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Keeping it in the Family:

Parental Influences on Young People's Attitudes to Police

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Abstract

Prior research finds young people are less satisfied with police than their older counterparts. Despite this, our understanding of youth attitudes to police is limited, as most research has focused on adult attitudes to police. This study adds to our understanding by examining the influence of parent-child dynamics on youth attitudes to police. We predict that youth attitudes to police will be influenced by their parents' attitudes. A survey of 540 school students in South East Queensland reveals perceived parental attitudes to police are associated with youth attitudes to police. However, this effect is partially mediated by maternal, but not paternal attachment. These findings suggest youth attitudes to police are not simply influenced by contact with police and delinquency, but that familial context is important. Consequently, our theoretical understanding of youth attitudes to police must move beyond a focus upon police contact and delinquency.

Key words: youth; police; attitudes to police; family; attitude attribution; parental attachment

Word count: 6,820

Introduction

Positive attitudes toward police are generally associated with favourable crime control outcomes (Reisig and Giacomazzi, 1998). Consequently, there has been considerable research interest in identifying the factors that influence citizen attitudes to police. In their comprehensive review of prior research, Brown and Benedict (2002) identify the key social factors that have been found to predict attitudes to police. These include contextual variables such as victimisation, fear of victimisation and neighbourhood context, as well as individual variables such as race, gender, police contact and age (Brown and Benedict, 2002). While some of these variables have been subject to limited empirical testing, the impact of age has been widely examined (Brick et al., 2009; Brown and Benedict, 2002). Of these, the majority find that young people are less satisfied with police than their older counterparts (e.g. Cheurprakobkit, 2000; Hurst and Frank, 2000; Hurst et al., 2000; Jesilow et al., 1995; Reisig and Correia, 1997; Reisig and Giacomazzi, 1998; Smith and Hawkins, 1973; Taylor et al., 2001; Webb and Marshall, 1995).

While prior research consistently shows that age is a predictor of attitudes to police, our understanding of the processes through which young people develop these attitudes is limited. A better understanding of the processes generating poor youth attitudes to police is vital, as young people are more likely to come into contact with police (Weitzer and Brunson, 2009), and poor attitudes may contribute to a cycle of negative interactions between police and young people. For example, the police decision to caution or arrest a suspect is often based on demeanor (Cunneen and White, 2002; White, 1994). If a young person holds a negative attitude to police, this may translate to a hostile demeanour when approached by police officers (Cunneen and White, 2002; White, 1994). These negative attitudes may therefore indirectly increase entanglement with the juvenile justice system (Cunneen and White, 2002; White, 1994).

Research as to *why* youth attitudes to police are generally less favourable is limited. Existing research generally focuses on the effects of police contact and delinquency (Brick et al., 2009; Cox and Falkenberg, 1987; Hurst and Frank, 2000; Leiber et al., 1998; Rusinko, 1978). These studies suggest that delinquency and police contact (especially negative contact and police-initiated contact) are key factors in the formation of negative attitudes to police among young people (Brick et al., 2009; Cox and Falkenberg, 1987; Hurst and Frank, 2000; Leiber et al., 1998; Rusinko, 1978). However, while studies on police-youth contact suggest that contact with police may cause negative attitudes, Brandl et al. (1994) propose negative interactions with police may be the outcome of negative attitudes to police, or at least, that a reciprocal relationship exists between attitudes and contact. Negative attitudes to police may thus be formed long before youth come into contact with police. On this point, researchers suggest family influences may be important (Brandl et al., 1994; Leiber et al., 1998). Despite this, our empirical and theoretical understanding of family influences on youths' attitudes to police is underdeveloped.

In response to this particular gap in research, and the general deficit in research on youth attitudes to police, this study explores the influence of parents in the development of youths' attitudes to police. Using a survey of 540 Grade 9 students in South-East Queensland, we examine how both perceptions of parental attitudes toward police and parental attachment influence youths' attitudes to police. We draw on the theoretical concepts of parent-child "attitude congruence" and parental attachment to explain the nature of the relationship between parental factors and youths' attitudes to police (Brody et al., 1994: 369).

Prior research on youths' attitudes to police

The impact of contact with police has dominated the study of young peoples' attitudes to police. Contact with police is particularly important, as interaction with police may be more prominent in the lives of adolescents and young adults than older adults. Adolescents often 'hang out' in public spaces, and therefore may be susceptible to a wider range of police interventions compared to older members of the community (Spooner, 2001; Weitzer and Brunson, 2009; White, 1994). Thus, an increased incidence of negative contact with police might logically explain the relationship between age and attitudes to police. As noted above, research confirms that negative interactions with police are linked to negative youth attitudes to police (Brick et al., 2009; Hurst and Frank, 2000; Rusinko, 1978; Smith and Hawkins, 1973).

Additionally, recent research on procedural justice and youths' perceptions of police legitimacy suggests that perceptions of legitimacy are decreased by negative evaluations of contact with police. Piquero et al. (2005) found that assessments of experiences with officials within the criminal justice system (such as the police) influenced general attitudes to legal authority, at least for youth charged with serious offences. Similarly, an Australian study of youth enrolled in state schools demonstrated that low perceived legitimacy of the police is linked to "negative contact" with police (Hinds, 2007: 201).

Relatedly, past research has also devoted considerable attention to the influence of delinquent involvement on youth attitudes to police, finding that delinquents have more negative attitudes to police than non-delinquents (e.g. Brick et al., 2009; Cox and Falkenberg, 1987). This relationship could be the result of delinquency bringing young people into greater contact with police, especially contact of a negative nature. However, in prior research, interpretations of this

relationship have tended to focus on underlying delinquent norms and values (Cox and Falkenberg, 1987). For instance, Leiber et al. (1998: 169) found that a “greater commitment to delinquent norms consistently predicted negative attitudes to the police”. Thus, research on the relationship between delinquency and attitudes to police suggests that attitudes to police may be shaped by the broader “sociocultural context” of young people’s lives (Leiber et al., 1998: 153).

However, delinquency and police contact do not provide a complete account of the formation of youths’ attitudes to police. To gain a more comprehensive understanding, researchers suggest that other influences on youths’ attitudes should be considered, with particular emphasis on the role of the family, including parental attitudes to police (Brandl et al., 1994; Cox and Falkenberg, 1987). Indeed, parents, as a part of the broader “socio-cultural context” might be important in shaping delinquent values and youth attitudes to police (Leiber et al., 1998: 153).

Parents, youth and attitudes to police

It is not surprising that the role of the family should be considered in understanding youths’ attitudes toward police. Parental attitudes and behaviour have been found to influence the socialisation and development of adolescents in general (Parke, 2004). Thus, young people’s attitudes to police may be affected by, or at least associated with, parental attitudes and behaviours. Moreover, several studies have found similarities between the attitudes and values of parents and their children more generally (Brody et al., 1994; Jennings and Niemi, 1981; Smith, 1983; Starrels, 1992; Whitbeck and Gecas, 1988). However there are some important considerations.

First, theory suggests that attitudes attributed to others may be more important than actual attitudes (see Acock and Bengston, 1980 and Whitbeck and Gecas, 1988 for discussions). If this theory is correct children may be impacted more strongly by the attitudes they think their parents

have compared to their parent's actual attitudes. The attitudes attributed to parents may therefore be related to children's attitudes. Second, several researchers suggest that emotional attachment to parents will mediate the relationship between attributed parental attitudes and values and the child's attitudes and values (Brody et al., 1994; Whitbeck and Gecas, 1988). For example, Brody et al. (1994), found youth who experienced higher levels of paternal warmth, were more likely to exhibit parent-child attitude congruence. Warmth or attachment to parents should therefore influence the extent of congruence between perceived parental and youth attitudes to police.

This research suggests two key research questions:

1. Are perceived parental attitudes toward police related to a youth's attitudes toward police, net of prior contact with police and delinquency?
2. Is the relationship between perceived parental attitudes toward police and a youth's attitudes toward police mediated by attachment to parents?

These relationships are depicted in Figure 1 below.

[INSERT FIGURE 1 ABOUT HERE]

Data collection

This study uses data collected from a survey of a sample of 540 Grade 9 (13 to 14 years) students enrolled in South-East Queensland secondary schools. The data was collected between April and May 2006 as part of a larger project on youth attitudes, their interactions with police and risk-taking, funded by an Australian Research Council Linkage Grant (Western et al., 2003). Active consent was obtained from participants and their parents or guardians. An 'opt-out' option was available for students on the day the questionnaires were distributed. The questionnaires were

completed in school classrooms during school hours, and were self-administered. The questionnaire took between 30 and 40 minutes to complete.

Sample

The sample was based on the population of Grade 9 students enrolled in five schools located in South-East Queensland. Schools invited to participate were chosen based on a history of higher rates of behavioural problems. This resulted in the over-sampling of schools in lower socio-economic areas. Two of the five selected schools were located in areas with higher scores on the Index of Relative Socio-Economic Disadvantage (IRSED) than the median score for Queensland suburbs of 996 (see Table 1) (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2001).

[INSERT TABLE 1 HERE]

All students in Grade 9 at each school were invited to participate. Of the 977 students enrolled in Grade 9 across the five schools, 69.0 percent returned consent forms. Seventy-nine percent of those students who consented were present and willing to participate on the day the survey was administered. In total, 540 students completed questionnaires, giving a response rate of 55.3 percent. The mean age of the final sample was 13.4 years and 49.2 percent of participants identified as male. Further, 4.8 percent identified as of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent, 8.1 percent identified as of Pacific Islander descent and 9.5 percent identified as of Asian descent. In comparison, the Australian Bureau of Statistics (2001b, 2001c) reports that 49.5 percent of the Queensland population in 2001 identified as male, 3.1 percent identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, 0.8 percent identified as of Melanesian, Micronesian or Polynesian (collectively known as Pacific Islander) ancestry and 4.0 percent identified as of Asian ancestry. In comparison

to the Queensland population, the current sample is therefore over-representative of these key ethnic groups. To account for this, we control for ethnicity in our analyses.

Measures

Dependent variable

The dependent variable in this study is youth attitude to police. To capture young people's attitudes to police in our sample, the survey included an index of eight items adapted from the National Youth Affairs Research Scheme (NYARS) Youth Questionnaire (Adler et al., 1992). These items were: "police need better training in dealing with young people"; "police use unfair methods to arrest young people"; "I would go to the police for help if I needed it"; "police should deal with serious crime and leave young people alone"; "in general, the police do a good job of stopping crime"; "I have great respect for the police"; "police tend to believe what parents have to say rather than what young people have to say"; and "in general, the police are not friendly when dealing with young people". Level of agreement was measured on a Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 10 (strongly agree). Some items were negatively worded to avoid response bias however scores for these items were reversed in analyses.

While these items have strong face validity and have previously been adopted in the Australian context (see Adler et al., 1992), prior research indicates that operationalising youth attitudes to police can be problematic. For instance, White and Menke (1982) found past research on citizens' attitudes toward police lacks convergence. Others agree, suggesting more care needs to be taken in developing measures of attitudes to police (see also Brown and Benedict, 2002; Hurst and Frank, 2000). As such, steps were taken to ensure the construct validity and reliability of our measure of youth attitude to police. A factor analysis with varimax rotation revealed two

distinct components (reported in Table 2). Component 1 taps into general perceptions of the police, while Component 2 focuses on perceptions of police interactions with young people. As the purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between parents' attitudes to police and youths' attitudes to police, we suggest it is more appropriate to examine general attitudes to police perceptions. We therefore constructed our dependent variable based on Component 1. The items identified in Component 1 were combined as an additive scale measuring *youth attitude to police* (Cronbach's Alpha =0.776).

[INSERT TABLE 2 ABOUT HERE]

Key independent variables

Five key independent variables are included in our models (see Appendix for items). Contact with police was measured as prior *police-initiated contact with police* as this has been identified in prior research as a predictor of youths' attitudes to police (Hurst and Frank, 2000; Rusinko, 1978; Smith and Hawkins, 1973). Respondents were asked to report on the occurrence of three types of prior police-initiated contact (see Appendix for items). A dummy variable was created to indicate *prior police-initiated contact with police*, coded 1 if the respondents answered "yes" to at least one of the questions, and coded 0 if the respondent answered "no" to all three questions.

Our measure of *prior delinquency* was adapted from the Australian Self-Report Delinquency Scale (Mak, 1993; Fagan and Western, 2005). Twenty-six items measuring delinquency were compiled into an additive scale. For each item, respondents were asked to report whether they had "done" a delinquent act in the previous three months (see Appendix for items). Each item was given the score of 1 if the respondent answered "yes" or 0 if the respondent

answered “no”. Responses for each individual were added to create a single measure of *prior delinquency* prevalence (Cronbach’s Alpha=0.900).

As peers are considered important in shaping youth attitudes and behaviours, it was also necessary to include a measure of peer attitudes (Ogilvie, 2003). Here we employed a measure of perceptions of *peer delinquency* to tap into peer attitudes and behaviours. On a response scale of “none”, “few”, “some” or “most”, participants were asked to report how many of their good friends had participate in five delinquent acts (see Appendix for items), in the previous three months. A dummy variable was then computed for delinquent peers (1=at least a few delinquent peers, 0=no delinquent peers).

Perceived parental attitude to police was measured as a single item. On a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 10 (strongly agree), respondents stated the extent to which they agreed with the statement “my parents like the police”. Parental attachment was measured using items from the Maternal and Paternal Care scale (Kennedy et al., 2003; Parker et al., 1979). As prior research suggests that there may be differences in the influence of maternal and paternal attachment on parent-child attitude congruence (Amato, 1994; Hill and Atkinson, 1988), separate maternal and paternal attachment indices were constructed. Each index consisted of eight questions designed to gauge perceived maternal or paternal attachment. Respondents were asked to select the response that best described their mother (or the “female who takes care of me”) and, separately, father (or the “male who takes care of me”) for each of the eight items. Responses ranged from 1 (sometimes), to 3 (very often). These items were added together to form a *maternal attachment* scale (Cronbach’s Alpha=0.915) and a *paternal attachment* scale (Cronbach’s Alpha=0.927) (see Appendix for items).

Control variables

In order to account for the demographic characteristics of the participants, variables measuring gender, socio-economic status, family structure and ethnicity were introduced as controls. These socio-demographic variables are mainstays in research on attitudes to police (Brown and Benedict, 2002; Hurst and Frank, 2000; Jesilow et al., 1995; Kennedy et al., 2003; Levy, 2001; Smart et al., 2004; Taylor et al., 2001; Webb and Marshall. 1995). A dummy variable was created to capture the *gender* of participants (1=male, female=0). Due to the age of the respondents, parental socio-economic status was used. Parents' socio-economic status was measured using a dummy variable that captured *parental employment* (1=at least one parent employed, 0=no parents employed). We also included a dummy variable to capture *living arrangements* (1=lives with at least one parent, 0=other living arrangements).¹ Lastly, we constructed dummy variables for those who identified as of *Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander* descent (1=Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, 0=other), *Pacific Islander* descent (1=Pacific Islander, 0=other) and *Asian* descent (1=Asian, 0=other).

Analytic approach

An Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression analysis was estimated to determine the effects of the key independent variables and to explore the potential mediating effect of parental attachment. Standard diagnostic tests were used to assess the validity of the analysis. Exploration of the data revealed that the assumption of the normality of residuals was met, and there were no issues of multicollinearity. Examination of casewise diagnostics and Mahalanobis distance revealed two outliers. The OLS regression analysis was undertaken with and without these cases.

However, as there were minimal changes in the parameter estimates, these cases were retained in the final analyses.

Results

Mean scores indicate that, on average, participants held positive attitudes to police ($\bar{x}=19.67$) and thought their parents did also ($\bar{x}=6.49$). Respondents reported relatively high levels of parental attachment, with a marginal difference between average paternal ($\bar{x}=16.12$) and maternal ($\bar{x}=17.23$) attachment. Prior delinquency levels reported among the sample were low ($\bar{x}=3.04$) while, somewhat surprisingly, 50.16 percent of the sample had experienced police-initiated contact. The descriptive statistics of the sample are summarised in Table 3.

[INSERT TABLE 3 ABOUT HERE]

Do perceived parental attitudes to police influence youth attitudes to police?

Table 4 reports the results of the OLS of the independent variables on youth attitudes to police. The independent variables were entered in five models: control variables were entered first, followed by police-initiated contact, then peer delinquency and prior delinquency, perceived parental attitude to police, and paternal and maternal attachment.

[INSERT TABLE 4 ABOUT HERE]

None of the demographic variables² entered in Model 1 (see Table 4) were significant. Although ethnicity and gender have been found to be related to attitudes to police in prior research, the findings around gender effects have not been consistent (Brown and Benedict, 2002; Nihart et

al., 2005), moreover studies on ethnicity tend to focus on Hispanic, African American and White attitudinal differences (Brown and Benedict, 2002). This finding is therefore not surprising. Peer delinquency and prior delinquency retain their significance as predictors of youth attitude to police through to the final model; explaining 14.1 percent of the variance in the dependent variable upon their addition in Model 3 (see Models 1 to 5, Table 4). Consistent with prior research, these findings suggest delinquent behaviours and associations contribute to a negative attitude to police among young people, net of other variables in the model (see e.g. Cox and Falkenberg, 1987; Hurst and Frank, 2000; Leiber et al., 1998). Moreover the addition of delinquency reduced the effect of police-initiated contact. Police-initiated contact explained 2.7 percent of the variance in the dependent variable in Model 2 but was non-significant in Model 3 (see Table 4). This finding suggests the effects of police-initiated contact are explained by the presence of delinquent attitudes and behaviours.

Of particular interest to our research was the addition of perceived parental attitude to police in Model 4 which produced the largest change in the R-square statistic and accounted for 23.0 percent of the variance in youth attitude to police (see Table 4). These results indicate that perceived parental attitude to police is positively associated with youth attitude to police, even after taking into account police-initiated contact, peer delinquency and prior delinquency ($b=1.386, p \leq 0.001$). Moreover, the effect of peer delinquency and prior delinquency decreased with the addition of perceived parental attitude to police into the model (as evidenced by a drop in the unstandardised coefficient, see Models 3 and 4, Table 4). These results indicate that perceived parental attitude to police somewhat mediates the effect of peer delinquency on youth attitude to police.

Does attachment to parents mediate the perceived parental attitudes-youth attitudes to police relationship?

Paternal and maternal attachment were added to the final model to explore the potential mediating effect of parental attachment on the relationship between perceived parental attitude and youth attitude to police (see Model 5, Table 4). Of the parental attachment variables, only maternal attachment had a significant relationship with youth attitude to police, indicating that stronger levels of maternal attachment are associated with more positive youth attitudes to police. However, while the inclusion of parental attachment variables in the model significantly increased the amount of explained variance in youth attitude to police, the introduction of parental attachment caused only a marginal decrease ($b=0.076$) in the unstandardised coefficient for perceived parental attitude to police (see Models 3 and 4, Table 4). Thus, parental attachment only marginally mediated the relationship between perceived parental attitude to police and youth attitudes.

Discussion

Prior research into youth attitudes to police has been dominated by a focus upon delinquency and police contact (Brown and Benedict, 2002). The results of the present study suggest contact with police may not be associated with youth attitude to police once prior delinquency is accounted for. Moreover, even though delinquency is associated with youth attitudes to police, parent-child dynamics are important. In fact, perceived parental attitude to police was found to be more important than delinquency and police-initiated contact in predicting youth attitudes to police (based on the most substantial change in R-square in the estimated models). The positive and significant association of perceived parental attitude to police with youth attitudes to police suggests parents' attitudes and behaviour influence youth attitudes to police (although higher levels of parental attachment only minimally mediated the relationship).

Just as the findings of this study show there is a relationship between parent-child dynamics and youth attitudes to police, these findings also allow for a broader understanding of youth attitudes to police. Prior research has often focused on the influence of contact with police and encounter-specific attitudes to police upon general attitudes to police. Scaglione and Condon (1980), for example, suggest negative encounters with police are likely to engender a negative attitude to police. The findings of this study support the suggestion that general attitudes to police are not simply influenced by contact with police officers (i.e. once peer delinquency and prior delinquency were accounted for, this relationship was not significant). Indeed, parent-child dynamics were found to be more strongly associated with youth attitude to police than police-initiated contact. While we were unable to capture the nature of police-initiated contacts – i.e. whether perceived positively or negatively by youths – we conclude that if young people learn attitudes to police from their parents, it may be that negative attitudes to police can then lead to negative police contacts. That is, at least in part, the causal order may be reversed, as has been suggested in prior research (e.g. Brandl et al., 1994; Leiber et al., 1998).

These findings must be interpreted with some caution for three reasons. First, the cross-sectional nature of the study means that we cannot make definitive conclusions about the direction of the relationships examined in this study. Second, the generalisability of the findings to other populations or groups requires further research, due to the purposive nature of the sampling method employed. The sample over-sampled schools with youth problems, from low SES areas, and was limited to those aged 13 to 14 years, from five state high-schools in South-East Queensland. Lastly, the secondary nature of this analysis meant that some measures used are not ideal. For example, the only measure available for socio-economic status was the presence of parental employment. While parental employment was entered only as a control variable, this is a crude measure of socio-

economic status and may limit the results. Similarly, the questionnaire did not include measures specific enough to gauge negative police-initiated contact (suggested as important by Cox and Falkenberg, 1987). The variable used in the analyses was a measure of general police-initiated contact, rather than of negative police-initiated contact, which may explain the comparatively weak and non-significant effect of police-initiated contact in the final model. Moreover, measures of peer delinquency and perceived parental attitude to police were slightly dissimilar to measures of prior delinquency and youth attitude to police.

Conclusion

This study provides insight into the under-researched domain of youths' attitudes to police. We find that while factors identified in prior research such as delinquency and peer attitudes are important, parent-child dynamics play a significant role in shaping youths' attitudes to police. Understanding the root of young people's attitudes is important as negative attitudes to police can result in negative outcomes. Negative attitudes to police may hamper police investigations and reduce the ability of police to control crime (Borrero, 2001; Loader, 1996). Furthermore, police discretionary practices are influenced by the demeanour of the suspect and, therefore, a negative attitude to police may increase the likelihood of arrest (Cunneen and White, 2002; White, 1994). As such, positive youth attitudes are of benefit to the police, young people, and the broader community. However, strategies to improve youth attitudes cannot simply focus on improving police-youth interactions. These findings indicate that youth attitudes to police are informed by parents. Thus, any strategies must also incorporate these broader influences on attitudes to police.

While this study offers some insight into parent-child attitude congruence regarding attitudes to police, further research is needed to explore other aspects of the parent-child dynamic

that affect law-abiding behaviour and belief. These may include: parental supervision, discipline, and the ability of parents to monitor youth association with delinquent peers (Rebellon, 2002). Alternative research methods could also prove useful. Actual parental and peer attitudes could be measured and compared with youth's attitudes to police.³ Through the use of longitudinal research, the direction of the relationship between parent-child dynamics and youth attitudes to police, might be better identified. Finally, future research should examine the impact of general attitudes to police upon specific encounters with police. The findings of this study provide support to the suggestion of Brandl et al. (1994) that general attitudes can influence specific encounters with police.

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Notes

1. It is particularly important to include a measure of family structure when considering the relationship between maternal and paternal attachment and youth attitudes to police (i.e. attachment to parents may be the result of family structure). It should be noted however that in the final models, family structure was not significant.
2. Interestingly, being of Pacific Islander background is a significant predictor in Model 4. This may be explained by the small sample size of students of Pacific Islander descent. This finding should therefore be interpreted with caution.

3. As one of the anonymous reviewers of this paper pointed out, the measure of perceived parental attitudes to police included in this study may also reflect how young people choose to present their perceptions of parental beliefs.

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Figure 1: Model of Key Predictors of Youth Attitudes to Police

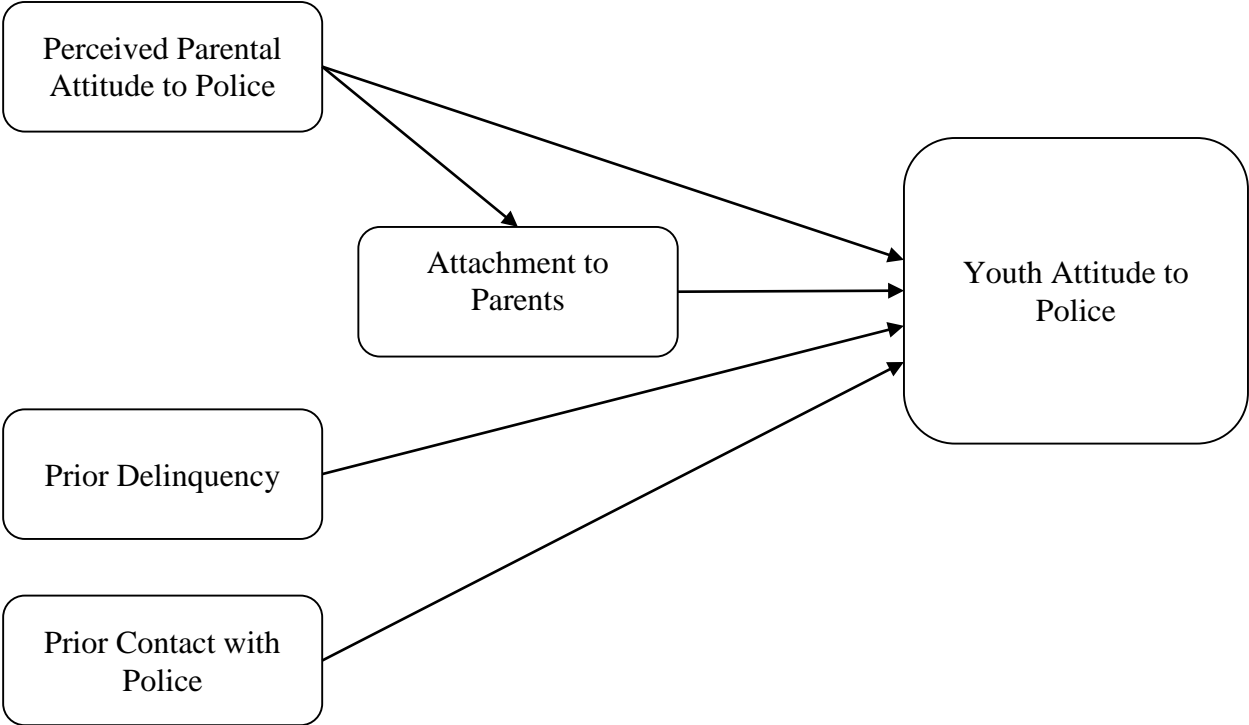


Table 1. Index of Relative Socio-Economic Disadvantage (IRSED), Statistical Local Areas in Queensland

SCHOOL	Approximate IRSED Score
A	1053
B	993
C	1038
D	866
E	797

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (2001a)

Table 2. Factor Loadings, Principal Components Analysis, Rotated Solution (N=540)

Items	Component 1	Component 2
<i>General youth attitude to police</i>		
I have great respect for the police.	0.856	
In general, the police do a good job of stopping crime.	0.807	
I would go to the police for help if I needed it.	0.798	
<i>Youth-specific attitude to police</i>		
Police need better training in dealing with young people.		0.661
Police use unfair methods to arrest young people.		0.738
Police should deal with serious crime and leave young people alone.		0.658
Police tend to believe what parents have to say rather than what young people have to say.		0.633
In general, the police are not friendly when dealing with young people.		0.720
Eigenvalues	2.936	1.645
Explained variance (%)	36.698	20.563

Note: Rotated varimax solution reported. Only factor loadings > 0.40 are displayed.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics of Study Variables (N=540)

Variables	\bar{x}^a	s.d. ^b	Min	Max
<i>Dependent variable</i>				
Youth attitude to police	19.67	6.67	3.00	30.00
<i>Control variables</i>				
Gender	49.16	-	0	1
Parental employment	91.22	-	0	1
Living arrangements	95.87	-	0	1
Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander	4.76	-	0	1
Pacific Islander	8.13	-	0	1
Asian	9.52	-	0	1
Peer delinquency	87.95	-	0	1
<i>Independent variables</i>				
Police-initiated contact with police	50.19	-	0	1
Prior delinquency	3.04	4.29	0	26
Perceived parental attitude to police	6.49	2.41	1	10
Paternal attachment	16.12	5.41	8	24
Maternal attachment	17.23	5.08	8	24

Note: a. Percentages shown for categorical variables; b. Standard deviations not shown for categorical variables; Gender (1=male, 0=female); Parental employment (1=at least one parent employed, 0=no parents employed); Living arrangements (1=lives with at least one parent, 0=other living arrangements); Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander (1=Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, 0=other); Pacific Islander (1=Pacific Islander, 0=other); Asian (1=Asian, 0=other); Police-initiated contact with police (1=yes; 0=no); Prior delinquency (1=yes; 0=no).

Table 4. OLS Regression of Independent Variables on Youth Attitude to Police (N=405)

Independent Variables	MODEL 1			MODEL 2			MODEL 3			MODEL 4			MODEL 5		
	b	s.e.	β	b	s.e.	β	b	s.e.	β	b	s.e.	β	b	s.e.	β
Gender	-1.135	.640	-.088	-.748	.642	-.058	-.331	.596	-.026	-.491	.505	-.038	-.513	.502	-.040
Parental employment	.396	1.238	.016	.596	1.223	.024	-.083	1.135	-.003	.359	.961	.015	.490	.958	.020
Living arrangements	2.665	1.767	.076	2.412	1.746	.068	2.846	1.617	.081	.410	1.382	.012	.211	1.376	.006
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	-2.650	1.479	-.089	-	1.470	-.070	-2.090	1.361	-.070	-.589	1.158	-.020	-.719	1.154	-.024
Pacific Islander	1.331	1.177	.057	1.293	1.161	.055	1.744	1.076	.074	1.812	.910	.077 *	1.658	.908	.070
Asian	-.132	1.070	-.006	-.462	1.061	-.022	-.408	.981	-.019	.135	.831	.006	.337	.832	.016
Police-initiated contact with police	-	-	-	-	.649	-.169 ***	-.053	.652	-.004	.452	.554	.035	.552	.552	.043
Peer delinquency	-	-	-	-	-	-	-2.329	.911	-.119 *	-2.151	.771	-.110 **	-2.044	.769	-.104 **
Prior delinquency	-	-	-	-	-	-	-.585	.079	-.373 ***	-.484	.067	-.309 ***	-.460	.068	-.293 ***
Perceived parental attitude to police	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1.386	.110	.497 ***	1.310	.115	.469 ***
Paternal attachment	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	.018	.055	.015
Maternal attachment	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	.120	.059	.095 *
R²			.026			.053			.194			.424			.433
Change in R²			-			.027 ***			.141 ***			.230 ***			.009 *

Note: * $p \leq 0.05$ level (2-tailed); ** $p \leq 0.01$ level (2-tailed); *** $p \leq 0.001$ level (2-tailed); Gender (1=male, 0=female); Parental employment (1=at least one parent employed, 0=no parents employed); Living arrangements (1=lives with at least one parent, 0=other living arrangements); Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander (1=Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, 0=other); Pacific Islander (1=Pacific Islander, 0=other); Asian (1=Asian, 0=other); Police-initiated contact with police (1=yes, 0=no); Prior delinquency (1=yes, 0=no).

Appendix. Items Included in Key Independent Variables/Scales

Variable	Item/s
Prior contact with police	<p>Have you ever been stopped and spoken to by the police?</p> <p>Have you ever been taken to a police station?</p> <p>Have you ever been officially cautioned by police?</p>
Prior delinquency	<p>Taken part in a fight between two or more groups?</p> <p>Stolen money less than \$10 (in one go)?</p> <p>Stolen money of \$10 or more (in one go)?</p> <p>Broken into a house or building to steal things?</p> <p>Deliberately damaged other people's property?</p> <p>Deliberately damaged property by starting a fire?</p> <p>Deliberately damaged school property?</p> <p>Deliberately hurt or beaten up somebody?</p> <p>Used anything as a weapon in a fight?</p> <p>Threatened someone or forced someone to give you things?</p> <p>Used marijuana?</p> <p>Used ecstasy, acid, speed, or other uppers or hallucinogens?</p> <p>Inhaled or chromed something (i.e. glue, petrol, paint, inhalants)?</p> <p>Used pills, puffers, or medicine for fun when you are not sick?</p> <p>Ridden with someone who is driving dangerously?</p> <p>Ridden a bicycle on the road without a helmet?</p> <p>Ridden a bicycle after drinking?</p> <p>Ridden in a car with someone who has been drinking?</p> <p>Driven a car on the road?</p> <p>Driven a motorbike on the road?</p> <p>Driven a car or motorbike when you've been drinking?</p>

Variable	Item/s
	<p>Driven a car or motorbike to go for a joyride?</p> <p>Driven a car or motorbike above the speed limit?</p> <p>Skipped class or wagged school?</p> <p>Shoplifted?</p> <p>Hit a teacher or supervisor?</p>
Peer delinquency	<p>Drunk a glass or more of alcohol</p> <p>Done risky and dangerous things</p> <p>Taken part in a fight between two or more people</p> <p>Driven a car on the road</p> <p>Driven a motorbike on the road</p> <p>Ridden with someone who is driving dangerously</p> <p>Ridden a bicycle on the road without a helmet</p>
Perceived parental attitude to police	<p>My parents like the police</p>
Maternal/paternal attachment	<p>She/he speaks to me in a warm and friendly voice</p> <p>She/he appears to understand my problems and worries</p> <p>She/he is affectionate to me</p> <p>She/he enjoys talking things over with me</p> <p>She/he gives me as much help as I need</p> <p>She/he understands what I need</p> <p>She/he makes me feel like I am wanted</p> <p>She/he gives me praise</p>