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# The Effects of Police Contact and Neighborhood Context on Delinquency and Violence

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## Abstract

We examined both main effects and cross-level effects of prior criminal justice contact on delinquency and violence. Using multilevel longitudinal data from the Project on Human Development on Chicago Neighborhoods (PHDCN, 1994–2001), this paper addresses a lack of clarity on the effect of police contact on delinquency and violence. We found that police contacts (three types) were associated with increases in delinquency and violence. These effects remained robust after controlling for individual-level covariates such as low self-control. Importantly, the effect of jail contact on the number of delinquent acts a youth engages in was stronger in neighborhoods with high levels of legal cynicism. Paradoxically, however, youths with prior police contacts were more delinquent when they lived in neighborhoods that had higher levels of satisfaction with police. Our study provides a more nuanced understanding of the correlation between police contact and future offending and offers insights into how neighborhood characteristics may worsen the effect of police contact, as well as the importance of dissecting types of contact with the justice system. The study offers policy implications for law enforcement.

**Keywords:** Police contact; neighborhood context; legal cynicism; police satisfaction; delinquency and violence

Neither police behaviors nor youth delinquency exist in a “vacuum”—that is, both are influenced by the neighborhoods or contexts in which they occur (Berg et al., 2012, 2016; Carr et al., 2007; Sampson & Bartusch, 1998; Smith, 1986). Indeed, researchers have revealed that neighborhood contexts can amplify or attenuate delinquency and crime rates (Bursik & Webb, 1982; Clear, 2007; Sampson & Bartusch, 1998; Rose & Clear, 1998), and many of the characteristics of neighborhoods that tend to foster crime and delinquency also influence police behaviors (Sampson & Bartusch, 1998; Kane, 2005; Kirk & Matsuda, 2011; Kirk & Papachristos, 2011; Reisig & Parks, 2003). Primarily, “disorganized” communities have higher rates of crime and delinquency—and possibly citizen-police contact—than do socially “organized” neighborhoods (Bursik & Webb, 1982; Carr et al., 2007; Sampson & Wilson, 1995; Krivo & Peterson, 1996). What is not clear is whether contextual effects (e.g., structural and cultural neighborhood features) might attenuate or buttress the effect of police contact on outcomes such as delinquency and violence.

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In this study, we focus on police behaviors such as contact with a delinquent youth, whether a law enforcement officer warned and released a youth, and whether an officer arrested a youth (resulting in an admission to jail). These represent contacts with formal justice system entities.<sup>1</sup> National surveys have consistently revealed that young people make up the largest percentage of people who are stopped or arrested by the police (Davis et al., 2018). Criminal offending peaks in the teenage years and declines in the early 20s; thus, youths are inevitably an important focus of formal social control efforts (Piquero et al., 2007). In fact, in 2018, over 700,000 youths were arrested by the police, (Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention [OJJDP], 2018). Although there has been a significant decrease in the number of youths arrested over the past decade (OJJDP, 2018), youth arrest has remained a pressing issue among researchers, practitioners, and policy makers alike.

It is likely that the volume of police contact for youths will vary across neighborhood contexts. For example, neighborhoods with high levels of legal cynicism, concentrated disadvantage, and police dissatisfaction will likely be characterized with youths who have high volumes of police contact (Zimmerman & Messner, 2011), while neighborhoods with high immigrant concentration will be associated with fewer police contacts, given that immigrant communities have lower crime rates relative to other minority-dominant communities (Martinez et al., 2008, 2010). In addition, the effect of prior contact with the justice system may vary by type and consequence of the contact. For instance, being warned and released may have a different implication for future involvement in delinquency relative to being held in jail following contact with a police officer. Accordingly, this study seeks to examine the effects of police contacts on youth delinquency and violence using a multilevel dataset to determine whether neighborhood context, particularly disadvantage, immigration, legal cynicism, and police satisfaction, moderates the effect of police contact on delinquency and violence. Understanding the mechanisms through which police contact leads to future delinquency may provide insight into how the impact of police contact can be ameliorated.

## **Theoretical framework and review of literature**

### ***Police contact reduces the likelihood of delinquency***

A prominent theoretical explanation for why individuals who have had contact with the police may be less inclined to engage in later deviant or delinquent behavior is deterrence theory. Deterrence operates under the utilitarian assumption that human behavior is governed by one's calculation of the benefit and cost of their actions (Cullen & Agnew, 2011; Engel et al., 2013; Huizinga & Henry, 2008; Smith & Gartin, 1989).

Some have argued that increased police attention to "minor" offenses, such as public intoxication, littering, and so forth might be associated with lower violent crime rates because it sends a message to potential offenders that crime—even minor forms—will not be tolerated (Martin et al., 2016). Smith and Gartin (1989) found support for specific deterrence in that

arrest among adolescent boys resulted in fewer future police contacts, but the deterrent effect was different for novice and experienced offenders. Arrest led to the termination of offending for novice offenders; however, for more experienced offenders, arrest only decreased, but did not stop criminal involvement (Smith & Gartin, 1989). There is also empirical support for the deterrent effect of other types of criminal justice contacts (e.g., jails) on future offending. Sampson (1986) argued that local incarceration (jail) is much more visible than other types of sanctions (e.g., state imprisonment) and may act as a deterrent due to its more immediate threat of punishment. Consistent with Sampson (1986), Martin et al. (2016) found that cities with a higher risk of jail incarceration experienced lower rates of robbery, aggravated assault, and homicide.

There is also empirical support for focused deterrence strategies. Generally, most studies, including meta-analyses, suggest that focused deterrence strategies are associated with reduction in crime and violence (Braga et al., 2011, 2014; Engel et al., 2013), but the bulk of research on this topic has been on violent crime.

### ***Police contact increases the likelihood of future delinquency***

According to Lemert (1951), the labeling process begins with primary deviance—the initial act of deviance committed by individuals who view themselves and are viewed by others as conformist (or law-abiding citizens). The next phase is secondary deviance, which occurs when a negative label (e.g., delinquent, criminal) is applied so publicly and powerfully that it becomes part of the individual's identity. Such dramatic labeling would become a turning point for the labeled individual, forcing them to take on the label as a key aspect of their identity (Lemert, 1951). The negative label then becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy in that those who are labeled begin to identify with the label and become what they have been labeled. Labeling theory suggests that police contact (e.g., arrests) amplifies the odds of future delinquency via secondary deviance (Smith & Paternoster, 1990). A labeling effect is even stronger as the seriousness of type of contact increases—that is, stronger for those arrested than those warned/released and stronger for those incarcerated than not.

Defiance theory, similarly, suggests that police-initiated contacts tend to elicit negative responses from the public, particularly in situations where citizens view the contact as unwarranted or unfair (Chenane et al., 2020; Fagan & Davies, 2000; Harris, 1997; McManus et al., 2019). Defiance theory explains the effects of sanctions on future crime and delinquency, in which defiance refers to “the net increase in the prevalence, incidence, or seriousness of future offending against a sanctioning community caused by a proud and shameless reaction to the administration of a criminal sanction” (Sherman, 1993, p. 459). The perceived fairness of sanctions is inversely related to future offending; fair sanctions should decrease future criminal involvement while unfair sanctions increase future criminal involvement. Under this theory, police contact would lead to an increase in delinquency when the contact is viewed as unfair.

Numerous studies have replicated the finding that contact with criminal justice agents or agencies can increase future offending (e.g., Bernburg & Krohn, 2003; Bernburg et al., 2006; Huizinga & Esbensen, 1992; Mowen et al., 2018; Paternoster, 1978; Slocum et al., 2018; Thornberry et al., 2004; Wiley et al., 2013), thus lending support for labeling and defiance theories. Along these lines, Wiley et al. (2013) found that police-initiated contacts were associated with increases in future delinquency and weakening of conventional bonds. Likewise, Wiley and Esbensen (2016) found that youths with prior police contact reported higher levels of delinquency relative to those who had no contact. They also reported that the negative effect of police contact was compounded for arrested youths—that is, following an arrest, youths reported more delinquency compared with youths who were only stopped but not arrested (Wiley & Esbensen, 2016). Similarly, Bernburg and Krohn (2003) found that arrests during adolescence were associated with increases in serious deviance in early adulthood. The effect of arrests continued to be associated with increases in crime at 21–22 years old, suggesting an effect that persists into early adulthood. Research by others (e.g., Huizinga & Esbensen, 1992; Klein, 1986; Liberman et al., 2014) indicates that criminal justice intervention (arrest) leads to short and long-term (post one-year) offending among youths; further, this pattern has been established using various datasets.

Researchers have found empirical support that defiance is a viable explanation for why individuals with police contact are likely to reoffend (Klein et al., 2014; Ttofi & Farrington, 2008). Specifically, Bouffard and Piquero (2010) found that individuals who defined the sanction as fair were least likely to continue their offending, while individuals who perceived the sanction as unfair or stigmatizing, were poorly bonded, and acknowledged the shame were most likely to continue their offending. In another study, Piquero and Bouffard (2003) found that police actions that are likely to be perceived as unfair or stigmatizing increase the likelihood that citizens behave defiantly toward police officers. Relying too heavily on formal controls (e.g., arrests and incarceration) can have other unintended consequences such as undermining informal social controls, which help keep crime rates low. This effect is expected to be most pronounced in areas characterized by extreme levels of disadvantage, primarily because the informal controls that are available in such areas are already depleted or strained (Martin et al., 2016). What still remains unclear is how this relationship may be moderated by other factors. Thus far, evidence suggests that gender of the youth, seriousness of delinquency, and satisfaction with police (Keane et al., 1989) may moderate the relationship. Neighborhood context may in fact moderate the police contact—delinquency relationship, but to date, has not been examined, though there is theoretical justification to do so.

### ***Potential moderating role of neighborhood context***

Both police behaviors and youths delinquency are influenced by the contexts in which they occur (Legewie & Fagan, 2019; Leventhal & Brooks-Gunn, 2000; Stewart & Simons, 2010; Terrill & Reisig, 2003). Many of the characteristics

of neighborhoods that tend to foster crime and delinquency also influence police behaviors, such as stopping offenders, arresting them, and so forth (Kirk & Matsuda, 2011; Kirk & Papachristos, 2011; Reisig & Parks, 2000). Researchers have argued that socially disorganized neighborhoods lack effective controls via communication, cooperation and social ties between neighbors, or strong institutional resources and capital (e.g., family structure, educational institutions, etc.) that function to keep crime and delinquency rates low (Bursik, 1986; Sampson, 2012; Peterson & Krivo, 2010). These neighborhoods are often characterized by high levels of concentrated disadvantage, high mobility among residents, ethnic heterogeneity, or immigrant concentration (Bursik & Webb, 1982; Bursik, 1986; Bursik & Grasmick, 1993; Peterson & Krivo, 2005, 2010; Sampson & Wilson, 1995; Sampson, 2012). These factors are community-level criminogenic factors that increase aggregate crime and delinquency likely by reducing social ties and effective communication between residents (Bellair & Browning, 2010; Bursik & Grasmick, 1993; Shaw & McKay, 1969).

Disorganized communities have higher rates of crime and delinquency—and possibly police-initiated contacts—than socially “organized” communities (Bursik & Webb, 1982; Sampson & Wilson, 1995; Krivo & Peterson, 1996; Wilson, 1987). This may be particularly true in disadvantaged neighborhoods—many focused deterrence and other hot spots policing activities are devoted to in these areas (Rinehart, 2011; Rinehart Kochel & Gau, 2019). Whereas the proactive policing strategies can be effective in reducing crime, these efforts can be counterproductive, particularly in poor communities in which these strategies are overwhelmingly utilized (Geller & Fagan, 2019). Given that police-citizen relations in these communities have historically been strained, increasing police presence may be viewed negatively, leading to high levels of legal cynicism and police dissatisfaction (Geller & Fagan, 2019). Others (e.g., Rinehart, 2011) have cautioned that over time, these strategies can erode public trust of the police, particularly in some neighborhoods.

As such, we suspect that the police contact—delinquency relationship (where police contact leads to increased delinquency) may be exacerbated in areas of high concentrated disadvantage or residential instability, given that these areas are exposed to more police activity. The youths in these areas may therefore have a higher likelihood of having contact with the police. They may be more likely to be labeled “delinquent” or experience defiance, depending on the quality or fairness of their interactions with police. Alternatively, if police contact reduces delinquency via deterrence, it is possible that this effect would be strengthened because of specific and focused deterrence strategies employed in these areas (e.g., youths may be deterred from future engagement in delinquency because of their exposure to police in these areas). Given these factors, researchers have posited that the actions of police officers in structurally disadvantaged areas can foster the development of cynicism and dissatisfaction with the police, which can ultimately increase crime and delinquency rates in these areas due to residents’ hesitation to cooperate with the police (Brunson, 2007; Kane, 2005; Kirk & Matsuda, 2011; Kirk & Papachristos, 2011; Silver & Miller, 2004; Terrill & Reisig, 2003).

However, not all communities are equal. Communities with high concentrations of immigrants have often been correlated with lower levels of crime and delinquency (Chenane & Wright, 2018; Sampson, 2008). The “immigrant paradox” (Sampson, 2008; Martinez et al., 2010) refers to recent findings that, despite exposure to conditions that have traditionally been thought to be criminogenic (e.g., economic deprivation), areas characterized by high proportions of immigrants tend to enjoy lower levels of crime and violence (Lee et al., 2001; Martinez et al., 2008). It is possible therefore that due to lower crime rates, some immigrant enclaves also have lower volumes of police contact and as a result, immigrant concentration may attenuate any negative effect of police contact on future delinquency. If police contact leads to less delinquency, it is also possible this effect will be weakened in immigrant neighborhoods because youths in these areas will have less exposure to police. In sum, structural (e.g., concentrated disadvantage) and cultural (e.g., legal cynicism and police dissatisfaction) features of neighborhoods may amplify or mitigate the effect of police contact on crime and delinquency, but scholars have yet to examine this moderated relationship.

### ***Present study***

It is possible that youths living in neighborhoods with certain characteristics (e.g., high levels of legal cynicism and concentrated disadvantage) may (a) experience police contact (and other types of justice contact such as jail) disproportionately or (b) respond to this experience differently than youths in other types of neighborhoods. Despite the possibility of a contextual effect, the influence of neighborhood context has yet to be considered in the police contacts—delinquency line of inquiry, though there is reason to believe that neighborhood conditions can moderate the effect of justice contact on subsequent involvement in crime or delinquency.

We utilize Project on Human Development in Chicago Neighborhoods (PHDCN) data, which consist of a general sample of adolescents (delinquent and nondelinquent) to investigate the relationship between police contact and delinquency. Moreover, the neighborhood component of the PHDCN provides stable enough data from individuals nested within neighborhoods in Chicago to examine true neighborhood- and individual-level relationships and provides neighborhood variables related to disadvantage, residential instability, racial and ethnic heterogeneity, and culture to examine moderation effects.

The specific research questions addressed in this study are:

Individual-level (Level 1) question:

- (1) Within neighborhoods, what is the effect of prior police contact on delinquency and violence?

Neighborhood-level (Level 2) questions:

- (1) Does the effect of police contact on delinquency and violence vary

across neighborhoods?

- (2) What are the relative effects of neighborhood context (e.g., police satisfaction) on rates of delinquency and violence?

Cross-level question (neighborhood moderation):

- (1) If the relationships between prior police contact and delinquency and violence vary across neighborhoods, are those relationships moderated by neighborhood context (concentrated disadvantage, immigrant concentration, police satisfaction, and legal cynicism)?

## **Method**

### ***Data***

We use the PHDCN data—a multiwave interdisciplinary study of how families, schools, and neighborhoods influence child and adolescent development (Earls et al., 2002). The PHDCN consists of several components, including a Community Survey (CS) and Longitudinal Cohort Study (LCS). Three waves of data—Wave 1 (1994–1997), Wave 2 (1997–2000), and Wave 3 (2000–2002)—were collected in Chicago (Earls et al., 2002). The study comprises several substudies, including the LCS, the U.S. Census, and the CS, which have been described in great detail in prior studies (e.g., Sampson & Bartusch, 1998; Wright & Fagan, 2013).

### ***Sample***

The sample for this study comprises individual-level and neighborhood-level measures on delinquency and violence drawn from Waves 1 and 2 and Cohorts 9, 12, 15, and 18 ( $n = 2,165$ ). Our sample is smaller than the original sample of youths interviewed for the PHDCN project because we do not include Cohorts 0, 3, and 6, which comprised the largest proportion of subjects. We excluded Cohorts 0–6 due to our focus on delinquency and violence as data for violence and delinquency were only available for Cohorts 9–18. Individual-level measures are derived from the LCS, while the neighborhood-level data are drawn from the CS and U.S. Census modules of the PHDCN. Participants that were in the “other” race/ethnicity category were deleted from the analysis due to relatively small sample size ( $n = 79$ ) as compared with White, African American, or Hispanic groups. As such, the eligible number of respondents was reduced to a final sample of 2,085 subjects nested within 76 neighborhoods. The number of residents within a neighborhood ranged from 5 to 62 ( $M = 28$ ,  $SD = 12$ ).

### ***Measures***

Figure 1 displays all variables that were included in this study.

### ***Dependent variable***

Three measures of delinquency and violence—(1) a combined dichotomous measure of delinquency and violence, (2) a dichotomous measure of



violence, and (3) a variety score of delinquency and violence (Sweeten, 2012)—were assessed in this study. The measures were taken from Wave 2 of the Self-Report Delinquency Questionnaire of the LCS (Huizinga et al., 1991). The combined dichotomous measure of delinquency (any delinquency) comprised 26 (KR-20 = .79) violent and nonviolent acts (see Appendix A). Youths who indicated that they committed any of these acts were coded as engaging in “any delinquency” (see Appendix A). The any violence variable is made up of 11 violent acts (KR-20 = .69). We also included a variety score of delinquency to capture different delinquent acts that a youth was involved in over the past year. The variety score of delinquency is made up of the 26 violent and nonviolent acts (KR-20 = .78). “Yes” indicators of engaging in each act were summed across delinquency. The acts ranged from 0 to 16, but we top-coded the variable at the 99th percentile (i.e., 10–16 = 9) because most of the variation (99%) existed between 1 and 9 delinquent acts. As shown on the top of Table 1, about 44% of the youths were involved in any delinquent acts and 34% of the youths were engaged in any violent acts. The mean number of delinquent acts (i.e., the delinquency variety score) was 1.20.

### ***Independent variables at Level 1***

The primary independent variable in this study is prior police contact, which was drawn from the Self-Report Questionnaire of the LCS at Wave 1. Youths were asked whether they have ever had trouble with the police. A yes response to this question indicated the youths had experienced contact with the police. Approximately 10% of the sample indicated that they had trouble with the police previously. We were also interested in the effect of different types of contact with the justice system on delinquency and violence. Two questions, asked at Wave 1, tapped into these types of contact. First, youths were asked to indicate if they were warned and released ( $n = 0, y = 1$ ) or whether they were ever held in jail ( $n = 0, y = 1$ ). Approximately 14% of the sample indicated they had been warned and released, while 5% said they had spent some time in jail. “Ever warned and released” and “ever held in jail” were both follow-up questions to the “ever had trouble with the police” question. In other words, youths were first asked to indicate if they had ever had trouble with the police and then they were asked if they had been held and warned or if they had been held in jail.

### ***Independent variables at Level 2***

The neighborhood-level characteristics assessed in this study include concentrated disadvantage, immigrant concentration, residential stability, police satisfaction, and legal cynicism. The three structural measures—concentrated disadvantage, concentrated immigration, and residential stability—were obtained from the 1990 U.S. Census and are based on principal component analyses. Concentrated disadvantage is based on U.S. Census data of percentage of neighborhood residents below the poverty line, households receiving public assistance, and unemployed residents (Sampson et al., 1997;  $\alpha = .81$ ). Concentrated immigration is based on 1990 U.S. Census data of the percent of Hispanic and foreign-born residents in a neighborhood cluster (Sampson et al., 1997;  $\alpha = .70$ ). Residential stability is based on 1990

U.S. Census made up of the percent of residents who had lived in the same house for five years and the percent of owner-occupied homes in a neighborhood cluster (Sampson et al., 1997;  $\alpha = .76$ ).

**Table 1.** Descriptive statistics.

<b>Individual-level variables (n = 2,085)</b>					
<b>Outcomes</b>					
Any delinquency	<i>n</i>		%		
Yes		927		44.46	
No		1,158		55.54	
Any violence					
Yes		699		33.53	
No		1,386		66.47	
	<i>M</i>		<i>SD</i>	<i>Min</i>	<i>Max</i>
Delinquency (variety score)		1.20	1.96	.00	9.00
<b>Predictors</b>					
Ever had trouble with police	<i>n</i>		%		
Yes		204		9.78	
No		1,695		81.29	
Missing		186		8.92	
Ever been warned and released					
Yes		289		13.86	
No		1791		85.90	
Missing	5			0.24	
Ever held in jail					
Yes		109		5.23	
No		1970		94.48	
Missing	6			0.29	
<b>Control variables</b>					
Sex					
Female (reference)		1,045		50.12	
Male		1,040		49.88	
Ethnicity					
White (reference)		343		16.40	
African American		742		35.59	
Hispanic		1,001		48.01	
Parental criminality					
Yes		294		14.10	
No		1,791		85.90	
Prior delinquency					
Yes		1,146		54.96	
No		939		45.04	
	<i>M</i>		<i>SD</i>	<i>Min</i>	<i>Max</i>
Age, years		13.20	3.29	7.77	19.16
Socioeconomic status		4.02	1.96	1.00	7.00
Low self-control		0.00	1.00	-2.63	3.63
Peer delinquency		0.00	1.00	-1.11	4.69
Exposure to violence		3.16	1.91	0.00	8.00
<b>Neighborhood-level variables (n = 76)</b>					
Police satisfaction		-0.03	0.24	-0.48	0.54
Legal cynicism		0.00	0.07	-0.18	0.19
Concentrated disadvantage		0.02	0.94	-1.51	2.35
Residential instability		0.17	0.93	-1.71	2.12
Immigrant concentration		0.13	1.00	-1.27	2.54

1990 U.S. Census	1995 Community Survey	Longitudinal Cohort Study, Wave 1-2 (1994-2000)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Neighborhood Disadvantage</li> <li>•Neighborhood Immigrant Concentration</li> <li>•Neighborhood Residential Mobility</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Neighborhood Police Satisfaction</li> <li>•Neighborhood Legal Cynicism</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Any Delinquency</li> <li>•Delinquency</li> <li>•Any Violence</li> <li>•Police Contact</li> <li>•Gender (male/female)</li> <li>•Age</li> <li>•White</li> <li>•African American</li> <li>•Hispanic</li> <li>•Peer Delinquency</li> <li>•Prior delinquency</li> <li>•Exposure to Violence</li> <li>•Low Self-Control</li> <li>•Parental Criminality</li> <li>•Salary</li> </ul>

**Figure 1.** Sources of variables.

Legal cynicism and police satisfaction were created from responses obtained from the CS of the PHDCN (Sampson & Bartusch, 1998). Legal cynicism assessed residents' beliefs about the legitimacy of the law and normative ideology, and was based on five items ( $\alpha = .48$ ). Responses were rated on a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*).<sup>2</sup> The five items (see Appendix B) were combined using a three-level item response model, which helps avoid the loss of data from missing item responses and accounts for item severities and respondent characteristics (such as gender and race/ ethnicity) as covariates (Fagan et al., 2015; Sampson & Bartusch, 1998).

Satisfaction with police assessed residents' perceptions of the effectiveness and fairness of police response to neighborhood crime and was also created using a three-level item response model. The police satisfaction scale was based on five items ( $\alpha = .83$ ) (see Appendix C). Answers were rated on a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). The bottom of Table 1 presents descriptive statistics for variables across 76 neighborhoods. The mean for police satisfaction, legal cynicism, concentrated disadvantage, residential instability, and immigrant concentration was  $-0.03$ ,  $0.00$ ,  $0.02$ ,  $0.17$ , and  $0.13$ , respectively.

### **Control variables**

Unless otherwise noted, control variables were drawn from Wave 1. Information on youths' demographic information such as age, sex, race and ethnicity, and deviance of peers, self-control, exposure to violence, prior delinquency, home environment, and parental criminality were obtained from youths' self-report and caretakers reports. Age is a continuous variable indicating the youth's age in years. The average age for this sample was about 13 years old and male and female youths each comprised approximately 50% of the sample. Two

dichotomous variables, Hispanic and African American, were created using White as the reference category to measure youths' race and ethnicity. Approximately half (48.01%) of the participants were of Hispanic origin, 36% were African American, and 16% White. Peer delinquency is based on youth reports of the number of their friends who engaged in 3 delinquent acts, including vandalism, stealing \$5–\$500, and attacking someone/something with a weapon. Youths responded to each item using a 4-point scale (1 = none, 2 = some of them, 3 = most of them, and 4 = all). This measure was standardized and summed ( $\alpha = .71$ ) so that higher numbers indicate higher levels of delinquent friends. Youths' exposure to violence is a sum of seven items (see Appendix C) measuring exposure to indirect victimization (KR-20 = .65). The mean for exposure to violence is 3.16. To measure prior delinquency, youths were asked (at Wave 1) to indicate (yes/no) if they had ever been involved in any delinquency from a list of 22 acts.

Responses from the primary caregiver or interviewer impressions were used to measure three additional control variables: youth self-control, family socioeconomic status (family salary), and parental criminality. Following Gibson et al. (2010), youths' low self-control was measured using 17 items ( $\alpha = .75$ ) reported by parents on the Emotionality, Activity, Sociability, and Impulsivity Temperament Survey (Buss & Plomin, 1975). Parents were asked to report on a 5-point Likert-type scale how characteristic each attitude or behavior was for their child, with items relating to inhibitory control (e.g., "has trouble resisting temptation"), decision time (e.g., "often acts on the spur of the moment"), sensation seeking (e.g., "will try anything once"), and persistence (e.g., "tends to give up easily"). Responses were summed and standardized across items and scored such that higher values indicate lower levels of self-control. Recall that for the standardized measures such as self-control and peer delinquency, the mean is 0.00. For the standardized measures, higher numbers indicated higher than average levels and those below zero indicated lower than average values. Socioeconomic status is an ordinal measure that captures total family salary at Wave 1 or Wave 2.<sup>3</sup> The mean for socioeconomic status was 4.02. Parental criminality is a dichotomous variable (no = 0, yes = 1) indicating that either parent of the child had had "trouble with the police or had been arrested." About 14% of the participants reported that either parent had had trouble with the police or had been arrested.

### ***Statistical analysis***

Given the hierarchical structure of the data (individuals nested within neighborhoods), multilevel modeling techniques were employed for the analysis. Bilevel datasets were created with individuals as level 1 units and neighborhood clusters as level 2 units. SAS 9.4 (SAS Institute Inc, 2015) was used to conduct statistical analyses for this study. PROC GLIMMIX was used for the two dichotomous outcomes (i.e., any delinquency and any violence) and PROC MIXED was used for the delinquency variety variable, which is considered as continuous. For PROC GLIMMIX, the default estimation technique, RSPL,

was used to maximize the residual pseudo-likelihood with an expansion about the current solutions of the best linear unbiased predictors of the random effects. For PROC MIXED, the default restricted maximum likelihood estimation method was adopted.

The analyses proceeded in several stages. First, unconditional multilevel models were conducted to examine to what extent each outcome varied across neighborhoods. Specifically, intraclass correlation coefficient (ICC) was reported for each outcome. In this study, ICC indicates the proportion of variation in the outcomes which exists across neighborhoods out of the total variation that exists in the outcome. Next, independent variables including the type of prior police contact and control variables at the individual level were added to the unconditional multilevel model for each outcome. Note that the three types of prior police contact (ever had trouble with police, ever been warned and released by police, ever been held in jail) were included in the model separately in order to analyze the impact of each type of prior police contact on the outcomes. Then, a stepwise approach was taken to add neighborhood-level variables (i.e., police satisfaction, legal cynicism, concentrated disadvantage, residential instability, and immigrant concentration) and cross-level interactions. That is, in addition to prior police contact and control variables, one neighborhood-level variable and its cross-level interaction with prior police contact were added to the model at each time. The neighborhood-level variable and the interaction were included in the final model if the effect was significant (i.e.,  $p < .05$ ). In other words, the final model included prior police contact, control variables, and significant neighborhood-level variables as well as cross-level interaction effects. Note that if the interaction effect was significant, the main effect of neighborhood-level variable was included in the final model regardless of its significance.

To prevent multicollinearity among predictors due to the interaction terms, neighborhood-level variables were grand mean centered (Bryk & Raudenbush, 1992; Raudenbush & Bryk, 2002). Continuous variables at the individual level were group mean centered to facilitate the interpretation of results. All individual-level control variables were fixed effects (i.e., no variations across neighborhoods) in this study for two reasons. First, the variations in the effects of the control variables across neighborhoods were not of focal interest in the present study. Second, given the number of control variables considered in this study, specifying those variables as random effects (i.e., random slope that varied across neighborhoods) would greatly increase the complexity of the model due to a larger number of parameters to be estimated.

## Results

### ***Research questions 1–2: Does police contact impact future involvement in delinquency and violence?***

ICCs were examined for the outcome variables under unconditional models. ICCs for any delinquency (yes/no), any violence (yes/no), and the delinquency

variety score were .03, .04, and .01, respectively. These relatively low levels of between-neighborhood variation are similar to what has been found in other studies looking at contexts such as schools and even families (Sampson & Bartusch, 1998). As can be seen by the ICCs, violence had the most variation at the neighborhood level. Duncan and Raudenbush (1999) cautioned about interpreting small ICCs, as effect sizes commonly viewed as large translate into small proportions of variance in individual outcomes explained by neighborhood membership. In fact, neighborhood effect sizes as large as .8 of a standard deviation difference give rise to an ICC as low as .14 (Sampson & Bartusch, 1998). Therefore, a small ICC among neighborhoods does not rule out a large effect size associated with a measured difference between neighborhoods (Duncan & Raudenbush, 1999).

Table 2, 3, and 4 present parameter estimates in the final multilevel models with ever had trouble with police, ever been warned and released, and ever held in jail as the predictor, respectively. Overall, the individual-level results revealed that youths who had any type of prior contact with the police had higher odds of engaging in subsequent delinquency and violence as well as higher likelihood to engage in a variety of delinquent acts. Specifically, the odds of committing any delinquent or violent acts increased by 44% to 81% for youths who had prior police contact relative to those who did not have contact across all types of contact. On average, the number of delinquent acts increased by 1.31, 0.96, and 0.86 for youths who had trouble with police, had been warned and released, and had been held in jail, respectively, as opposed to those who did not have the contact.

Male youths were more likely to engage in any delinquency, any violence, or a variety of delinquent acts relative to female youths. African American youths were more likely to be engaged in delinquent and violent acts and tended to have a higher number of delinquent acts than did Caucasian youths in most of the models. There was no significant difference between Hispanic and Caucasian youths in the likelihood of committing any delinquent or violent acts, except that Hispanic youths had higher odds of committing violent acts when controlling for their status of having been warned and released. Those with low self-control, and youths who have been exposed to violence or committed delinquency previously had higher odds of engaging in any delinquency, any violence, as well as greater likelihood to engage in a variety of delinquent acts. Having more delinquent friends was associated with more delinquent acts and higher odds of committing violence, but the impact of peer delinquency was not significant for the dichotomous measure of delinquency. Overall the effects of age, socioeconomic status, and parental criminality were not statistically significant.

**Table 2.** Parameter estimates of the final multilevel model with ever had trouble with police as the predictor.

Parameter	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3	
	Any Delinque cy		Delinquency (Variety Score)		Any Violenc	
Fixed Effects	B (SE)	OR	B (SE)	B (SE)	OR	
<i>Individual level</i>						
Intercept	-1.29 (0.16)**	—	0.44 (0.12)**	-2.29 (0.18)**	—	
Ever had trouble (Trb)	0.58 (0.19)**	1.78	1.31 (0.13)**	0.57 (0.18)**	1.76	
Age	0.03 (0.02)	1.03	-0.01 (0.01)	0.03 (0.02)	1.03	
Male	0.50 (0.11)**	1.65	0.33 (0.08)**	0.68 (0.11)**	1.97	
Hispanic	-0.11 (0.16)	0.90	-0.04 (0.12)	0.30 (0.18)	1.35	
African American	0.23 (0.16)	1.26	0.16 (0.13)	0.73 (0.17)**	2.07	
Socioeconomic status	0.05 (0.03)	1.06	0.01 (0.02)	0.01 (0.03)	1.01	
Parental criminality	0.10 (0.15)	1.11	0.04 (0.11)	0.15 (0.16)	1.16	
Low self-control	0.19 (0.05)**	1.20	0.10 (0.04)*	0.21 (0.06)**	1.23	
Peer delinquency	0.09 (0.06)	1.10	0.19 (0.05)**	0.15 (0.06)*	1.16	
Exposure to violence	0.14 (0.04)**	1.15	0.13 (0.03)**	0.16 (0.04)**	1.17	
Prior delinquency	1.17 (0.12)**	3.22	0.69 (0.09)**	1.07 (0.13)**	2.91	
<i>Neighborhood level</i>						
Legal cynicism						
Police satisfaction						
Concentrated disadvantage			0.11 (0.05)*			
Residential instability						
Immigrant concentration	-0.14 (0.07)*	0.87		-0.22 (0.07)**	0.80	
<i>Cross-level interactions</i>						
Legal Cynicism*Trb		—			—	
Police Satisfaction*Trb		—			—	
Concentrated Disadvantage*Trb		—			—	
Residential Instability*Trb		—			—	
Immigrant Concentration*Trb		—			—	
<i>Variance estimates</i>						
Individual-level variance <sup>a</sup>	—		2.72 (0.09)**	—		

Notes: The coefficient of the cross-level interaction needs to be interpreted in tandem with the coefficient of police contact; thus, it is not meaningful to obtain and interpret the odds ratio for the interaction term itself.

<sup>a</sup>The individual-level variance for Models 1 and 3 was 3.29 which is the variance of a standard logistic distribution. Other variance parameters (e.g., intercept variance) were either not significant or not estimable and therefore were not included in all models. OR = odds ratio.

\* $p < .05$ . \*\*  $p < .01$ .

### Research Question 3: What are the relative effects of neighborhood context (e.g., police satisfaction) on rates of delinquency and violence?

As can also be seen in Table 2–4, the effect of immigrant concentration was significant across most of the models. That is, neighborhoods with larger immigrant populations were associated with lower odds of engaging in any delinquent or violent acts. Specifically, a one-unit increase in immigrant concentration would result in 13% to 22% decrease in the odds of committing any delinquent and violent acts across various types of prior police contact. In addition, the effect of concentrated disadvantage on the number of delinquent acts was significant in the model with youths ever having trouble with police as the predictor, indicating that a 1% increase in disadvantaged residents was associated with 0.11 more delinquent acts.

**Table 3.** Parameter estimates of the final multilevel model with ever warned and released by police as the predictor.

Parameter	Model 1		Model 2	Model 3	
	Any Delinquency		Delinquency (Variety Score)	Any Violence	
Fixed effects	B (SE)	OR	B (SE)	B (SE)	OR
<i>Individual level</i>					
Intercept	-1.33 (0.15)**	—	0.30 (0.12)*	-2.34 (0.18)**	—
Ever warned and released (WR)	0.48 (0.16)**	1.61	0.96 (0.12)**	0.42 (0.15)**	1.53
Age	0.02 (0.02)	1.02	-0.01 (0.01)	0.01 (0.02)	1.01
Male	0.48 (0.10)**	1.61	0.37 (0.08)**	0.65 (0.11)**	1.92
Hispanic	-0.06 (0.16)	0.94	0.03 (0.12)	0.38 (0.17)*	1.46
African American	0.30 (0.15)*	1.34	0.42 (0.12)**	0.75 (0.16)**	2.12
Socioeconomic status	0.06 (0.03)*	1.06	0.02 (0.02)	0.01 (0.03)	1.01
Parental criminality	0.14 (0.14)	1.15	0.0001 (0.11)	0.13 (0.15)	1.13
Low self-control	0.20 (0.05)**	1.22	0.12 (0.04)**	0.22 (0.06)**	1.25
Peer delinquency	0.09 (0.06)	1.10	0.21 (0.04)**	0.14 (0.06)*	1.15
Exposure to violence	0.15 (0.03)**	1.16	0.13 (0.03)**	0.17 (0.04)**	1.18
Prior delinquency	1.19 (0.11)**	3.30	0.74 (0.09)**	1.11 (0.13)**	3.04
<i>Neighborhood level</i>					
Legal cynicism					
Police satisfaction			-0.11 (0.19)		
Concentrated disadvantage					
Residential instability					
Immigrant concentration	-0.16 (0.07)*	0.85		-0.24 (0.07)**	0.78
<i>Cross-level interactions</i>					
Legal Cynicism*WR		—			—
Police Satisfaction*WR		—	1.11 (0.48)*		—
Concentrated Disadvantage*WR		—			—
Residential Instability*WR		—			—
Immigrant Concentration*WR		—			—
<i>Variance estimates</i>					
Individual-level variance <sup>a</sup>	—		3.01 (0.09)**	—	

Note. The coefficient of the cross-level interaction needs to be interpreted in tandem with the coefficient of police contact; thus, it is not meaningful to obtain and interpret the odds ratio for the interaction term itself.

<sup>a</sup>The individual-level variance for Models 1 and 3 was 3.29 which is the variance of a standard logistic distribution. Other variance parameters (e.g., intercept variance) were either not significant or not estimable and therefore were not included in all models. OR = odds ratio.

\* $p < .05$ . \*\*  $p < .01$ .

#### **Research Question 4: Are the relationships between prior police contact and delinquency or violence moderated by neighborhood context?**

We uncovered two significant cross-level interactions, which indicated that the impact of police contact was moderated by neighborhood conditions. First, the effect of being warned by police and released on the variety of youth delinquency acts was stronger in neighborhoods with high levels of police satisfaction (Figure 2). When police satisfaction was relatively low (e.g., 1 *SD* below the mean as illustrated in Figure 2), the difference in the number of delinquent acts between those who had ever been warned and released and those that had not was relatively small. By contrast, the difference became much more substantial as the police satisfaction was higher.



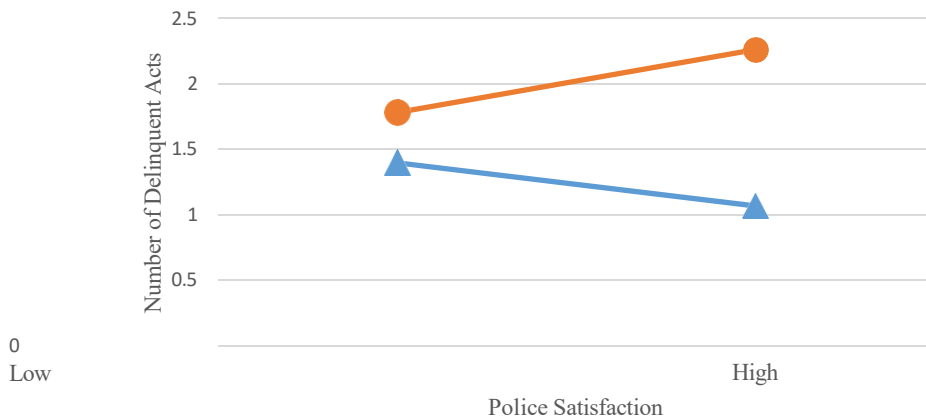
**Table 4.** Parameter estimates of the final multilevel model with ever held in jail as the predictor.

Parameter	Model 1		Model 2	Model 3	
	Any Delinquency		Delinquency (Variety Score)	Any Violence	
Fixed Effects	B (SE)	OR	B (SE)	B (SE)	OR
<i>Individual level</i>					
Intercept	-1.32 (0.15)**	—	0.34 (0.12)*	-2.28 (0.17)**	—
Ever held in jail (Jail)	0.59 (0.26)*	1.81	0.86 (0.18)**	0.36 (0.23)	1.44
Age	0.02 (0.02)	1.02	-0.003 (0.01)	0.01 (0.02)	1.02
Male	0.49 (0.10)**	1.63	0.41 (0.08)**	0.69 (0.11)**	1.99
Hispanic	-0.06 (0.16)	0.94	0.03 (0.11)	0.15 (0.16)	1.16
African American	0.29 (0.15)	1.34	0.42 (0.12)**	0.87 (0.16)**	2.38
Socioeconomic status	0.06 (0.03)*	1.06	0.02 (0.02)	0.01 (0.03)	1.01
Parental criminality	0.15 (0.14)	1.16	0.01 (0.11)	0.16 (0.15)	1.17
Low self-control	0.20 (0.05)**	1.22	0.13 (0.04)**	0.21 (0.05)**	1.23
Peer delinquency	0.10 (0.06)	1.10	0.23 (0.04)**	0.14 (0.06)*	1.15
Exposure to violence	0.15 (0.03)**	1.17	0.15 (0.03)**	0.16 (0.04)**	1.18
Prior delinquency	1.22 (0.11)**	3.39	0.81 (0.09)**	1.18 (0.13)**	3.24
<i>Neighborhood level</i>					
Legal cynicism			-0.37 (0.58)		
Police satisfaction					
Concentrated disadvantage					
Residential instability					
Immigrant concentration	-0.17 (0.07)*	0.85			
<i>Cross-level interactions</i>					
Legal Cynicism*Jail			11.57 (2.94)**		
Police Satisfaction*Jail					
Concentrated Disadvantage*Jail					
Residential Instability*Jail					
Immigrant Concentration*Jail					
<i>Variance estimates</i>					
Individual-level variance <sup>a</sup>			3.05 (0.09)**		

*Note.* The coefficient of the cross-level interaction needs to be interpreted in tandem with the coefficient of police contact; thus, it is not meaningful to obtain and interpret the odds ratio for the interaction term itself.

<sup>a</sup>The individual-level variance for Models 1 and 3 was 3.29, which is the variance of a standard logistic distribution. Other variance parameters (e.g., intercept variance) were either not significant or not estimable and therefore were not included in all models. OR = odds ratio.

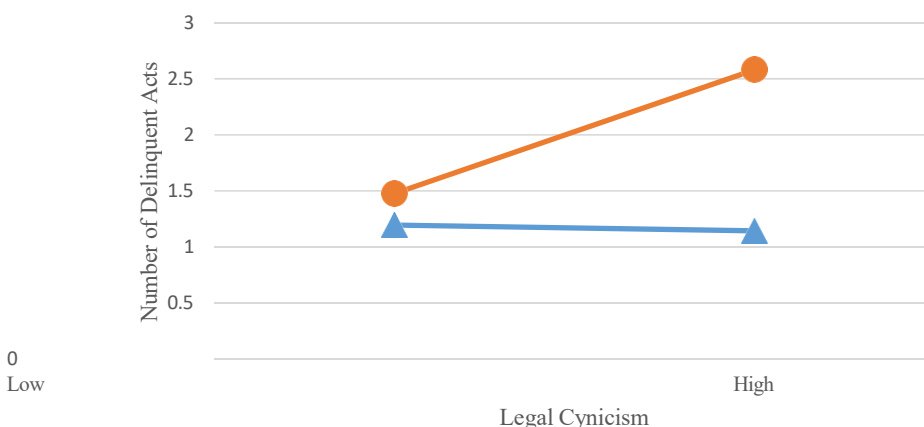
\* $p < .05$ . \*\*  $p < .01$ .



**Figure 2.** Interaction effect between ever been warned and released by police and police satisfaction. Two values (-.27 and .21) of police satisfaction correspond to 1 SD below and above the mean and were thus chosen to represent low and high levels, respectively. Continuous control variables took the value of 0 (i.e., at the level of its respective grand mean) and categorical control variables of male and African American took the value of 1 (African American male youths being examined).

A closer look at Figure 2 revealed that when youths lived in a community with higher levels of satisfaction with police, the number of delinquent acts decreased for those that had never been warned and released but increased for those who had been warned and released. In other words, being warned and released by officers increases delinquency more in these areas than in areas with lower levels of police satisfaction, while youths who had never been warned and released experienced an added buffering effect (thus lowering delinquency levels) when they lived in communities with high levels of police satisfaction. These relationships were not expected, but are somewhat consistent with recent neighborhood-level research, which has suggested that the influence of negative events (e.g., police contact) might be stronger on residents (youths, in this case) when they live in a relatively benign environment, such as those with higher levels of police satisfaction in this study (see Wright & Fagan, 2013; Wright et al., 2016).

Figure 3 presents another significant cross-level interaction. The effect of police contact resulting in being held in jail on the number of delinquent acts a youth engaged in was stronger in neighborhoods with high levels of legal cynicism. Youths who had been held in jail and who were living in neighborhoods that were more cynical about the legal system engaged in more delinquent acts than did youths who had been held in jail but who had been living in neighborhoods with low levels of legal cynicism. Alternatively, youths who had not been held in jail had relatively stable levels of delinquency, regardless of the neighborhood level of legal cynicism in which they lived. Thus, the results indicated that neighborhood legal cynicism appeared to strengthen the negative influence of police contact on delinquency among youths.



**Figure 3.** Interaction effect between ever been held in jail and legal cynicism. Two values ( $-.07$  and  $.07$ ) of police satisfaction correspond to 1 SD below and above the mean and were thus chosen to represent low and high levels, respectively. Continuous control variables took the value of 0 (i.e., at the level of its respective grand mean) and categorical control variables of male and African American took the value of 1 (African American male youths being examined).

delinquency and neighborhood factors. Similar to prior research, our results confirm that indeed contact with the justice system can have a detrimental effect on delinquency and violence, as we found that those with police contact and jail placements at Wave 1 were more likely to be involved in delinquency and violence at Wave 2 (Mowen et al., 2018; Paternoster, 1978; Slocum et al., 2016, 2018; Wiley et al., 2013). Our analyses go beyond existing research by including some important covariates—e.g., exposure to violence, parental criminality, low self-control, and so forth. For instance, empirical research has found low self-control to be an important covariate of delinquency (Gottfredson & Hirschi, 1990) and perhaps police contact (Reisig et al., 2011). Additionally, we found these relationships to exist even when controlling for multiple neighborhood factors such as disadvantage and immigrant concentration. The impact of police contacts on later delinquency and violence was robust across our models and in every significant analysis, suggested a labeling or deviance effect, whereby the contact exacerbated (increased) future delinquency or violence. Thus, our analyses did not suggest a deterrence effect of justice system contact for youths.

Perhaps the most important finding of this study is that the effect of prior criminal justice

contact on delinquency was moderated by neighborhood legal cynicism, confirming that neighborhood context can influence the prior contact-delinquency relationship. The positive relationship between having prior jail contact was stronger in neighborhoods with high levels of legal cynicism, suggesting that the presence of high levels of legal cynicism bolsters the effect of police contact on delinquency. This pattern of results comports with prior findings that suggest that neighborhoods can have moderating effects even when direct effects on crime outcomes are limited (e.g., Wright & Fagan, 2013; Zimmerman & Messner, 2011) (as we indeed found nonsignificant direct effects of legal cynicism and police satisfaction in our study). We have argued that legal cynicism would enhance the negative effect of police contact on delinquency or violence because neighborhood legal cynicism can foster negative views of the police, which ultimately affects responses to police contact. Neighborhood legal cynicism can foster feelings of unfair treatment by the police, thus enhancing defiance. Our results suggest that neighborhood legal cynicism, even when accounting for other deleterious neighborhood conditions like disadvantage, uniquely creates a context that fosters continued violence among youths who have had contact with police officers. Theory suggests that youths in areas of legal cynicism may experience police contact more often (via over-policing) or may respond to police contact differentially. Areas characterized by legal cynicism are distrustful of legal entities, such as police, and as such, those living in the area may perceive a contact with police officers negatively. Results are consistent with the expectation that youths in neighborhoods of high legal cynicism do not perceive police contact favorably and are more likely to react in a

negative way. Perhaps this is due to the general view in the neighborhood that police and other legal entities are not trustworthy, or that they engage in unfair treatment.

We also uncovered a somewhat unexpected cross-level interaction between police contact and delinquency or violence in neighborhoods with higher levels of police satisfaction: in these areas, youths with prior contacts with police (who were warned and released) were subsequently more delinquent than those with the same prior contact with police, but who lived in areas with lower levels of police satisfaction. In other words, the better environment (as indicated by higher levels of satisfaction with the police) appeared to worsen the defiance or labeling effect of being warned and released by police. As posited by some other scholars (Wright & Fagan, 2013), it is possible that for youths who experience few risk factors (in this case, living in a “better” environment), the impact of any one risk factor (e.g., police contact) is potentially more detrimental for these youths, primarily because they are unaccustomed to experiencing these risk factors. The findings indicate that the detrimental impact of police contact is worsened when one lives in a relatively benign environment, or one that is free of risk factors. We encourage more research on this topic in future studies.

### ***Limitations and future directions***

This study had some limitations, which present opportunities for future research. First, we were unable to examine the neighborhoods in which police contact actually occurred because we did not have access to the Census tract information, only the neighborhood cluster information. Although this study is the first to explore the effect of police contact at the neighborhood level, it would be nonetheless useful for future researchers to continue to examine whether police contacts are moderated by neighborhood factors in order to further understand the mechanisms through which police contact operates to influence crime and delinquency. We were also unable to account for selection effects in this study but future research on police contact might consider using matching techniques such as propensity matching in order to account for the issue of selection bias (Wiley & Esbensen, 2016; Wiley et al., 2013).

We also did not have a measure of the quality (positive or negative) of police contact, and research has shown that negative police contact increases the odds of a detrimental effect of police contact on future delinquency and violence (Sherman, 1993). However, if we had a measure of the quality of police contact, it is possible that the effect of negative police contact may be worse (more detrimental) than the present results. We did, however, have measures of different types of contact with the police and the justice system. As the findings have shown, the effect sizes of contact with the justice system varied across the type of contact. In fact, the effect of prior jail contact was nonsignificant for violence. We also did not examine the number of police contacts as we used a dichotomous measure for police contact. It would be interesting to see whether there are any differences when a measure containing multiple contacts is employed. Perhaps not a major limitation, but worth mentioning, neighborhood context data were obtained from the 1990 Census and some may argue that the city of Chicago has changed over

the years; however, Sampson (2012) argued that the neighborhood processes that were at play in Chicago are still the same. Although this dataset provides the best opportunity to explore the research questions under study, we nonetheless must acknowledge the age of the dataset. Finally, our findings are based on one urban area (Chicago neighborhoods) with data collected in the 1990s and may not be representative of other settings (e.g., rural) or time periods. Unfortunately, the effect of neighborhoods on the relationship between police contact and future offending is still widely unknown. Along these lines, it would be helpful to understand where police contact is highest and how neighborhoods in different locations, such as rural versus urban, influence the likelihood of high police contact.

## **Conclusion**

Given that police officers cannot simply ignore delinquency and violence, understanding the mechanisms through which police contact may lead to future delinquency may provide insight into how the potentially negative implications of police contact may be ameliorated. In high-crime communities where proactive policing tactics are necessary to keep the communities safe, it is important that police officers treat citizens with respect and fairness (Tyler & Fagan, 2008). As procedurally just policing strategies can help mitigate the development of negative neighborhood attitudes such as legal cynicism and dissatisfaction with the police.

Although more research is needed to identify other potential moderators to the police contact—delinquency relationship, from a policy standpoint, one can argue that law enforcement officers should recognize that the negative consequence of police contact is not just limited to minority neighborhoods or neighborhoods with high levels of disadvantage. In fact, Tyler and his colleagues have long argued the importance of treating all citizens with fair procedures (Tyler, 1990; Tyler & Fagan, 2008; Tyler & Huo, 2002); one can also make the same argument regarding the effect of having police contact based on these data. In other words, having police contact has negative outcomes across the board; however, more research is sorely needed in this area to ascertain how neighborhoods might influence police contact and delinquency. An examination of the quality of the police contact would help shed light into the possible mechanism through which police contact can negatively affect future offending. Indeed, Slocum et al. (2016) assessed the importance of being satisfied with police encounters in the relationship between police contact and deviance, but much is still needed in this area of research. One can argue that positive police-youth interaction programs may help increase positive police contacts, which can enhance the public's satisfaction with the police.

## **Notes**

1. For parsimony, we refer to these actions as “police contact” throughout this article.
2. Following prior research (Fagan et al., 2015), “neither” and “don’t

know” categories were combined and coded in the middle category of “neither agree nor disagree.”

3. W1 salary used only when W2 salary was missing

## Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

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## **Appendix A. Dependent variables**

### ***Violent and nonviolent: items for any delinquency measure***

Youths were asked to report whether in the past year they had committed any of the following 26 acts: disorderly conduct; vandalism; arson; breaking and entering; stole from store; stole from a house; stole from a car; bought stolen goods; stole motor vehicle; sold pot; sold cocaine/crack; sold heroin; prostitution; hit someone; attacked with weapon; throw objects at someone; carry weapon; gang fight; pickpocket/snatch purse; robbery; hit someone you live with; sex assault; chased someone; shot someone; shot at someone; and hurt someone in other way.

### ***Any violent acts: items for any violence measure***

Youths were asked to report whether they had committed any of these 11 acts in the past year: carried weapon; hit someone; attacked with weapon; threw objects at someone; gang fight; robbery; hit someone you live with; chased someone; shot someone; shot at someone; and hurt someone in other way.

## **Appendix B. Legal cynicism and police satisfaction**

### ***Legal cynicism***

Residents were asked about their level of agreement to the following statements: “laws were made to be broken”; “it is okay to do anything you want as long as you do not hurt anyone”; “to make money, there are no right and wrong ways anymore, only easy ways and hard ways”; “fighting between friends or within families is nobody else’s business”; and “nowadays a person has to live pretty much for today and let tomorrow take care of itself”.

### ***Police satisfaction***

Residents were asked their level of agreement to the following five statements: “the police in this neighborhood are responsive to local issues”; “the police are doing a good job in dealing with problems that really concern people in this neighborhood”; “the police are not doing a good job in preventing crime in this neighborhood” (reverse coded); “the police do a good job in responding to people in the neighborhood after they have been victims of crime”; and “the police are not able to maintain order on the streets and sidewalks in the neighborhood” (reverse coded).

## **Appendix C. Exposure to Violence**

Youths were asked if any family member was hurt by violent act, any family member killed by violent act, any close friends killed by violent act, they ever saw someone shoved/kicked/punched, attacked with knife, heard a gunshot, or saw someone shot.