during their adolescence, as disclosed by participants. The

findings suggest that unstructured leisure time is not as influential on deviance and crime occurring in the participant's young adulthood, in comparison to their adolescence. Throughout the interviews, it appears as though participants possess a limited amount of unstructured leisure time compared to when they were in their adolescence, due to life changes, such as employment and post-secondary education, and an overall maturation. As well, the influence of peer relationships appeared to be a weak influence towards participants engaging in deviance and crime in young adulthood, as some participants suggested they are no longer friends with deviant or criminal peers and that as they matured into young adulthood, their friends were not as influential to them in comparison to when they were adolescents.

Importance of Environment and Socioeconomic Status

The findings of this thesis suggest that a youth's environment and socioeconomic status do matter when determining youth behavioural outcomes. With respect to a youth's environment, the findings of this thesis suggest that unfavourable characteristics of one's environment(s) and an overall lack of interest and connection in the environment can lead youth to become bored and possibly engage in negative behaviour (e.g., crime, deviance). For example, some participants expressed that the small size of their town, the limited number of amenities in their town, and a lack of diversity in their neighbourhood led them to become bored when they were younger. In contrast, other participants recalled living in the same neighbourhood with other youth similar in age and developing a connection with them, alongside living in a friendly neighbourhood, that prevented them from becoming bored. Looking towards the notion of interest in one's environment, some participants expressed that their lack of interest in school led them to become bored and engage in truancy to avoid feeling bored.

Regardless of socioeconomic class, all participants experienced boredom. However, participants that held a mid to upper socioeconomic status expressed that their status helped them in relieving or ridding themselves of boredom. In contrast, youth that held a lower socioeconomic status expressed their status prevented them from engaging in activities that would alleviate boredom. From this, the possibility for those with a low socioeconomic status to engage in negative behavioural outcomes, like crime or deviance, was suggested. In contrast to this, there were few participants, who possessed a middle or high socioeconomic status, that expressed their socioeconomic status did not impact what they could or could not do behaviourally, yet they did mention their financial privilege allowed them to avoid boredom to a greater degree than lower socioeconomic status participants. Examples of financial privilege include having a driver's license, a vehicle of their own, and participating in sporting leagues that were costly.

Important Life Changes

Based on the research findings from the narrative interviews, entering post-secondary education and obtaining a part-time job are important life changes experienced by youth during the maturation process, which helped to alleviate and regulate boredom. Throughout the narrative interviews, it appears as though some participants viewed these specific life changes as regulatory effects on their deviant and criminal behaviour, which were a result of boredom. Additionally, other participants appear to have acknowledged that these life changes led to some desistance from deviant and criminal behaviour brought on by boredom. Participants who acknowledged their slight desistance, reasoned that it occurred because they matured and got older, experienced a change in priorities, gained responsibilities as they got older, and began to work on their self-improvement. For example, participant three had disclosed in their interview

that getting a part-time job and starting university took priority over hanging out and smoking cannabis with their friends.

Boredom, Late Modernity, and Related Feelings

Features of late modernity, specifically the feelings of meaninglessness and placelessness, appeared throughout the narrative interviews, as some participants recalled experiencing such feelings between the ages of 14 to 17 and now in young adulthood. One of this thesis' guiding research questions aims to determine if late modernity in connection with boredom influences what youth do with their time. Based on the findings of this thesis research, it appears that late modernity, in addition to the feelings of meaninglessness and placelessness, does influence how youth spend their time. Discussion with participants about these feelings appeared to suggest that boredom was present throughout and a result of such feelings – suggesting meaninglessness and placelessness are cyclical processes that are always present within a late modern society. Throughout the interviews, some participants disclosed that when they were younger, they would compare themselves to their peers and held a desire to be original after the comparison occurred. As a result, some participants partook in various popular online trends on social media, yet these trends changed so quickly. Despite participants trying to keep up with this constant change of trends, it was no longer fun. From this, these participants questioned their purpose in life and what they were supposed to be doing. Participants expressed that boredom was present during their failed attempts to be original and to keep up with trends. Despite such failures and the presence of meaninglessness and placelessness, participants recalled engaging in deviant and criminal acts to relieve themselves of such feelings like boredom, brought on by late modernity. However, this resulted in participants being disciplined by their parents for their deviant behaviour. Some participants disclosed that after this parental

discipline occurred, they would question their purpose in life and what they should be doing instead of engaging in deviant behaviour - such self-questioning is an example of feelings of meaninglessness and placelessness.

Another finding related to the influence of late modernity on youth behaviour is the constant presence and addictive nature of technology, mainly social media. In relation to a constant presence and usage of technology in today's society, a young person's obsession with external entertainment like the Internet, television, video games, and movies contribute to an increase of boredom, as suggested by Eastwood (as cited in Gosline, 2007). Eastwood states that in a modern society, sensory overload prevents us from finding what our interests are and what we truly like (as cited in Gosline, 2007). In the interviews, some participants expressed their thoughts on how online social media platforms, mainly TikTok, perpetuate feelings of boredom, meaninglessness, and placelessness as youth try to achieve a form of success and fame on the platform by creating content, as other successful TikTok users have in the past but fail to do so. From this failure, youth can experience an increase of feelings of boredom, meaninglessness, and placelessness.

Crime and Deviance – A Result of Boredom for Fun

During the narrative interviews, when asked if their criminal or deviant behaviour was committed for fun, most of the participants disclosed this behaviour was done for fun and/or to not be bored. Participants reasoned that such behaviour was done for fun because the behaviour was fun at the moment it occurred, was done out of excitement (e.g., a thrill), and the behaviour, overall, was fun. To answer the research question posed at the beginning of this thesis that questions when crime is fun for youth. The findings of this research suggest that deviant and criminal behaviour that was committed by the participants for fun, took place amongst friends

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during unsupervised and unstructured leisure time and usually in a public setting. For example, participants eight and fourteen expressed that their deviant behaviour, smoking cannabis and underage drinking, respectively, was done "mostly for fun" and that "there was really no other like huge reason why" it was done, respectively.

What occurred above was a discussion of how the research findings of reflections of boredom, leisure time, peer relationships, socioeconomic status & environment, maturation & important life moments, late modernity, and crime and deviance for fun answered the guiding research questions for this thesis. What occurs next is how the findings of this thesis contribute to existing research on boredom.

Contributions to Existing Research

This thesis and its findings contribute to existing literature regarding the various conceptions and definitions of boredom (e.g., cognitive, behavioural, environmental, and emotional) and the behavioural outcomes of boredom. This thesis research also extends on the two theories used to guide this research, Young's (2007) theory of human behaviour and Newton's (2001) boredom theory of youth criminality. These two theories are extended upon through discussions of aspects of late modernity and maturation, which are both experienced by youth, that took place during the interviews. Additionally, this thesis extends the qualitative narrative approach utilized by Wegner (2011), by utilizing retrospective interviews, along with photograph elicitation, in a narrative manner to understand the lived experiences of youth in relation to behavioural outcomes of boredom. As well, this thesis contributes to the broader field of youth deviance and boredom research, as it looks at Canadian youth, thus a much-needed Canadian perspective is provided.

Contributing to Existing Literature on Boredom's Definition

Discussed within the literature review, the conception and definitions of boredom can be seen from a cognitive, behavioural, environmental, and emotional perspective. Some of these perspectives of boredom appeared in the interviews with the youth; however, behavioural traits of boredom (e.g., a proneness to boredom) did not appear within the research findings. A cognitive definition of boredom from Newton (2001) and Westgate (2019) suggests a lack of stimulation felt by an individual indicates boredom has occurred. The research findings appear to reflect these definitions by Newton (2001) and Westgate (2019) as participants suggested that when they experienced boredom, it was acting as a signal for a need of stimulation or for stimulating activity to occur. As well, the research findings of this thesis appear to reflect Eastwood et al.'s (2012), Greenson's (1953), and London and Monello's (1974) depictions of boredom, where time feels to be slowly passing. Participants from this study suggested that when they experienced boredom, they recalled time as either standing still or moving slowly.

With respect to the environmental perspective towards boredom, Csikszentmihalyi (1990) suggests meaning and interest in one's environment defines boredom (as cited in Binnema, 2004). The findings of this thesis appear to similarly reflect what Csikszentmihalyi (1990) suggests, as participants recalled that having a connection to their neighbours and their neighbourhood made it difficult to be bored. Additionally, it appeared throughout the interviews many times that youth spend their leisure time with friends at parks and playgrounds, despite these playgrounds being intended for use by young children. The use of children's playgrounds by youth and the role these environmental aspects play with respect to boredom should be researched further. There may be potential for the development and creation of teen specific

playgrounds to alleviate boredom or feelings of boredom and potential engagement in crime and/or deviance amongst youth and their friends.

Various definitions and conceptions of boredom through an emotional perspective were present during a review of the literature, the research findings of this thesis appear to reflect such conceptions and definitions. Freeman (1993) suggests that boredom is an unpleasant feeling experienced by young people. The research findings of this thesis appear to reflect this as participants expressed that the experience of being bored was frustrating, annoying, and they did not enjoy the experience overall. As well, the findings of this thesis suggest that boredom experienced by participants led to feeling either restless, impatient, anxious, isolated or trapped. These findings are reflective of Wegner's (2011) definition of boredom that suggests feelings of anxiety about the absence of meaning (e.g., boredom) in activities with feelings of dissatisfaction, irritability, restlessness, stress, and entrapment.

What this thesis contributes to existing literature and on-going academic discussion of the definition of boredom, specifically through an emotional perspective, is that boredom has been described by a few participants as "just existing" or as a tranquil feeling. As mentioned earlier, existing research on boredom through an emotional perspective has seen boredom as an emotional state with low and high arousal emotions (e.g., sadness and frustration) and an overall unpleasant feeling. This specific research finding stands out amongst existing literature given that it is an uncommon finding.

Contributions to Existing Literature on Behavioural Outcomes of Boredom

With respect to behavioural outcomes of boredom, much of the research findings regarding behavioural outcomes of boredom appear to be reflective of what existing literature discusses regarding boredom and its behavioural outcomes. Barbalet (1999), Bengtsson (2012),

Vivian & Schnierer (2010), and Biolcati et al. (2018) suggest risk-taking behaviour as an outcome of boredom. The findings of this thesis appear to reflect this, as participants disclosed that they engaged in risk-taking behaviour such as stealing, trespassing, drug use and alcohol use, and sexual promiscuity. Additionally, these behaviours can be viewed as criminal and deviant. Looking specifically at drug use, Lee et al. (2007) suggest cannabis use is a result of boredom. Personal recounts from participants and their use of cannabis in their youth reflect this suggestion by Lee et al. (2007). As well, Mann and Robinson (2009) suggest that a behavioural outcome of boredom is academic truancy, it appears that participants' recollections of skipping class as a result of boredom reflect this suggestion. Turning away from negative behavioural outcomes of boredom, this thesis contributes to existing literature that suggests boredom leads to positive behavioural outcomes of boredom. Harris (2000) and Mann and Cadman (2014) suggest that boredom can lead to creativity, this appears to be reflected through a few participants, who expressed that when they experience boredom, they turn to creative activities like drawing, scrapbooking, and playing music on their guitar.

Findings of this thesis regarding youth behavioural outcomes of boredom supports existing literature on such topic, yet what it contributes is a specific behaviour not seen throughout the literature – sexual promiscuity occurring because of boredom. A few participants disclosed that they were sexually promiscuous during their youth at times when they were experiencing boredom. One participant explained they would enter online chat rooms with strangers, talk with them, and would send them explicit photographs of themselves. Another participant disclosed they would engage in sexual intercourse with multiple individuals. These findings are interesting given their absence in existing research.

Contributions to Late Modernity Research

This thesis makes a contribution to existing research on late modernity as it attempts to understand the experience of late modernity by further exploring the notion of a constantly changing society and the connection between boredom, late modernity, and youth. As mentioned in the theory chapter of this thesis, Young (2007) expresses that society is in a late modern period where feelings of instability are brought on by an ever-changing society. The findings of this thesis support this point mentioned by Young (2007), as it appears through participant responses that they feel like they live in world and society that is constantly changing. For example, one participant suggested that societal norms are never the same and are changing constantly and quickly. Additionally, this thesis makes a contribution by further exploring the relationship between boredom and the experience of late modernity, as feelings of meaninglessness and placelessness are suggested to be present in the lives of youth and impact their behavioural outcomes. It appears that youth who engage in deviant behaviour and suffer the consequences of such behaviour experience feelings of meaninglessness and placelessness, questioning themselves about what they are doing, what are they supposed to be doing, and what their purpose is.

This thesis compliments the work of Young's (2007) theory of human behaviour and late modernity as it utilizes the theory in relation to boredom and possible behavioural outcomes of boredom, strengthening its propositions by applying them to a specific population – youth. Young's (2007) theory of human behaviour in a late modern period is a relatively new theoretical framework but its propositions are relevant to today's current society as suggested in the reflection of participants' experiences with boredom, feelings of instability, uncertainty,

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placelessness, meaninglessness, ontological insecurity regarding what youth should be doing with themselves and how they should be spending their time.

Contributions to Newton's Boredom Theory

This thesis contributes to the work of Newton (2001) as its findings support and reflect Newton's (2001) propositions regarding learned criminality through peers, deviance and peers, the connection between deviance and maturation, and environmental occurrences of boredom and deviance. During the interviews, it appears that criminality and deviancy is influenced through deviant peers. For example, one participant acknowledged that the stealing they participated in was a direct relation to one of their peers who had learned online how to steal. This finding is reflective of a thought put forward by Newton (2001), who suggests that criminal behaviour amongst youth is learned from others. With respect to environmental settings that boredom and deviance occur in, it appears that some participants who lacked an interest in school and experienced boredom in school or had unstructured leisure time and experienced boredom engaged in deviant behaviour. These findings contribute to Newton's (2001) proposition on boredom and deviance occurring during school and leisure time. As well, Newton (2001) noted that youth grow out of criminality as they mature, this appeared in the findings as youth suggested starting post-secondary education and obtaining employment was part of their maturation process and left little time for them to be deviant or criminal. Additionally, the findings suggest that post-secondary education and obtaining employment reconfigured the priorities of youth and lead to youth gaining responsibilities.

The findings of this thesis compliment the work of Newton (2001) as her propositions like boredom and deviance typically occur during school hours, criminality is learned through peers, and that most youth will grow out of criminality as a result of maturation are reflected in

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the findings. This thesis extends on the work of Newton (2001) as it includes participants that are mostly from a middle class socioeconomic status, a factor that Newton (2001) does not account for in her theory, in relation to boredom and crime. This thesis findings appear to suggest that the class background of youth can determine a youth's behavioural outcomes of boredom.

Having presented the contributions to existing literature in this section, which includes various definitions of boredom, behavioural outcomes of boredom, late modernity and its relation to boredom, and Newton's (2001) boredom theory of youth criminality, what will now occur is a discussion of the limitations of this research.

Limitations

Upon completion of the narrative interviews with the 16 youth participants, limitations surrounding the sample group and the overall approach of this thesis research were seen. As mentioned, in the participant characteristics section, there were only 16 participants and only one of them was a male. Additionally, all the participants were university students. Thus, the sample group was limited, in terms of size, sex, age, and class variety. To remedy this limitation, recruiting more participants and participants that are diverse in sex and class would benefit a research study like this in the future. If this were to occur, the possibility of a gender and class comparison between participants could occur. With further regard to the sample group, some participants expressed difficulty with memory recall when asked to reflect on their life and life experiences between the ages of 14 to 17. Memory recall is important in this thesis research as participants are required to think back to the instances of their life from the ages of 14 to 17 in order to answer interview questions that are dependent on that time of their life. To alleviate this issue in the future, having a younger sample group that is the age the questions are intended for would be beneficial.

A more integrated approach to understanding youth and their behavioural choices is suggested based on the results from this study. While this thesis does cover youth boredom in relation to crime and deviance, a closer look at the relationships between socioeconomic status and boredom and behavioural outcomes should be investigated further. Specifically, one's socioeconomic status is important in order to understand and determine what can and cannot be done to alleviate feelings of boredom. While a sole qualitative approach to this thesis was used in order to attempt to provide rich narrative data, there is potential to obtain data of a higher quality if a mixed methods research approach was used. It is suggested that the potential of a mixed-methods approach would benefit this type of research in the future. The mixed methods approach would be beneficial as rich, qualitative data can be gathered from interpretations of lived experiences from youth regarding boredom and behavioural outcomes of boredom, while surveying and measuring through quantitative means how much boredom was experienced by youth and what type of behavioural outcomes of boredom occurred. A statistical approach alongside narratives provided by youth would be beneficial for future research, as having a statistical, quantitative basis that is explained and given context through narrative means can provide further insight into youth boredom and deviant and criminal behavioural outcomes.

Future Research

During the analysis of the key findings from the narrative interviews, several notions relating to youth boredom and behavioural outcomes of boredom appeared that would benefit from additional research in the future. The notions that would benefit from future research include aspects of socioeconomic status that can alleviate boredom, the relationship between maturation and boredom in relation to youth desistance from deviant and criminal behaviour, the presence of quasi-boredom, a specific emotional aspect of boredom, the influence of late

modernity on boredom and youth behavioural outcomes of boredom, and specific deviant and criminal acts that occur for fun or a need.

With respect to aspects of socioeconomic status that can alleviate boredom, a few participants with middle and high socioeconomic status expressed that having a driver's license and a car to drive alleviated boredom and allowed for fun to occur when with friends. Future research should explore what other aspects of middle and high socioeconomic, like possessing a driver's license and a car, can alleviate boredom amongst individuals.

Regarding maturation and important life changes, the findings suggest that maturation leads to some desistance to crime and deviance, yet what future research should determine is what factors, aside from post-secondary education and part-time employment, advance or delay the start of the maturation process. Additionally, post-secondary education and part-time employment were the only important life changes identified by participants; future research should explore what other important life changes youth experience as they transition from adolescence to young adulthood.

Additionally, the findings of this thesis research suggest participants were experiencing feelings of quasi-boredom however, the participants themselves did not explicitly state so, rather it was inferred through participant recollections of their responses to boredom. Future research should explore the notion of quasi-boredom further, as it is not part of this study's scope, and it is an interesting aspect of boredom that is not discussed within the existing literature. When asked to describe how they felt when bored, a few participants expressed they felt neutral and tranquil, these emotional aspects of boredom were not reflected in the existing literature. Future research on boredom should explore if other individuals feel similarly towards boredom. Moreover, it would be interesting to see if other individuals report feeling neutral or tranquil when

experiencing boredom, as this was a unique finding from a couple of participants that was not mentioned by the other participants. Interesting findings related to late modernity and aspects of late modernity, like feelings of meaninglessness and placelessness, appeared from the interviews. Further research should explore how late modernity, specifically feelings of meaninglessness and placelessness, influence boredom and behavioural outcomes of boredom amongst youth.

Finally, future research should explore what deviant and criminal acts are most commonly for fun and a need and how these acts done for fun differ from being done for a need. In the narrative interviews, participants were asked broadly if their deviant and criminal acts were committed for fun or a need. A mix of responses was seen but the majority of participants suggested these acts were done for fun. Perhaps identifying what acts are solely done for fun and solely done for a need can provide further insight into behavioural outcomes of boredom amongst youth.

Conclusion

Mentioned at the beginning of this thesis is Steinmetz et al.'s (2017) quote that describes boredom as a universal experience. One of the suggested key takeaways from this thesis is just that, boredom is a commonality experienced by all participants at some point in their earlier youth and their current age. It is important to understand what the behavioural outcomes of boredom are and how boredom affects the lives of youth. Specifically, it is imperative to understand how boredom relates to criminality and deviance amongst youth, with specific regards to a youth's behavioural choices. This thesis was conducted in a qualitative manner with a narrative approach to inquiry, in conjunction with the use of photograph elicitation during the 16 semi-structured interviews, to understand youth boredom and its influence on criminality and deviance amongst youth. The 16 youth participants were asked to reflect on their youth,

specifically between the ages of 14 to 17, and explain how boredom and other factors related to their life, influenced their involvement in crime and deviance, if it did at all. Some of the key findings that emerged from the semi-structured interviews suggest that: boredom was experienced by all participants, boredom, unsupervised leisure time, and peer relationships all come together to influence a youth's behavioural choices, boredom can lead to deviance but also can lead to productivity and creativity, crime and deviance can be committed by youth for fun, feelings of meaninglessness and placelessness in connection with boredom can be experienced by youth and can impact their behavioural choices, a youth's socioeconomic status can affect what a youth can and cannot do, and youth maturation and life changes in a youth's life (including obtaining employment and starting post-secondary education) can affect behavioural outcomes. If this research were to be replicated or conducted again, it would benefit from utilizing a mixed method approach, having a larger sample size, and a more diverse and younger sample group.

Appendix

Appendix A. Interview Guide

My name is Carolina Gutierrez. I'm collecting stories on the reflection of youths' lives and their experiences and recall of boredom, leisure time, peer influence, crime, and deviance. This is a semi structured interview that will focus on whatever you feel is important to talk about based on my topic. I want you to take your time and reflect on your youth between the ages of 14-17. I'll be here to listen and allow you to share your stories. I will interrupt as little as possible. I will be taking some brief notes and may ask a few probing questions throughout the interview. You are free to withdraw from the study at any point or to pass on any questions you do not wish to answer.

I have also asked you to bring a photograph from when you were 14-17. The picture can be of you and your friends and I would like you to describe the picture. You won't have to show us that photo, but we will ask you to describe it and what it represents to you. If you don't have a photo or would prefer not to find one that is no problem at all. I have some questions to help guide the conversation, but due to the narrative approach of this interview, what you decide to talk about does not have to be exclusive to these questions, and as we speak more questions may come up based on your story.

As noted in the consent form this research is confidential to the fullest extent of the law. Because I am going to be talking to you about criminal behaviour from your past, I want to clarify a couple of things:

1) We are only interested in hearing about general criminal involvement from your past, there is no need to provide specific details about any crimes you have committed.

2) What you discuss with me about any criminal activity or involvement is confidential to the fullest extent of the law and will not be shared. However, there are 2 limits to this. 1) there is a duty to report if you tell me about any plans to hurt yourself or hurt others. 2) there is a duty to report abuse happening to someone under 16. This is obviously not likely to happen in our interview, but I need to inform you about these limits to confidentiality.

Any questions or concerns about that?

We can now start with the first question and go from there.

Engagement/ Background Questions:
     1) What is your age?
     2) Are you a current student at Ontario Tech University?

Explorations Questions:
The first set of questions are about what activities you liked to do from ages 14 to 17
     3) What did you enjoy doing most when you were younger? On a daily basis?

4) Tell me a little bit about yourself when you were younger? Any school interest or any outside of school? Did you always like school?
5) How would you describe the neighbourhood you grew up in as? Do you still live in the same area?
6) How would you describe your socioeconomic status when you were younger?
7) Do you think your socioeconomic status and neighbourhood impacted what you could and could not do on a daily basis?
8) Can you describe who you are with in the photograph you were asked to bring?
9) Where was the location in photograph?
10) What where you doing at that time? What about the people around you?
11) How do you feeling looking at the picture?
12) In your youth, who did you primarily hang out with? How would you describe your friend group?
13) Did you have a daily structured routine after school and on weekends? Or was your time more unstructured? For example, did you have any planned extracurricular activities, such as soccer, swimming, or music lessons?
14) What would you say you typically did to keep yourself busy? Reflection of past and present?
15) When you felt you had nothing to do, what did you do and how did you feel?
16) How did you spend the majority of your leisure time? Was it supervised?
17) Do you remember feeling bored when you were with your friends?
18) I know it might be hard, but can you describe what it felt like to feel bored?
19) Would you describe boredom as always being a bad or negative feeling? Why or why not?
20) Do you remember how you and your friends responded to being bored?
21) What would you say you wanted as a youth in order not to be bored?
22) When you weren't bored, why weren't you?
23) Reflecting on your past, do you think that a constantly changing society influences what you could do with your time now and before? Feelings of meaninglessness ever occur?
24) What did you normally do for fun? What was involved in the fun? Ever any deviance? For example, for me…
25) Do you think feelings of boredom ever led to deviance or crime [I am not interested in hearing about specific crimes, just general involvement if you were]? For example, did you ever do something you might have gotten in trouble for out of boredom?
26) If there were moments of deviant behaviour, how would you describe them? Were they for fun? Out of a need? Both?
27) Compared to who you were when you were 14-17, do you think that nowadays you respond to boredom in a similar way or different? What do you do now if you feel bored? If you changed, when do you think that started and why?
28) Based on who you are today, where do you see yourself in the future? What are your hopes? These can be related to school, career, or your personal life.

Exit Question:

29) Is there anything else you would like to share that I haven't asked you about?

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