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**Young people's attitudes toward the police in Ireland. A mixed
methods study.**

Thesis submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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Table of Contents

List of Tables	viii
List of Figures	ix
List of Appendices	x
Declaration	xi
Acknowledgements	xii
Abstract	xiii
Chapter 1: Introduction	
1.1 Introduction	1
1.2 A Note on the Terminology used in this Thesis	3
1.3 Structure of the Thesis	4
Chapter 2: Understanding Young People's Attitudes	
2.1 Aims of the Chapter	5
2.2 A Psychological Understanding of Attitudes	5
2.2.1 <i>The Components of Attitudes</i>	7
2.2.2 <i>Attitudes as Latent Constructs</i>	10
2.2.3 <i>Attitudes and Behaviour</i>	11
2.2.4 <i>Attitudes and Information Processing</i>	12
2.3 The Formation of Attitudes in Adolescence	13
2.3.1 <i>Social Interactions and Attitude Formation</i>	14
2.3.2 <i>Social Identity and Attitude Formation</i>	15
2.3.3 <i>Social Cognitive Development and Attitude Formation</i>	16
2.3.4 <i>Social Cognitive Theory and Attitude Formation</i>	17
2.3.5 <i>Legal Socialisation and Attitude Formation</i>	20
2.4 Summary	22
Chapter 3: Factors Affecting Attitudes Toward the Police	
3.1 Aims of the Chapter	23
3.2 Conceptualising Attitudes Toward the Police	23
3.2.1 <i>The Performance Perspective</i>	24
3.2.2 <i>The Procedural Justice Perspective</i>	26

3.3 Factors Affecting Young People’s Attitudes Toward Police	29
3.4 Individual and Demographic Factors and Attitudes Toward the Police	29
3.4.1 <i>Race and Ethnicity</i>	30
3.4.2 <i>Age</i>	31
3.4.3 <i>Gender</i>	32
3.4.4 <i>Offending and Criminal Behaviour</i>	33
3.5 Context and Interpersonal Factors and Attitudes Toward the Police	34
3.5.1 <i>Neighbourhood and Socio Economic Status</i>	34
3.5.2 <i>Peer Influence</i>	36
3.5.3 <i>Family Influence</i>	36
3.5.4 <i>Police Behaviour during Encounters</i>	38
3.6 Psychosocial Factors and Attitudes Toward the Police	40
3.6.1 <i>Experiences with Police</i>	40
3.6.2 <i>Moral Reasoning and Moral Development</i>	44
3.6.3 <i>Cognitive Development and Legal Cynicism</i>	45
3.7 The Irish Context of Garda-Youth Relationships	47
3.7.1 <i>Background and Context of the Irish Juvenile Justice System</i>	48
3.7.2 <i>Current Juvenile Justice Practice in Ireland</i>	49
3.7.3 <i>Diversion Programmes</i>	51
3.8 Irish Research on Attitudes Toward the Gardaí	53
3.8.1 <i>Research with Adults</i>	53
3.8.2 <i>Research with Young People</i>	54
3.9 Summary	58
Chapter 4: The Current Study	
4.1 Aims of the Chapter	59
4.2 Rationale for the Study	59
4.3 Aims and Objectives of the Overall Study	63

4.4 Research Design	63
4.5 Ethical Approval	65
4.6 Summary	66
Chapter 5: Study One Methods	
5.1 Aims of the Chapter	67
5.2 Specific Objectives of the Qualitative Study	67
5.3 The use of Qualitative Methods	67
5.4 Procedure	69
5.5 Participants	70
5.6 Interview Schedule and Data Collection	72
5.7 Grounded Theory and Model Building	73
5.8 Data Analysis and Coding	75
5.8.1 Initial coding	76
5.8.2 Focused coding	77
5.8.3 Axial coding	77
5.8.4 Memo writing	78
5.9 Summary	78
Chapter 6: Study One Results	
6.1 Aims of the Chapter	80
6.2 The Nature of Young People’s Attitudes Toward the Gardaí	80
6.2.1 Ambivalent Attitudes	85
6.3 Core Category – Uncertainty	87
6.3.1 Uncertainty within Interactions	89
6.3.2 Uncertainty of Garda Behaviour	94
6.3.3 Uncertainty of Expectations	97
6.3.4 Uncertainty of Rights and Status	100
6.4 Discussion of Qualitative Results	104
6.5 Development of the Theoretical Model	107
6.5.1 The Affective Component – Perceptions of Gardaí	108
6.5.2 The Cognitive Component – Legal Socialisation	111
6.5.3 The Behavioural Component – Offending and Future	113

<i>Cooperation</i>	
6.6 Summary	117
Chapter 7: Study Two Methods	
7.1 Aims of the Chapter	118
7.2 Specific Objectives of the Quantitative Study	118
7.3 Hypotheses for the Quantitative Study	118
7.4 Research Design	120
7.5 Measurements	122
7.5.1 <i>Demographic Information</i>	122
7.6 Perceptions of Garda Performance	122
7.6.1 <i>Legitimacy and Respect</i>	123
7.6.2 <i>Fairness/Procedural Justice</i>	124
7.6.3 <i>Garda Performance</i>	125
7.6.4 <i>Garda Misconduct</i>	126
7.7 Legal Socialisation	126
7.7.1 <i>Moral Obligation to Obey the Law</i>	127
7.7.2 <i>Legal Cynicism</i>	128
7.8 Cooperation and Compliance with the Law	129
7.8.1 <i>Offending or Delinquent Behaviour</i>	129
7.8.2 <i>Experiences with Gardaí</i>	131
7.8.3 <i>Future Cooperation</i>	132
7.9 Attitudes Toward Other Authorities	133
7.10 Piloting	134
7.11 Sample Size Calculation	135
7.12 Participants	136
7.13 Research Sites	137
7.13.1 <i>Voluntary Second Level Schools</i>	137
7.13.2 <i>Vocational Schools</i>	137
7.13.3 <i>Community and Comprehensive Schools</i>	137
7.13.4 <i>Youthreach</i>	137
7.14 Procedure	138

7.14.1	<i>School Recruitment</i>	139
7.14.2	<i>Administration of Questionnaire</i>	139
7.15	Statistical Analysis	140
7.15.1	<i>Justification for using SEM in this study</i>	141
7.15.2	<i>Limitations of SEM</i>	142
7.16	Summary	142
Chapter 8: Study Two Results		
8.1	Aims of the Chapter	144
8.2	Data Screening	144
8.3	Preliminary Data Analysis	145
8.3.1	<i>Validity of Measurement Scales</i>	145
8.3.2	<i>Reliability of Measurement Scales</i>	146
8.4	Descriptive Statistics for Demographic Factors	147
8.5	Descriptive Statistics for Perceptions of Gardaí	148
8.5.1	<i>Garda Performance</i>	148
8.5.2	<i>Garda Misconduct</i>	149
8.5.3	<i>Procedural Justice</i>	149
8.5.4	<i>Legitimacy</i>	149
8.6	Descriptive Statistics for Legal Socialisation	149
8.6.1	<i>Legal Cynicism</i>	149
8.6.2	<i>Moral Obligation to Obey the Law</i>	150
8.7	Descriptive Statistics for Cooperation and Compliance	150
8.7.1	<i>Contact with Gardaí</i>	150
8.7.2	<i>Offending Behaviour</i>	152
8.7.3	<i>Future Cooperation</i>	154
8.8	Path Diagram for the Proposed Model	155
8.9	SEM Output Interpretation: Assessing Model Fit	158
8.9.1	<i>Chi-Square</i>	158
8.9.2	<i>Fit Indices</i>	158
8.10	SEM Procedures for the Present Study	159
8.10.1	<i>Step One: Measurement Model Testing</i>	160

8.10.2	<i>Step Two: Respecification of the Measurement Model</i>	164
8.10.3	<i>Testing the Effects of Covariates</i>	169
8.10.4	<i>Step Three: Structural Model Testing</i>	169
8.10.5	<i>Testing Alternative Models</i>	170
8.11	Analysis of Qualitative Comments	174
8.11.1	<i>Experiences with Gardaí</i>	176
8.11.2	<i>Perceptions of Gardaí</i>	177
8.11.3	<i>Cynicism and Obligation to Obey the Law</i>	178
8.12	Discussion of Study Two Results	179
8.13	Summary	182
Chapter 9: Discussion and Conclusions		
9.1	Aims of the Chapter	184
9.2	Summary of Key Findings	184
9.2.1	<i>The Nature of Young People's Attitudes Toward Gardaí</i>	184
9.2.2	<i>The Effects of Uncertainty on Attitudes Toward the Gardaí</i>	185
9.2.3	<i>Testing the Theoretical Model</i>	187
9.3	Integration of Findings with Previous Research	189
9.3.1	<i>Socialisation and Attitude Formation</i>	190
9.3.2	<i>The Performance and Procedural Justice Perspectives of Attitudes Toward the Police</i>	192
9.3.3	<i>Factors Affecting Attitudes Toward the Gardaí</i>	196
9.4	Theoretical Significance of Current Findings	203
9.5	Practical Implications	205
9.6	Methodological Considerations and Limitations	209
9.7	Directions for Future Research	213
9.8	Summary and Conclusion	216
References		217
Appendices		232

List of Tables

Table 5.1: Demographic and background characteristics of participants in study one	71
Table 8.1: Internal reliability statistics for all measurement scales in model testing	147
Table 8.2: Age and gender of participants by school type	148
Table 8.3: Types of Garda contact in past 12 months by gender and age	152
Table 8.4: Means and standard deviations for scores on SRD and alcohol use scales by gender and age	152
Table 8.5: Means and standard deviations for future behaviour/cooperation scale by gender and age	155
Table 8.6: Factor loadings for all items onto measured variables and measured variables onto their respective latent variables	162
Table 8.7: Intercorrelations among measured variables	170
Table 8.8: Comparative fit statistics for each of the models tested in study two	174

List of Figures

Figure 4.1: Diagram of mixed methods research design showing points of integration of qualitative and quantitative elements of the overall study.	65
Figure 6.1: Theoretical links between the effects of uncertainty within interactions with Gardaí and of Garda behaviour on the construct of overall perceptions of the Gardaí.	111
Figure 6.2: Theoretical links between the effects of uncertainty of expectations from Gardaí on the construct of legal socialisation	113
Figure 6.3: Theoretical links between the effects of uncertainty around rights and status and the construct of cooperation and compliance with Gardaí.	115
Figure 6.4: Full theoretical model of the ways that uncertainty influences the aspects of young people’s attitudes toward the Gardaí including the qualitative themes derived from data analysis.	116
Figure 7.1: Qualitative themes mapped onto quantitative constructs	121
Figure 8.1: Hypothesised path diagram of relationships between measured and latent variables influencing attitudes toward Gardaí and their covariates	157
Figure 8.2: Respecified hypothesised model	166
Figure 8.3: Hypothesised path diagram for Model B	172
Figure 8.4: Hypothesised path diagram for Model C and D	172

List of Appendices

Appendix A: Ethical Approval	232
Appendix B: Information sheet for qualitative study	233
Appendix C: Consent form for participants	235
Appendix D: Letter to youth club leaders	236
Appendix E: Interview protocol	238
Appendix F: Example of a memo	240
Appendix G: Full questionnaire from quantitative study	242
Appendix H: Letter to school principals	254

Declaration

I declare that this thesis has not been submitted as an exercise for a degree at this or any other University.

I declare that this thesis is entirely my own work.

Signed: _____

Helen Gleeson

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Abstract

The aim of this research was to address outstanding empirical issues in the attitudes to police literature by developing and testing a theoretical model of the factors that influence young people's attitudes toward the police in Ireland. An exploratory sequential mixed methods design was used where qualitative data was were collected in the first study through semi-structured interviews with 20 young people, and quantitative data was collected in the second study through a survey instrument with 226 young people. Data from study one were used to inform the development of a theoretical model of influences on young people's attitudes toward the police and to aid in the construction of a survey instrument to test the model. Results from this study showed that young people's attitudes toward the police are influenced by at least three factors: perceptions of the performance and effectiveness of police, legal socialisation, and cooperative and compliant behaviour on the part of the young person. Each of these factors was tested as an element of the theoretical model in study two using structural equation modelling. Model testing showed a good fit to the data with each factor having similar effects on overall attitudes toward the police. This indicated that young people place some importance on the performance and behaviour of the police in making their assessments of them. However, in addition unique aspects of adolescence, namely legal socialisation and levels of offending at this age, are important considerations and should be included in future measures of young people's attitudes toward the police. Results have practical implications for how the police approach and treat young people in their interactions with them such as giving young people a voice and explaining the reasons behind decisions made by police.

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

Policing organisations in many Western countries spend considerable amounts of time and effort in assessing the attitudes of the public toward their police officers. Interest in the public's attitudes toward police has grown over the past number of decades due to an increasing recognition that the police depend on the compliance and cooperation of citizens to effectively do their jobs (Hurst & Frank, 2000; Tyler, 2006b). If the police can ensure compliance in the public there is less crime for them to deal with. If they can ensure cooperation they can rely on the public to follow their directives, to report crimes that they may not otherwise become aware of and, they can be more confident that citizens will come forward as witnesses to crimes that in turn helps to secure convictions.

There are two potential ways of ensuring this compliance and cooperation: through instrumental means, where citizens will avoid breaking the law due to fear of being caught and punished and through normative means, where citizens feel obligated to obey the law due to their perceptions of the police as legitimate authorities (Tyler, 2006b). A normative perspective on compliance would lead citizens to obey the law because they feel it is moral and just and that the legal authorities enforcing the law have a right to use their authority to ensure compliance. Clearly if a police force can ensure compliance and cooperation through normative means, compared to instrumental means, it would facilitate more efficient and effective policing practice. Within the extant literature the processes of ensuring that citizens feel the police are legitimate authorities has been studied extensively (Hinds, 2007; Tyler, 2006b; Sunshine & Tyler, 2003). These studies argue that when the police are fair and unbiased in their dealings with citizens, they are more likely to be seen as legitimate and this in turn

creates a sense of obligation to obey the law. While there is substantial evidence to support the view that experiences with police that are perceived as fair are likely to increase perceptions of police legitimacy, there is less evidence to support the argument that moral obligation to obey the law is also affected (Gau, 2011; Tyler, 2006b). In this sense there is a need for further research on the constructs that help to ensure cooperation and compliance with the police based on a theoretical understanding of attitudes toward the police.

Attitudes toward the police are often measured through large scale quantitative surveys and have become a marker for police institutions of the amount of support that is available to them (Kautt, 2011). However, despite reasonably widespread use of such surveys, they tend to focus exclusively on the adult population and fail to assess the attitudes of younger people. Existing research suggests that young people have more frequent negative contact with police (Hinds, 2007; Leiber, Nalla & Farnworth, 1998; Parker & Sarre, 2008), have higher rates of offending (Woolard, Harvell & Graham, 2008) and, have more negative attitudes toward the police compared to adults (Brown & Benedict, 2000; Hurst & Frank, 2000; Taylor, Turner, Esbensen & Winfree, 2001).

For many young people the police are also likely to be the first, and only, contact that they have with the criminal justice system. These research findings, taken together, may be important as beliefs and attitudes formed in adolescence may shape future attitudes and beliefs. If citizen cooperation and compliance is necessary for effective policing within a society, then the attitudes and experiences of young people take on added importance.

Still, research with young people is limited compared to the existing literature on adults' attitudes toward police. To date none of this research has been conducted with Irish youth so there is little information that tells us about Irish young people's attitudes toward the police. Most research that has been conducted with younger people

is based on American samples and tends to focus on racial differences in attitudes toward the police as the main variable of interest. There can be problems in attempting to transfer findings from these studies to other countries, such as Ireland, with particular cultural and population differences (Kautt, 2011; O'Donnell, 2005). In addition, there have been criticisms of the current literature for its lack of attention to substantive theory (Liu & Crank, 2011) and to the poor psychometric properties of the measurement scales used in these studies (Gau, 2011; Maguire & Johnson, 2010; Reisig, Bratton & Gertz, 2007).

The purpose of the current study, therefore, was to explore the attitudes of Irish young people toward the police, and to develop a comprehensive theory that can explain the factors that influence their attitudes. This was achieved through an initial qualitative study in which interview data from 20 young people were collected and analysed using a grounded theory approach to develop a theoretical model. This model was subsequently tested quantitatively by surveying 226 young people and using structural equation modelling to assess the utility of the model in identifying the factors proposed to affect young people's attitudes toward the police.

1.2A Note on Terminology used in this Thesis

Throughout the following chapters of the thesis, the terms 'police' and 'Gardaí' are used depending on the population being referred to in that case. When referring to the Irish police, or to research conducted only with Irish populations, as in the current study, the term 'Gardaí' (plural) or 'Garda' (singular) are used. While the official term for the Irish police is Garda Síochána (in English 'guardians of the peace'), the more common terms of reference of Gardaí and Garda are used throughout the current study as it is grounded in the language of participants. When referring to a broader population that includes those outside of Ireland, or to research conducted in other countries, the term 'police' has been used. The terms of 'Gardaí' and 'Garda' were used in the interview questions and the survey instrument as this is the most

commonly used term among Irish citizens and it was intended to gather information that related directly to the Irish police rather than more general opinions of all police forces.

1.3 Structure of the Thesis

The following chapter presents current psychological understandings of the development of attitudes throughout adolescence. This is considered an important time for the formation and development of attitudes concerning the social world of the young person and is a crucial period of socialisation. Chapter three outlines what is currently known about young people's attitudes toward the police, both internationally and in Ireland. Some information on the Irish juvenile justice system and the nature of police-youth relationships in Ireland is also given. The fourth chapter introduces the current study methodology and research design. Chapter five presents the methodology used for the first, qualitative study in the thesis; the results from this study are presented in Chapter six. Chapters seven and eight present the methodology and results from the second, quantitative study respectively. Finally, Chapter nine discusses the results from both of these studies concurrently, while taking account of the study limitations, and offering suggestions for future research.

Chapter 2: Understanding Young People's Attitudes

2.1 Aims of the Chapter

The aim of this chapter is to provide a background to the psychological understanding of attitudes and attitude formation. Particular focus is given to the formation, maintenance and shaping of attitudes during adolescence. Finally, a theoretical framework for the current study from a social-cognitive perspective, and with reference to the development of attitudes toward the police in adolescence, will be outlined.

2.2 A Psychological Understanding of Attitudes

Attitudes are defined as an individual's subjective evaluations of the myriad people, places, ideas and things that they encounter in everyday life (Priester & Petty, 2001). This core definition is generally accepted by most psychologists (Bohner & Dickel, 2011), but there is considerable variation in the extent to which they agree that attitudes are stable and stored in memory, or that they are momentary judgements constructed on the spot using the information at hand (e.g. Eaton, Majka & Visser, 2009; Glasman & Albarracin, 2006). Within both of these perspectives there is additional debate as to the influence that attitudes exert over behaviour and their endurance over time. If stored in memory and only accessed when an associative link (i.e. the attitude object) is presented then attitudes would be stable and enduring over time, resistant to change and reasonably reliable in predicting behaviour (Maio & Haddock, 2010). If formulated in the moment then attitudes would be highly unstable, liable to fluctuation depending on the particular situation and would be of little value in attempting to predict behaviour (Glasman & Albarracin, 2006). While both of these perspectives have developed elaborate models to help explain ways that attitudes can be accessed they have little to say about how attitudes are initially formed or how they develop through adolescence.

When thought of as evaluative judgements attitudes can differ in two ways. Firstly, they differ in direction, or valence, so that an individual may like, dislike or have more a neutral attitude towards a range of attitude objects and these can differ across individuals (Ajzen, 2001). Secondly, attitudes differ in their strength so that each individual may have varying degrees of liking or disliking toward a range of attitude objects. Individuals may also hold both positive and negative, or ambivalent, attitudes toward the same attitude object (Conner & Sparks, 2002; Jonas, Broemer & Diehl, 2000). Differences in the valence, strength and level of ambivalence in attitudes are thought to be important factors in understanding when and how attitudes can affect behaviour (Maio & Haddock, 2010).

Attitudes can further be conceptualised as being explicit or implicit. Explicit attitudes are those that require conscious attention and are measured through direct, usually self report methods. Implicit attitudes are those that don't require direct attention and are thought to indicate unconscious processes (Fielder, Messner & Bluemke, 2006). Implicit attitudes are most commonly measured through a computerised Implicit Attitude Test (IAT) that records response times to word groupings which are thought to indicate an individual's evaluation of an attitude object. This approach is often used to measure attitudes that are likely to be perceived as socially unacceptable, such as racism or prejudice and that research participants would be inclined to deny when using more explicit measurements. However, there is no consensus as to whether explicit and implicit attitudes are comparable and thereby are measuring the same thing in different ways or if they are in fact different constructs. For example, in a meta-analysis of correlations between explicit and implicit attitude scores, Hoffman et. al (2005) found that there was wide variation across domains measured and that these correlational differences were not due to social desirability or levels of introspection required (Hoffman, Gawronski, Gschwender, Le & Schmitt, 2005). They did conclude that correlations

between explicit and implicit measures appeared to be higher when the domains being measured were affective compared to cognitive indicating the possibility that different types of attitudes may be suited to measurement by different approaches.

One of the main reasons that social psychologists study attitudes is the belief that they guide information processing and can influence behaviour. There are different theoretical explanations for each of these potential effects of attitudes and for the ways they are thought to work. However, it is generally agreed that attitudes are comprised of three main components having an affective, a cognitive and, a behavioural strand within each attitude held by an individual and with different attitudes being more strongly oriented to one of the three components (Maio & Haddock, 2010). Attitudes, therefore, are essential to the understanding of the relationships between young people and authority figures in that they may provide insight into the cognitive, emotional and behavioural processes that influence these relationships. An outline of each of the components and how they are thought to contribute to overall attitudes is given in the next section.

2.2.1 The components of attitudes. Attitudes can be thought of as being comprised of three components an emotional component, a behavioural component and a cognitive component. The tripartite model of attitude formation explains these three strands of attitudes as separate influences on both the valence and strength of subsequent attitudes. Presented by Maio and Haddock (2010) as the 'ABCs of attitudes' they refer to the affective, or emotional, component, the behavioural antecedents or consequences of attitudes and, the cognitive aspects of our attitudes.

Attitudes are thought to be influenced by our emotions through association (Maio & Haddock, 2010). When we begin to link either positive or negative affect with an attitude object, our attitudes toward that object also tend to be either positive or negative. In this sense the affective element of our attitudes is likely to be influenced by the types

of experiences that we have with that attitude object. Also, as mentioned in the previous section, these types of attitudes are most likely to be revealed by implicit measurements and may therefore not require individuals to process information relating to that attitude object consciously (Hoffman et. al, 2005).

In terms of the links between attitudes and behaviour, there are two potential directions of influence. Either our attitudes toward someone or something will influence the way that we behave toward them, or the way that we have behaved toward that attitude object in the past will influence our understanding of our current attitude toward them. Either of these perspectives would suggest that attitudes are stored in memory in some form. Cognitive dissonance theory explains that individuals will strive for consistency between their behaviour and their thoughts (Maio & Haddock, 2010). When we notice a discrepancy between our thoughts and behaviour we will try to restore balance by adjusting either our actions, or our thoughts. Thinking about the attitude-behaviour link in this way it could be anticipated that attitudes toward an object will likely be matched by particular behavioural responses to that attitude object. Attitudes and behaviour are found to be more strongly linked when individuals have had direct experience with the attitude object, when they discussed their attitudes more frequently and when these attitudes are held with confidence (Glasman & Albarracin, 2006).

The cognitive component of attitudes refers to the beliefs and thoughts that we have toward an attitude object. This encompasses the information processing element of attitude development, the ways that our beliefs about what are relevant or important attributes of an attitude object will influence how we perceive that object. This aspect of attitude formation will likely be influenced by a number of other factors such as; the time available to us to process information; how motivated we are to attend to that information and; whether we can understand the information or not (Ajzen, 2001; Bohner & Dickel,

2011). Also, as can be inferred from cognitive dissonance theory, the way that we process information can be influenced by reference to our own past behaviour in relation to that attitude object. The cognitive component of attitudes is thought to play an important role in attitude change as when individuals cognitively attend to their own attitudes they are more likely to attend to disconfirming information and re-evaluate their own beliefs (Hart et. al, 2009).

The tripartite model is a useful way of determining how to measure attitudes, and highlights the multiple pathways to attitude formation. However, its focus is entirely on the individual, internal processes that influence attitudes. What is lacking in this model is recognition of the potential influence of environmental or situational factors in affecting our behaviour and beliefs about our social world. A number of powerful psychological studies have shown that the environments in which we interact with others can have a dramatic influence on how we behave toward and think about other people and situations (e.g. the Stanford Prison Experiment, Milgram's obedience studies; Milgram, 2010; Zimbardo, 2007).

While internal processes are important features to consider when attempting to define and understand attitudes, it is also important to take account of the environmental factors that can influence attitudes and the ways that these environments are perceived and processed by individuals. For example, it is well established that negative information tends to have a greater impact on evaluations of an attitude object compared to positive information of a similar strength (Ajzen, 2001). All of these internal and external elements of attitudes lead to the conclusion that attitudes are not realistically measurable in a direct way. Instead, researchers tend to consider attitudes to be a latent construct, i.e. a construct that is not directly observable but made up of a number of other constructs that can be measured to indicate the valence and strength of an attitude toward a particular attitude object.

2.2.2 Attitudes as latent constructs. As stated above, attitudes are generally agreed to be latent constructs rather than directly observable variables. When determining an individual's attitude, a number of factors that are theoretically thought to be components of a particular attitude are measured directly and the strength and/or valence of the attitude can be estimated from scores on these measurements (Crano & Prislin, 2008).

Latent constructs, or variables, are measured extensively in psychological research, the measurement of attitudes being just one of many phenomena that utilises the concept of the latent variable (Bollen, 2002). Latent variables can be derived post data analysis, for example when using exploratory factor analysis to determine which scale items correlate with others and indicate a particular latent variable. This technique is more commonly used in scale development. When a study can propose variables that indicate the latent construct, based on past research and theoretical considerations, the approach is usually a hypothesis testing one, where observable variables are pre-determined to be indicators of the latent construct (Bollen, 2002).

This approach to the measurement of attitudes as latent variables can be seen in the variety of ways that attitudes are defined and conceptualised. Studies that focus on attitudes toward the police have emphasised different aspects of these attitudes including, trust (Jackson, et. al, 2011; Flexon, Lurigio & Greenleaf, 2009), respect (Hurst & Frank, 2008), satisfaction (Rosenbaum, Schuck, Costello, Hawkins & Ring, 2009) and, obligation to obey legal authorities (Tyler, 2006b; Sunshine & Tyler, 2003). A full exploration of the potential variables that may or may not influence the strength and valence of attitudes toward the police is required in order to ensure that all correlated variables are included in any measure of these attitudes.

Overall, it is possible that each of the components of attitudes may be more or less influential dependant on when they are processed. Research has shown that attitudes are stronger when they are

constructed from information in the moment than when they are derived from memory based processing (Maio & Haddock, 2010), and as will be seen in the next section, strongly held attitudes are more likely to influence behaviour.

2.2.3 Attitudes and behaviour. Some types of attitudes have been shown to exert more influence over behaviour than others (Bohner & Dickel, 2011; Glasman & Albarracin, 2006; Maio & Haddock, 2010). However, the reliability of predicting behaviour from an individual's attitudes is highly variable with correlations ranging from -.20 to .73 across studies (Glasman & Albarracin, 2009). The relationship between attitudes and behaviour is thought to be moderated, in part, by the strength of the particular attitude held by the individual (Maio & Haddock, 2010). Strongly held attitudes tend to have a number of features in common including; being easily accessible; having particular importance to the individual; low ambivalence; high levels of certainty of the attitude; having direct experience of the attitude object and; having temporal stability (Eaton et. al, 2009; Glasman & Albarracin, 2009; Maoi & Haddock, 2010). Strongly held attitudes in turn are thought to be formed when information is processed on-line compared to memory based information processing (Eaton et. al, 2009; Maio & Haddock, 2010). This would then lead to the possibility that attitudes are most likely to influence behaviour when individuals have more opportunity to process information about an attitude object through direct experience as opposed to simply remembering events or information relevant to that object.

Other mediating factors that influence the attitude-behaviour link were investigated by Glasman and Albarracin in a meta-analysis of over 100 studies covering a range of attitude objects and groups of individuals. Aside from the factors that were shown to affect the link between attitudes and behaviour outlined above in terms of attitude strength, they also found that behaviour performed in public it is more likely to reflect attitudes that are expressed in public compared to those

expressed in private (Glasman & Albarracin, 2009). In this way, if young people express negative and disrespectful attitudes toward the police among their peers, they may be more likely to act in confrontational ways in interactions with the police when their peers are present regardless of their more private attitudes toward the police more generally.

2.2.4 Attitudes and information processing. Attitudes are shaped by social contexts, we discuss our views with others and most individuals will tend to have clearly held in-group and out-group consensus on issues that are important to them (Eaton et. al, 2009). We are also more likely to select and attend to information that is congruent with our existing attitudes when these attitudes are strongly held compared to weaker attitudes (Bohner & Dickel, 2011), and are likely to ignore disconfirming information in some situations (Hart et. al, 2009). Hart and colleagues found in a meta-analysis of selective exposure to information that our attitudes in the moment, and how they are likely to influence behaviour, are determined by our goal at that time, which may be to be correct (resistant to new information, selective congenial information) or to aid in making a decision (seek new information whether challenging to attitudes or not).

We are also more likely to attend to and remember information about attitude objects that are relevant to our personal values compared to less personally important attitude objects (Boer & Fischer, 2013; Maio & Haddock, 2010). However research has also shown that when an individual reasons about their own attitudes they are more inclined to change that attitude particularly if it is cognitively, rather than affectively, based (Maio & Haddock, 2010). Furthermore, it is argued that we are more inclined to attend to and remember negative information about situations and people than positive information (Maio & Haddock, 2010), a finding that is supported by research in the attitudes to police literature also (e.g. Skogan, 2006). The links between attitudes and information processing can be seen to be affected by a

number of factors in that it is necessary to take account of the type of attitude being studied (i.e. how personally relevant it is to the individual), the type of information the individual is likely to attend to (what their goal is in that situation) and whether this particular attitude is likely to be memory based or processed on-line.

2.3 The Formation of Attitudes in Adolescence

Attitudes, beliefs and values change over the course of adolescence through a combination of cognitive and social transitions and psychosocial development within a variety of contexts (Smetana, 2006; Steinberg, 1993). Adolescents must contend with changing understandings of moral issues (including justice, welfare and rights) and concerns with authority and social norms along with changing expectations of them from their social world (Smetana, 1983; 2006). At times, these issues can occur as conflict between each other, and at other times the issues occur in synchrony.

The development of attitudes then can be understood through a framework that takes account of both the social cognitive processes and social status of young people within the context of the society they live in and aspects of psychosocial development that include identity formation and growing autonomy. This section will give an overview of the theoretical understandings of attitude formation and change over the adolescent years and the factors thought to be important in influencing these changes.

While there is a long and extensive body of research on attitude change and persuasion (see Azjen, 2001 and Bohner & Dickel, 2011 for reviews) there has been less attention directed toward the formation of attitudes through childhood and adolescence. However, theories of psycho-social development in adolescence can help in explaining this process. This section therefore will focus on psycho-social development in adolescence and how this may be related to attitude development during this period.

2.3.1 Social interactions and attitude formation. The range of social interactions that a young person is exposed to is likely to become more diverse through the adolescent years as young people spend more of their time outside the home and school often in largely public spaces (Brown, 2007; Crawford, 2009). In particular there is likely to be an increasing number of interactions with a wider variety of legal actors which play a fundamental role in the socialisation process of the young person and will help to determine their views and beliefs about the moral foundations of the law (Fagan & Tyler, 2005; Piquero, Fagan, Mulvey, Steinberg & Odgers, 2005). Direct experience has been shown to be an important factor in determining the strength of attitudes held by an individual and the level of cognitive effort undertaken by the individual in forming or changing that attitude (Eaton et. al, 2009; Hart et. al, 2009).

Research would suggest that negative experiences with the police have more impact on attitudes than positive experiences (Liu & Crank, 2011; Skogan, 2006) seemingly being more accessible to memory and being perceived as more relevant, although the reasons for this are unclear. One possible explanation may be that individuals are inclined to compare their actual experience with their expectations of the interaction. It may be that in some instances actual experiences are far removed from somewhat idealised expectations and the discrepancy between the two makes the experience more relevant to attitude formation (Woolard, Harvell & Graham, 2008). It can be seen then how attitudes may change and be reconstructed through adolescence via the interpretation of experiences and the need to adjust expectations of other's behaviours in order to better anticipate the outcomes of these interactions.

Likewise, the development of judgements about morality and justice are thought to begin from early childhood and change throughout adolescence (Turiel 2003; 2008). The development of moral judgements is not seen as merely a process of internalising social

norms but of active interpretation of what is deemed to be right and wrong behaviour, where young people tend to categorise behaviour and rules as either conventional or moral, a distinction that can be seen in children as young as five years old (Turiel, 1983; 2003). These distinctions of actions into the qualitatively different types of events that are classified as conventional and moral domains are thought to occur through an active process of interpretation of experiences and action upon them (Turiel, 1983). In this way it is conceivable that young people will view some laws as moral, in that they relate to the protection and safety of society and will likely view the enforcement of them as legitimate, and will view other laws as more conventional and open to discretion that need not always be adhered to.

2.3.2 Social identity and attitude formation. Identity formation in adolescence is a complex, multifaceted process that involves changes in the way that young people see themselves in relation to others and to the broader society in which they live (Steinberg, 1993). One means of establishing a social identity is through developing an orientation towards formal or institutional authority which can help to reveal one's social status within society (Rubini & Palmonari, 2006). A trend can be observed across adolescence where younger adolescents (12 to 13 years) have mostly positive attitudes towards institutional authorities, becoming more critical or cynical in the middle stage (14 to 16 years) and returning to more positive orientations in later adolescence (Fagan & Tyler, 2005; McAra & McVie, 2005; Rubini & Palmonari, 2006). These fluctuations indicate that there is a specific process of both identity and attitude formation taking place during the adolescent years which, in turn, may be influenced by the specific goals that the young person is focused on achieving at different times.

There is also evidence to suggest that some young people see delinquent or non-conformist behaviour as part of their social identity (Elmer & Reicher, 1995; Carroll, Houghton, Khan & Tan, 2008). As a

means of promoting a particular reputation among peers, some young people may see both breaking the law and showing disrespect to police as a means to gain a certain social status (Dai, Frank & Sun, 2011). This in turn is likely to lead to a greater risk of negative contact with police which may help to both entrench such a social identity and to reinforce such behaviour in that individual by strengthening delinquent goals, attitudes and values that may persist into adulthood (Carroll et. al, 2008).

2.3.3 Social cognitive development and attitude formation.

Cognitive changes during the adolescent years involve the development of the capacity to better understand the perspectives of others and to take account of the external influences on other people's actions (Steinberg, 1993). Three areas of research interest within the study of social cognition can help to explain the development of attitudes towards institutions such as the police: studies of role taking; studies of impression formation and; the study of morality and social convention.

Role taking involves the ability to see things from another's perspective which allows the young person to formulate arguments that require appealing to another's interests. Impression formation is the increasing use of inference where adolescents are more likely than younger children to interpret the motives, feelings and beliefs of others. The development of moral thinking means that adolescents move away from the belief that right and wrong are determined by set rules imposed by adults to questioning the underlying meanings of moral standards and understanding their subjective nature. Social conventions are recognised as often arbitrary rules of social behaviour that exist through general consensus as opposed to their legal status (Turiel, 1983; 2003).

Each of these understandings of social cognition can help to explain how attitudes are open to change over the course of adolescence. Young people become increasingly active in attempting to understand the motives of other's behaviour and to ascribe emotions

and beliefs to other people when trying to understand their actions. They are also beginning to question these motives and the social structures in which they occur, while becoming more adept at arguing their own viewpoint and thinking about more abstract concepts such as equality, democracy and justice (Lehalle, 2006). In addition to these cognitive changes, the adolescent is also trying to establish their sense of autonomy which can include the resistance of control from authoritative others (Fagan & Tyler, 2005; Steinberg, 1993). While younger children are inclined to see the rules prescribed by the police as concrete and unchangeable, adolescents are increasingly viewing some of these rules as open to interpretation and are making judgements about the actions of the police based on their more abstract notions of morality and right and wrong. These inferences are then more likely to occur when the young person has had experience with relevant others, either personally or vicariously, which encourages this more active cognitive processing of the young person's opinions and attitudes toward significant others in their social world (Smetana, 2006; Turiel, 1983).

2.3.4 Social cognitive theory and attitude formation. This range of social cognitive processes can be understood through Bandura's social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1989; 2001). This theory emphasises the interactions that occur between the individual's external environment, their own and others behaviour, and their cognitive processes. The individual is an active agent in forming their beliefs and attitudes through cognitive processing of experiences and through observation of others.

That adolescence is somehow qualitatively different to either childhood or adulthood is dismissed by Bandura. What changes, he says, are the sociocultural attitudes toward the individual and expectations from society that vary according to an individual's age, race, socioeconomic status, and so on. So it is society's attitudes and expectations that change during this time and young people learn to

adapt to these changes through their experiences – past and present- and through the means by which they process these experiences depending on their cognitive and behavioural capabilities (Bandura, 1989).

As socialisation progresses the young person begins to internalise the values and rules of their society and these are used to self-evaluate one's own behaviour (Smith & McVie, 2003). Through this process individuals come to develop their own social and moral values that guide behaviour and help to maintain and monitor this behaviour, and subsequently their attitudes, in line with social norms. In addition, those who engage in illegal or immoral behaviour can use internal justifications for these actions by reducing their apparent immorality and finding means to align such behaviour with internal moral standards (Bandura 2001; Bandura, Barbaranelli, Caprara & Pastorelli, 1996).

Social cognitive theory is premised on what Bandura terms 'triadic reciprocal determinism', which involves the three components of P (the person and their individual characteristics), B (the behaviour they exert in particular situations) and E (aspects of the external environment, including other people). Reinforcement, and in particular self reinforcement that becomes more important as the individual ages, is considered to be relevant in promoting or decreasing particular behavioural responses in individuals. However, social cognitive theory moved away from traditional behaviouristic theories by placing emphasis on the active cognitive processes that take place within the individual when they re-orient their attitudes and beliefs based on their experiences (Bandura 1989; 2001).

Individuals will enter social situations with a particular set of expected outcomes which will influence how that individual behaves within that situation, a process that Bandura termed 'forethought' (Bandura, 1989). This in turn will have an impact on the environment in which the individual behaves and the subsequent environmental

contingencies will impact on the processing of beliefs and future expectancies. In this way social cognitive theory explains the dynamic nature of attitude formation that is based on both experience and cognitive functioning. In general, the individual will strive to ensure positive outcomes for themselves and avoid negative outcomes. These outcomes presumably will be different dependent on both the internal goals of the individual and the presence or absence of others in that situation.

Along with forethought, another cognitive process that is argued to influence behaviour in particular situations is that of moral reasoning (Bandura, 1989; 2001). Moral reasoning is conceptualised as arising from a set of internal 'controls' that govern the individual's behaviour in different situations. Developing through triadic reciprocal determinism, both prosocial and deviant forms of moral behaviour and reasoning are thought to be formed through the same learning principles as opposed to internal attributes or traits (Muss, 1996). At the extreme end, those who engage in highly immoral behaviour have been classified by Bandura as participating in moral disengagement. Moral disengagement involves the use of a number of cognitive distortions including dehumanising the victim of an aggressive act, shifting personal blame for behaviour, and using euphemistic language around the immoral act.

While "people do not change from week to week what they regard as right or wrong or good or bad" (Bandura, 2001, p.9), people must activate their internal moral controls in order for them to be used. Moral disengagement therefore is seen by Bandura to be an active, self-regulatory, process that allows the individual to act in ways they would otherwise feel are immoral and not a match to their own internal standards of morality (Bandura, 1991). Moral disengagement then has been used as a marker of immoral reasoning and as an explanation for criminal and delinquent behaviour by lowering or eliminating the amount of guilt an individual feels about a behaviour (Bandura, et. al,

1996). Though it is implied that a lack of moral disengagement reflects a more moral way of reasoning and behaving, there is no comparable test that would provide evidence for this view.

Social cognitive theory explains the formation of beliefs and attitudes as part of the process of more general adolescent development which occurs through experiences and the cognitive understanding of those experiences. It also provides a possible explanation for why there is often a large discrepancy between the negative attitudes of young people and the more positive attitudes of adults toward the police. If, as Bandura argues, sociocultural attitudes and expectations of individuals change as a function of their age, then it may be that young people are treated in different ways by the police compared with adults and this may account for the discrepancy in attitudes between generations. In order to investigate this it would be necessary to understand how young people perceive they are treated by police and if they feel there is an unfair difference when compared to other members of society, in particular adults.

How these interactions may have different impacts on individual attitudes or beliefs is not explained by social cognitive theory. While it offers some guidance as to the potentially important areas that should be explored in understanding young people's attitudes toward the police, it does not offer direction as to the particular elements of experience that may be relevant in this area. Theories that look directly at the interactional process between citizens and the police can help to shed light on what factors individuals consider when interpreting how they have been treated by police and how their attitudes may be formed in different directions through experience.

2.3.5 Legal socialisation and attitude formation. Legal socialisation is a process by which individuals acquire attitudes and beliefs about the law, legal authorities and legal institutions (Piquero et al, 2005). It is thought to be comprised of a number of cognitive elements including legal cynicism, moral engagement or reasoning

about the law and perceptions of the legitimacy of legal authorities and the law (Fagan & Tyler, 2005; Piquero et. al, 2005). As a process it develops through interactions with the legal system and a variety of legal actors, either directly or vicariously through family, friends, peers and the media. Adolescence is a key period of attitude formation on policing and the law (Hinds, 2009a).

In a study assessing the differences in these elements in different age groups Fagan and Tyler found that those in mid-adolescence had the most negative attitudes toward police in that they had the highest levels of legal cynicism and lowest levels of perceived legitimacy, while there was no significant difference for moral reasoning (Fagan & Tyler, 2005). This would indicate that some elements of legal socialisation change and develop over the adolescent years, while moral reasoning is a more stable, internal process. However, this study fails to explain why these changes occur apart from the assumption that socialisation is influenced by accumulated experiences.

Part of the process of legal socialisation is also thought to involve the internalisation of social rules and norms and experiences of social control which influence the level of self-control exerted by individuals in their legal and illegal behaviour (Smith & McVie, 2003). Within a generalised perspective of attitudes to authority, attitudes towards teachers, parents, the police and the law have been found to be highly intercorrelated (Levy, 2001) suggesting that young people hold similar attitudes towards a variety of authority figures which may be due to socialisation processes. In addition, adults who hold more positive views of the police also tend to have a stronger sense of involvement and inclusion in the political system overall (Bridenball & Jesilow, 2008). However, this perspective assumes that young people fail to make distinctions between authority figures and between different types of control from authority figures, an assumption that would be disputed by domain theories of social understanding (Turiel, 1983). It is necessary therefore, to explore the underlying cognitive processes

that young people engage in when they interpret and attempt to assign meaning to both their own and other's experiences with legal authorities such as the police.

2.4 Summary

Within psychology, attitudes are thought to be composed of three elements that pertain to emotions, cognitions and behaviour, each interacting with the others in influencing attitudes. However, there is continuing debate as to the ways that attitudes are accessed by individuals and whether they can be reliable predictors of behaviour or means of information processing. As attitudes are multidimensional constructs and are not directly observable, they are most commonly conceived of as latent constructs that are composed of a number of other measurable factors which combine to indicate the nature of the individual's attitude toward a particular object.

Attitude formation through the adolescent years is thought to occur through a number of processes including interaction with the social world, the development of a social identity, cognitive processing changes and, the interpretation of social rules. Adolescents are active in forming understandings of social norms and rules and in their changing understandings of the behaviour of others in their social world. The socialisation process that occurs during adolescence involves the changing understandings of both conventional norms of society and more abstract notions of justice, morality and equality.

Chapter 3: Factors Affecting Attitudes Toward the Police

3.1 Aims of the Chapter

The aim of this chapter is to give an overview of the current research literature that focuses on factors that influence attitudes toward the police among young people. The first section will outline the two most common approaches to understanding attitudes toward the police: the performance perspective and the procedural justice perspective. The second section will provide a review of research findings on a variety of factors that may affect attitudes toward the police in young people. Finally, the third section of this chapter will give an overview of the current context of Garda youth relations in Ireland and a review of existing literature within an Irish context.

3.2 Conceptualising Attitudes Toward the Police

Within the existing literature there is a lack of consensus as to which factors are most likely to influence attitudes toward the police and also what approach to measuring these attitudes is most appropriate (Liu & Crank, 2011). This can be seen as being partly due to the atheoretical nature of much of the research in this area which is often based on national surveys that rely more on descriptive analysis of responses from the public as opposed to more in-depth analyses of how attitudes toward the police are influenced (Bradford, Jackson & Stanko, 2009; Kautt, 2011; Liu & Crank, 2011).

Currently there are two common broad approaches to measuring attitudes toward the police, either through asking individuals to assess the performance of the police in carrying out their duties, or through measuring individual's perceptions of their treatment by police after an encounter with them. The performance perspective assumes that individuals base their judgements of the police on their ability to prevent crime and to arrest those who have broken the law (Liu & Crank, 2011). This perspective views such judgements as indicative of the public's satisfaction with and respect for

the police. In contrast, the procedural justice perspective assumes that individuals form their attitudes from their perceptions of how the police treat citizens and make decisions affecting them (Tyler, 2006b). This perspective views personal and vicarious encounters with the police as most important in forming attitudes as individuals will base their assessments of the police by matching police behaviour to their own expectations of treatment and beliefs about justice and fair treatment. Each of these perspectives is explained in more detail below.

3.2.1 The performance perspective. National surveys that enquire about citizen's levels of satisfaction with areas of policing such as the number of police in a community, perceptions of crime levels and perceptions of police effectiveness in arresting criminals are based on a police performance perspective. These types of assessments can also include statistical measures of crime rates and arrest rates (Kautt, 2011; Liu & Crank, 2011). This perspective is based on the assumption that attitudes toward the police stem directly from police behaviour and takes no account of how this behaviour is interpreted by individuals, instead it views citizen's opinions of the police as contingent on tangible aspects of police action such as arrest rates and officer visibility (Dirikx, Gelders & Parmentier, 2012; Hough, Ruuskanen & Jokinen, 2011; Liu & Crank, 2011).

Within this perspective it is thought that individuals who have higher levels of satisfaction with the police generally will also be supportive of the police and will be more likely to cooperate with police directives and comply with the law (Hough et. al, 2011). This approach is most likely to be used by administrative agencies such as the police themselves and government agencies. The Public Attitudes Survey (PAS) conducted in Ireland each year up until 2008 is based on this perspective in that it attempts to measure the views of the public on Garda performance. Across countries where these types of surveys are conducted they tend to find high levels of reported satisfaction with the

police although these are primarily based on adult samples (e.g. Browne, 2008; Kautt, 2011)

Although possibly the most common approach to measuring public attitudes toward the police, there is little research evidence to support the view that reported levels of satisfaction with the police are directly related to overall attitudes or behaviour (Liu & Crank, 2011; Skogan & Hartnett, 1997; Tyler, 2006a). It has been noted that perceptions of crime and police performance are both subjective entities. Measures of fear of crime for example, have been shown to be largely unrelated to actual levels of crime or the statistical probability of becoming a victim of that crime (Sunshine & Tyler, 2003).

One possible reason for the lack of evidence linking performance ratings to attitudes to the police is that these surveys are measuring only one dimension of attitudes toward the police, there is some evidence to suggest that individuals hold both global (general satisfaction) and specific (related to particular aspects of police performance) attitudes toward police and that it is necessary to measure both in order to gain a comprehensive understanding of attitudes toward the police (Brandl, Frank, Worden, & Bynum, 1994; Dirikx et. al, 2012). Both qualitative and quantitative studies with young people have found that global assessments of the police may be primarily negative while more specific views of the police or individual police officers can be more positive (Carr, Napolitano & Keating, 2007; Dirikx et. al, 2012; Hurst, Frank & Browning, 2000).

It is also possible that perceptions of performance play differing levels of importance in forming attitudes toward the police. Hinds (2009a) found that while performance has little influence on perceptions of police legitimacy in US populations it was a significant predictor of legitimacy in her Australian sample of young people (2009a) and in a sample of Australian adults (Hinds, 2009b). Any measurement of attitudes toward the police in a previously unmeasured sample therefore should include perceptions of

performance as a potentially important variable in influencing overall attitudes toward police and the various dimensions of these attitudes as well as both general and specific types of questions relating to police performance.

3.2.2 The procedural justice perspective. The procedural justice perspective argues that the most important factor in the formation of attitudes toward the police is the perceived fairness of the police in interactions with the public rather than the actual outcome of that interaction. From this perspective, it is the individual's personal and vicarious experiences with legal actors (i.e. police officers, court officials etc.) that best explain the formation of attitudes toward the police (Tyler, 2006b; 2009). It is also argued that the particular direction of the development of these attitudes toward the law and legal actors will have an impact on later beliefs and behaviour such as law compliance and cooperation with the police (Fagan & Tyler, 2005; Hinds, 2007; Paternoster, Brame, Bachman & Sherman, 1997; Tyler, 2001). These attitudes will in turn affect both general assessments of the police and the interpretation of any future experiences with police (Sunshine & Tyler, 2003).

Legitimacy is defined as the perceived right of the police to expect the public to comply with the law, to follow their directives, and to cooperate with them when required (Tyler, 2006a). Legal authorities are seen to be legitimate when they are perceived to have acted in fair and unbiased, or procedurally just, ways. Procedural justice has been found to be directly linked to perceptions of the legitimacy of these authorities (Tyler, 2006b), although as noted above, this link may not be as predictive in samples from outside of the US (Hinds, 2009a; 2009b). Nonetheless, the concept of legitimacy as it is understood here has also been shown to affect the attitudes of adolescents toward school authorities (Gouveia-Pereira, Vala, Palmonari & Rubini, 2003), security guards (Fagan & Tyler, 2005), and to parents (Fondarcaro, Dunkle & Pathak, 1998). In adults it has been found that those who question the

legitimacy of a law they are being asked to comply with (e.g. tax compliance) are more likely to comply when they experience procedural justice and it appears to be more important in ensuring compliance in these individuals than those who already hold favourable views of that law (Murphy, Tyler & Curtis, 2009). This may point to the potential for procedurally just practices from authorities to foster greater compliant behaviour from citizens even when they are disinclined to do so.

Fair procedures under this theoretical understanding are thought to be important in part because they provide status relevant information to individuals and they convey to an individual information about their position within society (Gau, 2011; Tyler, 2009). Given that adolescence is considered to be an important period in which to develop a social identity (Steinberg, 1993) this aspect of procedural fairness may be even more important at this time than in adulthood (Bandura, 1989). Interpretations of fair treatment from the police which communicate to the individual that they are valued members of society are thought to influence perceptions of the legitimacy of police officers and police forces (Dirikx et. al, 2012; Sunshine & Tyler, 2003; Tyler, 2006). In the case of young people in particular however, any contact with police may potentially be seen as status challenging (Waddington, 1999).

The theory of legitimacy and procedural justice can help to expand social cognitive theory by indicating the reasons why experiences are so important in the formation of attitudes values and beliefs, and to consider reasons beyond outcomes (i.e. arrest or caution). These in turn will impact on the individual's legal and compliant behaviour and help to ensure that citizens will feel obligated to obey the law through normative means making police forces more efficient and effective and can increase compliance with police directives during interactions (Dai, Frank & Sun, 2011; Tyler, 2001; 2006a). In addition, establishing policies that can help to foster a sense

of legitimacy and trust in legal institutions is likely to be more effective in reducing crime in the long term than populist solutions of 'getting tough on crime' that are often promoted by governments (Jackson et. al, 2011).

While this theory can help to explain why interactions between citizens and the police are often found to be important in determining attitudes toward the police, it fails to account for possible pre-existing attitudes or beliefs. Slocum et. al (2010) found that the impact of negative experiences on intentions to report crime in the future is reduced by half when delinquent behaviour is included in analyses (Slocum, Taylor, Brick & Esbensen, 2010). By focusing exclusively on the actions and decisions of the police, it ignores any potential influence that may be brought to the situation by the citizen. As adolescence is a time when individuals begin to question authority and seek more independence and freedom, it is likely that issues of procedural justice become increasingly important to young people when interacting with all authorities, including the police.

Despite a strong theoretical basis for the constructs of procedural justice and legitimacy and a large body of evidence supporting their influence in attitudes toward police, there is still some inconsistency in how they are measured and in what factors are thought to explain each of the concepts (Gau, 2011; Hinds, 2009a). It has been noted that the measurement properties of both procedural justice and legitimacy are often given scant attention within the literature (e.g. Maguire & Johnson, 2010; Reisig, Bratton & Gertz, 2007), and that they are assumed to be objective assessments of police behaviour which may not always be the case (Dai, Frank & Sun, 2011). In addition, although research evidence is scarce in this area, procedural justice may have differential effects on those who are low in self-control compared to those higher in self-control, so that there may be more interactional factors between legitimacy and procedural justice that have yet to be included in studies of young people's attitudes

toward the police (Wolfe, 2011). Any subsequent measurement of these concepts therefore should first be assessed for their construct validity especially within a population that has not previously been measured on these concepts, to determine the factors that best explain procedural justice and legitimacy in that population and to establish whether there are other relevant factors that should be included in any such measurements.

3.3 Factors Affecting Young People's Attitudes Toward the Police

A large body of research has investigated the factors that correlate with or influence young people's attitudes toward the police, including individual and demographic factors, the relevance of context and situational variation and, psychosocial and cognitive factors of the individual. The variety of potential factors influencing attitudes toward the police is reflected in the multitude of methods that have been used in different studies making it sometimes difficult to collate findings and to determine the relative impact of the various factors.

The majority of these studies have been conducted with US populations, both adults and juveniles, and may not show the same combination of variables influencing attitudes when measured in populations from other countries (Hinds, 2007; 2009a; Hough, Jackson, Bradford, Myhill & Quinton, 2010). In addition most research is of a quantitative nature and often focuses on a small number of variables in large data sets and in some cases relies on measurements initially developed for use with adults rather than younger people (Bradford et. al, 2009). While the overview that follows in the sections below will refer mostly to this research where such research exists it will attempt to include qualitative study findings and research from European countries as far as possible.

3.4 Individual and Demographic Factors and Attitudes Toward the Police

The majority of research studies measuring attitudes toward the police also include individual and demographic factors, sometimes as

explanatory factors for variations in attitudes, and also as interactive factors with other relevant variables. The most commonly measured variables from this approach include race/ethnicity, age, gender and, offending or criminal behaviour.

3.4.1 Race and ethnicity. Within the study of attitudes toward the police, race/ethnicity is one of the most extensively researched variables (Taylor, Turner, Esbensen & Winfree, 2001). Nonetheless, evidence for the effects of race on attitudes toward the police is inconsistent, with some studies finding strong correlations between minority status and negative attitudes (e.g. Hurst, Frank & Browning, 2000) and others finding no relationship (e.g. Skogan, 2005). In the UK it has been noted that in contrast to many of these US based studies, minorities often report more positive views of the police compared to whites (Kautt, 2011, Hough et. al, 2010), while in some studies the effect of race disappears when other factors, such as the quality of interactions, are considered (Bradford, et. al, 2009; Hinds, 2007).

It is likely that race is a more complex influencing factor in explaining attitudes toward the police than has been assumed in some studies. Those of a minority group may be more likely to interpret police actions as racially motivated and therefore feel targeted by police more than majority groups (Solis, Portillos & Brunson, 2009). Race/ethnicity is often found to have more predictive strength when considered as an interacting factor with other variables such as age (Woolard, Harvell & Graham, 2008), experiences with police (Bradford, et. al, 2009; Rosenbaum, Schuck, Costello, Hawkins & Ring, 2005), neighbourhood context (Reisig & Parks, 2000) and tolerance for minor deviance (Sampson & Bartusch, 1998). There is also some evidence to show that young African American males in particular are subject to more frequent police stops than females, older citizens or white citizens (Collins, 2007; Skogan, 2005).

Given the ethnic diversity within the American population and notable historical clashes between minorities and the police there

(Brown & Benedict, 2002) it is understandable that this would be a variable of interest to both researchers and police administrations in the US to explain variations in attitudes toward the police. In Ireland however, there is a very different ethnic profile with less than 5% of the population belonging to ethnic minority groups (CSO, 2011), and this research is unlikely to add anything to our understanding of Irish young people's attitudes toward the Gardaí.

3.4.2 Age. In a review of over 100 papers reporting on attitude toward the police research in both adults and young people Brown and Benedict state that age is the only consistent factor to predict differences in these attitudes (Brown & Benedict, 2002). Most studies find that when compared with adult attitudes young people express more negative views of the police (Brick, Taylor & Esbensen, 2009; Brown & Benedict, 2002; Hinds, 2007; Hurst & Frank, 2000; Taylor et al, 2001). Reasons proposed for this difference include the greater number of adversarial contacts that young people are likely to have with police compared to adults (Bradford et. al, 2009) and general challenging of authority figures during the adolescent years (Dai, Frank & Sun, 2011; Hinds, 2007).

However, attitudes toward the police have also been found to fluctuate during adolescence with younger adolescents (12 to 14 years old) reporting mostly positive and somewhat idealised views of the police, and older adolescents (15 to 18 years old) reporting more negative and cynical attitudes which gradually become more positive as they move into adulthood (Brick, Taylor & Esbensen, 2009; Fagan & Tyler, 2005; Hurst, Frank & Browning, 2000; Rubini & Palmonari, 2006). While these studies show there are some differences in attitudes toward authorities by age, they are mediated by social contexts and experiences, suggesting that age alone is not a sufficient determining factor in predicting attitudes towards legal authorities.

What appears to be the most likely explanation for changes in attitudes toward the police throughout adolescence is that increasing

age is highly related to a number of other factors including increased visibility on the streets (McAra & McVie, 2005), more negative interactions with police which may be exacerbated by adolescents failing to show respect for police (Dai, Frank & Sun, 2011), greater amount of time spent outside the home with peers (Crawford, 2009), and a general increase in the frequency and amount of offending or delinquent behaviour over the same period (Hinds, 2007; 2009a; Steinberg, 2009). From the studies that have looked at age as an influencing factor on attitudes toward the police, it appears that other factors are more relevant and age may just be a coincidental factor in this case.

In addition, a number of qualitative studies have shown that young people can hold negative views of particular experiences with police while simultaneously having positive attitudes toward the concept of policing and police authority (Carr, Napolitano & Keating, 2007; Dirikx, et. al, 2012; Solis et. al, 2009; Stoutland, 2001). As pointed out by Hinds (2007), it may not necessarily be the increased interactions between young people and the police that have most influence on attitudes, but that at this age young people may be more sensitive to slights in terms of respect shown to them and therefore may perceive their interactions with police in a more negative light compared to adults (Fagan & Tyler, 2005; Hinds, 2007).

3.4.3 Gender. Many studies have found that females tend to have more favourable attitudes toward the police when compared to males (Brick et. al, 2009; Smith & McVie, 2003; Taylor et. al, 2001). This is often argued to be due to the lower levels of offending behaviour in females and by extension the fewer number of antagonistic interactions with police and also the less confrontational nature of police-female interactions (Bradford et. al, 2009; Hinds, 2007). Both official statistics and empirical studies tend to find that males are at higher risk of engaging in many offences including drug use, assaults, theft and, dangerous driving (Smith & Ecob, 2007).

Conflicting evidence for gender differences in attitudes toward the police also exists where studies have found that females have more negative attitudes toward the police than males (Avdiya, 2010; Hurst & Frank, 2000). These findings are explained by higher expectations of service from police in females and the tendency for negative experiences with police to have a greater impact on attitudes than positive experiences (Bradford et. al, 2009; Skogan, 2005).

Both males and females who are 'at risk' of delinquency (i.e. engage in some offending behaviour but have not been caught) however have been found to have similar attitudes toward offending and toward promoting a non-conformist reputation to their peers, although the proportion of males in this category may be higher than in females (Carroll, Houghton, Khan & Tan, 2008; Elmer & Reicher, 1995). If a non conformist reputation is important to a young person they are likely to also express less respect for the police than their counterparts, whether this would then become part of their overall attitudes toward police or would remain a behavioural means of enhancing such a reputation remains to be investigated. The Carroll et. al studies indicate that gender may interact with other individual factors to affect the differences in attitudes toward the police between males and females (Carroll, Hattie, Houghton & Durkin, 1999; Carroll et. al, 2008).

3.4.4 Offending and criminal behaviour. Criminal or delinquent behaviour is often seen as the behavioural side to more negative attitudes toward figures of social control including the police (Piquero et. al, 2005). Delinquency, sometimes conceptualised as a rejection or questioning of social rules and norms, is often seen as a normative part of the adolescent years, which tapers off in adulthood (Armstrong, 2004; Brezina & Piquero, 2007; Steinberg, 2009). Studies that include delinquent behaviour as a variable tend to find that as the behaviour increases attitudes toward the police become more negative (e.g. Brick, Taylor & Esbensen, 2009). Brick et. al (2009) found that offending behaviour and pro delinquent attitudes were more predictive

of negative attitudes toward the police than the nature of contacts with police, however, the authors failed to measure more common interactions such as dispersion which may have more effect on perceptions of police fairness.

Despite the body of evidence that shows support for the link between delinquent behaviour and negative attitudes toward the police it hasn't been determined if this behaviour occurs before or after the formation of attitudes. It is possible that those who engage in more delinquent acts leave themselves open to a greater number of adversarial contacts with police which may lead to more negative attitudes. In contrast, it is also plausible that negative attitudes toward the police are part of a wider set of views about social conformity and authority and that this leads to less regard for the law and more offending behaviour (Rubini & Palmonari, 2006).

3.5 Context and Interpersonal Factors and Attitudes Toward the Police

In addition to individual or demographic factors that are argued to influence young people's attitudes toward the police, features of the environmental context are also likely to have some impact on how interactions with the police are interpreted by individuals. Particular contextual and interpersonal factors that may influence or change attitudes toward the police include, neighbourhood context and socio-economic status, peer influence and, the behaviour and demeanour of police officers during encounters with the public.

3.5.1 Neighbourhood and socio-economic status. Those living in more disadvantaged and higher crime neighbourhoods may experience greater frequency of citizen-police contacts than other neighbourhoods and these are likely to be of a negative, stop and search nature (Avdija, 2010; Collins, 2007). Among younger people and adults those in lower socio economic classes are inclined to report less favourable attitudes toward the police or Gardaí (Browne, 2008; McAra & McVie, 2005; Sampson & Bartusch, 1998). Explanations for these

findings include a higher likelihood of young people from disadvantaged backgrounds having more negative contacts with police (Collins, 2007; McAra & McVie, 2005), and the tendency for disadvantaged neighbourhoods to be more crime prone leading residents to believe that the police are not pursuing crime effectively or that they don't care enough about that neighbourhood to reduce the crime levels there (Bridenball & Jesilow, 2008; Liu & Crank, 2010; Reisig & Parks, 2000; Sampson & Bartusch, 1998). There is some evidence to suggest that in the US at least the police tend to be more aggressive in their behaviour towards those living in more disadvantaged areas (Stoutland, 2001).

Perceptions of neighbourhood crime will likely also influence resident's views on the effectiveness of the police so that areas that have higher rates of crime are likely to experience more intrusive and more reactionary policing and yet see little improvement due to this extra policing. However, while adults tend to report less trust in the police when they live in high crime areas, younger adolescents (up to age 14 years) at least express greater levels of trust in the police (Diehl Lacks & Gordon, 2005) although why these differences exist is not known.

Neighbourhood context may also have some impact on differences in expected future reporting of crime to the police where those living in high poverty neighbourhoods report lower intentions of future crime reporting, however, when levels of self reported delinquency and pre-existing attitudes toward the police are included in analyses this effect disappears (Slocum, Taylor, Brick & Esbensen, 2010).

Neighbourhood context does appear to influence attitudes toward the police in that those from different neighbourhoods tend to show differences in their attitudes (Brown & Benedict, 2002). However, as Brown and Benedict state there is no agreement as to why this should be so, and it is most likely to occur through a combination of

the factors that go into making neighbourhoods different (e.g. racial structure and SES) that contribute to the differences reported. Much of this research is also confounded by racial differences, being based primarily in the US and often comparing both ethnic differences as well as presumed neighbourhood differences in measuring attitudes toward the police.

3.5.2 Peer influence. Peer and friend groups are thought to be highly important during the adolescent years (Steinberg, 1993) and it is possible that attitudes toward the police are influenced by those of an adolescent's peer group. Most offending in adolescence also happens within social group settings with peers (Elmer & Reichler, 1995; Steinberg, 2009). Young people also appear to choose peer groups that match their own levels of moral obligation in terms of delinquency and offending (Brezina & Piquero, 2007). Research in this area has shown that in particular negative vicarious experiences can have a similar effect on attitudes toward the police as personal experience, lending support to theories of peer influence (Flexon, Liurgio & Greenleaf, 2009; Hurst & Frank, 2000; Leiber, Nalla & Farnworth, 1998).

However, in a study with adult residents of a US city, Rosenbaum et. al (2005) found that positive vicarious experience appeared to change attitudes more than negative vicarious experience over a one year period. This is explained by considering prior attitudes toward police where the authors argue that positive information about the police may be more novel to some groups and is then likely to be remembered and to have more impact on existing, negative, attitudes than information that confirms prior attitudes. Also, when vicarious experience was added to personal experience the explained variance in attitudes toward the police increased from 38% to 44%, indicating similar effects for both types of experience (Rosenbaum, Schuck, Costello, Hawkins & Ring, 2005).

3.5.3 Family influence. The literature surrounding the effects of family on young people's attitudes toward the police is scarce

concentrating mostly on family influences on criminality or anti-social behaviour. This research tends to focus on either the impact of family dysfunction or parental supervision on young people's risk of criminality (e.g. Estevez & Elmer, 2011; Vishu-Petra, Borlean, Chendran & Bus, 2008) or on how attitudes toward parents correlate with those toward other authorities (e.g. Morrell, Scott, McNeish & Webster, 2011). Much of this research finds strong correlations between negative family experiences and later anti-social behaviour, criminality or imprisonment in offspring (Barker, Trentacosta & Salekin, 2011; Vishu-Petra et. al, 2008). There is also evidence to suggest that good parental monitoring can reduce the likelihood of young people engaging in offending behaviour (Morrell, et. al, 2011) and that strong attachment to parents can facilitate the acceptance of pro social norms on young people (Estevez & Elmer, 2010; Malti & Buchmann, 2010). However the distinction between this behaviour and attitudes toward the police or justice system is not usually measured within this literature.

The effects of vicarious experiences on young people's attitudes toward police are often measured but do not distinguish between the experiences of friends or family so it is not known if they have differential effects on attitudes. Many studies imply a socialisation perspective on young people's attitudes and assume that young people assimilate the attitudes of parents or other family members without directly measuring for these effects. There is also a tendency within this research to assume parental attitudes toward police are positive. For example, Flexon et. al, (Flexon, Lurigio & Greenleaf, 2009) asked young people the extent to which they identified with each of their parents alongside measures of trust in the police. However, as the authors themselves note, there was no attempt to measure the attitudes of parents in this study and levels of identity with parents was assumed to represent an acceptance of pro social norms and beliefs.

One study that directly investigated the influence of family attitudes on young people's attitudes toward police was conducted by

Sargeant and Bond (2013). This study found that there was a strong correlation between the attitudes of young people and what they perceived to be their parent's attitudes. This relationship in turn was mediated by quality of parent-child attachment where stronger attachment to parents showed greater similarity in attitudes. An interesting feature of this study was that Sargeant and Bond did not directly measure the attitudes of parents but measured young people's perceptions of their parent's attitudes and suggest this may be more important as an influencing factor during adolescence. Results in this study suggest that the perceived attitudes of parents toward the police had stronger effects on participant's attitudes than either peer delinquency or contact with police. However, participants in this study were young adolescents (mean age = 13.4 years) and further research would be required to establish if this effect is maintained into later adolescence when young people are striving for greater independence from parents.

In sum, family influences on young people's attitudes toward police is an area in need of further research. As young people are inclined to spend more time with peers and less with parents as they move through adolescence the research in this area also tends to focus more on the impact of peers than family on attitudes to police and other authorities. While there is evidence to suggest that dysfunctional or harmful family relationships and experiences are linked to anti-social or criminal behaviour this link is likely to be affected by other factors such as experience and neighbourhood contexts.

3.5.4 Police behaviour during encounters. Some factors of police behaviour (e.g. police disrespect and forceful behaviour) during encounters with the public can result in greater levels of reported disrespect from citizens. However, this may be more pronounced for younger males than for other groups, where younger people in particular are less influenced by procedurally just practices by police compared to adults (Dai, Frank & Sun, 2011). Those who feel the police

have listened to them and have treated them with respect (elements of procedural justice), report higher levels of satisfaction with specific experiences although this has no effect on global, or general, attitudes toward the police (Reisig & Strohine-Chandek, 2001). It has been argued that individuals can hold both specific attitudes toward particular police officers, or to particular aspects of police control, and global attitudes about the police more generally and that these may not always be in agreement with each other (Brandl, Frank, Worden & Bynum, 1994). Global attitudes may be based on more abstract ideas about police duties and behaviour while specific attitudes are likely to be influenced more by personal experiences and interactions with police (Carr, Napolitano & Keating, 2007; Hurst & Frank, 2000).

When considered against demographic factors it has been found that certain demographic groups (younger individuals, males and minorities) may both receive more aggressive policing interactions and be more likely to interpret interactions in a negative way (e.g. McAra & McVie, 2005; Reisig & Strohine-Chandek, 2001; Skogan, 2005; Solis et al, 2001). McAra and McVie (2005) argue that the police develop 'working rules' whereby they target particular groups of young people, mainly males, mid-adolescent, with friends who have criminal records, for repeated stops and questioning. Those who are seen by police as being more anti-authority are also likely to receive both more frequent police interaction and more aggressive policing styles in an attempt to impose discipline and punishment on them (Collins, 2007; Choongh, 1997).

Perceptions of police misconduct, which includes officers being rude, aggressive and disrespectful, have been found to have strong predictive effects on influencing attitudes in young adults (Avdija, 2010; Crawford, 2009), this is also the case when young people hear about police misconduct from others (Hurst & Frank, 2000). As moral as well as legal authorities, being exposed to misconduct among the police may result in damage to an individual's sense of moral obligation to obey

police directives and to perceptions of the police's moral authority (Hough, Jackson, Bradford, Myhill & Quinton, 2010). It is argued that if citizens feel they cannot trust the police they are unlikely to report crimes to them, to engage in community programmes with police and to call the police for assistance (Flexon, Lurigio & Greenleaf, 2009).

Signs of disrespect from young people are also likely to influence the outcome of police-youth interactions, where those thought to show disrespect are more likely to be arrested or cautioned than those who show greater deference (Choongh, 1997; Crawford, 2009; Dai et. al, 2011). In addition, those who anticipate unfair treatment from police also report less likelihood of future cooperation with police directives and less compliance with police or court sanctions, indicating a pivotal role of experience with police in future behaviour (Woolard et. al, 2008). However, it is possible that different groups will have different types of expectations of police behaviour or action, for example those in higher crime neighbourhoods may have lowered expectations of police effectiveness and higher expectations of aggressive policing styles, and may subsequently report more positive attitudes toward police based on the same behaviour when compared to those living in low crime neighbourhoods (e.g. Kautt, 2011).

3.6 Psychosocial Factors and Attitudes Toward the Police

Psychosocial factors that may influence young people's attitudes toward the police include experiences with police, and more importantly the interpretation and understanding of those experiences. However, only a relatively small proportion of young people have personal experience with police yet they still form opinions about them. These attitudes are also influenced then through adolescent development of both moral reasoning and cognitive processes such as the development of legal cynicism.

3.6.1 Experiences with police. Contacts with the police have been consistently shown to impact on citizen's attitudes toward the police (Flexon, Lurigio & Greenleaf, 2009; Hinds, 2007; Skogan, 2005;

Tyler, 2006b; Woolard et. al, 2008). For young people still adapting their behaviour and beliefs to the social norms of their society, these experiences are likely to be important as "...each encounter that people have with the authorities is an instance of civic education, which teaches people about the law" (Tyler, 2011, p. 318).

In measuring different types of experiences with the police researchers have identified differing effects for what are termed voluntary contact (where citizens contact the police) and involuntary contact (where the police stop citizens for questioning or sanction) (Skogan, 2005). Experiences can also be classified as personal and vicarious, with personal experiences tending to have greater influence on young people's attitudes toward the police (Hurst & Frank, 2000). Nonetheless, studies tend to find that any of these types of contacts with police will have some impact on one or more dimensions of attitudes toward the police. Those who have had no contact with police are more likely to report more positive views of the police compared to those who have had either positive or negative interactions with them in the previous 12 months (Bradford et. al, 2009; Hinds, 2007). However, there appears to be a stronger impact on overall attitudes toward the police from negative as opposed to positively reported contacts (Bradford et. al, 2009; Skogan, 2005).

Citizen initiated, or voluntary, contacts that are later interpreted as negative (i.e. due to a lack of perceived effort or information from police) may have a greater impact on attitudes than other types of contacts (Rosenbaum et. al, 2005). This suggests that an individual's expectations of treatment may have a greater impact on attitudes than the overall nature of the interaction. If an individual has committed an offence and is arrested by the police they are likely to expect a certain amount of antagonism from the police and may view this experience in a more neutral way if it matches their expectations. On the other hand, if an individual contacts the police for help they would have different expectations and would expect a different level of treatment from

police, if this experience fails to meet those expectations it is likely to have more negative impact on that individual's attitudes toward the police due to the discrepancy between experience and expectations (Miller & Davis, 2008; Wilkinson, Beaty & Lurry, 2009).

Adults with low expectations of police performance or politeness have been shown to report greater satisfaction with interactions with the police compared to those who hold higher expectations, indicating that the same experience can be interpreted differently by individuals (Reisig & Stroschine-Chandik, 2001). In contrast, young people who report anticipatory injustice (where they anticipate unfair treatment from police) have been shown to report more negative attitudes and lower levels of trust in the police, and this is higher in young people with more experience of the criminal justice system (Woolard, Harvell & Graham, 2008). This may indicate the need to consider the use of questionnaires that are designed specifically for young people as they may not interpret the same experiences with police in the same ways that adults do. For those who have had no prior experience with the police however, it is unclear how these expectations are formed and may be influenced more by underlying demographic factors (such as SES, age or neighbourhood; Wells, 2007) rather than actual experiences with police.

It is also possible that individuals will focus on different aspects of a police contact depending on the reason for that contact. For example, Wells (2007) found that while procedural justice type behaviours from police were most predictive of positive endorsements of the police after an encounter, for victims of crime there was also evidence to suggest that they focus as much on the outcomes of that contact as on the procedures used. However, some studies that include young people in their sample have found that any type of contact with police is related to less favourable attitudes compared to those who had none (Brick et. al, 2009). This finding may lend support to theories that suggest younger people are more inclined to view police contact as

unjust and intrusive than adults (e.g. Hinds, 2007) and may further indicate a need to investigate different factors when measuring the attitudes of young people than those used in adult populations.

Likewise in a qualitative study with young people Carr et. al (2007) found that negative experiences are more useful in explaining negative attitudes toward the police than either delinquency or peer associations (Carr, Napolitano & Keating, 2007). These authors argue that such negativity is usually transitory and is liable to become more positive as young people experience less antagonism from police officers as they get older. Young people in this study were found to show support for social control from the police in the abstract but that negative attitudes form through experiences that fail to match up to expectations of fair treatment and procedural justice which in some instances may be overly idealised.

Existing attitudes toward the police may also influence either the type of contact experienced by an individual or how they interpret that contact (Brandl, et. al, 1994; Hinds, 2009b; Rosenbaum et. al, 2005). Prior negative attitudes may lead to more antagonistic interactions with police by increasing disrespect in individuals, or by reducing the likelihood of compliance with directives. Existing negative attitudes can also influence the way in which an interaction with police is interpreted by the individual so that those who hold negative global attitudes toward the police will be more inclined to view a specific experience in more negative terms compared to an individual with prior positive attitudes (Brandl, et. al, 1994).

Leiber et. al (1998) argued that attitudes toward the police need to be considered in a wider socio-cultural context and that focusing on single incidents of police-youth contact fails to take account of these contexts in explaining young people's attitudes toward the police. This study also found that contact with police alone was a poor predictor of attitudes toward the police, however it only included male known delinquents in its sample and there is no evidence to suggest these

findings would apply beyond this particular group (Leiber, Nalla & Farnworth, 1998).

3.6.2 Moral reasoning and moral development. As young people move into adulthood and come to see social obligations as binding, their understanding of social rules and moral reasoning about them changes, and this appears to occur through the individual's interpretation of their experiences rather than through influence from others (Bandura, 1989; Malti & Buchmann, 2010). Moral reasoning is considered to be one aspect of legal socialisation that develops, along with other cognitive processes, over the course of adolescence (Smetana, 1983; 2006). Within Kohlberg's theory of moral development this occurs through experience with and interpretation of experiences in the individual's social world (Turiel, 2003; 2008). Within this framework morality is not seen as merely the internalisation of social rules and norms, but also the resistance to rules that are deemed to be unjust and the subversion that can occur when individual's see inequality in their social worlds. In this sense moral reasoning develops concurrently with other cognitive development processes but is also a distinct domain of social reasoning that can be in conflict with social conventions and norms.

Although conceptually understood as part of the process of development, there is some indication that moral reasoning and legal cynicism remain relatively stable during adolescence, as shown in one study conducted over an 18 month period measuring these aspects of legal socialisation (Piquero et. al, 2005). While group differences between those who have been incarcerated and those who report little to no offending are evident, with the non-offending group showing lower cynicism and higher levels of obligation to obey the law, these appear to be entrenched by about age 14 or 15. This study also found high levels of perceived legitimacy in those who were less cynical about the law, suggesting that personal experiences with the legal system influence more general views about the law and the legal system

(Piquero et. al, 2005).

A further study that investigated moral reasoning in incarcerated compared to non-incarcerated youth found that those who were incarcerated showed less mature levels of moral reasoning along with cognitive distortions relating to harmful behaviour (Larden, Melin, Holst & Langstrom, 2006). While not specifically measuring attitudes this study suggests there may be differences across cognitive processes in those who offend and those who don't. The inclusion of measures of moral reasoning in studies with young people tends to focus on its relation to offending or delinquent behaviour rather than attitudes toward legal authorities. When it is included in attitude studies it is found to have little relation to overall attitudes toward police (Fagan & Tyler, 2005), however, procedural justice theory would suggest that a measure of moral obligation to obey the law, as opposed to general moral reasoning, should be included in such studies as this should be related to perceptions of both procedural justice and legitimacy of the police (Gau, 2011; Tyler, 2006a; 2009).

3.6.3 Cognitive development and legal cynicism. Legal cynicism can arise through experiences with police where there is a lack of fair treatment which affects how individuals view the morality and legitimacy of the police (Hough, Jackson, Bradford, Myhill & Quinton, 2010). Legal cynicism is often included in studies focused on assessing legal socialisation in young people and has been found to be at its peak in mid adolescence (e.g. Piquero et. al, 2005; Fagan & Tyler, 2005). Legal cynicism refers to a lack of trust or confidence in the police or the legal system in its ability to either prevent or punish crime. In some qualitative studies it has been found that legal cynicism can be high among young people who also desire a better police force indicating that young people can hold both negative and positive views of the police simultaneously depending on the types of questions they are asked about the police (Carr, Napolitano & Keating, 2007). These authors also argue that disaffection with the law is transitory or

temporary and is based on negative experiences with police and the law, which are thought to improve when individuals are legally deemed to be adults.

The quality of experiences, rather than the frequency of contacts, with police do appear to have an impact on at least some of the potential dimensions of attitudes toward police including legitimacy, legal cynicism and obligation to obey the law (Bridenball & Jesilow, 2008; Piquero et. al, 2005). Those who have had experiences that they see as being unfair, unjust or resulting from some form of discrimination from police are likely to show higher levels of legal cynicism (Piquero et. al, 2005; Woolard et. al, 2008). This is likely related to an overall cynicism and questioning of authority figures during adolescence and may reflect a young person's changing cognitive processes on issues related to justice, morality and social norms (Fagan & Tyler, 2005; Steinberg, 2009; Turiel, 2008).

If young people are beginning to understand moral and social norms as qualitatively different domains of their social worlds, the increase in legal cynicism during mid-adolescence can be seen as a reflection of this where young people are making distinctions between what is legal and what they perceive as right (Lehalle, 2006; Smetana, 2006; Turiel, 1983; 2008). This process of questioning and interpreting the social world may also help to explain why experiences with the police appear to be so important to the development of young people's attitudes toward the police. From having largely idealised views of the police as younger children (Fagan & Tyler, 2005), to having those views challenged by personal or vicarious experiences (Leiber et. al, 1998), adolescents may become temporarily more cynical about the purpose and effectiveness of the police before they begin to accept the importance of social norms in maintaining order in society (Carr et. al, 2007). In this way legal cynicism may be transitory but could still have an impact on a young person's overall attitudes toward police during the adolescent years.

3.7 The Irish Context of Garda-Youth Relations

As previously mentioned, the research outlined above was conducted with individuals in countries outside of Ireland. In order to better understand the context of the current study it is useful to situate it within the Irish juvenile justice system in which both the Gardaí and young people must negotiate their interactions. The extent of control and surveillance of young people by the Gardaí in their informal roles as moral guardians, welfare agents and monitors of behaviour is largely unrecorded in Ireland. Like many other areas of criminal justice in Ireland, a comprehensive study of juvenile justice is extremely difficult to achieve. The primary reason for this lies in a widespread deficit in data and official statistics, as well as empirical research, a factor acknowledged by many academics in the field of criminology in Ireland (e.g. McCullagh, 1996; O'Donnell, 2005; O'Donnell, Baumer, & Hughes, 2008; O'Mahony, 1993). As stated by Ian O'Donnell

...what information does exist cannot be integrated across the various criminal justice agencies; it is impossible to examine the flow of cases through the system. To cap it all, there is no research unit in the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform and there is little funding available for research.

Unsurprisingly, given this context, research findings are thin on the ground; there is limited understanding of methodological issues; and developed theorising is scarce. In combination, these difficulties mean that any conclusions are weighed down with more than the usual number of caveats. (O'Donnell, 2005, p. 100)

The following section therefore will present an overview of the background and context of the juvenile justice system in Ireland and present what information is known about the potential relationships between young people and the Gardaí in Ireland and the findings from the limited number of research studies that have been conducted in this area to date.

3.7.1 Background and context of the Irish juvenile justice system. Ireland declared itself a republic with a new constitution in 1949, after gaining independence from Great Britain in 1922. The legacy of Ireland's colonial history has permeated the criminal justice system in a number of ways, particularly in the continued use of, now mostly outdated, legislation and court and prison structures and buildings. For example, the 1908 Children Act has only recently been overhauled and a new act (Children Act, 2001) has been partly introduced to deal with modern understandings of children's rights and needs (it should be noted, that aspects of this act are still to be implemented, particularly sections relating to a more holistic approach to juvenile justice).

While Ireland managed to have a sustainably low rate of prison numbers and crime for most of the 19th and 20th century, throughout this period there were a number of other 'repositories for the difficult, the deviant and the disengaged' (O'Sullivan & O'Donnell, 2007, p. 33). For juvenile 'delinquents' these would usually be an industrial school or reformatory, where the stated purpose was to care for and educate its child inhabitants. These schools were initially set up to cater for what was seen as the primarily social problem of poverty, where authorities deemed parents unfit to care for their own children due to lack of money. Due to the variety of institutions that people could be incarcerated in the past, for example homes for the mentally feeble, for single mothers and their children and for destitute children, the waning use of these as means to control the 'deviant' in society has resulted in a marked decline in overall numbers in confinement, from over 31,000 in 1951 to just under 5,000 in 2002 (O'Sullivan & O'Donnell, 2007). However, while the proportion of citizens in the country in these forms of confinement has decreased over the past 70 years, there has also been an increased reliance on imprisonment for more minor offences (over 90% of committals in 2009 were for non-violent offences; Irish Prison Reform Trust, (IPRT) 2013) and the number of people in prison

has risen from 65 per 100,000 in 1997 to 96 per 100,000 in 2012 (IPRT, 2013).

This change in the process of incarceration of young people particularly can be seen in parallel to the declining influence of the Catholic Church in defining the social morals of the country, and the increasing statements of responsibility for neglected or unruly children being taken on by the state, initiated by the Child Care Act in 1991 (Buckley & O'Sullivan, 2007). However, it could be argued that Ireland is still using the old approach to social control. Whereas in the past, young people who violated social and religious norms were institutionalised, in the 21st century, diversion projects and community sanctions are also working to intercept those who are deemed to be 'at risk' of deviance and norm breaking, and in the opinion of some authors enlarging the potential pool of young people who will be sanctioned under the juvenile justice system (McCullagh, 2006).

These new approaches to juvenile crime mean that by virtue of living in a particular area, recognised as deprived or of high risk, young people will often come under the watchful eyes of the police and be subject to the well intentioned interventions of risk reduction initiatives. Whether these programmes work to divert young people from criminal behaviour can only be guessed at, as no comprehensive evaluation of the scheme has ever been carried out (Kilkelly, 2011; McCullagh, 2006). As in many other aspects of the criminal justice system in Ireland, it is also impossible to track the future offending behaviour of young people involved in the schemes due to a lack of sufficient data in this area.

3.7.2 Current juvenile justice practice in Ireland. For the majority of people the only contact they will have with the criminal justice system over their lifetime will be with the police. The figures for Irish young people between the ages of 12 and 18 years who come into contact with the criminal justice system can best be gauged from the yearly evaluations produced on the Diversion Programme (to be

explained in more detail below). These figures show that approximately 20,000 young people have at least some official contact with the Gardaí, yet only about one third of these are processed through the criminal justice system while the other two thirds are dealt with via cautions and supervision orders (Garda Research Unit, 2011; Dept. of Justice, 2006).

The issue of social control over young people and their behaviour can be seen to have been transferred from the moral authorities of church and state in the early to mid- twentieth century to the current diversion approach to offending, managed by the Garda Síochána (the term for the Irish police force, literally translated as 'guardians of the peace'). There can be no argument that the shift in focus from institutionalising 'problem' children to attempting to divert them from crime through community measures is a good thing, especially given the revelations of the extent of abuse within these institutions in the past number of decades. In alliance with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC, 1989) the stated aim of the state is to use prison only as a measure of last resort and when all other methods of intervention have failed.

While no studies have examined the impact of Garda discretion on their likelihood to arrest or caution young people to date in Ireland, a study with Australian police officers who have a similar approach to youth justice as Ireland, showed that there was large variability in officer's stated intentions of action in the same circumstances of youth offending (Parker & Sarre, 2008). This study concluded that there is a lack of consistency in officer's approach to minor offending, a factor which could impact on young people's expectations of contacts with police leading to uncertainty and mistrust, and this inconsistency appears to be due to wide discretionary powers afforded to police in dealing with youth offending.

In his social discipline model, Choongh (1997) outlines how the police in the UK may seek out those whom they see as anti-authority

and attempt to impose discipline on them through punishment and extraction of submissiveness. While there is no evidence to suggest that Irish Gardaí practice the same means of singling out particular groups in this way, those most likely to be targets would be younger people who are more publically visible more of the time. This would likely lead to a lack of trust from young people and impact on attitudes toward Gardaí in a negative way. A longitudinal study on Scottish police and young people also found similar 'working rules' to be in place with police there, a factor that the authors argue may explain the large discrepancy in the numbers of young people targeted by police and the relatively small number of them eventually charged with crimes (McAra & McVie, 2005).

3.7.3 Diversion programmes. Diversion programmes were officially ratified under the Children Act of 2001, and were aimed at reducing the number of young people who would be processed through the criminal justice system by diverting them from further crime through the use of cautions and community supervision. When a young person (between the ages of 10 and 18 years old) is suspected of committing a minor crime they are eligible for admission onto the diversion programme, where they will be issued with a caution and may be subject to supervision by a specially trained Juvenile Liaison Officer. Those that are deemed unsuitable for the programme (due to the seriousness of the crime or the past record of the young person) can be sent on for prosecution through the courts. The numbers from this group that are eventually convicted are very low, with the majority of cases being dismissed or 'thrown out' at this stage, suggesting some disparity between what the courts and the Gardaí deem to be serious offences (Garda Research Unit, 2011; Smyth, 2011).

While there are a number of provisions under the Children Act (2001) that refer to the treatment of young people within the diversion programme and while they are in Garda custody, there are no comparable guidelines on how young people are to be treated when

encountered in other, less official situations. Although not a direct criticism of the Garda Síochána, Kilkelly has raised concerns about the level of control and discretion afforded to Gardaí in administering the Diversion Programme (Kilkelly, 2011). Ultimately the decision to admit a young person to the programme and for how long, and whether a conference is to be held or not is at the discretion of the Director of the programme. There are no formal guidelines as to how these decisions should be made and no stated official criteria that need to be met (apart from the young person admitting their guilt in order to be considered for the programme) (Smyth, 2011; Walsh, 2008).

Criticism has been levelled at the Juvenile Diversion Programme and other interventions by some authors. In the first instance there is concern about the violation of children's rights where they are required to admit their guilt before being admitted to the programme which under other circumstances would need to be proven in court (Smyth, 2011; Walsh, 2008). Secondly, children as young as 10 years old are eligible for the programme despite the age of criminal responsibility for less serious crimes being set at 12 years old, this can also include sanctions for anti-social behaviour which is not classed as a criminal offence. Thirdly, as non admittance to the programme is usually due to the seriousness of the offence, it is argued that those young people most in need of intervention are generally sent to court and processed through the criminal justice system (McCullagh, 2006). Those who are entered into the diversion programme are most likely the same young people who engage in low level offending during the adolescent years which tends to fall off as they mature and get older. Support for this argument may be added by noting that the numbers of young people being sent to prison has changed very little in the years since the formal introduction of the diversion programme (e.g. Buckley & O'Sullivan, 2007; Kilkelly, 2011; McCullagh, 2006).

3.8 Irish Research on Attitudes Toward the Gardaí

As outlined above, research within the criminal and juvenile justice system in Ireland has been sparse and remains under investigated. This is partly due to the traditionally low crime rates in the country and partly due to the problems that researchers encounter when attempting to collate official data. Outlined below are the findings from the small body of research that exists in this area to date, firstly focusing on what is known about adult's attitudes toward the Gardaí and secondly looking at research on young people's attitudes toward the Gardaí.

3.8.1 Research with adults. Irish people have traditionally (albeit sometimes anecdotally) been assumed to have largely positive attitudes toward the Gardaí largely due to the small community focused nature of Garda jurisdictions (O'Donnell, 2005). Each year until 2008 (when it was suspended due to budget constraints) an annual survey of approximately 10,000 adults was commissioned by the Gardaí to gauge public attitudes toward them. In the survey from the last year for which data is available, people generally showed high levels of satisfaction with the Gardaí (overall results, 81%), which is comparable to other years (Browne, 2008). When asked about improvements to the service, 72% replied that improvements were needed, although suggestions mainly concentrated on increasing manpower and foot patrols. Most people responded that the Gardaí were approachable or very approachable (79%). However, when responses are broken down by age or housing, the lowest ratings of approachability were reported by those in the younger age category (18-24) and those living in Local Authority Housing. Reasons given for why they were seen as approachable were almost directly opposite to why they were seen as unapproachable, e.g., friendly/helpful vs. unfriendly/unhelpful, have time for you vs. just not interested, can communicate with them vs. feel they are superior. Just 7.7% reported unacceptable behaviour experienced from a Garda, these being mostly due to a Garda being impolite or rude to the individual.

Forty percent of respondents had some contact with Gardaí in the previous year, primarily to have passport forms signed. Garda initiated contact seems to have consisted of either road traffic stops or requests for documentation from respondents. Only 1% of respondents in this survey reported Garda contact due to arrest, being detained for questioning or being searched. Due to the low number of survey participants who had this type of contact with Gardaí it is not possible to assess how they were interpreted or whether contact with Gardaí leads to any distinguishable differences in levels of satisfaction among the general population.

3.8.2 Research with young people. As noted above the Public Attitudes Survey (PAS) involved only those over the age of 18 years and no comparable data is regularly collected to assess levels of satisfaction with Gardaí in younger people. One study used this survey (modified slightly to make it more age appropriate) to examine the attitudes of young people living in one jurisdiction in Dublin and compared findings with the findings for adults from the 2008 PAS (Feeney, 2009).

This dissertation surveyed only 103 young people aged between 15 and 19 years, compared to 10,000 adults in the Public Attitudes Survey, so comparisons are not equal. However, some striking differences between young people and adults did emerge.

For example, young people reported much higher levels of Garda initiated contact than did adults and these contacts were perceived to be more negative than those reported by adults. In addition, most contacts described by the young people in this study involved violence or aggression on the part of Gardaí. Overall levels of satisfaction with Gardaí were 18% lower for young people than that reported by the adults surveyed and Gardaí were perceived to be more unapproachable by young people due to Garda manner and attitude.

Only 37% of young people surveyed here reported crimes to the Gardaí, compared to 84% of adults, which may be related to the reported approachability of Gardaí and also levels of satisfaction with

them. It should be noted, however, that most crimes reported by adults involved burglary, which would require a Garda report to claim compensation from insurers. This factor of legitimacy, reporting crime, is an often neglected aspect when researching the effects of perceptions of legitimacy on attitudes toward the police, with most studies concentrating only on levels of compliance with the law.

The findings from this study are in accordance with international findings on young people's attitudes toward the police. Generally when comparisons are made between young people and adults, findings show that younger people have more negative perceptions of police and also have more negative interactions with them (see Brown & Benedict, 2002, for a review). Research also suggests that the police are viewed as less legitimate by younger people when compared to the ratings of adults (e.g. Hinds, 2007).

Issues surrounding the perceived negative relationships between young people and Gardaí also arose during focus groups exploring stereotyping of young people in Ireland (Devlin, 2006). Lack of respect shown to young people by Gardaí was reported to emerge as a dominant theme in many of the focus groups. In contrast to this, the same participants also reported that some individual Community Gardaí were seen to be both approachable and respectful. What is interesting about this finding, that didn't appear to emerge from the other studies, was that young people were willing to allow that not all Gardaí are the same, and that they would have respect for particular members if they feel it is reciprocated. Problems of feeling harassed and stopped and searched for no reason were also an issue in these groups, and they appear to be more of a problem for those living in socially disadvantaged areas.

A further study looked at the attitudes of young people toward both regular Gardaí and Gardaí involved in special projects, or intervention programmes that are locally based crime prevention initiatives usually set up in disadvantaged areas and targeted at those

who are 'at risk' of criminality. This evaluation found that while young people were generally positive about the Garda officers involved in the project and found them to be approachable and fair, this had no effect on their overall attitudes toward the Gardaí in general. Participants reported largely negative attitudes toward the Gardaí outside of the projects mainly due to their own past experiences with them and experiences of their friends and family. In this study it was noted by the authors that young people made clear distinctions between the Garda officers they knew through the projects and Garda officers who were not involved in projects and that they were more likely to meet outside of the centre (Bowden & Higgins, 2000).

There is some evidence to suggest that in the past at least, young people from more disadvantaged areas are subject to harsher and more aggressive (often physical) policing than those from other backgrounds (Mulcahy & O'Mahony, 2005). In addition, the authors note that despite the widespread belief that Irish citizens hold largely positive attitudes toward the Gardaí, those living in deprived and disadvantaged neighbourhoods express concern about both over-policing and under protection. Similar concerns were voiced by young people from the Traveller community who believed that the Gardaí perceived them as innately violent and failed to intervene when they required help from the Gardaí. However, as in many other qualitative studies, while participants expressed largely negative views of how they are being policed at the time of the research study, they also expressed a desire for more and better policing in their neighbourhoods and for greater consultation between residents and the Gardaí.

A final report that investigated the extent of public order offences in two neighbourhoods in the Dublin area found notable differences in the way that Gardaí treated younger and older citizens who had offended which was often dependent on the socio-economic make-up of the neighbourhood in which they were approached (National Crime Council, 2003). This study found that much of the

youth crime observed involved underage drinking and loitering, and in the case of the less affluent neighbourhood frequently involved the use of strong language from Gardaí directed at young people. This in turn could lead to an escalation of antagonism between Gardaí and young people during the interaction, a notable feature of similar observational studies in other countries (e.g. Dai, Frank & Sun, 2011). Of those charged with public order offences, both adults and young people, it was found that the majority of these were later dismissed, or struck out, when they reached court. The report concludes with recommendations for ongoing training for Garda officers in dealing adequately with young people in the course of their duties suggesting a lack of effective means of interacting with young people across a range of Garda officers (National Crime Council, 2003).

What is evident from these studies is a lack of faith in the Gardaí and their abilities or inclination to carry out their expected duties by young people and especially by those living in more disadvantaged neighbourhoods. A second topic that emerges from comparing the findings from these studies is that young people generally report that the Gardaí don't show them much, if any, respect. In most cases, young people recommend that Gardaí should try to rectify this in order to promote better relations between themselves and young people. What this indicates is that young people desire positive relationships with Gardaí and appear to want to respect them and see them as legitimate, but, they perceive that Gardaí are at fault for the negative relationships that are reported to currently exist.

What all of the above studies show, is that young people are keenly aware of the types of relationships that they have with Gardaí. They also show that most young people would prefer to have better relationships with them, and that individual Gardaí can go some way toward improving community relations at least. It also appears that young people have more frequent interactions with Gardaí than adults, and that in general, these are seen by young people to be primarily

negative. These findings are largely in line with similar types of research studies conducted with populations in other countries.

3.9 Summary

There are two general approaches to the understanding of attitudes toward the police: the performance approach, which focuses on levels of satisfaction with police effectiveness, and the procedural justice approach, which focuses on how individuals believe they are treated by police during encounters with them. While younger people tend to show more negative attitudes toward the police when compared with adults, there is inconsistent and often conflicting evidence in support of the influence of other variables. These include variables such as race, gender, neighbourhood context, offending behaviour, the influence of peers, the impact of experiences with police and aspects of cognitive development. The mixed findings for the influence of these factors may be due to inconsistencies in research designs used and in measurements chosen or in the variables proposed to interact with each other. Qualitative studies tend to find that young people hold different attitudes toward the police in general and toward individual police officers and these may often be in conflict with each other.

In Ireland there is a shortage of research in all areas across the criminal justice system and little is known of young people's attitudes toward the Gardaí. Tentative conclusions can be drawn from the small number of studies carried out with Irish youth which show some similarities with international research. Young people in Ireland appear to have more negative attitudes toward Gardaí compared to adults, and they make clear distinctions between Garda officers they know personally and the Gardaí in general. Despite official attempts to move away from a primarily punishment focus to a more well intentioned diversionary approach to youth offending, young people still report a sense that they are disrespected by Gardaí and that they are subject to harsh treatment from them especially those living in more disadvantaged areas.

Chapter 4: The Current Study

4.1 Aims of the Chapter

The aim of this chapter is to outline the rationale for the study, the aims and objectives of the study, and the research design and methodological approaches used in the current study. Some notes on each of the approaches used in the research design will be given, with a fuller explanation of methodology to be given in the chapters to follow. Finally, this chapter will indicate the means for integrating findings from both phases of the overall study and how ethical approval was obtained.

4.2 Rationale for the Study

Support from the public is widely recognised as an aid to the police in maintaining social order and in gathering information about crime and criminals (Rosenbaum, Schuck, Costello, Hawkins & Ring, 2005). Many crimes would not even come to the attention of the police without the willingness of the public to report them. Media appeals are frequently used to encourage members of the public to offer information on crimes that the police need help in solving. Without witnesses willing to give evidence in court on what they may have seen or heard, many criminal acts would go undetected. It is also important for the police and legal authorities to encourage deference, or law abiding behaviour, in the public as this helps to ensure that laws are complied with and should reduce the level of crime that needs to be addressed within communities.

Attitudes toward the police will be influenced by an individual's experiences with police officers and through vicarious experiences of their friends, family and media reports (Miller & Davis, 2008). Research has shown conflicting evidence of a number of other relevant variables that may impact on an individual's attitudes toward the police such as age, gender, race, neighbourhood context, levels of offending behaviour and, the influence of peers (see Brown & Benedict, 2002 for a review). Some of these factors may be more relevant during the adolescent years

than in adulthood as this is a time of attitude formation and cognitive development where a young person begins to understand and take on the responsibility of social rules and norms (Steinberg, 1993; Turiel, 2003). In addition, young people may be exposed to more contact with police than adults due to the increasing amount of time they spend in public places with peer groups, this contact is likely to be unsupervised and may be highly discretionary (Hinds, 2009a; McAra & McVie, 2005). The police are also likely to be the only contact young people have with the criminal justice system, so it would follow that their attitudes toward the police may extend to other areas of the justice system (Hurst, Frank & Browning, 2000).

Despite this knowledge and a growing body of research surrounding the attitudes of young people toward the police, there are still currently a number of issues within the literature that have yet to be resolved. While a single study cannot resolve all of these issues at once, the current study will seek to address a variety of them through the use of mixed methods research design and with reference to recommendations from other authors.

Early research in this area focused almost exclusively on the attitudes of adults toward the police and in general found support to be high (Diehl-Lacks & Gordon, 2005; Liu & Crank, 2010). However, when young people were included in studies that measured their attitudes toward the police it was found that they show more negative attitudes when compared to adults (Diehl-Lacks & Gordon, 2005; Fagan & Tyler, 2005; Flexon, Lurigio & Greenleaf, 2009). Research to date has failed to fully explain the disparity between adult and adolescent attitudes toward the police while also accounting for the finding that attitudes are likely to be maintained into adulthood. One potential reason for this may be the use of survey instruments that were initially designed for use with adults to measure the attitudes of young people, assuming similar processes of attitude development for both groups. This ignores the potential for any unique aspects of the adolescent experience to be

accounted for including developmental and cognitive aspects. The present study will attempt to address this problem through the initial use of a qualitative exploratory study to determine the factors that are likely to be most relevant to young people's attitudes toward the police independent of those of adults.

A second criticism of the current research literature is the largely atheoretical nature of much of the research in this area (Gau, 2011; Liu & Crank, 2010). In order to fully understand the process of attitude formation and influence it is necessary to base research studies on strong theoretical models that are open to being tested across a variety of groups. The current study seeks to develop a theoretical model of young people's attitudes toward the police through the analysis of qualitative, exploratory data and the testing of the model through quantitative analysis.

Thirdly, many studies focus on single influencing variables (primarily race) thus ignoring much of the complexity or multi-dimensionality of attitude formation and the potential for multiple influences on young people's attitudes. There has also been further criticism of the use of measurement scales that have not been sufficiently examined for validity in their use with younger populations (Bradford, Jackson & Stanko, 2009; Gau, 2011). Through the use of structural equation modelling, the present study will assess the validity and reliability of measurements used to assess the influences on young people's attitudes toward the police and will allow for multiple relationships and pathways to be analysed concurrently.

There have been previous calls for more qualitative investigation of young people's attitudes toward the police within the literature (Dirikx, Gelders & Parmentier, 2012; Hurst & Frank, 2000; Stoutland, 2001). Despite this the majority of studies remain largely quantitative in nature and are unable to explore the 'cognitive landscapes' of adolescents in order to better understand the formation of their attitudes (Hurst & Frank, 2000). If a research study is to explore the

meanings that young people give to their own experiences and relationships with the police, it is necessary to first undertake a qualitative study of these factors. The present study will do this through the use of semi-structured interviews with young people which will allow them the opportunity to voice their opinions of the Gardaí and to suggest ways in which their attitudes are influenced and may be improved or changed over time.

Finally, the vast majority of research on attitudes toward the police is based on either US or UK populations and has focused primarily on racial influences and racial differences in attitudes. While there is likely to be some overlap in the factors that influence all young people's attitudes toward the police across countries and cultures, Ireland has a very different racial composition compared to either of these countries and it is possible there are unique indicators of the attitudes of Irish youth that are not considered in previous studies. There are also potential policing differences between Ireland and other countries as the Irish police are an unarmed force relying on the goodwill of the public to support them. Traditionally small, rural jurisdictions also meant that officers stationed there would, quite naturally, become a regular part of that community, aided by the continued reliance on police officers to carry out certain administrative duties in their areas (e.g. collecting population census forms), and their long-standing involvement in local sports clubs (O'Donnell, 2005). Previous authors have noted the need for cultural specificity in this area of research to ensure the use of measurements that are most relevant to each population (e.g. Brown, 2007; Dirikx et. al, 2012; Hinds, 2009a; Grube & Morgan, 1990; Kautt, 2011). In addition, there is a shortage of research with Irish youth across all aspects of their understandings of the criminal justice system and there are currently no studies that have investigated the attitudes of Irish young people toward the Gardaí. The current study will focus on the views of a population of Irish youth in order to determine the factors that are most likely to influence their

attitudes toward the Gardaí and to explore the possible differences in patterns of influence between this population and those previously included in the research literature.

Due to the possibility for negative attitudes toward the police to impact on compliant and cooperative behaviour in the general public, it is important for police administrators to understand the extent of these attitudes among all citizens that they serve. Ways in which these attitudes can be improved in order to facilitate greater law abiding behaviour and support from the public should also be sought through an understanding of the factors that influence citizen's attitudes.

4.3 Aims and Objectives of Overall Study

The primary aim of this study was to address a number of empirical limitations within the literature on young people's attitudes toward the police through the development and testing of a theoretical model by examining the relationships between individual, environmental, and psycho-social factors. A comprehensive understanding of young people's attitudes toward the police was sought through the use of both qualitative and quantitative methods and the integration of results from both studies. In addition there were a number of specific objectives addressed in each phase of the current study which are outlined in **Chapter 5** and **Chapter 7** each addressing either the qualitative or quantitative objectives respectively.

4.4 Research Design

A mixed methods exploratory design was used for this research study and consisted of two distinct phases of data collection: qualitative followed by quantitative (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). Using a mixed methods approach has a number of advantages over using a single method to investigate a complex phenomenon such as attitudes toward the Gardaí. In its broadest sense integrating both qualitative and quantitative studies allows for a broader and more complete understanding of the phenomenon and can facilitate answering of both types of research questions (Bryman, 2006). However, as each

approach is thought to only give a partial understanding of a phenomenon due to methodological limitations of each individual approach (Greene, 2008), the aim of mixed methods studies is often to give complementary findings on two aspects of the same phenomenon (Sale, Lohfeld & Brazil, 2002). In the current study it was intended that findings from both study phases would offer such complementarity and would give a broader understanding of young people's attitudes toward the Gardaí and the psychological factors that may influence them.

The first phase of the study involved collecting qualitative data through semi-structured interviews with 20 young people (aged 12 to 18 years). No exclusion criteria were used in participant selection as a broad exploration of attitudes from a diverse group of young people was sought. Data from these interviews were analysed through a grounded theory approach to facilitate the development of a theoretical model to help explain the factors that influence young people's attitudes toward the Gardaí.

Themes identified in the theoretical model were then used to inform the development of a quantitative survey designed to measure influencing factors and their relationships with each other in a larger sample of young people. This was the first stage of method integration where qualitative data analysis was used to inform quantitative data collection.

Quantitative data were collected through a cross sectional survey administered to 226 young people ranging in age from 12 to 22 years old. Data from this part of the study were collected from groups of young people in a second level school setting. Testing of the overall model and the relationships between factors were analysed through structural equation modelling which allows for all relationships to be analysed concurrently and for a full model to be tested for fit with the data simultaneously.

In the final analysis results from both qualitative and quantitative studies were integrated to give a broader understanding of

attitudes toward the Gardaí in young people and to highlight areas where results complement each other and where they diverge. A diagram of the overall study design including each phase of the study and the points of integration is shown in **Figure 4.1**.

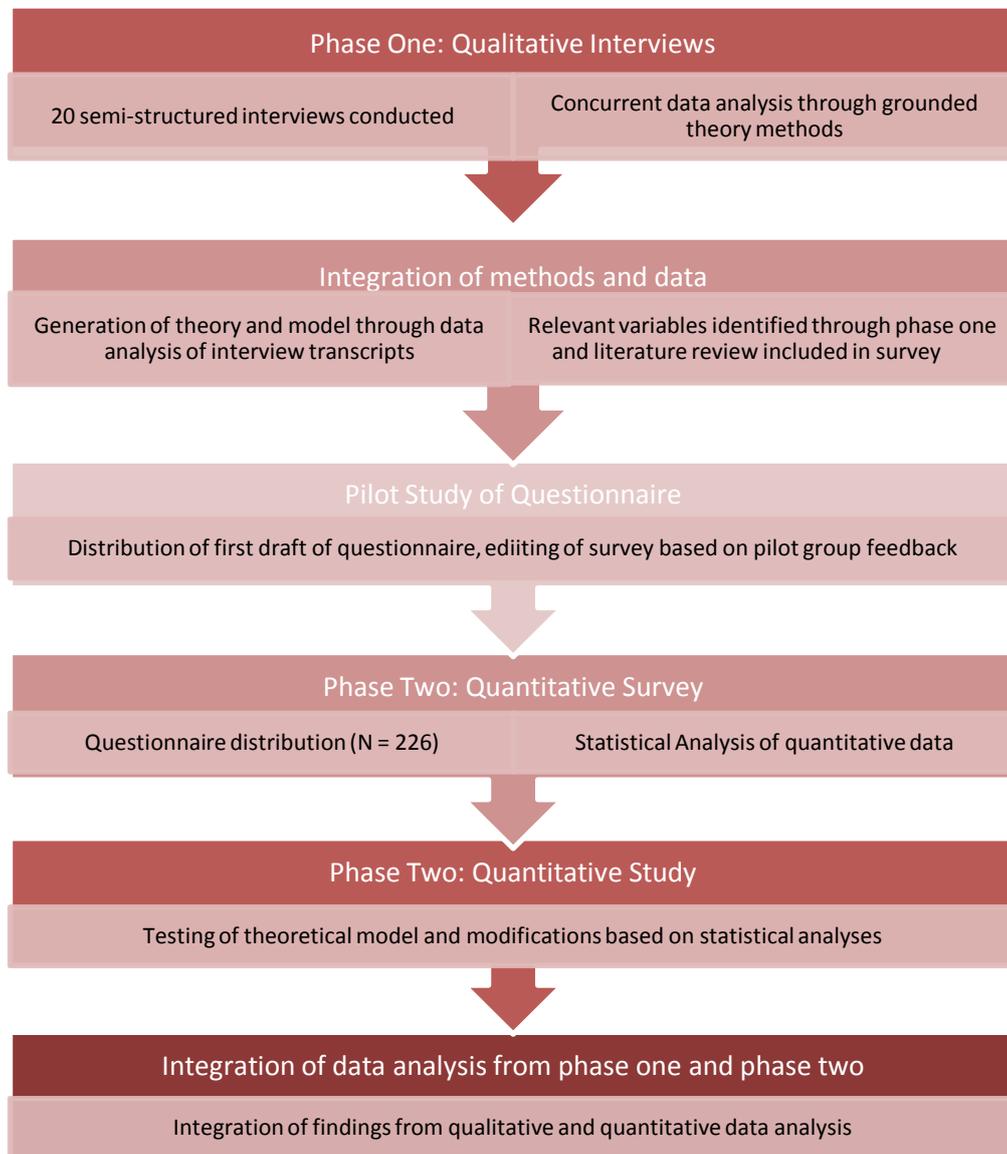


Figure 4.1 Diagram of mixed methods research design showing points of integration of qualitative and quantitative elements of the overall study.

4.5 Ethical Approval

Ethical approval for both phases of this project was granted by the Research Ethics Committee (REC) at National University of Ireland,

Galway in November, 2010. A copy of the full approval is provided in **Appendix A**. All participants were given information sheets detailing the research study, with separate versions for each phase of the study, and what was being asked of them if they chose to take part. For participants under 18 years old, both personal and parental consent was sought, while just personal consent was required from participants aged 18 years or older. Examples of the information sheets and consent forms used in the first study are provided in **Appendices B** and **C**.

4.6 Summary

From the existing literature discussed in previous chapters a number of factors appear to be important in influencing young people's attitudes toward the police. Nonetheless, much of this research is atheoretical and uses measurements originally designed for use with adults and not with young people. There is a need for a more stable theoretical basis for studies in this area which requires qualitative exploratory research in the initial stage. A theoretical model developed through this exploratory study can then be tested through a larger scale survey type study to identify the most relevant factors of attitude influence and examine the relationships between factors.

A mixed methods study was deemed most appropriate to explore both of these aspects beginning with a qualitative study to be followed by a quantitative study where results were integrated at two points. First, the themes identified in the first phase of model development were used to inform the development of a quantitative survey. Secondly, results from both study phases were integrated to give a broader understanding of the influences on young people's attitudes toward the Gardaí.

Chapter 5: Study One Methods

5.1 Aims of the Chapter

The aim of this chapter is to present details of the methodology used for the qualitative study. It will give an overview of the use of qualitative methods and the rationale for choosing this approach for the current study. The study procedure is detailed including information on participants who took part in this study, the development of an interview schedule, and ethical considerations. Finally, the process of data analysis using a grounded theory approach is outlined.

5.2 Specific Objectives of the Qualitative Study

This qualitative study was an exploratory study into the current attitudes of young people toward the Gardaí and the factors that may influence these attitudes. By asking young people directly about their own attitudes it was hoped to gain an understanding of the meanings that they ascribe to their relationships with and views of the Gardaí through their own words. A number of specific objectives were proposed for this study;

1. To gain an understanding of young people's attitudes toward the Gardaí in their own words.
2. To explore the factors that may influence young people's attitudes toward the Gardaí and why these factors have an impact on attitudes.
3. To develop a theoretical model of attitudes toward the Gardaí using a grounded theory approach, that incorporates the factors that influence attitudes toward the Gardaí and explains the relationships between these factors.

5.3 The use of Qualitative Methods

As the approach to this study was exploratory with a focus on understanding young people's attitudes toward the Gardaí and determining influencing factors on their attitudes an initial qualitative

study was considered most suitable as the first stage of the overall study. Within the literature most studies have used quantitative, survey type, research designs to measure young people's attitudes toward the police without first investigating the choice of factors used. Previous qualitative research has shown that young people's attitudes toward the police are complex, multi-dimensional and, culturally sensitive and there is a need for such investigation into Irish young people's attitudes as no other research with this population currently exists (e.g. Carr, Napolitano & Keating, 2007; Dirikx, Gelders & Parmentier, 2012; Stoutland, 2001).

Qualitative research is an approach that aims to understand 'what it is like' for individuals to experience particular phenomena (Lyons & Coyle, 2007). This type of research rests on the belief that the population of interest are the most appropriate source of information and best judges of the most pertinent issues for exploration. Qualitative research is suited to the types of research questions that focus on exploration and discovery of complex and sometimes ambiguous phenomena. It also has the advantage of placing individuals at the centre of the research study and using their stated beliefs, opinions and perceptions as the basis for the generation of a theory of their attitudes (Silverman, 2005). Influenced by the theoretical perspective of symbolic interactionism, most qualitative research assumes that reality is a construction of the interpretations that individuals (including the researcher) create through interactions with the environment and with others (Charmaz, 2006).

Semi-structured interviews were chosen for this study as they allowed for the in-depth exploration of the views and opinions of young people, and the interview schedule could be modified throughout the study in order to follow up on issues raised that were unanticipated or to remove questions that were found to be irrelevant amongst these participants. The intention was to gain both common and diverse views and opinions from participants. It was expected that the data would

reflect the perceptions of participants and their understandings of their relationships and attitudes rather than a direct account of objective reality.

It was thought that individual interviews would be more useful than focus groups in this case as group or peer pressure would not be a factor in individual's expression of their attitudes. Similarly, methods that involved the observation of interactions with Gardaí and young people would not have been capable of revealing the complex cognitive and emotional content of attitudes among young people.

5.4 Procedure

Initially, six youth centres in Galway city, identified through Youth Work Ireland (<http://www.youthworkgalway.ie>) were contacted by letter about the project and given brief details of what would be involved (a copy of this letter is available in **Appendix D**). In the week following this, youth leaders were telephoned to confirm whether they were willing to participate or not. Initially, four of the centres expressed interest in participating in the study, however, of these four, one declined because young people attending the centre were uncomfortable with the subject matter of the study, and another later declined because they had not realised that the study involved individual interviews.

Information regarding participation was given to youth centre members either by the researcher (at Site 1) or by group leaders (Site 2) as a group and documentation including information sheets for participants and their parents or guardians as well as informed consent forms were distributed at this time, and young people were given the option to participate or not. For all participants aged under 18 years old, both parental and individual consent was sought and separate forms were signed by a parent/guardian and the young person, those aged 18 years just signed their own consent forms. All participants were guaranteed anonymity, and informed that they were entitled to terminate the interview at any point without penalty.

Interviews were arranged at suitable times for participants and were conducted in a room in the youth centre that they attended. All interviews were audio recorded and later transcribed verbatim within 24 hours for analysis, and lasted between 25 and 40 minutes in total. This resulted in 232 pages of interview data, older participants tended to elaborate more on their views than younger participants (those under 15 years old), and those who reported a greater number of contacts with Gardaí had longer interviews compared to those who reported none, resulting in transcripts of differing lengths.

Of the two centres that subsequently became involved, there were notable differences between them in terms of the participants themselves and the conduct of the interviews. For example, the second interview site was much more chaotic and noisy than the first and many of the interviews were interrupted at some point by people entering the interview room. Also, in the first research site, the researcher had a brief group meeting with potential participants a week before interviews began in order to explain the project to them and answer any questions they might have had, this opportunity was not given for the second research site.

5.5 Participants

Participants were aged between 12 and 18 years old, living in the Galway city area at the time of the interviews. Data collection concluded at the point of data saturation where no new themes or views were expressed by participants in subsequent interviews which is recommended for grounded theory approaches (Suddaby, 2006). In all, twenty participants took part in interviews at this stage, prior sample numbers were estimated at between twenty and thirty participants dependent on when saturation was reached and one to one interviews commonly have sample sizes averaging twenty five participants (Creswell, 2007). All were of Irish nationality, and all were attending second level school full time. None of the participants had spent any time in prison. Both males and females were asked to

participate, and they were offered a reimbursement for their time in taking part, in the first research site, each received a €20 voucher for a local shop, in the second site, as per the request of the youth leader there, participants were instead offered a day at an adventure centre to be taken as a group.

In terms of participants, those from site 1 were more likely to have parents with professional occupations, and were more likely to own their own homes, and Site 2 is earmarked as a disadvantaged area and has been assigned a community Garda officer with diversion programmes in place in the youth centre. Also, all participants from Site 2 were male as most activities within the club are targeted at young males rather than females. However, despite the differences, the major themes uncovered through data analysis remained consistent across a majority of participants.

Table 5.1

Demographic and Background Characteristics of Participants

<i>Gender</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Lives With</i>	<i>Employment Status of Parents/guardian</i>
Site 1			
Male	16 years	Both parents	Employed
Female	15 years	Both parents	Employed
Male	15 years	Both parents	One employed
Male	16 years	One parent	Employed
Male	16 years	Both parents	One employed
Male	12 years	One parent	Employed
Female	15 years	Both parents	Employed
Female	18 years	One parent	Unemployed
Female	16 years	Both parents	One employed
Male	18 years	Both parents	Employed
Site 2			
Male	13 years	Both parents	Unemployed
Male	13 years	One parent	Unemployed
Male	14 years	Both parents	One employed
Male	13 years	Aunt	Employed
Male	13 years	One parent	Unemployed
Male	14 years	Both parents	One employed
Male	17 years	One parent	Unemployed
Male	17 years	Both parents	One employed
Male	15 years	Both parents	Employed
Male	17 years	Both parents	One employed

5.6 Interview Schedule and Data Collection

Approximately 20 semi-structured, focused questions were used in an attempt to elicit a broad range of responses based on the major theme of attitudes toward the Gardaí. Questions were constructed with reference to the extant literature in conjunction with issues thought relevant to the researcher for discussion.

Opening questions were drawn from the performance and satisfaction with police literature and focused on participant's views of how well the Gardaí performed in their duties. These were followed by questions that were drawn from the procedural justice literature and were concerned with participant's views of how they are treated by Gardaí as young people and in comparison to adults. The third set of questions focused on participant's own experiences with Gardaí and how these were interpreted by participants as research consistently shows that personal experiences affect views of the police (e.g. Fagan & Tyler, 2005; Hinds, 2009a; Tyler, 2006). Follow on questions from this were constructed by the researcher with reference to the research questions for the study and focused on how participant's viewed their experiences in influencing their own attitudes and expectations of treatment from Gardaí in the future. The next questions were concerned with issues of moral obligation to obey the law and were drawn from social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1989) and the extant literature that has found differences in moral reasoning between those who engage in criminal behaviour and those who do not (e.g. Larden, Melin, Host & Langstrom, 2006). Subsequent questions related to intended future cooperation with the Gardaí and were devised to tap the construct of cooperation as proposed in the procedural justice model (Tyler, 2006b). Closing questions were centred on young people's own views of how their relationship with Gardaí could be improved and how they would like the Gardaí to interact with them in the future and were constructed by the researcher during initial

interviews based on earlier comments from participants about their perceived relationships with Gardaí.

The structure of the interview protocol was modified during the data collection process in order to follow up on certain aspects of attitudes and experiences reported by previous participants, and some questions were subsequently dropped. This approach is recommended in grounded theory studies to allow for both an overall picture of experiences to be explored and for more in depth information to be gathered around specific instances (Charmaz, 2009).

Despite modifications to some questions all interviews covered the same main concerns, which included; how well the Gardaí are perceived to be doing their jobs; how participants felt they were perceived by Gardaí; recounts of both personal and vicarious experiences with Gardaí and; perceptions of the relationship between young people and the Gardaí. The semi-structured nature of the interview schedule allowed for emphasis on different areas depending on the age of the participant, their level of experience with the Gardaí and the issues that they offered as being most pertinent to them. An example of the interview schedule is available in **Appendix E**. Interview data were analysed using a grounded theory approach in order to develop a theoretical model of themes and categories that emerged from the data.

5.7 Grounded Theory and Model Building

The original method of grounded theory was that proposed by Glaser and Strauss in the 1960s which was a challenge to the prevailing positivist approach to research (Charmaz, 2009). Since then, different approaches to grounded theory have been proposed which has led to slightly different methods of data analysis that emphasise particular methods of understanding and interpreting the data to be analysed. All grounded theory approaches have a number of features in common, including a) developing codes, categories and themes inductively from the data, b) memo writing throughout data collection and analysis, and

c) returning to the data numerous times to further develop and abstract themes and categories. (Bazeley, 2009; Charmaz, 2009; Creswell, 2007).

This study follows the constructivist process outlined by Charmaz (2009) as this appeared most appropriate to suit the aims of this particular study and is presented as a more flexible 'set of principles and practices' (p. 9) rather than a prescribed set of rules to be followed. Constructivist grounded theory differs from the original approach in that it emphasises multiple realities and complexities instead of a single core process (Creswell, 2007). As this study sought to gain an understanding of the existing attitudes of young people toward the Gardaí as well as the factors that young people feel have an influence on them this approach seemed most appropriate. The choice of a grounded theory approach for this study was made based on a number of factors.

Firstly, grounded theory is recommended when models that already exist have been developed and tested on populations that differ significantly from the population of interest (Creswell, 2007). In the case of this study, existing models have been developed using either adult populations or young people outside of Ireland. Given the potential differences in experiences and cognitions between young people and adults, a model based on their perceptions is required. Likewise, cultural factors would influence the attitudes of young people and probably also the attitudes and behaviour of the police.

Secondly, when existing theories are likely to be incomplete due to the exclusion of potentially important variables or factors, grounded theory can help to build a more comprehensive model that better reflects the phenomena under study (Creswell, 2007). Many existing studies are based on the measurement of a small number of variables and their interactions with each other in order to test a priori hypotheses in a quantitative manner (Kautt, 2011). However, without reference to theories of attitude formation, there is no way of

determining if these studies are measuring relevant relationships or are missing important third, or fourth factors that may impact on findings.

A third factor that influenced the choice of grounded theory analysis was the desire to include the perceptions and opinions of young people themselves in the development of the theoretical model. Grounded theory allows for the researcher to better understand how individuals interpret their experiences and their realities by going beyond a purely descriptive analysis of the data and offering a more analytical and explanatory focus (Lyons & Coyle, 2007; Suddaby, 2006).

Finally, the outcome to grounded theory analysis is the development of a theoretical model based on the interpretation of participant's perceptions of a particular phenomenon (Charmaz, 2009) which was also the primary aim of this part of the overall study.

5.8 Data Analysis and Coding

Three levels of coding were used during the data analysis process, each one intended to build individual codes into theoretical constructs, the levels used here were, initial coding, focused coding, and axial coding in accordance with that recommended by Charmaz in using constructive grounded theory methods (Charmaz, 2009). Although these coding levels are explained separately, they did not occur in a linear sequence, but were ongoing continuously throughout the coding process, with a number of iterations of coding occurring throughout the data analysis process, while also using a constant comparative approach during data collection.

Memo writing occurs during all stages of data collection and coding and consists of short, initial thoughts on the data that is present and how it may or may not relate to other data or existing codes or theories. All analyses stay close to the data that has been collected and initial codes will usually be descriptions of actions, later codes become more conceptual and theoretical. Within the grounded theory literature the terms code, concept, category and theme are often used interchangeably (Bazeley, 2009), in the current study the term code

refers to early identification of patterns that emerge from the data, category is used to refer to the core umbrella term that other themes fall under, theme is used to identify elements of the core category that help to explain the data, while concept refers to the more abstract understanding of themes that can be included in a theoretical model that explains patterns and factors within it.

5.8.1 Initial coding. Initial coding refers to the first, provisional codes that are present in the data. First, all transcripts were read through several times to give an overall impression of participant's views and responses. Next, each segment (either line, sentences, or paragraph) was given a label that reflected an initial coding (Charmaz, 2009), which used the words of the participant to represent the code. From these initial codes, themes were generated by sorting the codes into more substantial codes and themes. The themes reflected similarity of responses (in regard to both existing attitudes and perceived influences on them), and frequency of responses. At least half of the participants had to identify an initial theme before it was included. Next, all transcripts and memos were reread to identify both frequently occurring responses and unexpected or counterintuitive data that provided atypical evidence of participant experiences.

Throughout the initial coding stages, the constant comparative method was used, where data is compared to data to look for similarities and differences between incidents and participants, to help explain and expand the codes. This part of the data analysis started soon after the collection of data and led to the modification of the interview protocol in order to follow up on apparently relevant areas for discussion, and at a later stage, the discarding of some questions that no longer produced any new information.

In all, sixteen initial codes were generated from this stage of analysis and were generally the words of participants or single action words and phrases such as 'respect', 'helpful', 'harassment' and 'not listening'. These codes were added to and modified throughout this

stage of coding as data collection continued.

5.8.2 Focused coding. “Focused coding means using the most significant and/or frequent earlier codes to sift through large amounts of data. Focused coding requires decisions about which initial codes make the most analytic sense to categorise your data incisively and completely.” (Charmaz, 2009, p. 57). Focused coding involves a process of comparing data with data across incidents and interviews. Then data is compared to the codes that have been constructed during the first, initial stage of coding.

Focused coding is recommended by Charmaz as a way of condensing large amounts of data across participants and to help to begin the process of abstracting codes to categories. This process involved laying out all of the initial codes and attempting to group them into themes based on their relationship to each other and looking for any instances of opposition to the most commonly occurring themes. This resulted in some codes being discarded due to their lack of explanatory power within the overall set of themes, and some codes were re-categorised after ongoing assessment of the fit of initial codes with existing themes.

Responses were categorised according to several focused codes, for example, types of interactions and their impacts, peer group attitudes, Garda behaviour, compliance to the law, respect for the Gardaí and, gender and/or age differences in attitudes. Thirdly, all codes were reviewed to determine how they fit in with existing theories around social-cognitive theory (Bandura, 1989), and the theory of legitimacy and its impact on attitudes toward legal authorities (Tyler, 2005). Codes and themes were sorted, compared and contrasted until no new codes or themes could be produced and all of the data were accounted for in the subsequent themes (Charmaz, 2009).

5.8.3 Axial coding. In axial coding relationships between themes that were generated during focused coding are developed further. This stage of coding involves relating themes to subthemes,

defining and describing each theme and identifying patterns within the data (Charmaz, 2009).

As recommended by Charmaz, axial coding was used to help define and explain codes and themes in a flexible manner rather than applying a fixed overlay on the current data, as would be suggested by Strauss and Corbin. This process involved a number of returns to the original data and initial codes. It had been intended to analyse the data at all levels of coding by using the computer package NVivo for convenience. However, after a number of false starts, core concepts and themes were failing to emerge using this method. Finally, two notice boards with large movable paper markers for main categories were used and themes and sub themes were arranged and re-arranged using these until a core category was developed and the outline of a conceptual map was beginning to take shape. This level of coding can also be referred to as theoretical coding which relates to the ways in which themes can be related to each other in order to form hypotheses that can later be integrated into a theoretical model (Charmaz, 2009).

5.8.4 Memo writing. Concurrent with data collection and analysis the practice of memo writing was also ongoing. Analytic memos help to clarify thoughts around codes as they are being formulated or constructed and to examine relationships between themes and concepts. They are a useful way of expanding and understanding the researchers own perceptions of themes as they are being constructed and linked together (Creswell, 2007).

Memos also help in the later stages of coding in relating categories and sub categories to each other and aid in the overall analytic process of gradually becoming more abstract within themes and concepts. Memos allow for engagement with the themes and gives a space for exploring the researchers own thinking about each theme. An example of one of these memos is included in **Appendix F**.

5.9 Summary

The first phase of the study was a qualitative exploration of general

attitudes toward and perceptions of the Gardaí of twenty young people in Galway city. Semi-structured interviews were conducted at two research sites with young people aged between 12 and 18 years old. Interviews were transcribed and analysed using a grounded theory approach which involves a number of iterations of increasingly detailed coding, alongside extensive memo writing on emerging themes. The main themes, to be described in the following chapter, were reflective of the main factors that emerged as potentially important in influencing the attitudes of young people toward the Gardaí.

Chapter 6: Study One Results

6.1 Aims of Chapter

The primary aim of this chapter is to present the results from qualitative semi-structured interviews as outlined in the previous chapter. An overview of the attitudes towards Gardaí as expressed by the twenty interview participants will be given first, followed by a detailed description of the core category, themes and sub- themes identified through a grounded theory approach. Following the description of categories, the development of the theoretical model to be tested in study two will also be outlined. Finally, the means by which qualitative results were used to inform data collection in study two will be presented.

6.2 The Nature of Young People's Attitudes Toward the Gardaí

The attitudes expressed by the participants in this study are not easily labelled as either positive or negative, despite this being the trend in many quantitative studies (e.g. Brown & Benedict, 2000; Frank & Tyler, 2005; Hurst & Frank, 2000). Of the twenty young people interviewed, eighteen reported both positive and negative attitudinal views of the Gardaí at some point in the interview, indicating the presence of conflict or ambivalence in their overall attitudes toward the Gardaí.

Participants appeared to hold both positive and negative views of the Gardaí simultaneously that were based on both personal experiences with Gardaí and perceptions of the purpose and effectiveness of the Gardaí. When talking in general about the Gardaí views were more likely to be negative in nature, which may help to explain why many quantitative studies commonly find young people's attitudes toward police to be primarily negative as they don't allow for deeper meanings to be explored. However, findings in this study are in accordance with other qualitative studies with young people where participants express both positive and negative attitudes toward police (e.g. Dirikx, Gelders & Parmentier, 2012; Stoutland, 2001).

Participants expressed mature and complex views about the Gardaí, but these complexities tended to be revealed through talking about specific actions of the Gardaí, whether personally experienced or not. They expressed high levels of support for the institution of the Gardaí and referred to the need for such authority and social control to maintain an ordered society, which includes the need to punish those who have broken the law. Yet, in contrast, they also tend to see their own offending (commonly underage drinking) as merely 'fun' and not causing harm to anyone else and they feel that they should be allowed more leeway in these cases, especially when they compare their behaviour to that of other young people they see as 'criminal', or more serious offenders.

Positive attitudes were expressed when participants talked about non-threatening, conversational type experiences that they had with a Garda officer. This was most common for those in Site 2 where there was a community Garda officer who was involved in the local youth club and participants had many opportunities to interact with her on a non official level. This officer was described as being approachable, friendly and non judgemental. A few participants from Site 1 also reported similar experiences with other officers that they knew by name and who they have had informal interactions with in the past. Participants were inclined to view Garda officers as individuals when speaking about them in positive ways, often referring to the distinctiveness of these types of officers when compared with 'the Gardaí' more generally. Participants also expressed an understanding for the difficulties that Gardaí face in solving crime and finding perpetrators of crimes. References to this aspect of the difficulties inherent in policing focused on the perceived amount of effort Garda officers were thought to apply to their jobs, rather than the outcomes of these efforts.

Negative attitudes that were expressed by participants usually referred to perceived unfairness or harassment from Gardaí. Many

participants stated that they felt stereotyped by Gardaí because they were juveniles and that the Gardaí viewed all young people as 'troublemakers'. This gave participants a feeling of being continuous suspects in the eyes of the Gardaí and participants reported that they often felt as if they were guilty of some offence when they encountered Gardaí whether they had broken the law or not;

"...normally they [the Gardaí] just hang around and make us feel uncomfortable, so that you do move anyway" (Female, age 15 years, Site 1).

Negative attitudes were also expressed by the three participants who had reported crimes to the Gardaí in the past where they felt that they were not taken seriously due to their age and that the Gardaí failed to fully investigate these crimes. Being moved on or stopped and searched were further causes for negative impressions of the Gardaí as participants generally felt these were unfair and unjustified actions;

"I was just walking up the street and the Gardaí pulled over and searched me and all that, but I had nothing on me so they just let me off, I don't do anything like that, do anything bad...should be the criminals that they should be getting, not the likes of young fellas like, doing nothing, they've nothing else to be doing only doing things like that, do you know what I mean?" (Male, age 17 years, Site 2).

In contrast if young people felt they were given some explanation for the actions of the Garda the similar incidents could become more positively regarded, as explained by this participant;

"...we were playing soccer before, in a park down near the school, and they [the Gardaí] said 'lads ye have to move out of here' and one of my friends said 'why?', and he said 'a neighbour said that ye were making too much noise'. Like, just because he gave us the reason we said 'alright, yea, we can move further up'" (Male, age 16 years, Site 1).

Other negative opinions of the Gardaí were reported by participants when they considered their own views of the purpose of the police and how they feel the Gardaí should behave and do their jobs.

Common responses to opening questions about the most important aspects of the Gardaí referred primarily to helping the public, for example in the case of road traffic accidents, protecting the vulnerable and generally 'keeping an eye out for the public' (Male, age 18 years, Site 1). While most participants stated that they viewed the Gardaí as doing their best in difficult situations, many also felt that they could improve through prioritising their attention onto more serious issues, such as drug use or violent crimes. As well as perceiving some actions of the Gardaí as harassment of young people, a number of participants also reported either experiencing or witnessing aggressive and sometimes violent treatment from Gardaí. This, in turn tended to lead to participants stating that they felt they had no trust in the Gardaí and that they would try to avoid contact with them in the future;

"I've been arrested a few times and...by law they...are not allowed abuse their power...but, they do, like, for example, I got arrested and...a female Guard kept punching me constantly, in the side of the head, because, supposedly, I was resisting arrest, but I was sitting in the back of the car in handcuffs" (Male, age 18 years, Site 1).

This type of experience results in both a lack of trust and a reluctance to become involved with the Gardaí on any level, even when they find themselves the victim of a crime, so that the young male in the above quotation went on to declare that he would 'deal with it myself' rather than report a crime to the Gardaí if he were to become a victim of a crime.

Overall, young people expressed a desire for better policing such as more rigorous policing styles and greater emphasis on more serious crime. Almost all participants expressed support for the concept of policing but they also stated that this should be achievable without the use of physical force or harassment of younger people or other groups. This may reflect the somewhat idealised view that participants hold of what they believe the Gardaí should be in conflict with what they have experienced from Gardaí or heard about them from others.

When asked how they think other young people view the Gardaí participants in this study almost unanimously replied that they were strongly negative without much need for deep consideration.

"...most people my age, probably thinks they're good for nothing like,...that's what they mostly think now..."(Male, age 14 years, Site 2).

However, there is also evidence to suggest that participants differentiate between their own attitudes and those of their peers;
"...some people just look at the Guards as something you don't like and you don't do anything good towards 'pigs' or whatever you want to call them and then you'll always have these people, but I certainly would have respect for Guards..." (Male, age 16 years, Site 1).

If participants believe that their friends or peers have negative attitudes toward the Gardaí this may potentially affect how they themselves behave when they encounter Gardaí in groups of other young people. Nonetheless, peers telling of their own experiences with the Gardaí are generally seen as 'stories' that are exaggerated for the purposes of entertainment of friends and are not taken as truthful accounts of interactions, and participants acknowledge that only negative stories are likely to be shared with friends;

"...there's a big social status with being anti-Gardaí, and if you're nice toward a Garda, then you're kind of seen as soft, but,...there's a kind of image that's stuck in people's heads that the Gardaí are bad, and are trying to stop you having fun, and...you almost have to go out of your way to get a rally [get chased]...some people want to tell stories about their time with the Gardaí, and how, 'I got thrown in a cell, and I was in a fight and Gardaí caught me', that's what people want, that's what their friends, or their peers, look for in a good story" (Male, age 16 years, Site 1).

The influence of peers at least on general attitudes toward the Gardaí can be seen to be minimal in this sample, although most participants reported that they believed their closer friends shared their own opinions of Gardaí, which they expressed as more tempered. Conflict between their personal views of Gardaí and how these are

represented when they encounter Garda officers in a group of peers may lead to further confusion and antagonism between young people and the Gardaí in general evoking more negative reactions from officers and further entrenching negative attitudes. Yet, these negative attitudes are not wholly accepted by young people as being uni-dimensional within their own opinions and they are capable of distinguishing between their attitudes and those that they wish their peers to see.

As ambivalent attitudes were most prevalent in this study, some further discussion of ambivalence in attitude research and how they differ from dichotomous (i.e. positive versus negative) attitudes is warranted to help explain the subsequent data analysis presented below.

6.2.1 Ambivalent attitudes. When an individual holds both positive and negative beliefs, emotions, or attitudes toward an object they are understood to be ambivalent about that object (Conner & Sparks, 2002). Two types of attitude ambivalence have been identified within the psychological literature; potential ambivalence and experienced ambivalence (Jonas, Broemer & Diehl, 2000). Potential ambivalence refers to the co-existence of both positive and negative attitudes toward an object that may not be in the conscious awareness of the individual (Krosnick & Petty, 1995). Felt, or experienced, ambivalence is the term used to describe the feeling of tension that is caused by knowingly holding both positive and negative attitudes toward an attitude object. Research has determined that both types of ambivalence are separate attitude expressions and are usually uncorrelated (Jonas, Broemer & Diehl, 2000; Maio & Haddock, 2009).

The presence of ambivalence does not imply that attitudes are unstable or that the individual is uncertain of how they perceive the attitude object, equally strong positive and negative attitudes can be held simultaneously by the same individual (Priester & Petty, 2001). However, ambivalent attitudes are thought to be more easily influenced

by situational factors when compared to univalent attitudes. Highly salient features of the environment or the attitude object are likely to influence the attitude held in either positive or negative directions (Maio & Haddock, 2009; Priester & Petty, 2001). This can lead to different types of behavioural responses to the same attitude object that are dependent on the features of the context in which it is encountered. Attitude ambivalence can occur in relation to a wide range of domains including racist attitudes, sexist attitudes and consumer attitudes (Conner & Sparks, 2002). There is also evidence to suggest that attitudes may be more likely to show ambivalence when individuals are unsure of the reliability or accuracy of information presented to them about that attitude object (Tormala & DeSensi, 2008).

Krosnick and Petty (1995) outline three distinctive features of ambivalent attitudes compared to univalent (or simply positive or negative) types of attitudes; 1) that they should be less stable across time, 2) they should be less likely to predict behaviour and 3) they should be more receptive to persuasion or other relevant information. Each of these features relate to the tendency for situational factors to influence the ability of the individual to access either positive or negative evaluations of the attitude object. The measurement of ambivalent attitudes therefore can be constrained as an individual's reported attitudes at one point in time may not match those reported at another, or may not match with their behaviour in the same way that univalent attitudes can be predicted to do (Jonas et. al, 2000; Maio & Haddock, 2009).

Ambivalence is measured through one of two types of approaches; through direct questions asking a participant to state their sense of conflict in their own attitudes and; through a series of positively and negatively oriented questions which are then analysed using mathematical formulae to indicate the level of ambivalence present. Each of these approaches have been subject to criticism of their ability to accurately determine the presence of attitude

ambivalence and their lack of consistency in both definitions of ambivalence and findings leaving a lack of consensus on the best means of measuring ambivalence (Jonas, et. al, 2000).

The study of ambivalent attitudes recognises that attitudes are formed through cognitive, affective and behavioural information (Jonas, et. al, 2000; Maio & Haddock, 2009). As such, it is possible that an individual will experience ambivalence within or across each of these dimensions. However, as mentioned above, there is no means of identifying the best ways to measure ambivalence in any of these dimensions (Conner & Sparks, 2002). Due to the exploratory nature of this study and the inherent difficulties in choosing an appropriate means of measuring ambivalence based on a qualitative analysis of data, it is more useful to approach the presence of ambivalence in attitudes toward the Gardaí by investigating the range of dimensions uncovered through data analysis and their specific relationships to each other. This approach will ensure that all relevant dimensions of attitudes are included in the final analysis and that relationships between quantitative variables can be hypothesised to give an overall understanding of the factors influencing current attitudes toward the Gardaí among young people.

The ambivalence present in the majority of accounts of attitudes toward Gardaí as expressed by participants in this study can be seen as the background context in which the categories and themes that emerged from grounded theory data analysis can be better understood. In the present analysis attitude ambivalence will be understood as a reflection of the complexity and multi-dimensional nature of young people's attitudes toward the Gardaí and subsequently this understanding will inform the development of the theoretical model presented later in the chapter.

6.3 Core Category: Uncertainty

After a number of coding iterations (see **Chapter 5** for full details) the core category that emerged from the data and permeated all

subsequent themes and sub-themes was the effects of uncertainty across different domains of young people's attitudes toward the Gardaí. This core category of uncertainty consists of multiple ways that young people report they are treated and perceived by the Gardaí, including feelings of being stereotyped, being harassed, the use of Garda discretion and, the uncertainty of outcomes in interactions. Uncertainty in the context of Garda-youth relations will tend to have negative emotional and psychological effects on young people due to the tendency for uncertainty to arise in threatening or fearful situations (Freeman & Seymour, 2010). Coupled with the sense of uncertainty, there is also some element of fear as to how young people will be treated by Gardaí, especially if they have encountered aggressive treatment from them before.

A large proportion (17 out of 20) of participants reported that they felt they were stereotyped as troublemakers by the Gardaí in general, and they see this feeling as having implications for how young people and the Gardaí interact with each other. Being unsure of the outcomes of interactions with the Gardaí due to the uncertainty of how they will be viewed by different Garda officers can lead young people to avoid any interaction at all. Garda discretion can lead to different approaches from different Garda officers, as can be seen with the community officer at Site 2, and this can lead to greater uncertainty in young people as they feel they cannot anticipate the reactions of other officers in the same way as they can with this officer.

Other consequences of this uncertainty include a reported lack of trust in the motives of the Gardaí and this in turn impacts on young people's respect for them. While many participants stated that they knew they had rights in terms of how they are treated by the Gardaí, most were unsure as to what these rights mean in a real sense and many lacked confidence in the legal system generally to protect their rights. The uncertainty felt across interactions and in interpreting the behaviour of Gardaí leaves young people unable to predict either when

they will encounter negative reactions from Gardaí or how they will be treated when they do. The ambivalence in attitudes expressed by participants in the present study may be partly attributable to this sense of uncertainty where young people may interpret their experiences differently dependent on their initial expectations from Gardaí and how their experience compares to these expectations.

Four sub-themes were identified under the core category of uncertainty that can influence young people's attitudes toward the Gardaí. Each aspect of uncertainty leads to particular responses from young people, either in their behaviour during interactions with Gardaí, or in their interpretations of what the Gardaí mean to them. This core category of uncertainty is explored in the following sections as it relates to interactions with Gardaí, interpretations of Garda behaviour, expectations of treatment from Gardaí and, young people's understandings of their own rights and social status.

6.3.1 Uncertainty within interactions. It is likely that any encounter with the Gardaí will induce some levels of anxiety and tension in a young person regardless of whether they have committed a crime or not. When a Garda can be judged to be reasonable and fair and is interested in listening to the young person this serves to diffuse the tension of the situation leading to greater likelihood of compliance and more positive interpretations of that situation. The process of interpreting interactions with Gardaí is also context dependent in that the social context in which the interaction takes place will determine the degree to which young people feel disempowered. Generally, in interactions with community officers whom they know, young people feel more empowered compared to when they have contact with other Gardaí that they have no prior relationships with.

There was a relatively equal amount of contact (both positive and negative) with Gardaí between older and younger participants in this study, contrary to expectations that younger participants would report much less contact (Fagan & Tyler, 2005; McAra & McVie, 2005;

Piquero, Fagan, Mulvey, Steinberg & Odgers, 2005). This finding is most likely due to the presence of a community Garda in the neighbourhood of participants from Site 2 where most of the younger participants were interviewed. This means that while those in Site 2 were just as likely to be cautioned or taken home by the community Garda as those from Site 1, they also had more frequent non-official contacts which they saw as being fair and relatively friendly.

Most contacts were of an informal nature (for 12 out of 18 participants), and consisted of being moved from parks, being stopped and searched, or having an informal conversation with a Garda. In some cases young people reported being treated aggressively or violently by the Gardaí, or more often, seeing them acting violently towards others. These types of experiences are seen primarily as being unfair and an abuse of power and young people state that these incidents reduce their respect for the Gardaí overall. In contrast having a conversation with a Garda was almost always portrayed as being a positive experience, as it involved the young person being treated more as an equal;

"...there is some nice Guards who...he'll have a conversation with you like...and, am, like there is some nice Guards out there who are like that..."
(Male, age 18 years, Site 1).

Community officers are generally seen to be more approachable and fairer when compared to Gardaí young people feel they don't know. In this sense, there is a separation of individual officers who can be trusted, and 'the Gardaí' as an institution that is largely unknown and suspicious;

"Well it depends on what Guard you meet, you could meet some nice Guards, out this way they are, like, they listen to your part of the story, but then you have Guards there that won't even look at you...it depends on what Guard you meet, that's the way it goes" (Male, age 15 years, Site 2).

In cases such as these young people report that it is not the desire to have more control over the situation that is important but the

sense that they are being treated with some respect and being given a reasonable explanation for Garda actions. Negative past experiences appear to have a stronger influence on attitudes than positive experiences as the negative types of experiences are deemed to be more representative of the Gardaí in general than positive interactions which usually occur with the community Garda or officers known to participants. In the context of attitude ambivalence, salient characteristics of each interaction are likely to influence future attitudes toward the Gardaí where young people come to see negative aspects of their interactions as representative of all Gardaí and interactions with the community Garda as an exception to this usual approach to dealing with young people.

Procedural justice theory argues that fairness of treatment is the most important element in producing perceptions of legitimacy of legal authorities in citizens (Tyler, 2006b; Sunshine & Tyler, 2003). Making fair and unbiased decisions is reported to be important to participants in determining whether they see the Gardaí as legitimate or not; *“Well, people my age, they don’t give you the time to talk,...they just...they either do something to you or they bar you or something, when they should be listening...from your part of the story”* (Male, age 15 years, Site 2).

“...they talk to us as if...they are an extremely high authority figure, and like...at the end of the day, when they take off that uniform they’re just one of us, just because they have a uniform doesn’t give them the right to talk down to someone...”(Male, age 18 years, Site 1).

This feeling of not being respected or taken seriously serves to undermine the authority, and thereby the perceived legitimacy, of Garda officers in the eyes of young people. This appears to be more pronounced for young people who feel that they are targeted by Gardaí without good reason. Perceived legitimacy is also linked to differences in perceptions of community Gardaí and other Garda officers which, in

part, reflect the types of relationships they feel they have with community and other Garda officers.

Many participants appear to view the Gardaí and the law as essentially the same thing, and if young people believe they can respect the Gardaí, they will consequently have greater respect for the law; *"...like in the same way that, if you have a good teacher you'll learn...if you have good Guards you'll obey the rules, and I think, like especially with the people who often break the rules, hooligans if you want to call them, I mean if they get from a young age,...that they aren't the bad guys, well, then they're not going to want to fight them, like they're not going to have them as their enemy, they're not going to break laws as much as they would"* (Male, age 16 years, Site 1).

"...because they [the Gardaí] and the law are associated together so if you don't like the Guards, naturally enough you're not going to like the law, so to gain respect for them you kinda gain respect for the law" (Male, age 16 years, Site 1).

Participants themselves believe that negative interactions with Gardaí have an impact on their own future attitudes;

"I thought they'd listen to you...but they didn't, they just barred me [from the school bus] and they didn't give me a chance to talk, put my part of the story, so that's why I just didn't really like them afterwards" (Male, age 15 years, Site 2).

"...a lot of people my age have had contact with Guards, and they've just like...after that they've just said 'Ah, no Guards, they're just the bad guys' like they don't help people at all, they just take advantage of the power and just, they hit you or...yea, just out to get you or whatever" (Male, age 16 years, Site 1).

"...when you're young you've absolutely no experience of directly dealing with the Gardaí, you've a very kinda, you know, innocent opinion, but then I guess...your history kind of spoils that innocent opinion, 'cause once you see that the Gardaí aren't perfect and they're not always enforcing the rules like they should be, and sometimes they enforce the wrong rules...it's

given me a more...open opinion toward the Guards, where I can see the bad more clearly, but I can appreciate the good better as well” (Male, age 18 years, Site 1).

However, more positive views were expressed by many of the participants in Site 2 in relation to the community Garda and they refer to their likelihood of approaching and interacting with this officer in a different manner to other officers;

“...if I see them [Gardaí] and I know them, I know a few of the Guards in particular now, if I know them I’ll go and have a chat to them, and some Guards come over and talk to me and have a chat” (Male, age 17 years, Site 2).

This type of interaction can also occur with other known Gardaí when they are seen as non-threatening and fair in their approach to participants;

“I’ve had positive encounters with the Guards, there is some really nice Guards like, who have...actually sat there...just chatting having a conversation with a Guard like...he’ll have a conversation with you...and, am, there is some nice Guards out there who are like that...” (Male, age 18 years, Site 2).

An issue that was raised by almost all participants when talking about their interactions with the Gardaí was the feeling that they are rarely listened to by officers. This feeling was spoken about in relation to both reporting a crime and to instances when young people were being accused of an offence. Participants also reported that this was one of the most important features of good relationships between the Gardaí and the general public where *“...if you can get a Guard to listen, he’ll get on with anyone” (Male, age 15 years, Site 2).* For some young people in the present study, it means that they quickly learn how to interact with the Gardaí on a superficial level in order to avoid unanticipated sanctions, as they no longer expect fair treatment.

Due to a lack of predictability of interactions with Garda officers that young people don’t know, they feel less inclined to interact with

them in any way. Young people reported that they generally try to avoid any contact with the Gardaí due to the sense that the Gardaí will see them as being guilty of some offence and will mistreat them in some way. This may impact on young people's likelihood to either report crimes to the Gardaí in the future or to offer information to them when requested. This feeling leads young people to mistrust both the motives and actions of the Gardaí and reduces the potential for them to have their negative impressions challenged. Contact with the community Garda was reported in positive terms and this appears to be largely due to the predictable nature of interactions between her and participants. However, these positive experiences appear to have no impact on participant's attitudes toward the Gardaí more generally.

6.3.2 Uncertainty of Garda behaviour. Participants viewed the most important purpose of the Gardaí to be related to ensuring the safety and assistance of the public as opposed to crime related duties. The Gardaí are seen as a necessary element of ordered society. References to the effectiveness of the Gardaí in this sense reflected young people's awareness of the reality of police work. There is emphasis on the amount of effort the Gardaí are thought to put into their jobs rather than the outcomes such as preventing crime or catching criminals. Young people in this study expressed their support for the Gardaí when they are seen to be doing 'their best' as opposed to their ability to meet criteria that are commonly measured in performance approaches to gauging public support for police. This finding may help to explain why performance has been found to influence perceptions of police legitimacy in some studies (e.g. Hinds, 2009a; 2009b) as well as procedural fairness in interactions if young people consider both aspects of policing in determining their views of them.

In the present study young people focused mostly on the ways in which the Gardaí conduct themselves in their day to day duties. Coupled with this however, is a clear sense of a lack of confidence in the

Gardaí to either prevent crime or to investigate it fully after it has happened, and there was frequent reference to them 'doing their best', even when it was acknowledged that they sometimes abuse their powers;

"...if they didn't think it was that serious, they wouldn't put in a full effort, but I do think that they do their job, and you know, they try their best..."

(Female, age 16 years, Site 1).

"It depends on what it is,...I've seen them do stuff they're not supposed to do, I mean like hitting people...otherwise, no, I think they're good at their job, on some things" (Male, age 12 years, Site 1).

While it may seem that participants lack conviction in their views of the Gardaí, these types of comments may alternatively show that young people are reluctant to use single incidents to inform their overall attitudes about them.

The main areas that seem to concern these young people centre around their perceptions of treatment from Gardaí that they feel is primarily influenced by the fact of their age;

"...they just see a teenager, and just like...that's a teenager and there's a bad mark on us straight away, kind of thing. They just assume that we're up to no good kind of thing" (Female, age 15 years, Site 1).

Many young people feel that they are required to defend themselves to the Gardaí, which they state is often interpreted by officers as a sign of disrespect or 'being cheeky'. It is likely that Garda officers who expect respect from young people become more antagonistic and aggressive when they feel it is not being shown and this in turn can often lead to further disrespect from the young person (Choongh, 1997). So, often young people feel doubly disempowered when they believe that they are suspects because they are young and that any attempts to disagree with these assumptions can lead to aggressive treatment from the Gardaí.

It is acknowledged by participants that when they are openly disrespectful to Gardaí themselves this can cause antagonistic interactions to escalate to a more aggressive situation;

"I suppose the Gardaí could be more polite, but I suppose teenagers as well, could be more polite as well, we don't like, some people, like, talk back or give cheek to the Gardaí and that's unnecessary as well. But, am...yea, I suppose like there's fault on both sides you know" (Male, age 16 years, Site 1).

Many young people believe that they have some personal responsibility for how the Gardaí react to them, but they also feel that the manner in which they are spoken to by Gardaí is a cause of their own disrespectful behaviour. Often young people feel they are at a disadvantage against Garda officers who have the power to make their own "...accounts of incidents the authoritative one" (National Crime Council, 2003, p. 68), a factor that the participants in this study were clearly aware of;

"...there's no point [in complaining about unfair treatment] because if I make a complaint, they're just going to turn around and make it my fault" (Male, age 18 years, Site 1).

"...just, don't give them back cheek or something like, because then they'd give you a caution or something" (Male, age 13 years, Site 2).

Young people reported that they often feel that they cannot anticipate how a Garda will treat them during an interaction. This leaves them with feelings of being powerless and lacking control over the situation and means that they cannot predict the outcomes of an interaction even if they have had a similar encounter in the past. This sense of uncertainty affects how young people view the Gardaí in that they feel unable to trust them and lose respect for their authority through what they see as the use of unfair discretionary powers. Perceptions of Garda misconduct also lead to a feeling of fear among young people who believe that they may be mistreated by a Garda officer but have no way of knowing when that may happen. This uncertainty is also reflected in young people's comments on their

perceptions of Garda performance in that they feel that the Gardaí may not always prioritise the same things as young people feel are important.

There is a sense of resignation from some of the participants who feel that trying to assert themselves with Gardaí is pointless, so instead they lower their expectations of equal treatment and find ways to shorten their interactions with Gardaí and avoid confrontations with them. They believe that they are treated differently to adults and that the Gardaí don't take their complaints or reports seriously. In the longer term, this also means that they reported being reluctant to approach the Gardaí for any reason, even if they have been the victim of a crime themselves.

6.3.3 Uncertainty of expectations. The strongest negative reaction to unmet expectations with Gardaí was expressed by those who had reported a crime, this relates to both expectations of treatment from the Gardaí and expectations of performance.

"I just thought the Gardaí were, you know, good people, and they help the community and...they're there to help you and stuff. Like now if my house was getting robbed I wouldn't even think, I wouldn't consider calling them, I'd deal with it myself" (Male, age 18 years, Site 1).

"I was staying at a friend's house and my bike was stolen and, when I found out the next morning, we rang, and the Guards were like 'Oh yea, we'll be up there in like five minutes', and we stayed there all day and they didn't show up at all" (Male, age 16 years, Site 1).

Experiences such as these, particularly when young people feel let down by the Gardaí they see as being there primarily to help people, are reported by participants to lead to a reduced sense of trust and confidence in the Gardaí more generally. Trust here appears to be most strongly affected by having dissatisfying interactions with a Garda, and may lead young people to feeling that they *"...wouldn't expect too much"* (Female, age 18 years, Site 1) in the way of support from Gardaí. These sentiments have the potential to have more long term implications for

police-citizen relationships if young people feel that their trust in the Gardaí has been eroded and they report being less likely to cooperate with the Gardaí in the future.

When asked whether they would report a crime to the Gardaí in the future and if they would trust the Gardaí to investigate it fully a majority (15 out of 17 participants) said that they wouldn't if it was a minor crime, mainly because they wouldn't expect the Gardaí to take it seriously. Some participants from Site 2 also mentioned that they would be worried about reprisals for reporting against some people in their neighbourhood and that they wouldn't trust the Gardaí to protect them in these cases, while others, due to past experiences, were fearful of being blamed themselves;

"Because I wouldn't want the Guards to have anything got to do with it...because some of them is cheeky and...try to get you arrested and all this, put you to jail" (Male, age 14 years, Site 2).

"I would but, the way it's gone today, if you report the wrong lads, they could come back and do anything to you like, that's the way it is..."(Male, age 17 years, Site 2).

These quotes reflect the lack of trust that young people have in the Gardaí and may point to problems in future cooperation with Gardaí in terms of reporting crimes or offering information to them when it is needed.

Uncertainty of what to expect from interactions with Gardaí can come from not knowing whether the Gardaí will treat them as if they have committed an offence and there is a feeling that *"sometimes they can just pick on a teenager like for no reason"* (Male, age 16 years, Site 1). There appears to be no consistent manner for the Gardaí to deal with the same offence. The most common offence that these participants reported was underage drinking, and they revealed a range of responses from Gardaí when they had been caught from having their alcohol confiscated, being moved on, being brought home to their parents or being brought to the station. This use of discretion on the

part of different Gardaí adds to the feeling of uncertainty that young people have when they find themselves unable to predict the outcome of interactions even if they have committed an offence;

"...there's times when they'll throw you into the cab, and there's times when they'll just pour out your drink, so, there's not a balanced view on it, because it depends on the Guard you get, some of them will abuse their power, some of them won't, some of them will just take a bad liking towards you and they'll do things differently, but, I mean, some of them can be quite nice and let you off the hook" (Male, age 16 years, Site 1).

In contrast, encounters with the community Garda at Site 2 appeared to be more predictable whether participants had committed an offence or not. This officer was frequently referred to as being fair regardless of the outcome, as a number of participants from Site 2 had been formally cautioned by the community Garda. Through the relationship that had been formed between these participants and their community Garda, they felt that whatever the situation, they could reliably anticipate how the interaction would end and they felt safe in the knowledge that this Garda would treat them fairly and without aggression regardless of the reason for their interaction. When participants are able to predict how a particular Garda will react to them they are more inclined to approach that Garda themselves which ultimately should help to further strengthen the relationship between them;

"No, I wouldn't have trust in the Guards, properly, but, you know, there's one or two of them that I could see, and I'd stop and talk to them, you know, 'cause some of them are very, very nice, but some of them are just horrible" (Male, age 12 years, Site 1).

Participants reported that they had certain expectations of the Gardaí in terms of both how they do their jobs and how they treat citizens in interactions. While all participants stated that they view the Gardaí as a necessary authority in an ordered society, they believed that this should be achieved by the Gardaí through fair and respectful

means. For those whose expectations of the Gardaí were not met, usually those who had reported a crime, their attitudes toward Garda performance were most negative. Through their own experiences young people find themselves questioning their expectations of the Gardaí and, for older participants, recognise that these are not met with any consistency. This affects the levels of confidence in the Gardaí that participants reported and also their trust in the Gardaí to perform to the standards they would like them to achieve.

6.3.4 Uncertainty of rights and status. Participants referred to their sense of powerlessness within interactions with Gardaí and also in terms of their ability to influence how the Gardaí perceive them. Young people appear to assess their own behaviour with Gardaí with reference to their social status compared to Garda officers. Also, young people report that they feel they are placed in different social categories by Gardaí depending on whether they are alone or with a group of their peers, if they are deemed to have offended or not and, even the time of day or night that they have contact with Gardaí. Participants felt that not only are they treated as continuous suspects by Gardaí, but that they are rarely given the opportunity to defend themselves or have their say because they are deemed untrustworthy or untruthful.

Discretionary powers of the Gardaí mean that they can ultimately decide how to deal with any individual young person they meet and there is no way for that young person to fully anticipate the potential outcomes. There is also a sense that while these young people are aware they have rights, they are not entirely sure what these rights are, and that this puts them at a disadvantage as they also feel unable to assert themselves in interactions with Gardaí partly because of this lack of knowledge. This leads to a general feeling of uncertainty for young people particularly if they are approached by an officer they don't know, and they cannot form expectations of how the interaction will play out;

"...with different Guards there's different rules that will apply because they have that leeway, they can decide to arrest you, decide what to do with you, so, when you meet a Garda, you're hoping you get lucky" (Male, age 16 years, Site 1).

This is further exacerbated by a general lack of knowledge of proper procedures in young people which are not explained to them by the Gardaí leaving them open to further uncertainty;

"...they're not really...telling you what the law is properly, like if there was a thing where they could explain to children what it is and what's the procedure, but they're not, they're just doing it their own way and whatever way they think is right..."(Male, age 12 years, Site 1).

Participants repeatedly expressed the feeling that the Gardaí see all young people as 'troublemakers' and that they were often branded as such regardless of whether they had offended or not. This is especially true in situations involving both a young person and an adult, where young people presume that they will be deemed the guilty party regardless of the facts of the situation;

"I remember a friend was...and he was completely innocent...he was out on Halloween, and he was caught with the wrong group, and a man chased him, beat him up and beat the crap out of him like, and...had the audacity to call the Guards and get him arrested. And, they [the Gardaí] didn't listen to him at all" (Male, age 15 years, Site 1).

This feeling of continuous suspicion leads young people to either avoid contact with the Gardaí at all, or approach encounters with them in a defensive manner, which often results in increasingly antagonistic interactions.

As already mentioned, participants see legal control from Gardaí as necessary to keep social order and control. However, if they believe the Gardaí are not also following rules as they should be, by abusing their authority or not focusing on what participants deem to be important matters, young people express the belief that their own obligation to obey the law is reduced;

“Some people like to follow the law, but there’s no point following the law, if they’re not going to try and help you, because I saw a few times now, you could tell that they’re not even listening, so what is the point...if they’re not even going to try and do anything about it...” (Male, age 15 years, Site 2).

While agreeing that breaking the law should lead to some form of intervention by the Gardaí, participants feel that it is unjustified to assume that all young people are offending all of the time, and are keen to distinguish themselves from what they see as ‘real criminals’; *“...like, whatever you’re doing, you’ve done it, or if they think you’ve done it they’re...like it’s understandable the Guards are doing their job, but you’d see it, you’d see a Garda just ‘empty your pockets’ and you know like that, just straight off, presumed guilty towards the youth”* (Male, age 16 years, Site 1).

However, there is also the acceptance that some Garda intervention may be seen as unfair in the present time by young people but that the motives of the Gardaí are to ensure their future compliance with the law;

“...some fellas...they don’t cop on until later years that they have actually put them right, and later years they will realise that what they [the Gardaí] did put them right, like...the young lads think the Guards are wrong, but they’re not basically, they’re putting them on the right track” (Male, age 17 years, Site 2).

Descriptions of the community Garda by participants in Site 2 tended to be different when compared to those about other Gardaí. The community Garda was not thought to engage in stereotyping of young people, a feature of the more equal relationship that young people felt had developed between them. As with other aspects of these young people’s attitudes however, the community Garda was seen to be an exception compared to the Gardaí generally, and perceptions of how this Garda viewed young people was seen to be a feature of her own personality rather than the usual or expected views of all Gardaí. In the

view of participants, images of them, or more specifically ‘teenagers’ and ‘youths’ being only either troublesome or troubled permeate society’s views of them and is often reflected in the way they are treated by adult institutions such as the Gardaí.

Based on their own experiences, participants report that they often feel that they are hassled by the Gardaí who they see as ‘having nothing better to do’, and because they can get away with harassing young people as stated by one participant *“it’s easier to treat us badly I suppose, who are we going to tell?”* (Male, age 15 years, Site 1). Young people feel that often there is no-one that they can tell if they are mistreated by the Gardaí, as the majority of their offending is also hidden from their parents, particularly in the form of underage drinking. They also feel that their status as less trustworthy members of society is reflected in the different ways that Gardaí treat younger people and adults;

“...once you’re an adult it’s like...most things are legal, the illegal things that teenagers do are legal...they trust you more...they don’t expect you to do something wrong or illegal or something. They definitely have a different attitude, a more friendly, or more trustworthy attitude” (Male, age 15 years, Site 1).

So, young people are aware of the different status that they hold in society, and relate this to the ways that they perceive they are treated by the Gardaí, and sometimes by other adults also. While they accept that the Gardaí need to have some power over citizens in order to enforce the law, they see the treatment of themselves and other young people as often being unnecessarily forceful and sometimes uncalled for. In addition, young people are conscious of the consequences of their asserting themselves in confrontation with Gardaí and believe that they are seen to be in the wrong because of the differences between themselves and the Gardaí in terms of status and social authority. While young people are aware that they have rights when dealing with the Gardaí, many reported that they didn’t know what those rights

were, and that they felt their rights were inconsequential because the Gardaí frequently 'change the rules' to suit themselves thereby leaving young people in a disadvantaged position.

6.4 Discussion of Qualitative Results

Young people must make decisions about who to trust in the world and participants in this study expressed a desire to have a police force they can trust in but appeared disillusioned by their experiences and their uncertainty about the justness of how they felt they may be treated by Garda officers. Disengagement with the processes of law and order is a common theme across interviews from both research sites. While most participants endorsed following the law and the importance that holds for the wider society, they often also reported that they don't feel confident enough in the Gardaí to uphold the law sufficiently.

Uncertainty is evident across all aspects of the interviews including personal and vicarious experiences with Gardaí which relate to both treatment and outcomes, and also in relation to participant's own rights in interactions and how they think they should be treated. Uncertainty can also be seen in relation to understandings of agency and control, as in how much control the Gardaí should be allowed to have, this is especially important around public space issues and being stopped and searched for no apparent reason. The consequences of these perceptions are twofold. They impact on perceptions of respect for the Gardaí which in turn can be a factor in antagonistic interactions. Secondly, young people reported they were less likely to see the Gardaí as legitimate authorities and were less likely to follow directives from them.

The uncertainty of expectations that participants experienced can lead to cynicism and disrespect; this can be seen in the counter attitudes toward the community officer or other officers they know where positive views come from a sense of predictability of treatment. The importance of procedural justice in interactions is evident here in that participants don't necessarily see being arrested as negative but if

the procedures used are fair they interpret the outcome as fair also. This is in line with much of the research on the effects of procedural justice and legitimacy on attitudes toward the police (e.g. Gau, 2011; Tyler, 2006b; 2009). However, positive and procedurally just interactions in one instance appear to have little effect on more general, or global, attitudes toward the Gardaí as an institution which remain largely negative as would be expected from previous studies (Dai, Frank & Sun, 2011; Skogan, 2006). In contrast to previous studies however, those from Site 2 (a more socially and economically disadvantaged neighbourhood compared to Site 1) had more positive rather than antagonistic police interactions than those from Site 1 which was due to the presence of a community officer (Choongh, 1997; Crawford, 2009). Even with this more frequent positive interaction however, the attitudes of participants at Site 2 remained largely negative.

The perceived misuse of power by the Gardaí, and especially experiencing or witnessing this first hand, was directly linked to feelings of respect, trust and legitimacy toward the Gardaí. Respect in particular was reported to be reciprocal; generally young people felt that if they are shown respect by Gardaí, they are likely to give respect to them in return. Trust in the Gardaí is revealed through reports of how committed the Gardaí are perceived to be to their jobs and whether or not a young person would report a crime to them. Perceptions of legitimacy are linked to respect, trust and procedural fairness but also to the sense of moral obligation to obey both the directives of the Gardaí and the law more generally.

Participants expressed the feeling that they have often felt that they are powerless in interactions with the Gardaí and that this affects how they view the Gardaí overall. When talking about the institution of the Gardaí as a legal authority, many young people, in particular those who have had a negative experience, reported that they felt less obligated to obey the directives of a Garda that they no longer viewed as legitimate. These two factors are likely to be intertwined where the

perceived legitimacy of an authority will impact on how morally obligated an individual feels to comply with them. Other psycho-social factors, in particular the views or influence of peer attitudes are not as strong as has been predicted in other studies (e.g. Leiber, Nalla & Farnworth, 1989). Participants made distinctions between close friends and peers and tended to view the reported experiences of peers as exaggerated 'stories' meant for entertainment of others rather than accurate presentations of events. On the whole these young people see their attitudes toward the Gardaí as open to change over the course of moving into adulthood but this is reported to be due to the changing views that Gardaí will have of them, and the subsequent change in treatment, rather than due to their own changing outlooks. As has been found in previous studies (e.g. Bradford, Jackson & Stanko, 2009; Hinds, 2007; Rosenbaum, Schuck, Costello, Hawkins & Ring, 2005; Skogan, 2005) this implies that personal experiences would be an important explanatory factor in understanding young people's attitudes toward the Gardaí.

As it is commonly acknowledged that the police rely on the public to inform them of crimes that have happened as well as to assist in their investigation of them, coupled with the identification of young people as the most likely victims of crime (Crawford, 2009), this reluctance of young people to report crimes to the Gardaí could undermine a very important aspect of their purpose. Participants believed that because the Gardaí already hold a fixed view of them and make immediate assumptions about their guilt that any effort to defend themselves is subsequently seen as 'being cheeky'. This leads young people to avoid any contact with the Gardaí and to feel that they cannot trust them even when they haven't committed any offence.

There is evidence to support both the performance perspective of attitudes toward the police and the procedural justice perspective. Participants focused on both aspects of the Gardaí in their descriptions of their own attitudes, although procedurally just treatment appeared

to be more important to this sample. It is likely that both perceptions of the performance of the Gardaí, including perceptions of their misconduct, and procedural justice and perceptions of the legitimate authority of the Gardaí are both relevant to understanding the attitudes of Irish young people as has been found in other studies outside of the US (Hinds, 2009a).

Individual factors are difficult to determine in this small sample ($N = 20$), there is insufficient variation in both age and gender to investigate whether they influence attitudes toward the Gardaí or not. Participants own offending behaviour may have a part to play in their attitudes via the increased number of contacts that they expose themselves to through such behaviour. While other studies have found that there are links between negative attitudes and offending behaviour (Brick, Taylor & Esbensen, 2009; Piquero et. al, 2005) this relationship appears to be more complex within the current sample, whereby offending behaviour, contacts with Gardaí and other psycho-social factors are likely to interact to influence attitudes.

6.5 Development of the Theoretical Model

The primary aim of the qualitative study was to gain an understanding of the attitudes of Irish young people toward the Gardaí and use this information in conjunction with existing literature to build a theoretical model of factors that may influence these attitudes. The ways in which the qualitative themes from this study can be arranged into a theoretical model represent the perceptions that young people hold toward both the Gardaí and the law, including their own understandings of their relationships with the Gardaí. In the present study the factors that emerged as relevant in understanding young people's attitudes toward the Gardaí are comparable to factors measured in a variety of existing studies, both qualitative and quantitative. However, the patterns of influence that are apparent in this study suggest the need for a more comprehensive and complex set of factors and relationships to be measured in a single model than has

previously been undertaken within the literature. This section will detail the development of a theoretical model that will later be tested through quantitative statistical analyses by representing themes and sub-themes as quantitative variables.

As outlined in **Chapter 2**, attitudes are thought to be composed of three elements, affect, cognitions and behaviours (Ajzen & Fishbein, 2000; Maio & Haddock, 2009). The themes that emerged through analysis of the current study data can be grouped under these umbrella terms also. The first two sub themes, (uncertainty within interactions and of Garda behaviour) combined give an indication of how young people perceive the Gardaí and can be seen as reflecting the affective element of attitudes toward the Gardaí. Uncertainty of expectations, which influences both legal cynicism and perceptions of moral obligation to obey the law, reflects the cognitive element of attitudes. Finally, both offending behaviour and predicted future cooperation (under the sub theme of rights and status) can be seen to reflect the behavioural aspects of attitudes. Each of these three aspects combined give an indication of the attitudes of young people toward the Gardaí and allows for differential effects of each of these elements to be measured simultaneously and to assess the relationships between individual factors. Within the model presented here, each component of young people's attitudes toward the Gardaí has been given a title that reflect factors that have been measured quantitatively in the existing literature to better facilitate the construction of a survey instrument to be used to test the model.

6.5.1 The affective component– Perceptions of Gardaí.

Young people's perceptions of the Gardaí reflect the meanings that participants expressed about them in terms of both how effective they perceive them to be and how professional they view them to be. The individual indicators of perceptions of the Gardaí are those explained under the themes of interactions and Garda behaviour. From the qualitative analysis it appears that both of these themes are equally

important to young people in explaining their perceptions of the Gardaí and they focus on the perceived effort of Gardaí rather than their success when they refer to them doing a 'good job' which includes both how they are seen to treat citizens and how they approach their duties.

Previous studies have highlighted the importance of citizen's impressions of the fairness of police in dealing with the public. The procedural justice perspective shows that in many cases the attitudes of individuals will be more affected by how they perceive they have been treated by police than by the actual outcome of their contact (e.g. Paternoster, Brame, Bachman & Sherman, 1997; Sunshine & Tyler, 2003; Tyler, 2006b; 2009). These perceptions are thought to influence both how the individual views the police generally and how they will interpret any future interactions (Sunshine & Tyler, 2003). However, the bulk of this research is based on US populations. Studies from other countries, in particular Australia, have found that both perceptions of the performance or effectiveness of the police and perceptions of fair treatment are important in considering citizen's attitudes (Hinds, 2009a; 2009b; Hough, Jackson, Bradford, Myhill & Quinton, 2010). Differences in findings across studies that investigate the effects of procedural justice and legitimacy on individual's attitudes toward the police have been argued to be due to a lack of focus on the underlying psychometric properties of measurements used (Gau, 2011; Maguire & Johnson, 2010).

In the current qualitative study, perceptions of Gardaí appear to be influenced by a number of individual factors that include procedural justice, perceptions of legitimacy and respect for Gardaí and perceptions of Garda performance and misconduct. Perceptions of Gardaí are not formed in a vacuum and as related by participants there are a number of sources of information that affect the views they hold of the Gardaí. Both perceptions of the fairness of Gardaí and their effectiveness are included together in the current model as they are both equally likely to influence overall perceptions of the Gardaí (Hinds,

2009a), however, it is also possible that young people will have largely positive views of Garda performance while also holding negative views of their own experiences (Carr et. al, 2007; Dirikx, et. al, 2012; Solis, Portillos & Brunson, 2009). Perceptions that arise from views about Garda-youth interactions are represented by the factors of respect, procedural justice and legitimacy.

Perceptions of Garda performance and misconduct are related to each other as participants tended to refer to both when speaking about their views on the effectiveness of the Gardaí, and they have been shown to be linked in previous studies (Crawford, 2009; Hurst & Frank, 2000). Participants in this study tended to view the Gardaí as being effective only if they carried out their duties without resorting to aggressive behaviour. Also, young people may be more sensitive to the effects of police misconduct than older citizens (Dai, Frank & Sun, 2011) which may lead to a greater impact on their overall attitudes toward the Gardaí than perceptions of performance alone, both of these elements of Garda behaviour are included in the factor of perceptions of the Gardaí as shown in **Figure 6.1** below.

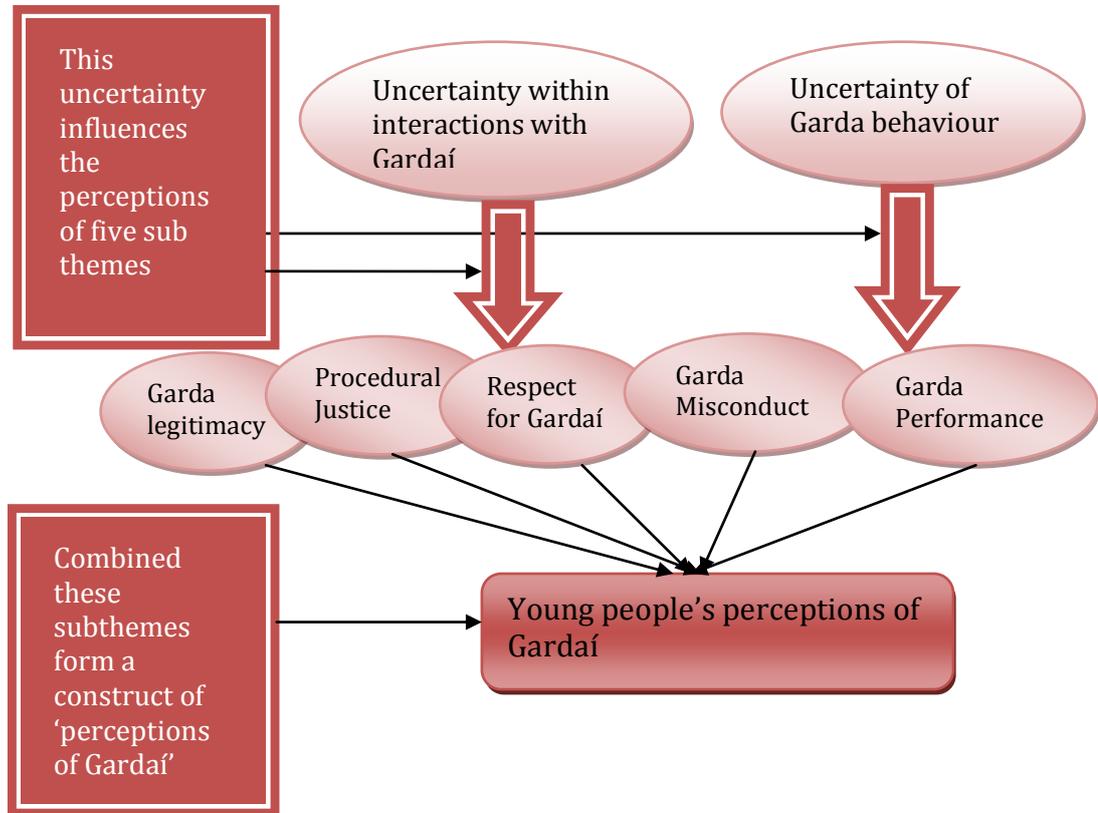


Figure 6.1: Theoretical links between the effects of uncertainty within interactions with the Gardaí and of Garda behaviour on the construct of overall perceptions of the Gardaí.

6.5.2 The cognitive component – Legal socialisation. Legal socialisation refers to the cognitive elements of attitudes toward the Gardaí and includes both legal cynicism and moral obligation to obey the law. Legal cynicism reflects thoughts about the authority of the Gardaí and their right to hold that authority. Moral obligation refers to young people's perceptions of their own obligation to follow rules as set down by the legal system and to follow the directives of the Gardaí. Both of these are thought to be related to, but separate from, procedural fairness and legitimacy elements of perceptions of the Gardaí as outlined above (Fagan & Tyler, 2005; Piquero et. al, 2005; Sunshine &

Tyler, 2003). Moral obligation can also reflect a young person's moral reasoning about which laws they deem to be justified and which ones they see as less so (Turiel, 2008). Both aspects of legal socialisation are shown under the theme of uncertainty of expectations as participants in the current study expressed this type of reasoning when talking about the types of treatment they anticipate from Gardaí and how they would like to be treated in the future. Both elements of expectations are linked but separate cognitive processes that are likely to change over adolescence through experience and maturity (Turiel, 1983; 2008).

Both moral obligation and legal cynicism are related to perceptions of Garda performance and fairness. Those who have a higher sense of moral obligation to obey the law and a corresponding low level of legal cynicism will be expected to show more positive perceptions of the Gardaí overall. Moral obligation and legal cynicism have been found to be related to views of the legitimacy of the police which tends to be most negative during mid-adolescence (Carr et. al, 2007; Hough et. al, 2010; Piquero et. al, 2005). As they are both considered to be transitory aspects of adolescence and are expected to change as young people take on the responsibilities of adulthood, they are best reflected as cognitive processes of legal socialisation which is understood to be an ongoing developmental process similar to other area of socialisation (Fagan & Tyler, 2005; Steinberg, 1993) as shown in **Figure 6.2** below.

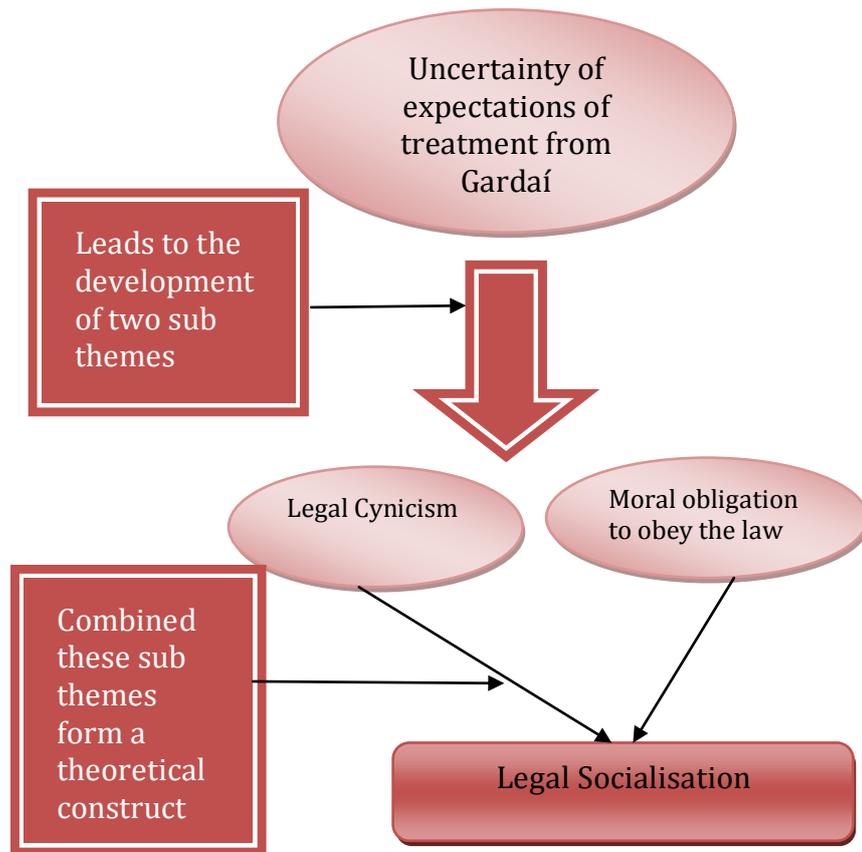


Figure 6.2 Theoretical links between the effects of uncertainty of expectations from Gardaí on the construct of legal socialisation

6.5.3 The behavioural component – Offending and future

cooperation. Current levels of offending behaviour may have an effect on young people’s attitudes toward the Gardaí (Brick et. al, 2009). This may be influenced through cognitive processes, such as moral obligation to obey the law, but also through an increased risk of negative interactions with the Gardaí (McAra & McVie, 2005). In combination higher offending and greater frequency of contact with Gardaí can influence young people’s report intentions for future cooperation such as reporting crimes or offering information to Gardaí (Slocum, et. al, 2010). Levels of offending in young people is also likely to reflect their level of moral obligation to obey the law as these have

been found to be negatively correlated in previous studies (Larden, Melin, Holst & Langstrom, 2006; Piquero et. al, 2005).

These behavioural components of attitudes in this study can be both outcome and influencing factors in attitudes toward the Gardaí. It has not yet been established if young people develop negative attitudes toward the law and police and subsequently engage in offending behaviour or if offending itself serves to encourage the development of these attitudes. Likewise, while offending and intentions for future behaviour have been found to be linked, there is no evidence to suggest that future cooperation is entirely dependent on positive attitudes. As expressed by participants in the current study, intentions for future cooperation tend to be seen as complex processes that are changeable depending on particular situations. For example, many participants stated that they wouldn't report crime to the Gardaí in their own neighbourhoods but that they may report something if they felt it was a serious crime.

The level of offending that a young person engages in should be directly related to the amount of contact they have with the Gardaí, however, as has been shown in previous research, it may be that certain groups of young people have more contact regardless of their offending behaviour (Choongh, 1997). Nonetheless, those who break the law more often are the group most likely to be at risk of negative contact with the Gardaí and they are seen to be related in this model. Future cooperation is likely to be related to both offending and contacts with the Gardaí. Qualitative analysis of the current study suggests that those who have had more negative contact are least likely to state intentions to cooperate with the Gardaí in the future. Initiating voluntary contact with the Gardaí may be a reflection of the affective and cognitive components of attitudes already outlined above. These three behavioural components are presented in **Figure 6.3** below.

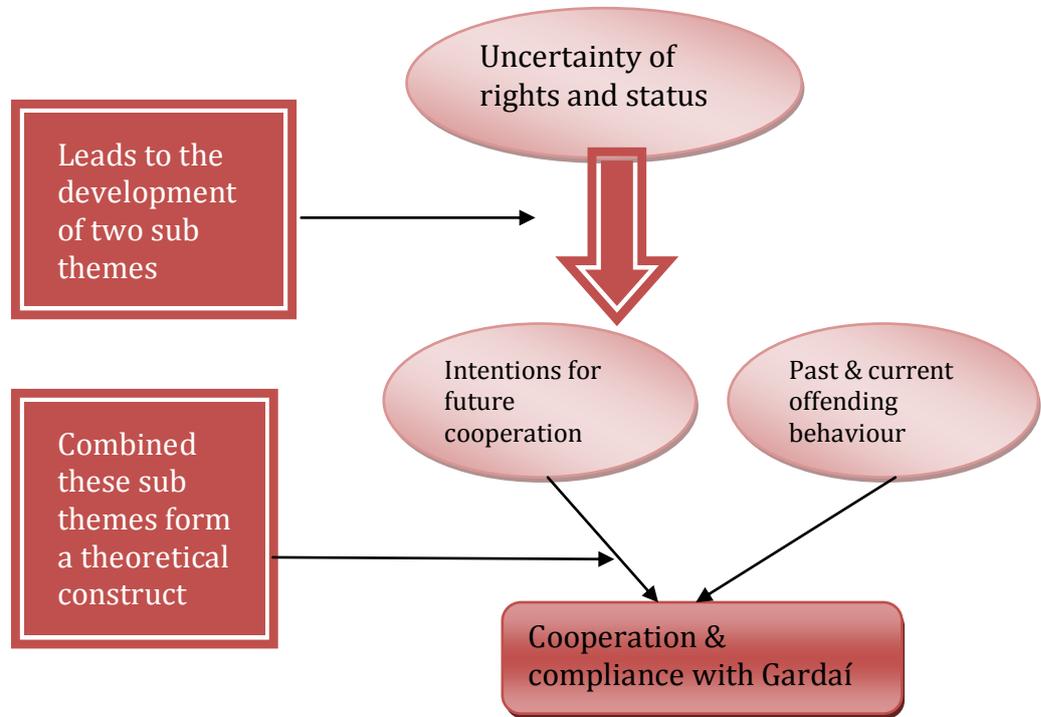


Figure 6.3 Theoretical links between the effects of uncertainty around rights and status and the construct of cooperation and compliance with Gardaí.

The full model of all three theoretical factors is given in **Figure 6.4** below.

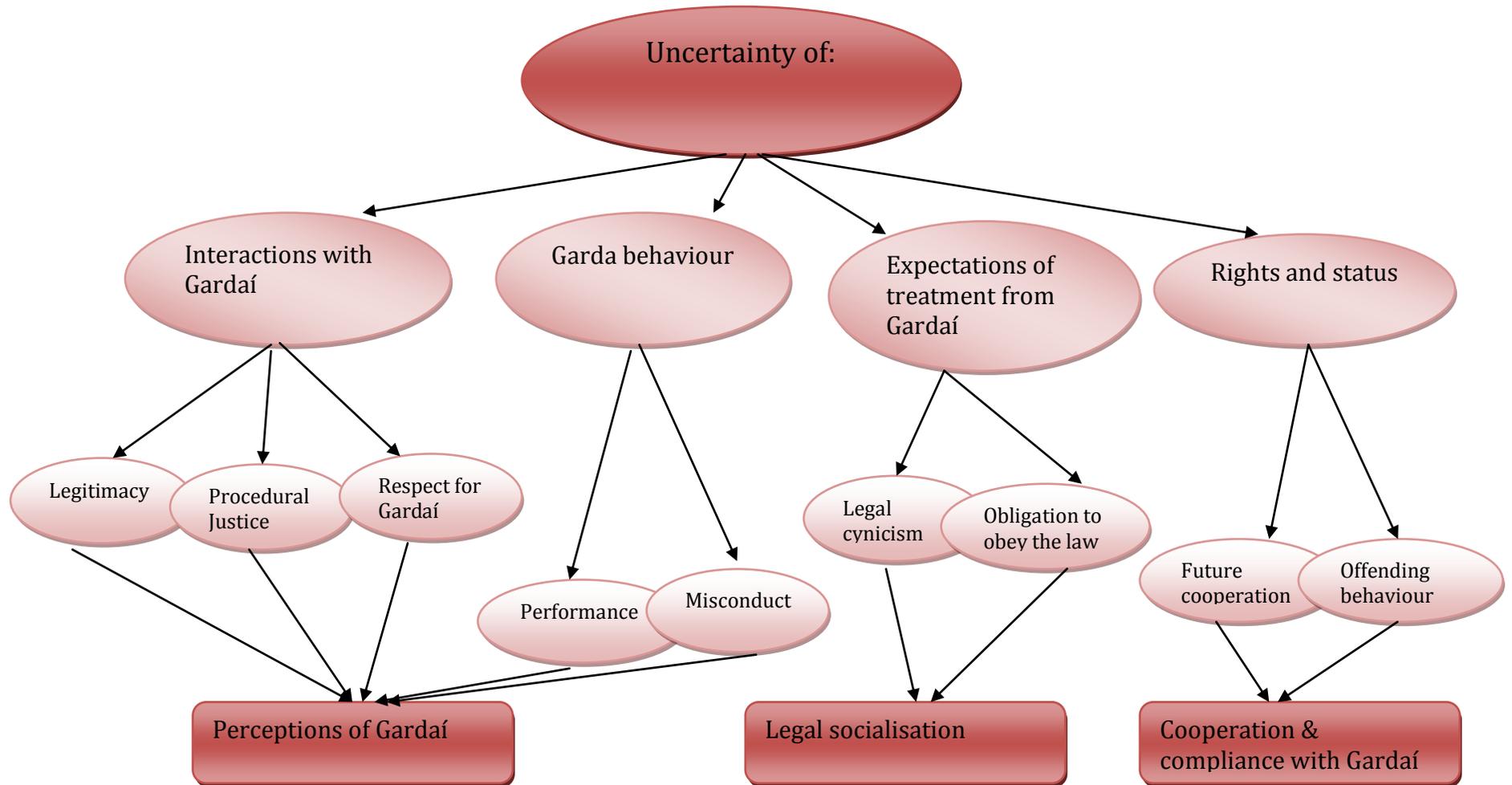


Figure 6.4 Full theoretical model of the ways that uncertainty influences the aspects of young people’s attitudes toward the Gardaí including the qualitative themes derived from data analysis.

6.6 Summary

The primary aim of this qualitative study was to explore the nature of young people's attitudes toward the Gardaí and the factors that influence them. Data analysis showed that young people in this study hold both positive and negative views of the Gardaí simultaneously and these views depend on whether participants were referring to individual Garda officers or the institution of the Gardaí. The core category that emerged from data analysis was uncertainty which affected each of the sub-themes of interactions: Garda behaviour, expectations, and young people's rights and status.

Each of the sub-themes subsequently reflects factors that have been measured in different ways in previous studies, although in this study they present a different pattern of influence on attitudes. Each theme can be understood through the three components of attitudes (Maio & Haddock, 2010) of affect (perceptions of Gardaí), behaviour (cooperation and compliance) and cognition (legal socialisation). The theoretical model was developed through data analysis and an extensive review of existing literature and presents a complex but parsimonious model of attitudes toward the Gardaí that can be tested through quantitative methods of data analysis.

Chapter 7: Study Two Methods

7.1 Aims of the Chapter

The aim of this chapter is to present the methodology used for the quantitative study. It will present an outline of the research design used and the quantitative measurements used to assess the themes from the theoretical model developed in the previous chapter. The chapter will give the details of the piloting phase of the questionnaire, calculation of sample size for the full study and, participant recruitment. Finally, the data analysis chosen for this study will be outlined.

7.2 Objectives of the Quantitative Study

The purpose of this quantitative study was to compile a survey instrument composed of the factors identified in the theoretical model developed in the qualitative study and to test the model through quantitative statistical methods on a larger sample of young people. In addition a number of objectives were proposed for this study:

1. To test the theoretical model developed through qualitative data analysis on a larger sample of young people and to assess the relevance of the factors included in the model in explaining their attitudes toward the Gardaí.
2. To better understand the dimensions of young people's attitudes toward the Gardaí and the relationships between factors predicted to have an influence on these attitudes.
3. To assess the strength of the factors proposed in the model to predict young people's attitudes toward the Gardaí.

7.3 Hypotheses for the Quantitative Study

A number of hypotheses were tested in the quantitative study:

1. In combination the three factors of perceptions of Gardaí, legal socialisation, and cooperation and compliance will predict attitudes toward the Gardaí.
 - 1.a More positive perceptions of Garda performance and fairness will predict positive overall attitudes toward Gardaí.

- 1.b Higher levels of legal socialisation will predict positive attitudes toward the Gardaí.
- 1.c Higher reported cooperation and compliance with the law will predict more positive attitudes toward the Gardaí.
2. Perceptions of the Gardaí will be predicted by four indicators.
 - 2.a Higher scores on the Garda performance scale will predict more positive perceptions of Gardaí.
 - 2.b Higher scores on the procedural justice scale will predict more positive perceptions of Gardaí.
 - 2.c Higher scores on the Garda legitimacy scale will predict more positive perceptions of Gardaí.
 - 2.d Lower scores on the Garda misconduct scale will predict more positive perceptions of Gardaí.
3. Legal socialisation will be predicted by two indicators.
 - 3.a Higher scores on the moral obligation to obey the law scale will predict higher levels of legal socialisation.
 - 3.b Lower scores on the legal cynicism scale will predict higher levels of legal socialisation.
4. Cooperation and compliance will be predicted by two indicators.
 - 4.a Higher scores on the intentions for future cooperation scale will predict higher levels of cooperation and compliance.
 - 4.b Higher levels of compliance, (measured as lower levels of offending behaviour), will predict higher levels of cooperation and compliance.
5. Higher levels of self reported offending behaviour will predict greater number and frequency of Garda contact.
6. Greater numbers and frequency of Garda contact will predict more negative overall attitudes toward the Gardaí.
7. Three covariates will also help to predict attitudes toward the Gardaí.
 - 7.a Age will predict overall attitudes toward the Gardaí where

increasing age will be associated with more negative attitudes.

7.b Gender will predict attitudes toward the Gardaí with males having more negative overall attitudes compared to females.

7.c Attitudes toward other authorities will predict overall attitudes toward the Gardaí where those with positive attitudes toward other authorities will also have positive attitudes toward the Gardaí.

7.4 Research Design

This study was a quantitative survey composed of a number of measurement scales each reflecting one of the themes identified through qualitative analysis of interview data. A cross-sectional, self report approach was used. This design was chosen as the study is primarily exploratory with the intention of testing the validity of the theoretical model developed from qualitative analysis of the previous study data. This approach allows for the model to be tested without explicit expectations and will allow for refinement of the model. This can occur in two ways. Firstly where a factor (or an item within a scale) is shown to reduce model fit it may be considered for removal from the model. The second type of refinement can occur where a priori relationships between factors and/or latent variables show poor correlations these can be modified to or removed to create a model that shows a better explanation of the data.

This study depends largely on self reporting from young people as has been used in previous studies (e.g. Fagan & Tyler, 2005; Smith & McVie, 2003). Self report measures are also commonly used in studies that measure offending and law breaking in young people and have been found to have reasonable reliability when compared to official statistics (Thornberry & Krohn, 2000). Using a self report approach also helps to ensure the anonymity of participant's surveys as this was considered important to encourage greater honesty in responding. Each of the scales in the current survey have been used in this way in the past and have shown good levels of reliability and validity in this

context and are outlined in the following section.

As already stated each measurement was chosen for its ability to quantitatively assess one of the qualitative themes within the model.

Figure 7.1 below shows each theme in the model mapped onto its corresponding quantitative measurement.

Qualitative Theme	Mapped Onto	Quantitatively Measured Construct
1. <i>Perceptions of Respect & Legitimacy</i>		Legitimacy
2. <i>Perceived Fairness of Gardaí</i>		Procedural Justice
3. <i>Perceptions of Garda Performance</i>		Performance
4. <i>Perceptions of Garda Misconduct</i>		Misconduct
5. <i>Obligation to Obey the Law</i>		Moral Obligation to Obey the Law
6. <i>Legal Cynicism</i>		Legal Cynicism
7. <i>Offending Behaviour</i>		Self-Report Delinquency
8. <i>Experiences with Gardaí</i>		Contacts with Gardaí
9. <i>Cooperation with Gardaí</i>		Future Cooperation

Figure 7.1 Qualitative Themes that are Mapped onto the Quantitative Constructs used in Study 2.

7.5 Measurements

The survey instrument consisted of both previously existing scales and scales constructed by the researcher for the purposes of the current study based on findings from the qualitative study (e.g. experiences with Gardaí). In addition, questions on demographic information, such as gender and age, were included. This provided a survey instrument with demographic questions and a total of 9 variables measuring attitudes toward the Gardaí. A full copy of the final survey is available in **Appendix G**.

7.5.1 Demographic information. This section was devised by the researcher based on examples of similar demographic surveys used in the Edinburgh Study of Youth Transitions and Crime (McAra & McVie, 2005) which also targeted a similar population sample to that in the current study. Questions asked about the participant's age, gender, country of birth, number of people in the household, parental employment status and education, and whether their family has a medical card.

7.6 Perceptions of Garda Performance and Effectiveness

Perceptions of Garda behaviour as related to overall attitudes were evident in the qualitative study phase. These perceptions were of two types: how effective young people thought they were at their jobs and; how often the Gardaí were perceived to break the rules or the law. Young people's perceptions of the Gardaí were measured through four scales indicating levels of perceived performance of Gardaí, their use of procedural justice or fairness, the legitimacy of Gardaí and, Garda misconduct. Procedural justice and legitimacy are commonly measured together with the assumption that perceived procedural justice directly affects the perceptions of legitimacy of legal authorities (Tyler, 2006b). Two questions relating to perceived respect for Gardaí have been integrated into the perceived legitimacy scale as they are reflective of one of the elements of legitimacy, based on a review of previous studies, rather than as a single, distinct, variable. Performance of Gardaí

indicates the perceived effectiveness of and satisfaction with the Gardaí in general terms and is frequently used in surveys of attitudes toward the police (e.g. Browne, 2008). Perceived misconduct by the Gardaí was measured to indicate levels of perceived unfairness or abuses of power that the Gardaí are thought to engage in and are thought to have an effect on perceptions of legitimacy and performance of the Gardaí overall.

7.6.1 Legitimacy and respect. Perceived legitimacy is defined as “...the property of an authority or institution that leads people to feel that that authority or institution is entitled to be deferred to or obeyed.” (Tyler, 2003, p. 514). When people view the law and legal authorities as legitimate they are thought to be more likely to obey the law and to comply with directives from those authorities (Paternoster, Brame, Bachman & Sherman, 1997; Tyler, 2006; Sunshine & Tyler, 2003), so it has been measured reasonably extensively in studies of attitudes toward the police as an indicator of people’s willingness to cooperate with the police. Sunshine and Tyler (2003) also argue that when people view the police as legitimate they are more likely to give them a wider range of discretion to perform their duties, what they term as ‘empowerment’ of the police.

The concept of legitimacy is based on the argument that people are more influenced by the treatment they receive from police rather than the outcomes of any interactions with them. This is reflected in the qualitative data from this study, where participants were clearly more concerned with their perceptions of treatment than whether or not they were arrested or cautioned.

Legitimacy was measured here using similar items to those used by Tyler (2006) and Piquero et al. (Piquero, Fagan, Mulvey, Steinberg & Odgers, 2005) but eliminating questions that relate to the courts system for this study in order to focus fully on attitudes toward the Gardaí. This left six items with a 5-point Likert type response set from *strongly agree* to *strongly disagree*, all scores were subsequently summed and

averaged to give a total score where higher scores indicated higher levels of perceived legitimacy. No reliability scores are available from other studies for this aspect of the legitimacy scale, however, for the scale including questions on the court system, Piquero et al. (2005) reported alpha to be .80, and Hinds (2007) used four items to measure legitimacy with adolescents and reported alpha to be .70 with her sample.

7.6.2 Fairness/procedural justice. There were two versions of the procedural justice measure included in the questionnaire. The first was based on the personal experience of the participant and how fair and unbiased they perceived the Gardaí to be in their most recent encounter. The second procedural justice measure was based on more general perceptions of the fairness of the Gardaí in dealing with the public. Used extensively by Tyler and others as part of a measure of perceptions of the legitimacy of the police, procedural justice is thought to be indirectly related to compliant and co-operative behaviour in both adults and young people (Hinds, 2007; Paternoster, et. al, 1997; Tyler, 2006; Sunshine & Tyler, 2003).

The items used in this study follow those used by Tyler (2006b) and Sunshine and Tyler (2003) who follow six criteria for procedural justice as laid out by Leventhal. The six items each tap a separate criteria; consistency (being treated the same as other people, or the same way in different situations); representation (being given the opportunity to explain yourself, or feeling you have been listened to by the authority); impartiality (decisions are made without bias or the influence of personal feelings); accuracy (basing decisions on correct information); correctability (the feeling that mistakes could be corrected or that unfair treatment could be rectified through a trusted agency) and; ethicality (the politeness of authorities in their dealings with the public).

For the general procedural justice measure the issue of impartiality was asked through two questions to distinguish between

perceptions of respectful treatment of young people and adults. While Tyler only applied this measure of procedural justice to those who had reported some experience with the police (Tyler, 2006b), Hinds (2007) showed alpha ratings of .7 in her study with adolescents who had or had not reported experiences with police using as few as four items (reliability ratings are not available for the Tyler study).

In the current study, it was decided to use both a measure of personal procedural justice based on the participants own experiences, and a measure of general procedural justice to see if judgements of personal experience are related to overall perceptions of procedural justice. Also, it can indicate views of the overall fairness of Gardaí held by all participants whether they have had personal experiences or not. Responses were based on a 5-point Likert type scale ranging from *strongly agree* to *strongly disagree* and scores were summed and averaged to give a total score, with higher scores indicating more positive assessments of procedural justice.

7.6.3 Garda performance. Perceptions of police performance, or levels of satisfaction with the police, have often been found to be lower in adolescents than in adults (e.g. Hinds, 2007; Hurst, Frank & Browning, 2000). This factor emerged as a source of ambivalence in qualitative data analysis where young people saw the Gardaí as doing ‘a good enough’ job but not always focusing on what young people felt that they should. Tyler found that satisfaction with the police was a separate factor to moral obligation to obey the law, although both are indirectly related to levels of legitimacy (Tyler, 2006b), indicating that perceptions of performance should also be measured in conjunction with these two factors.

Measures of general perception of police performance are also frequently included in measures of public attitudes toward the police as an indicator of overall attitudes and public confidence in the police (e.g. Public Attitudes Survey; Browne, 2008). The scale used by Hurst et al. (2000) is used here as it was developed for an adolescent population

and is reflective of the main issues of concern raised in qualitative interviews in the first part of this study. In total there were nine items asking about how well the Gardaí are thought to be stopping/preventing crime and how helpful they are seen to be to citizens in trouble. Responses were based on a 5-point Likert type scale ranging from *strongly agree* to *strongly disagree*, scores were summed and averaged to give a score of perceptions of Garda performance. Higher scores on this scale indicated more positive perceptions of Garda performance.

7.6.4 Garda misconduct. The misconduct scale measured how Gardaí are perceived in terms of their likelihood to abuse their power rather than just performance or effectiveness. It is considered a separate construct to performance/satisfaction by Miller and Davis (2008) who conducted a factor analysis on four items measuring misconduct and six items for performance. Based on qualitative data analysis from this study, the two do appear to be different constructs, albeit related to each other. When used in conjunction with items relating to Garda performance, this scale allowed for perceptions of both positive and negative aspects of Garda behaviour to be recorded, which was reflective of reports from participants in the qualitative phase of the study.

The four items asked about how frequently young people believe the Gardaí abuse their authority by breaking the law, police rules, using excessive force and stopping people without good reason. Six response options were given ranging from *never* to *all the time*. When used previously with adolescent samples the scale has been found to have alpha ratings of between .87 and .91 (Miller & Davis, 2008).

7.7 Legal Socialisation

Two measures were used here to tap levels of legal socialisation, legal cynicism (Sampson & Bartusch, 1998), and moral obligation to obey the law (Tyler, 2006b). Legal cynicism towards the law and legal actors refers to the belief that acting in ways that are 'outside' the law is

acceptable and that legal rules are not binding to that individual. In relation to other concepts in the model legitimacy is thought to be affected by levels of legal socialisation whereby individuals come to see legal authorities as having a moral right to hold that authority. It is based on three premises (1) that individuals have opinions about the legitimacy of the law, (2) that these views shape behaviour and (3) that they occur through an interaction of social processes and experiences (Fagan & Tyler, 2001). Moral obligation to obey the law refers to the sense that the law should be obeyed and that legal rules are acceptable and should be followed even if the chances of punishment are low, it is seen as an essential feature of legal socialisation (Sunshine & Tyler, 2003).

7.7.1 Moral obligation to obey the law. Moral obligation to obey the law is operationalised by Sunshine and Tyler (2003) as a sub factor of legitimacy. Based on qualitative data analysis it is used here in conjunction with legal cynicism as an indicator of legal socialisation. Theoretically, this measure is similar to Bandura's measure of moral disengagement, in that it taps into the individual's sense that societal norms and legal rules should or should not be binding to them personally. In contrast to the concept of moral disengagement however, this scale is more abstract in asking about general feelings of obligation to obey common social and legal rules, for example, 'you should do what the Gardaí tell you to do even when you disagree with their decisions'.

Although thought of as an essential element of perceived legitimacy, moral obligation has been found to independently influence compliance with the law, suggesting that it should be measured separately but alongside legitimacy (Tyler, 2006b). In combination with the measures of legitimacy and legal cynicism it is expected that a pattern of legal socialisation will be shown, where low levels of moral obligation would relate to higher levels of legal cynicism and lower levels of perceived legitimacy.

The seven items used by Sunshine and Tyler (2003) and also by Tyler (2006b) were used in this study, with some re-wording to better reflect a younger population. Also, the original scale was scored using a 6-point Likert type response set, but in order to conform to other measures within the survey a 5-point Likert scale was used for this factor also. Scores are summed and averaged, including two questions that are reversed scored, to give a total moral obligation score, where higher scores indicate higher levels of moral obligation to obey legal authorities.

In previous studies, this scale has been measured as a component of other factors rather than as a single construct, therefore reliability scores are not available for moral obligation alone. When measured with legitimacy and trust as a composite factor, alpha was found to be .84 in Tyler's study (2006b).

7.7.2 Legal cynicism. The concept of legal cynicism is based on Durkheim's theory of anomie, in that those who feel powerless in a society will also tend to be more cynical about that society's rules and conventions. As adolescence is generally thought to be a particular time when individuals feel somewhat powerless (and as borne out by qualitative data analysis), legal cynicism is seen to be an important feature of overall attitudes toward the Gardaí. Closely related to perceptions of procedural justice, where those with higher levels of legal cynicism also tend to show lower levels of perceived procedural justice (Fagan & Tyler, 2001; Piquero et al., 2005), legal cynicism has also been found to be related to levels of delinquent behaviour (Piquero et al., 2005).

The scale consisted of five items that focused on beliefs about the acceptability of breaking the law, for example, 'there are no right or wrong ways to make money'. Responses were scored on a 5-point Likert type scale ranging from *strongly agree* to *strongly disagree*. Scores were summed and averaged to give a composite legal cynicism score, where higher scores indicated higher levels of cynicism.

This scale has shown reliability coefficients ranging from .44 to .69 with adults samples (Sampson & Bartusch, 1998). With adolescent populations an overall alpha of .74 was reported by Fagan and Tyler (2001), and alpha coefficients of .60 were reported by Piquero et al. (2005) when used with a delinquent population.

7.8 Cooperation and Compliance with the Law

Cooperation with the Gardaí and compliance with the law were measured using three scales to assess levels of offending behaviour in participants, the extent of contacts they had with Gardaí in the previous 12 months, and their predicted future cooperation with Gardaí.

Compliance with the law was measured using a self report delinquency scale that assess the level and extent of illegal or offending behaviour that young people have engaged in over the past year. This scale has been used extensively in similar studies as a means of gauging the rate at which young people break the law. Greater frequency of contact or experience with Gardaí should be related to higher levels of offending (McAra & McVie, 2005) and experiences are likely to influence young people's intentions to contact the Gardaí voluntarily in the future (Tyler, 2006).

Cooperation with the Gardaí was measured through a scale similar to that used in the Public Attitudes Survey in Ireland (Browne, 2008), by asking young people to indicate how likely they would be to contact the Gardaí for a number of different reasons in the future. As Tyler has shown, attitudes toward the police are thought to show their effects through these two components of citizen behaviour where those with more positive attitudes are expected to engage in less crime and also be more willing to approach the police to report crimes and offer information to them.

7.8.1 Offending or delinquent behaviour. The self report delinquency scale (SRD; Elliot & Ageton, 1980) is a widely used measure in studies of adolescent delinquency and crime. It is most commonly used as an outcome variable in studies that focus on

personality and environmental factors that might influence young people's levels of delinquency. Various modifications have been made to the original scale in an attempt to reduce overlap and redundancy within the scale (e.g. Bendixen & Olweus, 1999). While Elliot argued that all scales should include the full range of delinquent acts including murder and sexual assault (Elliot & Ageton, 1980), these are often left out when the focus of the research is the general level of delinquency among relatively normative populations.

The scale, in its different forms, has been found to be reasonably reliable across studies in that participants do seem to report their own offending behaviour honestly and there appear to be few issues with recall effects (Thornberry & Krohn, 2000). Reliability estimates are often above .80 across uses of the scale even when different variations are used (as reported in Thornberry & Krohn, 2000). Measuring the validity of a scale like this is difficult given that it measures what is usually a 'hidden' set of behaviours. It has been noted that officially recorded incidents of anti-social or criminal acts represent only a small proportion of the actual frequency or intensity of this behaviour, so it is not useful to compare results on this scale to those of official records (an added problem in an Irish context is the lack of access to such records in the first place). While for most aspects of the scale validity is thought to be adequate, it appears to be much lower for questions relating to more serious offences (Thornberry & Krohn, 2000).

The version of the Self Report Delinquency scale used in this study is an 18-item scale with a separate section relating to underage drinking, as the main purpose of the scale in this instance was to establish a level of behaviour that is likely to bring young people into contact with the Gardaí on a less serious level. Also, it was expected that this sample of participants would be unlikely to report on more serious offences as a group, being in some form of full time education and not likely to have criminal records. This approach, based on similar assumptions has been used by other authors and was found to be

reasonably successful (Bendixen & Olweus, 1999; Marcelo, 2009; McAra & McVie, 2005). Also, in accordance with these studies and based on interview data, drinking alcohol was treated as a separate item because its relation to general delinquency is not fully established, and it is generally seen to be an indicator of risk for police interaction rather than a measure of actual delinquency. In addition some items that would be irrelevant to this population were dropped from the final version used here, for example defrauding housing benefit.

Participants were given a list of behaviours and asked to state how often in the past 12 months they had engaged in that behaviour. Responses range from *never* to *every week*. This method of scoring allows for both an intensity and a frequency score of offending to be obtained. Items in the scale were further grouped into types of offence to give a better picture of the nature and seriousness of the behaviour (Marcelo, 2009). The subsequent groups can be classed as; A) problematic behaviours, usually not criminal, for example truancy; B) property offences, includes things such as breaking windows, graffiti and arson; C) violent offences including fighting with others and carrying hidden weapons; D) substance abuse, in this case drug use and; E) fraud and dishonesty, including fare-dodging and handling stolen goods. Higher scores indicated higher levels of offending within each section.

7.8.2 Experiences with Gardaí. Experiences with the police and the perception of those experiences have been shown to be important in influencing attitudes in both young people and adults (Hurst & Frank, 2008; McAra & McVie, 2005; Tyler, 2006b) where more frequent contact is associated with more negative attitudes. The range of experiences asked about in this study was based on the types of contact reported by participants in the qualitative study, and are comparable to those used in other studies with young people (e.g. McAra & McVie, 2005). The list consisted of ten types of contact that young people may have with Gardaí and ranged from things such as

reporting a crime to being cautioned. Experiences of a less formal nature were also included, for example being stopped and searched or being moved on from a public place.

Respondents were asked to indicate how often in the past twelve months they had experienced any of the ten types of contact, responses ranged from *never* to *more than 10 times*. There was also a qualitative, open option to describe any other type of contact not already listed. The first three questions could be considered 'citizen initiated' contact (i.e. voluntarily approaching a Garda). The following five questions could be deemed 'informal' types of contact, including being asked to empty pockets and being moved on, based on the qualitative findings, these types of contacts would usually be perceived negatively. The final two questions covered formal types of contact including being charged or cautioned. From phase one data analysis it was evident that these final two types of contact were not always considered negatively by young people, whether the decision to arrest/caution was made fairly or not was more important than the actual outcome. In this way both a cumulative score of experiences and an indication of the nature of those experiences could be calculated.

Following this list of contacts there were five questions relating to knowledge of and relationship with a Community Garda. These questions were used to assess whether the participant had a positive example of a Garda from which to draw their responses on other parts of the questionnaire as this may influence how they see the Gardaí, as it did for some of the participants in the qualitative study.

7.8.3 Future cooperation. Measuring future behaviour is a method of determining how likely young people report they would be to contact the Gardaí in a number of different situations in the future. It is similar to the measure of cooperation used by Sunshine and Tyler (2003) which asked participants how likely they would be to report crimes to the police. Based on questions asked in the Public Attitudes Survey (Browne, 2008) administered to adults, and also from

qualitative data analysis, eight different possible reasons for contacting the Gardaí were given in this survey.

Each item asked participants how likely they think they would be to contact the Gardaí in the future and included a range of scenarios such as; in an emergency situation; to offer information on solving a crime and; if their home was broken into. Four response options were given from *very likely* to *not at all*. There was an additional option to include any other reasons they might contact Gardaí that was not listed in the scale. Scores were summed and averaged to give an overall score of intention to cooperate with higher scores indicating greater likelihood of contacting the Gardaí in the future. Higher scores indicated a greater likelihood of cooperating with Gardaí in the future.

7.9 Attitudes Towards Other Authorities

Qualitative data analysis revealed that some of the participants referred to the Gardaí as being the same or similar to other authorities, in particular teachers and parents. It is logically possible then, that a number of young people will perceive all authority figures in the same terms, as being primarily concerned with controlling their behaviour, and as holding greater social power than them. Few studies measure attitudes towards other authorities in determining the attitudes of young people towards the police, one exception may be Fagan and Tyler's study of legal socialisation among adolescents where they included a procedural justice scale relating to security guards and school security officers (2005).

It is not clear if young people are likely to generalise their attitudes towards one group of authority figures to all possible authority groups. Two possibilities exist in terms of attitudes toward the Gardaí. Firstly, that young people will perceive the Gardaí as being similar enough to both teachers and parents that they will report similar attitudes towards each of these groups, meaning that they have a more generalised attitude toward authority. The second possibility is that young people will perceive the Gardaí as being different to other

authorities, most likely because of their different social status, as being representative of the legal system, and will see authorities such as teachers and parents as belonging to a more specific group of authority figures. In order to attempt to differentiate between those who hold generalised authority attitudes from those who have particular views on the Gardaí regardless of their attitudes toward other authorities, it was decided to include some measurement of these attitudes.

Rigby (1984a; 1984b) developed a scale for assessment of attitudes toward institutional authority which includes 32 items relating to teachers, the army, the police and the law. The questions included in the questionnaire for the current study focused only on teachers and parents as they are the authority figures most likely to be encountered by participants on a regular basis. Questions from Rigby's scale relating to teachers were used with some re-wording for ease of understanding, and questions relating to parents were worded in a similar manner to these items. This led to a total of ten items for this scale, five each relating to teachers and parents. This scale was also measured using a 5-point Likert type scale, where scores were summed and averaged to give a total 'attitudes toward other authorities' score and higher scores indicated more positive attitudes. Alpha coefficients for Rigby's scale as whole when tested with third level students ranged from .91 to .94 (Rigby, 1984a).

7.10 Piloting

The initial questionnaire was piloted to check for ease of reading, understanding, time needed to complete and, any other issues that needed to be addressed before finalising the survey instrument.

Piloting took place in a second level school outside of Galway with seven participants aged 16 and 17 years old. Six males and one female took part in this stage of the study.

No major issues were raised during the pilot phase. None of the participants reported problems with understanding the questions or with reading the questionnaire. Before the piloting session a particular

concern was the level of discomfort that would be felt by participants while answering some of the more sensitive types of questions (e.g. about their own offending behaviour), but no discomfort was reported regarding these questions by the group. The questionnaire took approximately 25 minutes for participants to complete.

One issue that did arise from discussions with the participants was that they would have preferred more opportunity to add their own opinions and comments during the questionnaire. For this reason a number of extra, open ended questions with comment space were included in the final version of the questionnaire which allows participants to include their own comments relating to each of the different aspects of the measures used.

7.11 Sample Size Calculation

The data analysis chosen for this phase of the study was Structural Equation Modelling (SEM). This statistical technique allows for all of the potential variables to be collated into a single model to assess how well the data fits to the proposed model. The particulars of SEM will be explained in more detail below.

Estimating a required sample size for use in an SEM analysis is not straightforward. There are many recommendations available in various places, however, these generally are not based on mathematical calculations and tend to revert to 'rules of thumb' (e.g. Kline, 2011; Schreiber, Stage, King, Nora & Barlow, 2006). This rule of thumb usually states that a ratio of parameters to participants should be followed and is generally set at 10 participants per parameter. Previously published studies using SEM tend to use a median sample size of 200 participants, and this number is often recommended as the minimum number for most models in order to find a good fit for the data (Shah & Goldstein, 2006).

In calculating sample size for this phase of the study, the above recommendations were followed in that a minimum sample number was set at 200 participants. In addition, the number of parameters

(including observed and latent variables, and covariances between variables) was counted at 12 observed variables, 3 latent variables and, 3 covariances to give a total of 18 parameters which would require a minimum sample size of 180. The total number of participants who completed questionnaires in this phase was 226 meaning that minimum sample requirements were met.

7.12 Participants

The questionnaire was administered in one voluntary school, one vocational school, one community and comprehensive school and nine Youthreach centres. Inclusion criteria for participants were that they would be aged between 12 and 18 years old, and it was hoped to reach participants from a diverse range of socio economic backgrounds. Some participants in Youthreach centres were over 18 years old (11 in total), but it was decided to include them in the final analysis as they were still part of the overall sampling group being still involved in second level formal education. The total number of participants who completed questionnaires for this phase of the study was 226 across the four school types (215 within 12 to 18 year age range).

The final sample for Study two resulted in an over representation of participants from Youthreach centres (39.82% of total sample) compared to national averages (Department of Education and Skills, 2013). This is likely to have led to an over sampling of those from the Travelling community in the current study due to an increased number of students from the Travelling community engaging in Youthreach compared to mainstream secondary schools (CSO, 2013). As those from Traveller backgrounds have traditionally had more antagonistic relationships with the Gardaí (Mulcahy & O'Mahony, 2005) the possible bias created by this over representation in the current study should lend a note of caution to the interpretation of the final results. Ways that the final results may have been affected by the composition of the full sample for Study two are discussed further in **Chapter 9**.

7.13 Research Sites

The research sites for collecting data for the quantitative study were second level schools and Youthreach centres. Below is a short description of the different types of educational institutions that participated in the study and the ways that they differ from each other. The first three types, voluntary, vocational and community and comprehensive schools, would be considered mainstream schools in that they cater to young people aged 12-18 years old who have transferred directly from primary level, and students would sit the two state examinations here (Junior and Leaving Certificates). Youthreach is a 'second chance' educational institution which caters primarily for early school leavers aged 15-20 years old, where state examinations are also taken, but often with a reduced number of subjects studied and a longer time frame to complete the courses.

7.13.1 Voluntary second level schools. These are privately owned second level schools, usually run under the trusteeship of a religious order (either Catholic or Church of Ireland). They receive government grants and subsidies (unless they are fee paying) to facilitate the running of the school.

7.13.2 Vocational schools. These schools are owned by the Vocational Education Committee (VEC) which is a government institution. Initially vocational schools focused on providing technical education and skills to students, they now provide a range of academic and practical subjects. Vocational schools are also the main providers of adult education and community education courses.

7.13.3 Community and comprehensive schools. Established in the 1960s with the intention of providing second level education to all young people in a community without having to pay fees to attend, they are often an amalgamation of voluntary and vocational schools. They provide a broad academic and practical curriculum to students.

7.13.4 Youthreach. Youthreach is a form of 'second chance' education for young people who left school early usually without any

formal qualifications. Students are aged from 15 to 20 years old, and centres are based in out of school settings, often in community resource centres. Most Youthreach centres are based in disadvantaged areas with higher than average levels of early school leavers. They cover a range of course topics which lead to recognised qualifications and can eventually lead to third level education in Institutes of Technology.

7.14 Procedure

The primary sampling units for phase two of the study were second level schools in the West of Ireland as listed on the Department of Education and Skills website (www.eductaion.ie) which included different categories of schools; voluntary secondary schools, community schools and schools classified as disadvantaged schools. Youthreach centres were listed on the Vocational Education Committee (VEC) websites, and were listed by county. The intention was to allow for a range of participants from different areas and socio-economic backgrounds to be included in the study.

A stratified random sampling technique was initially attempted in order to recruit a broad representative sample of the population (i.e. young people aged 12 to 18 years old). However, of a total of 45 mainstream schools invited to participate in the study only 3 of these accepted, giving a response rate for these schools of 6.6%. Of Youthreach centres invited to participate 9 of the 10 centres accepted, giving a response rate of 90% for these schools. Compared to national figures this proportion is an over representation of students from Youthreach compared to other types of second level education (Department of Education and Skills, 2012). This may be a limitation in assessing general attitudes toward the Gardaí within this population. However, as early school leavers are more likely to be involved with the police it could also be an advantage to have a larger number of participants who are most likely to have had adversarial contact with Gardaí in order to better measure the effects of such interactions on attitudes.

7.14.1 School recruitment. All school principals from the selected lists were initially contacted by letter by the researcher. The letter included information on the purpose of the study, the researchers involved and the level of participation sought from the school (Copy of the letter available in **Appendix H**). Follow up telephone calls were made to the schools within two weeks of sending the letter. Those who were not interested in participating were thanked for their time and removed from the selection list. Those who stated interest in participating in the study were given further details on the study procedure and arrangements were made to visit the school to administer the questionnaire. Consent forms and information sheets were forwarded on to the school so that parental consent forms could be signed and returned prior to data collection.

7.14.2 Administration of questionnaire. The questionnaire for this phase of the research study was group administered. As all groups were surveyed in a school environment, convening of the group was not a particular problem as most schools have existing groups, usually set classes that participated in the study. It is still important to stress to participants that their participation is voluntary, as there may be some sense that the survey was a class exercise that they had to partake in. Also, as the subject matter was concerning young people's attitudes toward the Gardaí, it was also important to stress the researcher's independence from the institution of the Garda and also from the school itself. In order to achieve this, all groups were given an introductory talk to the research outlining, the researcher's interest in the subject matter, and the purposes of the research study.

At this point all participants were given an opportunity to ask questions of the study, some participants were concerned about the anonymity of their responses, and assurances were given that all surveys would remain anonymous and that only the researcher would be extracting the data from them. Also, participants were encouraged to seek clarification if there were any questions or comments that they

didn't understand during the survey. This gave the researcher the opportunity to explain to the group in case any other participants were having similar difficulties but had not asked. An example of where an explanation was sought was in relation to community Garda, were those living outside of the city were unfamiliar with the term or the type of policing it involved, once explained most participants found that they were familiar with this type of Garda officer whether they were aware of a community officer in their area or not.

7.15 Statistical Analysis

This phase of the study is concerned with exploring the underlying factors that help to determine young people's attitudes toward the Gardaí. In this sense the research is measuring latent, or unobserved, variables, i.e. variables that cannot be directly observed or measured but can be estimated through measuring the covariance between a number of observable variables (Schreiber, et. al, 2006).

Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) is a collection of related techniques, including exploratory factor analysis, path analysis, and forms of multiple regression (Kline, 2011). In the early 1970s, factor analysis and path analysis approaches were integrated in the work of Joreskog, Keesling and, Wiley, which was initially called the JWK model. With increasing sophistication of computer packages able to analysis ever more complex relations among data, the technique of what became SEM expanded among the social and behavioural sciences (Kline, 2011).

While usually referred to as a confirmatory procedure (in that the goodness-of-fit of a model is tested), it is essentially a disconfirmatory procedure, as its use within the social sciences is to test hypotheses when a true causal model is unknown. Even when a model is thought to fit the data well, it does not mean that there are no alternative models that may fit the data just as well. For this reason, a number of models are usually tested with the same data in order to assess which model is most parsimonious and most theoretically relevant (Byrne, 2010; Kline, 2011).

7.15.1 Justification for using SEM in this study. As attitudes are not directly observable and are a combination of a number of other, measureable features (e.g. performance, legitimacy, etc), it is necessary to measure attitudes as latent variables. This means that measures of perceived effectiveness of the Gardaí, for example, can be combined with measures of perceived legitimacy of the Gardaí along with the other measured factors to indicate the nature of attitudes of participants. While attitudes cannot be directly observed or measured, they can be inferred from the data collected using measurements of the factors that are theoretically thought to indicate these attitudes. In addition as the three central constructs in the model were assessed with multiple indicators, this makes SEM a logical choice for data analysis (Kline, 2011; Schreiber et. al, 2006).

Like ANOVA, group differences can also be measured using SEM, however, in the case of SEM group mean differences on latent variables can also be estimated which is not possible with other statistical analyses such as ANOVA (Kline, 2011).

Kline gives four reasons for choosing SEM over other statistical tests such as ANOVA or multiple regression;

- 1) The entire model can be evaluated as opposed to individual effects of variables on each other, in this way 'a view of the entire landscape' (p.13) can be obtained.
- 2) The second reason is the effect of large sample sizes on statistical significance. In SEM a larger size is required in order to fully test a model. In other forms of data analysis, a larger sample size will virtually guarantee statistical significance even when effects are meaningless, which means that significant findings are likely to be more reliable in a SEM analysis.
- 3) Thirdly, as SEM is less concerned with statistical significance than other tests, differences in *p* values across software packages are less important than would be the case with other types of analysis.
- 4) Finally, Kline argues that researchers should be more concerned

with estimating effect sizes in statistical analysis than with significance testing as a more accurate picture of the interaction of variables. Using SEM allows for effect sizes to be estimated more accurately than other data analysis techniques.

Other advantages of using SEM over multiple regression include the ability to use confirmatory factor analysis when multiple indicators per latent variable are used which helps to reduce measurement error, and also the ability to measure mediating variables rather than be restricted to an additive model (Garson, n.d.).

7.15.2 Limitations of SEM. As with all data analysis techniques there are a number of disadvantages and limitations to using SEM. One particular problem that can occur with using SEM is the lack of replication. As in the current study, many empirical studies utilising SEM are cross-sectional, one off, studies, which means that generalisations to a wider population are not calculable and tend to remain unknown (Kline, 2011).

A second limitation of SEM is that directionality of causes cannot be measured. The supposed directional arrows used in drawing the model are based on the researchers hypothesised relationships between variables, and as with any other statistical analysis, without longitudinal data direct causation between these variables can only be inferred.

Thirdly, a common potential limitation of all quantitative research is the researcher's choice of measurement. Without adequate and appropriate measures and theoretically relevant variables being measured, no analysis will produce useful findings. In the case of SEM this includes using the most appropriate measures to reflect the latent variables that are to be estimated in the model (Byrne, 2010).

7.16 Summary

Phase two of the study used a cross sectional survey type design. A number of measurements were included in the survey reflecting the themes that emerged from the qualitative data analysis. Piloting of the

survey showed that it was easily comprehensible and minor modifications were made to the final instrument based on participant feedback. Participants were then recruited through mainstream schools and Youthreach centres, yielding a total number of 226 participants overall. The survey was administered to groups of participants in a classroom setting and all were completed anonymously. Data were analysed using structural equation modelling in order to better examine the relationships among factors and to enable the measurement of attitudes as a latent variable.

Chapter 8: Study Two Results

8.1 Aims of the Chapter

The primary aim of this chapter is to present the results from both the analysis of quantitative data and from the testing of the theoretical model using SEM. The first section outlines the descriptive statistics of the data relating to the measurements used in this quantitative phase of the study. The second section will provide details on testing the theoretical model in three stages; 1) testing the measurement model to determine the adequacy of indicator variables to explain their respective latent variables; 2) making modifications to the model to improve the overall fit and; 3) testing of the final structural model. Finally, the effects of potential covariates will be explored, including age, gender and attitudes towards other authorities. A brief analysis of the qualitative data gathered through open ended comments in the questionnaire will then be presented before a general discussion of findings from this phase of the study in the final section of the chapter.

8.2 Data Screening

Of the initial sample of 226 participants, five had a substantial amount of missing data (e.g. missing full scales or large parts of a number of scales) and these were eliminated from data analysis leaving a total of 221 participants for quantitative analysis. There were no missing data in the remaining data sets.

Prior to conducting statistical analyses data were screened for normality of distribution and outliers as recommended by Field (2005). The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test revealed that all scales, apart from the SRD, were normally distributed (all *p values* >.05) and contained no serious outliers. As anticipated all scores on the Self Report Delinquency were significantly non-normal with positive skewness and kurtosis, and all sub-categories of offending showed multivariate nonnormality. It was decided to recode the scores on Self Report Delinquency into three distinct levels of offending as recommended by Marcello (2009) whereby each score was coded as 0=no offending, 1=

moderate offending and 2= high offending. This was considered the most appropriate means of coding this scale as it allowed for all participant scores to be included and for a range of levels of offending to be examined. These levels were based on both the frequency and amount of self reported offending over the past 12 months following guidelines used in the European Study of Self Reported Delinquency and allowed for the normalisation of data from this scale (Marcello, 2009).

8.3 Preliminary Data Analysis

As the measurement scales used in this study had been originally developed for use with populations outside of Ireland and some were initially developed for use with adults, it was considered necessary to first check the validity and reliability of each scale. Also, given previous criticisms of studies in this area that fail to take account of the psychometric properties of measurement scales it was important to ensure that each scale was the most appropriate to measure attitudes toward the Gardaí in this sample (Gau, 2011). In addition, scales were assessed for correlations between variables and for item redundancy. Basic descriptive statistics were carried out in order to obtain overall sample characteristics using PASW 20.

8.3.1 Validity of measurement scales. Preliminary analysis was conducted on each measurement scale to assess the relevance of individual items in explaining each of the variables to be included in the final model. As these scales were originally developed for use with adults rather than young people it was anticipated that there may be some issues with item inclusion across scales and that some items would need to be removed in order to improve measurement of attitudes of this particular sample.

Three items were shown to be poorly correlated with corresponding items on the same scale and served to reduce the overall reliability and explanatory power of the scale through their inclusion. Within the moral obligation scale two items were found to have poor

factor loadings onto the overall scale; item 5.16 (*sometimes you have to bend the law for things to come out right*) and item 5.17 (*some people with power use the law to control people like you*). Both of these items are qualitatively different to the other items on the scale in that they do not refer directly to the discretion that should be allowed to the Gardaí. It was thought that both of these items potentially tapped a different factor to the other items and were possibly too abstract in nature for younger participants. The factor loading for item 5.16 was .25 and for item 5.17 was .23, all other items loaded above an acceptable .40 (Field, 2005) onto a single factor of moral obligation to obey the law.

For the procedural justice scale item 6 (*when people are unhappy with a Garda decision it is easy to have the matter corrected*) was found to be poorly correlated with the other items with a factor loading of just .34. Based on this finding and with reference to interview data where this issue was seen to have a poor fit to overall thoughts of procedural justice among young people the item was deemed to be redundant and was subsequently removed. Items on all other measurement scales showed factor loadings above .40 and were included in the final analysis.

8.3.2 Reliability of measurement scales. Each scale was assessed for internal reliability within the sample for the final number of participants ($N = 221$). **Table 8.1** gives the Cronbach's alpha statistic for each of the individual scales. All scales are close to or above an acceptable level of .70 (Field, 2005).

Table 8.1

*Internal Reliability Statistics for all Measurement Scales in Model Testing**(N = 221)*

Scale	Number of items	Cronbach's α	Mean
1. SRD & Alcohol	24	.85	.50
2. Contacts	10	.89	.33
3. Procedural Justice	5	.74	2.1
4. Legal Cynicism	5	.69	1.86
5. Moral Obligation	5	.70	1.77
6. Other Authorities	10	.68	2.25
7. Legitimacy	6	.75	1.76
8. Performance	9	.79	1.84
9. Misconduct	4	.69	3.15
10. Future Behaviour	10	.88	2.97

8.4 Descriptive Statistics for Demographic Factors

The mean age of participants in the present study ($N = 221$) was 16.32 years ($SD = 1.88$) with similar mean ages for males ($M = 16.22$, $SD = 1.56$) and for females ($M = 16.48$, $SD = 2.31$). Of the four types of schools included in the study those attending Youthreach centres totalled almost 40% of the sample. The full breakdown of participants by school type, age and gender are given in **Table 8.2**. Participants were also asked if they had a family member who was a Garda and just 15 of the total (7%) reported that they did meaning the vast majority (93%) had no family relationship to the Gardaí.

The majority of participants were under 18 years old with just 24% reporting their age as 18 or older. The largest age group were in the 15 to 17 year old range, a group previously found to have the highest level of both minor offending and negative contact with police (e.g. McAra & McVie, 2005). Most participants (77.4%) reported that they lived with both parents, while just under 14% lived with one

parent, and 3% lived in step families, with the remainder in 'other' households.

Table 8.2

Age and Gender of Participants by School Type (N = 221)

School Type	Male N (%)	Female N (%)	Age:			Total N
			12-14 N (%)	15-17 N (%)	18+ N (%)	
2nd Level - Mainstream	29 (69)	13 (13)	1 (2.4)	41 (93.6)	0	42
Vocational School	47 (85.5)	8 (14.5)	3 (5.5)	51 (92.7)	1 (1.8)	55
Community School	18 (50)	18 (50)	34 (94.4)	2 (5.6)	0	36
Youthreach	42 (47.7)	46 (52.3)	0	36 (25)	52 (75)	88
Total	136(61.5)	85 (38.5)	38 (17.2)	126 (57)	53 (24)	221

8.5 Descriptive Statistics for Perceptions of the Gardaí

The factors that were used to indicate perceptions of Gardaí included; performance of Gardaí; perceptions of Garda misconduct; perceptions of procedural justice and; perceptions of legitimacy.

8.5.1 Garda performance. Scores on the Garda performance scale which indicate levels of general satisfaction with Gardaí had a mean score of 1.85 ($SD = 1.20$), with males ($M = 1.86, SD = .80$) and females ($M = 1.83, SD = .91$) displaying similar levels of satisfaction. There were some notable age differences in scores on this scale where the youngest age group (12 to 14 years) showed the highest levels of satisfaction ($M = 2.08, SD = .59$) compared to both the 15 to 17 year old group ($M = 1.95, SD = .85$) and the over 18 years group ($M = 1.44, SD = .41$) with general levels of satisfaction decreasing with increasing age.

8.5.2 Garda misconduct. Scores on the misconduct scale indicate how often participants believe the Gardaí engage in non-professional or abusive actions. The mean score for this scale was 2.0 ($SD = 1.2$) with males scoring slightly above the mean for the sample ($M = 2.1, SD = 1.23$) and females slightly below ($M = 1.86, SD = 1.15$). While the 12 to 14 years group ($M = 1.84, SD = 1.02$) and the 15 to 17 years group ($M = 1.87, SD = 1.14$) showed similar mean scores there was a marked increase in perceived misconduct among the over 18 group ($M = 2.91, SD = .67$).

8.5.3 Procedural justice. Scores on the procedural justice scale indicate perceptions of the fairness of Gardaí in their dealings with citizens and showed a sample mean score of 2.1 ($SD = .91$). On this scale also the mean for males ($M = 2.12, SD = .89$) was higher than for females ($M = 1.99, SD = .94$). The lowest mean score for perceived procedural justice was among the oldest age group ($M = 1.29, SD = .79$) when compared to the youngest group ($M = 2.11, SD = .89$) and the 15 to 17 years group ($M = 2.21, SD = .85$).

8.5.4 Legitimacy. The legitimacy scale measures perceptions of the legitimate authority that is held by Gardaí. The mean score for the full sample on this scale was 1.78 ($SD = .93$) with males ($M = 1.80, SD = .96$) again scoring slightly higher on this scale than females ($M = 1.75, SD = .90$). There were also age differences in perceived legitimacy with the oldest age group, 18 years and over, showing the lowest levels ($M = 1.49, SD = .43$) and the youngest group showing the highest perceptions of legitimacy ($M = 1.98, SD = 1.05$) with the 15 to 17 year old group between these ($M = 1.82, SD = .88$).

8.6 Descriptive Statistics for Legal Socialisation

Legal socialisation was measured through two factors of legal socialisation and moral obligation to obey the law based on previous theory, a review of the existing literature and qualitative data analysis.

8.6.1 Legal cynicism. The mean score for all participants on the legal cynicism scale was 1.86 ($SD = .84$) with males ($M = 1.88, SD = .90$)

and females ($M = 1.80, SD = .73$) showing similar scores but with males slightly higher. Those in the older age group (18 years and over) showed the lowest levels of legal cynicism ($M = 1.52, SD = .87$) compared to the other two groups (12-14 years $M = 2.11, SD = 0.83$; 15-17 years $M = 1.88, SD = .87$). This would suggest that as young people get older they become less cynical towards the law and the Gardaí.

8.6.2 Moral obligation to obey the law. On the moral obligation scale the mean score for all participants was 1.77 ($SD = .89$) with males ($M = 1.79, SD = .90$) and females ($M = 1.73, SD = .86$) also showing similar mean scores on this scale. In contrast to the legal cynicism scale, the oldest age group, those over 18 years, showed the lowest mean scores on the obligation to obey the law ($M = 1.51, SD = .38$), compared to the youngest age group ($M = 1.86, SD = .87$) or the 15 to 17 year olds ($M = 1.84, SD = .93$), indicating a stronger belief that the law and the Gardaí should be obeyed in younger participants.

8.7 Descriptive Statistics for Cooperation and Compliance

Three factors were included in the construct of compliance and cooperation that reflect the behavioural component of attitudes. Contact with Gardaí was included in this construct as it is most likely to occur through the young person's own offending behaviour based on past research (e.g. Smith & McVie, 2003). It would also be expected from qualitative data analysis that those who have had more negative contact would be least likely to state intentions to cooperate with the Gardaí in the future.

8.7.1 Contact with Gardaí. Participants were asked about a range of possible contacts that they may have had with the Gardaí in the past year. In order to look at how contacts may affect other variables included in the questionnaire three dummy variables were created to compare those who reported no contact in the past year to those who reported some, coded as either positive or negative contact (see McAra & McVie, 2005 for similar coding practice on this variable). The numbers of those who had relatively high levels of contact were too

small to create a distinct grouping (not more than 10 participants in each case) so all those who reported any of the types of contact in the past year were included in the 'contact' group.

Looking at the total number of any type of contact across participants, the largest proportion reported at least one contact ($N = 143$ or 65%) while just 35% ($N = 78$) stated they had no contact at all with Gardaí. Total contacts for males and females are also largely similar with 67% of males ($N = 91$) reporting at least one contact and 61% of females ($N = 52$) also reporting at least one contact in the past year.

In line with studies in other countries (e.g. McAra & McVie, 2005), males had a higher proportion of contact with Gardaí compared to females on all items except reporting a crime to Gardaí and being stopped and asked questions about a crime that had happened. The most striking difference between males and females contact with Gardaí comes under being stopped and searched in public where 31% of males report such contact and just 9.5% of females report the same. In terms of age differences, as expected younger age groups have much fewer contacts with the Gardaí when compared to older groups. The proportion of those reporting no contact with Gardaí decreases as age increases in this sample. **Table 8.3** below reports the numbers and proportions of contacts with Gardaí by age group and gender.

Table 8.3

Number and Percentage of Garda Contact in the past 12 months by Age and Gender

Contact	12-14 yrs (N = 38) (% of group)	15-17 yrs (N = 130) (% of group)	18+yrs (N= 53) (% of group)	Males (N = 136) (% of group)	Females (N = 85) (% of group)	Total (N=221) M (SD)
Reported a crime that happened to you	0 (0)	16(12)	10 (19)	14 (10)	12 (14)	(N = 26) .14(.43)
Reported a crime- someone else	2 (5.2)	17 (13)	6 (11)	13 (9.5)	14 (16)	(N = 27) .14(.39)
Talked to a Garda on the street	23 (60)	40 (31)	19 (36)	52 (38)	31 (36)	(N = 83) .53(.90)
Been told to move on	15 (39)	41(31.5)	24 (45)	51 37.5)	29 (34)	(N = 80) .65(1.12)
Stopped /asked questions	4 (10.5)	29 (22)	24 (45)	38 (13)	13 (15)	(N = 51) .42 (.95)
Stopped & searched	7 (18)	25 (19)	19 (36)	42 (31)	8 (9.5)	(N = 51) .51(1.13)
Taken to a Garda station	3 (8)	19 (15)	15 (28)	27 (20)	10 (12)	(N = 37) .30(.84)
Taken home to parents	2 (5)	28 (21.5)	9(17)	19 (14)	7 (8)	(N=39) .18(.57)
Given caution or formal warning	4(10.5)	28 (21.5)	22(41.5)	35 (26)	19 (22)	(N = 54) .35(.75)
Arrested and charged	0 (0)	8 (6)	9 (17)	15 (11)	2 (2)	(N = 17) .14(.59)
No Contact	16 (42)	45 (35)	7 (13)	44(32)	34 (40)	N = 78

Note. Many participants indicated more than one type of contact in the past 12 months so numbers may not add to the same totals for age/gender groups. Percentages have been rounded to the nearest 0.5%.

8.7.2 Offending behaviour. On the Self Report Delinquency measure indicating levels of offending in the previous 12 months, almost 27% of participants answered never to all types of offence

across the scale. Across the full sample of participants ($N = 221$) levels of offending were generally low with over 91% of participants showing a mean of less than one across the five subscales. As previously outlined in chapter 7, the Self Report Delinquency scale was subdivided into five sections relating to different types of offending, means and standard deviations for each sub-scale and for alcohol use for males and females are given in **Table 8.4**. Mean scores on all subscales are higher for males than for females which are in line with findings from other countries using the Self Report Delinquency questionnaire (e.g. Marcello, 2009; McAra & McVie, 2005). As outlined above, all scores were recoded to allow for each participant to be given one of three levels of offending in order to reduce the effects of nonnormality on model testing and to facilitate the inclusion of all participants.

As was anticipated, offending behaviour increased with age, where the youngest age group (12 to 14 years) showed the lowest level of offending across the different sections. The largest difference between ages was for alcohol use, where those over 18 years old, who can legally drink alcohol, showed the highest levels of alcohol use. For all of the offences sections, those over 18 years showed mean scores above the total mean for the full sample. Compared to the total sample, the youngest age group were below the sample mean on all types of offending. For the 15 to 17 year old group, they were above the overall mean in three of the six types of offending (problem behaviour, property offences, and violent offences) and below the group mean on the other three (substance abuse, alcohol use, and fraud offences).

Table 8.4

Means and Standard Deviations for scores on SRD and Alcohol Use by Gender and Age

SRD Section	Male (N = 136) M (SD)	Female (N = 85) M (SD)	Age: 12-14 (N = 38) M(SD)	Age: 15-17 (N = 126) M(SD)	Age: 18+ (N = 53) M(SD)	Total Sample (N = 221) M (SD)
<i>Section A:</i> Problematic behaviour	2.04 (2.47)	1.53 (2.0)	1.12 (1.92)	1.89 (2.24)	2.55 (1.91)	1.85 (2.31)
<i>Section B:</i> Property offences	1.88 (2.78)	1.12 (2.41)	.76 (1.36)	1.56 (2.42)	2.04 (1.50)	1.59 (2.67)
<i>Section C:</i> Violent offences	1.17 (1.64)	.58 (1.23)	.57 (.92)	1.01 (1.59)	1.12 (.67)	.94 (1.52)
<i>Section D:</i> Substance abuse	.84 (2.16)	.67 (1.86)	.15 (.51)	.63 (1.80)	1.34 (1.29)	.77 (2.05)
<i>Section E:</i> Fraud offences	.39 (.79)	.24 (.53)	.19 (.58)	.61 (.67)	.61 (.41)	.33 (.70)
<i>Alcohol Use</i>	3.59 (2.70)	2.78 (2.86)	1.07 (1.38)	2.91 (2.54)	5.64 (1.35)	3.28 (2.79)

8.7.3 Future cooperation. On the future behaviour scale participants reported that they would be more likely to contact the Gardaí for seemingly more serious reasons (e.g. someone being attacked, having their home broken into) than for less serious reasons (e.g. having something worth less than €50 stolen from them). Compared to the overall mean score for the scale ($M = 2.97, SD = .64$) means for the more serious issues are above this score whereas means for the less serious issues all fall below this central mean score. Means and standard deviations for each item by gender and age are given in **Table 8.5**. Males and females reported similar levels of expected future behaviour according to each item and each age group showed similar means across each item, with the exception of the last item (asking for help from Gardaí) where the youngest age group appear most reluctant to contact Gardaí for this reason.

Table 8.5

*Means and Standard Deviations for Scores on the Future
Behaviour/Cooperation Scale by Gender and Age*

Scale Item	Males (N = 136) M (SD)	Females (N = 85) M (SD)	Age: 12 - 14 years, (N = 38) M(SD)	Age: 15-17 years, (N = 126) M (SD)	Age: 18+ years, (N = 53) M(SD)	Total Sample (N = 221) M (SD)
1. If your home was broken into	3.57 (.86)	3.67 (.64)	3.60 (.71)	3.67 (.73)	3.75 (.78)	3.61 (.78)
2. Something worth less than €50 stolen from you	2.51 (1.03)	2.51 (.80)	2.55 (.90)	2.51 (.96)	2.05 (.46)	2.51 (.94)
3. Something worth more than €50 stolen from you	3.22 (.97)	3.10 (.81)	3.27 (.82)	3.23 (.88)	3.15 (.51)	3.16 (.91)
4. If you were attacked and hurt by someone else	3.13 (1.05)	3.44 (.85)	3.24 (1.17)	3.26 (.96)	3.30 (.57)	3.25 (.99)
5. If you saw someone else being attacked and hurt	3.30 (.91)	3.41 (.85)	3.17 (1.26)	3.53 (.85)	3.60 (.48)	3.34 (.89)
6. In an emergency	3.68 (.71)	3.73 (.52)	3.90 (.71)	3.67 (.68)	3.83 (.32)	3.70 (.64)
7. To report something suspicious where you live	2.78 (1.00)	2.86 (.91)	2.93 (.81)	2.80 (.97)	2.50 (.51)	2.81 (.97)
8. To report someone being loud or rowdy where you live	2.44 (1.00)	2.26 (.95)	2.10 (.89)	2.46 (.99)	2.02 (.55)	2.37 (.99)
9. To offer information	2.73 (1.06)	2.60 (1.06)	2.83 (1.27)	2.74 (.99)	2.36 (.57)	2.68 (1.06)
10. To ask for help from the Gardaí	2.37 (1.11)	2.19 (.96)	1.83 (.65)	2.42 (1.10)	2.26 (.53)	2.30 (1.06)

8.8 Path Diagram for the Proposed Model

The theoretical model developed through qualitative data analysis and an extensive review of the literature was tested using SEM which allows for the examination of relationships between measured and latent variables. The path diagram below (**Figure 8.1**) represents the

hypothesised relationships between factors that lent themselves to further investigation and their respective indicators. Key factors within the model include offending behaviour, contacts with Gardaí, perceptions of those contacts, legal cynicism and moral obligation to obey the law, and perceptions of satisfaction with and the use of power of the Gardaí. Each of these relationships will be examined through model testing.

Potential covariates were determined by examining associations between age, gender, attitudes towards other authorities and the outcome variable of attitudes toward Gardaí. Only those variables that showed a significant relationship within the model were included in the final model testing. The process of determining this final model is outlined in the following sections

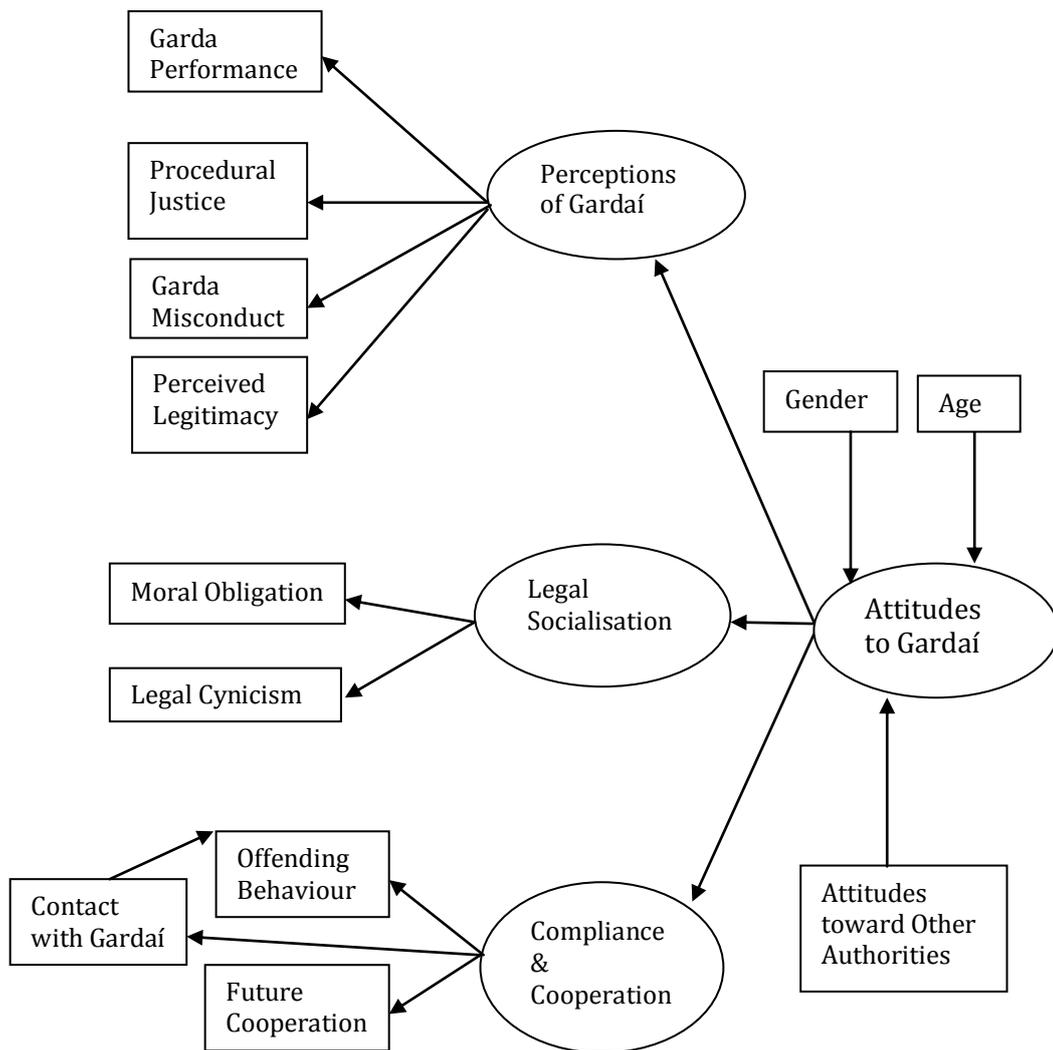


Figure 8.1 Hypothesised path diagram of relationships between measured and latent variables influencing attitudes toward the Gardaí and covariates. Conventional notation is used whereby variables in square symbols represent measured variables and those in oval symbols represent latent variables.

8.9 SEM Output Interpretation; Assessing Model Fit

To assess the adequacy of a model through SEM the fit between the sample data that creates the empirical covariance matrix and the estimated covariance matrix produced by the model should be close (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001). The most common ways to assess this fit is through the chi-square and a variety of fit indices.

8.9.1 Chi-square. When a model fits the data well a non-significant chi-square is generally expected. However the chi-square statistic is sensitive to a number of factors such as variable distribution (i.e. normality) and sample size and cannot be considered as a fit criterion alone (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001). In particular larger sample sizes (>200) can affect the significance of the chi-square (Byrne, 2010) and non-normal distribution of data will often inflate the value of the chi-square which can lead to spurious modifications when attempting to improve the fit of the model (Markland, 2007). In order to fully assess the fit of a model using SEM it is necessary to include reference to other fit indices alongside the chi-square to avoid inflated Type II errors (Kline, 2011).

8.9.2 Fit indices. Due to the potential problems associated with the chi-square statistic a number of fit indices are commonly interpreted and reported when assessing model fit in SEM. These include comparative fit indices such as the Comparative Fit Index (CFI; Byrne, 2010), and the Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI; Hu & Bentler, 1999). Values on the CFI and TLI range between zero and one with values above .90 considered acceptable for good model fit (Byrne, 2010).

In addition, other indices sensitive to the number of estimated parameters in the model, and thus the complexity of the model, including the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) with 90% confidence intervals is reported where a value of less than .05 is considered a good fit and values up to .08 are acceptable (Schreiber, Stage, King, Nora & Barlow, 2006). A further indicator of model parsimony is Akaike's Information Criterion (AIC; Byrne, 2010) which

takes account of both the goodness of fit of the data and the number of parameters estimated. The AIC is used in comparing two or more models with smaller values indicating a better fit of the hypothesised model (Byrne, 2010).

8.10 SEM Procedures for the Present Study

For the present study the hypothesised conceptual model was specified and estimated using AMOS 20. Model parameters were estimated using a maximum likelihood procedure for initial measurement testing. Following guidelines by Schreiber and colleagues (2006) the goodness of fit for each model was assessed using the chi-square test and fit indices including the GFI, CFI and TLI, and the RMSEA with 90% confidence intervals.

As recommended by Kline (2011) and others (Schreiber et. al, 2006; Weston & Gore, 2006) a three step process was taken to confirm the applicability of each indicator as a factor of each latent variable and to lend greater confidence to model fit statistics in the structural model.

In the first step, the measurement model is assessed, where the pattern of observed variables that explain the latent variables is identified. The measurement model is used to examine the interrelationships between variables by estimating factor loadings, unique variables and modification indices (Schreiber, et. al, 2006). Modifications to improve model fit are made in the second step, where paths are either removed or added according to indications from Modification Indices and an examination of the covariance matrix (Kline, 2011). The purpose of modification at this stage is to achieve a more parsimonious structural model and to ensure all relevant relationships are accounted for. The final step in the process involves testing the fit of the final structural model. The structural model identifies the hypothesised interrelations between the latent variables and observed variables as a series of structural equations (Schreiber et. al, 2006).

As an exploratory study, even with a priori hypotheses about the

relationships between variables, it is important to consider other possible model structures to ensure the best explanation of the current data (Kline, 2011). For this reason, a number of alternative models with theoretically plausible structures were also tested with the current data. The first alternative model includes contacts with Gardaí as an indicator of legal socialisation rather than cooperation and compliance. This approach has been used in previous studies exploring the socialisation aspects of delinquency and attitude formation (e.g. Fagan & Tyler, 2005; Piquero et. al, 2005). It is possible that both aspects of legal socialisation (legal cynicism and moral obligation to obey the law) are directly influenced by a young person's experience with the Gardaí which would be reported through the contacts with Gardaí scale.

A second alternative to the current measurement model positions offending behaviour and future cooperation with Gardaí as outcomes to attitudes that are in turn explained by the legal socialisation and perceptions of Gardaí latent variables. Using behaviour as an outcome to attitude measures has been reported in previous studies in this area (e.g. McAra & McVie, 2005; Tyler, 2006b; Woolard, Harvell & Graham, 2008). The third and final alternative model tested placed offending behaviour as a precursor to contacts with Gardaí, as in the current measurement model, but allowing offending behaviour to influence both perceptions of Gardaí and legal socialisation through these contacts. There is some evidence to suggest that those who engage in more offending behaviour have attitudes that are in line with this behaviour and are likely to report more negative attitudes than those who report less offending (e.g. Piquero et. al, 2005).

8.10.1 Step one: Measurement model testing. The aim of testing a measurement model is to ensure that each indicator (measured variable) is a separate measure of the hypothesised latent variable (i.e. perceptions of Gardaí; legal socialisation and; cooperation and compliance), which in combination are a representation of the

underlying construct (attitudes toward the Gardaí) (Weston & Gore, 2006). The measurement model was tested to assess attitudes toward the Gardaí as a three factor construct as proposed in the first hypothesis (see **Chapter 7**) that predicts attitudes toward Gardaí to be a multidimensional construct. The second purpose of testing a measurement model was to examine the adequacy of each measurement scale to explain its respective latent variable in this population through examination of the factor loadings of items (hypothesis two).

The measurement model tested in this first stage was that outlined in the path diagram (**Figure 8.1**). The potential covariates of age, gender and attitudes toward other authorities were not included in this testing as it was not necessary to test for item loadings in these variables. Model fit indices for the measurement model showed an acceptable fit to the data ($\chi^2(24) = 45.324, p = 0.004, RMSEA = .066$ (90% CI: .037; .095), TLI = .92, CFI = .95). In addition to overall fit indices, factor loadings, parameter estimates and modification indices were examined to ensure all hypothesised relationships within the model were the most appropriate for this study data. Factor loadings for items and scales are given in **Table 8.6**.

Table 8.6

Factor Loadings for Individual Items onto Measured Variables and for Measured Variables onto their Respective Latent Variables

Latent Variable	Factor Loading of Measured Scale onto Latent Variable	Measured Variable	Individual Measured Item Within Scale	Factor Loadings of Individual Item onto Measured Variable			
Legal Socialisation	.46	<i>Legal Cynicism</i>	LC 1	.70			
			LC2	.64			
			LC3	.58			
			LC4	.48			
			LC5	.36			
	.68	<i>Moral Obligation</i>	M01	.69			
			M02	.71			
			M03	.66			
			M06	.38			
			M07	.42			
			Perceptions of Gardaí	.21	<i>Garda Misconduct</i>	MIS 1	.59
						MIS 2	.47
	MIS 3	.73					
	MIS 4	.57					
.71	<i>Garda Performance</i>	PER 1	.42				
		PER2	.49				
		PER3	.64				
		PER4	.63				
		PER5	.70				
		PER6	.51				
		PER7	.40				
		PER8	.56				
		PER9	.62				
.71	<i>Procedural Justice</i>	PJ1	.50				
		PJ2	.63				
		PJ3	.50				
		PJ4	.54				
		PJ5	.57				
		PJ7	.65				

Latent Variable	Factor Loading of Measured Scale onto Latent Variable	Measured Variable	Individual Measured Item Within Scale	Factor Loadings of Individual Item onto Measured Variable
Perceptions of Gardaí	.86	<i>Legitimacy</i>	LEG1	.58
			LEG2	.79
			LEG3	.54
			LEG4	.73
			LEG5	.45
			LEG6	.41
Cooperation & Compliance	-.75	<i>Offending Behaviour (SRD)</i>	A – Problem Behaviour	.80
			B – Property Crime	.92
			C – Violent Crime	.74
			D – Substance Use	.64
			E – Fraud	.55
	.50	<i>Future Cooperation</i>	FUT 1	.57
			FUT2	.61
			FUT3	.67
			FUT4	.67
			FUT5	.70
			FUT6	.54
			FUT7	.77
			FUT8	.65
			FUT9	.69
			FUT10	.64
	-.12	<i>Contacts With Gardaí</i>	POSITIVE	.45
NEGATIVE			.94	

As can be seen from the table all factor loadings were adequate being above .40 except for the loading of contacts with Gardaí onto the cooperation and compliance latent variable. In addition, examination of parameter estimates showed that all indicators, again with the

exception of this relationship ($p = .28$), were significant (all $p < .001$). This would suggest that contact with Gardaí is not an appropriate indicator for cooperation and compliance (contacts with Gardaí loaded onto offending behaviour at .42). This would lend support to the testing of one of the alternative models where contacts with Gardaí would be loaded onto legal socialisation or would indirectly influence both legal socialisation and perceptions of Gardaí.

The second point to note from the table of factor loadings is the poor loading for Garda misconduct onto the latent variable of perceptions of Gardaí (.21). Modification indices for this model showed just a single possible modification that would improve the chi-square statistic which would involve allowing Garda misconduct to load onto the cooperation and compliance variable instead of perceptions of Gardaí. From a theoretical viewpoint, this would be a plausible relationship for young people who perceive greater misconduct among the Gardaí which may directly influence their own intentions to approach the Gardaí in the future or may feel justified in breaking the law themselves.

8.10.2 Step two: Respecification of the measurement model.

Even though the current measurement model showed adequate fit to the data, in an exploratory study it is often recommended to look for ways to respecify the model to improve the fit of the model in line with the original theory proposed and to address poor factor loadings or parameter estimates (Byrne, 2010; Schreiber et. al, 2006). Kline (2011) suggests two general problems that should be addressed in respecification; the loading of indicators onto the correct variables and; an examination of the number of latent factors in the model.

In the current model factor loadings for individual items onto their respective scales was good across all variables in the model. In addition examination of the modification indices showed no proposed chi square changes for removing or respecifying individual items. However, as can be seen from the factor loadings in **Table 8.6**, the

variable of Garda misconduct loaded poorly onto its latent variable of perceptions of the Gardaí and contacts with Gardaí loaded poorly onto the latent variable of cooperation and compliance. While qualitative analysis suggested that perceptions of Garda misconduct was likely to be independently related to overall perceptions of the Gardaí and their effectiveness it appears to be poorly explained by these perceptions in the current sample. Also, contacts with Gardaí was thought to be directly related to future intentions to cooperate and current compliant behaviour, qualitative analysis showed that at least some young people have negative contacts with Gardaí without offending and that even official sanctions from Gardaí can be interpreted positively if Garda behaviour was deemed to have been fair in that instance.

It was decided to respecify the model by allowing Garda misconduct to load onto the cooperation and compliance latent variable and re-run the analysis. Contacts with Gardaí remained as an indicator of this latent variable through offending behaviour for this analysis as there were no indications of improvement in fit if it were moved and it didn't appear to load onto another variable in any meaningful way. The respecified model can be seen in **Figure 8.2**.

Model fit indices for this respecified model showed an improvement on the original measurement model ($\chi^2(24) = 34.713$, $p = 0.073$, RMSEA = .045 (90% CI: .000; .076), TLI = .97, CFI = .98). The chi square statistic is reduced in this model and is now non-significant; the RMSEA statistic is below an acceptable .05 level while both fit statistics are above an acceptable .95. This model appeared to be a better fit to the data, no modification indices were suggested for this version of the model, parameter estimates are significant ($p < .001$) for all relationships with the exception of Garda contacts loading onto cooperation and compliance ($p > .05$). The factor loading for Garda misconduct onto cooperation and compliance is higher than was seen for perceptions of the Gardaí although it remained below .40.

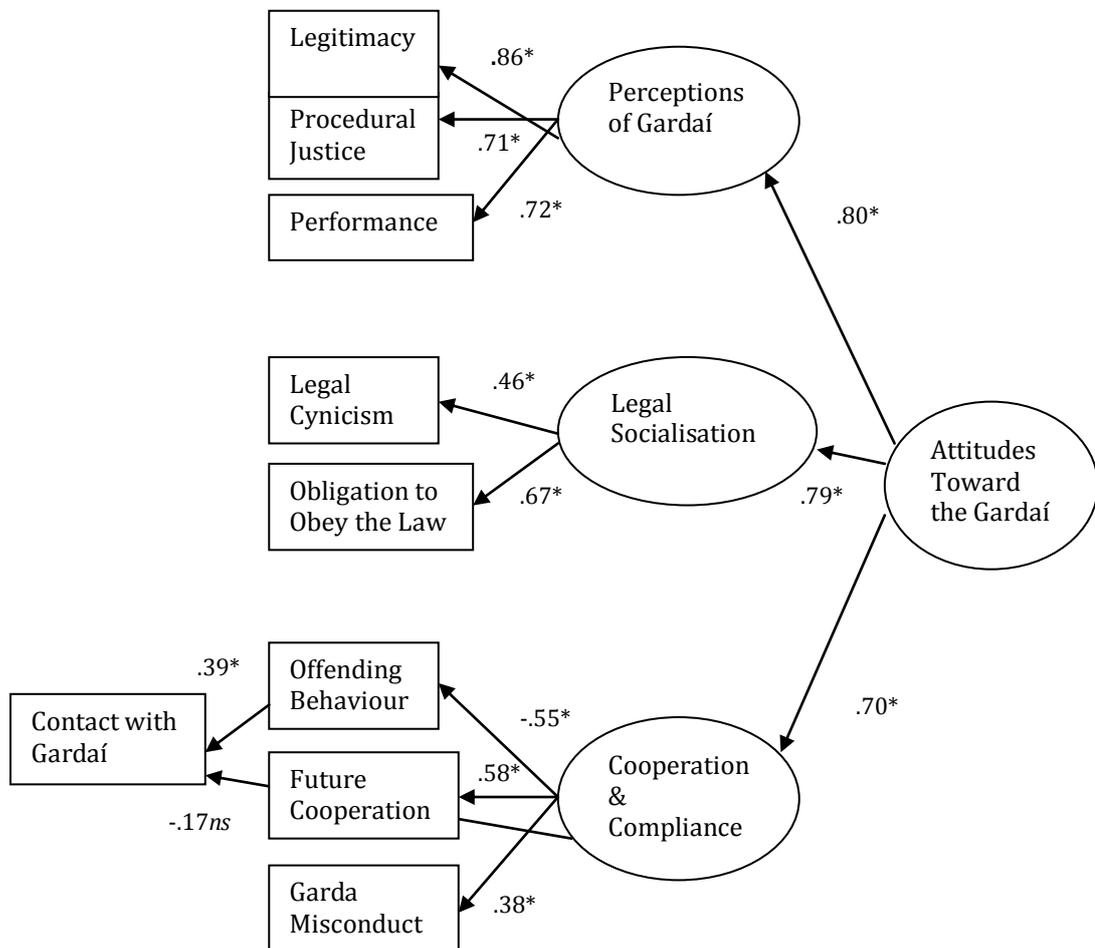


Figure 8.2 Respecified hypothesised model with Garda misconduct loading onto the latent variable of cooperation and compliance and showing standardised coefficients for all relationships. ($N = 221$)

* $p < .01$, $ns =$ non significant

Each of the latent variables in the model significantly and independently predicted the outcome variable of attitudes toward the Gardaí, so that overall perceptions of the Gardaí had a significant direct relationship with attitudes ($\beta = .80, p < .01$), legal socialisation had a significant direct relationship with attitudes ($\beta = .79, p < .01$) and cooperation and compliance also had a significant direct relationship

with attitudes ($\beta = .70, p < .01$). In addition each of the individual indicators showed significant relationships to their respective latent variables.

Perceptions of the Gardaí were significantly predicted by perceptions of Garda performance ($\beta = .72, p < .01$) so that those who reported higher levels of perceived Garda performance had higher overall perceptions of the Gardaí. Perceptions of the fairness of Gardaí, as measured by the procedural justice scale, were significantly positively related to overall perceptions ($\beta = .71, p < .01$) so that those who saw the Gardaí as being more procedurally just had more positive perceptions of the Gardaí overall. Perceptions of the legitimacy of the Gardaí was significantly related to perceptions of Gardaí ($\beta = .86, p < .01$) so that those who had higher perceptions of Garda legitimacy also had more positive overall perceptions of the Gardaí.

Legal socialisation was significantly predicted by levels of legal cynicism (reversed) ($\beta = .46, p < .01$), where those who report lower levels of legal cynicism had higher levels of legal socialisation. Moral obligation to obey the law was significantly related to legal socialisation ($\beta = .67, p < .01$) where those who reported a greater level of moral obligation to obey the law had higher levels of legal socialisation.

Cooperation and compliance was significantly and negatively predicted by offending behaviour ($\beta = -.55, p < .01$) so that those who engage in more offending have lower levels of overall cooperative and compliant behaviour. Intentions for future cooperation was significantly and positively related to overall cooperation and compliance ($\beta = .58, p < .01$), those who reported greater intentions for cooperation with Gardaí in the future having higher overall scores. Perceptions of Garda misconduct was significantly and positively related to overall cooperation and compliance ($\beta = .38, p < .01$), which was unexpected from the study hypotheses and indicates that as perceptions of Garda misconduct increase cooperation and compliance with Gardaí also increases. There was no significant direct relationship

between contact with Gardaí and overall levels of cooperation and compliance ($\beta = -.17, p < .01$) however contact was significantly and positively related to offending behaviour ($\beta = .39, p < .01$) indicating that those who engage in more offending behaviour will have more negative contact with the Gardaí but that this doesn't independently affect overall levels of either future intentions to cooperate or current offending.

As the initial intended sample was young people aged between 12 and 18 years old it was also decided to run the data with those over 18 years old excluded. The possibility that these older participants may have skewed the data due to their potential added experience with Gardaí and possible differences in the legal socialisation measures was considered a practical concern, and may have lead to inflated fit statistics during model testing. In total 11 participants belonged to this older age group.

The fit statistics for the data set with these 11 participants excluded were still within acceptable ranges for a good model fit ($\chi^2(24) = 39.089, p = .027, RMSEA = .055$ (90% CI: .019; .085), TLI = .95, CFI = .97). The changes in fit statistics when these participants are removed suggest that their inclusion in model testing improves overall model fit to some extent. Standardised coefficients for the relationships between variables in the model however showed only marginal changes (all $< .03$ difference between models) and previously significant relationships remained significant suggesting that the patterns of influence within the model remain the same whether these participants are included or excluded. Intercorrelations between variables in the model also showed only modest differences in the two versions of the model. These correlations are given in **Table 8.7** below. Given that the relationships within the model remain largely the same in both versions of the model it was decided to continue model testing with the full data set including the 11 participants over 18 years old.

8.10.3 Testing the effects of covariates. Three potential covariates were also added to the model to test for their effects on attitudes toward the Gardaí, age, gender and, attitudes toward other authorities. Each of these variables have been found to influence overall attitudes toward police in previous studies in this area. When all three were added the model the overall fit of the data was reduced ($\chi^2(52) = 161.194, p = .00, RMSEA = .098(CI90\%; .081; .115), TLI = .76, CFI = .81$). Examination of other statistics (i.e. factor loadings, parameter estimates and modification indices) showed that gender appeared to have no effect on attitudes toward the Gardaí ($p = .95$), while both age and attitudes toward other authorities were significantly related to attitudes ($p < .05$). The model was subsequently run again with gender excluded as a covariate.

This model still showed poor fit to the data ($\chi^2(42) = 148.541, p = .00, RMSEA = .107, (CI90\%: .089; .126), TLI = .76, CFI = .82$). In addition, by including the two covariates of age and attitudes toward other authority's parameter estimates for the remaining relationships within the model were negatively affected with some now showing non-significance. It is possible that in the current study the sample size was too small to show age effects on attitudes toward the Gardaí and this may be the reason for the poor fit of data when it is included. Attitudes toward other authorities was included in the full model as it was suggested from qualitative data analysis that this may be related to general attitudes toward the Gardaí, however no hypothesis for the effects of this variable was made there was insufficient evidence to predict an effect. Due to the negative effect of the addition of these covariates on data fit, subsequent analyses were conducted without their inclusion.

8.10.4 Step three: Structural model testing. The correlation matrix for the variables used for testing the model is presented in **Table 8.7**. The correlations between the hypothesised relationships were mostly significant although some were modest. As multiple direct

and indirect relationships were tested, all theoretically meaningful variables were retained for model building even if they showed modest correlations.

Table 8.7

*Intercorrelations among Measured Variables for the Full Data set;
Intercorrelations for the Data set Minus 11 Participants <18 Years Old in
Brackets*

Study Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Offending Behaviour	X								
Garda Contact	.49** (.49)	X							
Legal Cynicism (reversed)	-.31** (-.34)	-.25** (-.27)	X						
Moral Obligation	-.23** (-.23)	-.13** (-.13)	.31** (.32)	X					
Future Cooperation	-.31** (-.30)	-.22** (-.23)	.28** (.29)	.25** (.24)	X				
Garda Performance	-.25** (-.27)	-.09 (-.09)	.17** (.18)	.42** (.41)	.28** (.28)	X			
Procedural Justice	-.31** (-.33)	-.17** (-.18)	.27** (.31)	.48** (.48)	.20** (.20)	.47** (.45)	X		
Legitimacy	-.27** (-.28)	-.14** (-.17)	.27** (.27)	.47** (.47)	.25** (.26)	.64** (.67)	.61** (.61)	X	
Garda Misconduct	-.18** (-.17)	-.20** (-.19)	.17** (.18)	.13* (.17)	.25** (.27)	.12* (.11)	.09 (.08)	.19** (.18)	X

* = $p < .05$, ** = $p < .01$. Significant correlations at the .01 level are in bold and significant correlations at the .05 level are in italics

8.10.5 Testing Alternative Models

As model testing in this study was primarily exploratory and aimed at testing a theoretical model derived through qualitative interviews and past literature the possibility that there are other, better fitting models for this data must be considered. It has been argued that attitudes

toward the police, or components of attitudes as measured here, influence both cooperation with police and compliance with the law and that these variables should be measured as outcomes to attitudes toward police rather than as influences on them (Gau, 2011; Schumaker & Lomax, 2004; Sunshine & Tyler, 2003). Also, it is theoretically possible that aspects of attitudes are primarily influenced through young people's experiences with the Gardaí and that other aspects of attitudes are mediated through these contacts whether they are positive or negative in nature (Brick, Taylor & Esbensen, 2009; Hinds, 2007; Taylor, Turner, Esbensen & Winfree, 2001; Tyler, 2006). The failure of the measure of contact with Gardaí to show significant effects on either compliance and cooperation or general attitudes toward the Gardaí in the structural model would suggest the possibility that this variable acts in a different way to influence attitudes toward Gardaí. Both of these potential models were tested for goodness of fit and compared to the initial model already outlined above. **Figures 8.3** and **8.4** show the path diagram for each of these models which have been labelled Model B and Model C respectively.

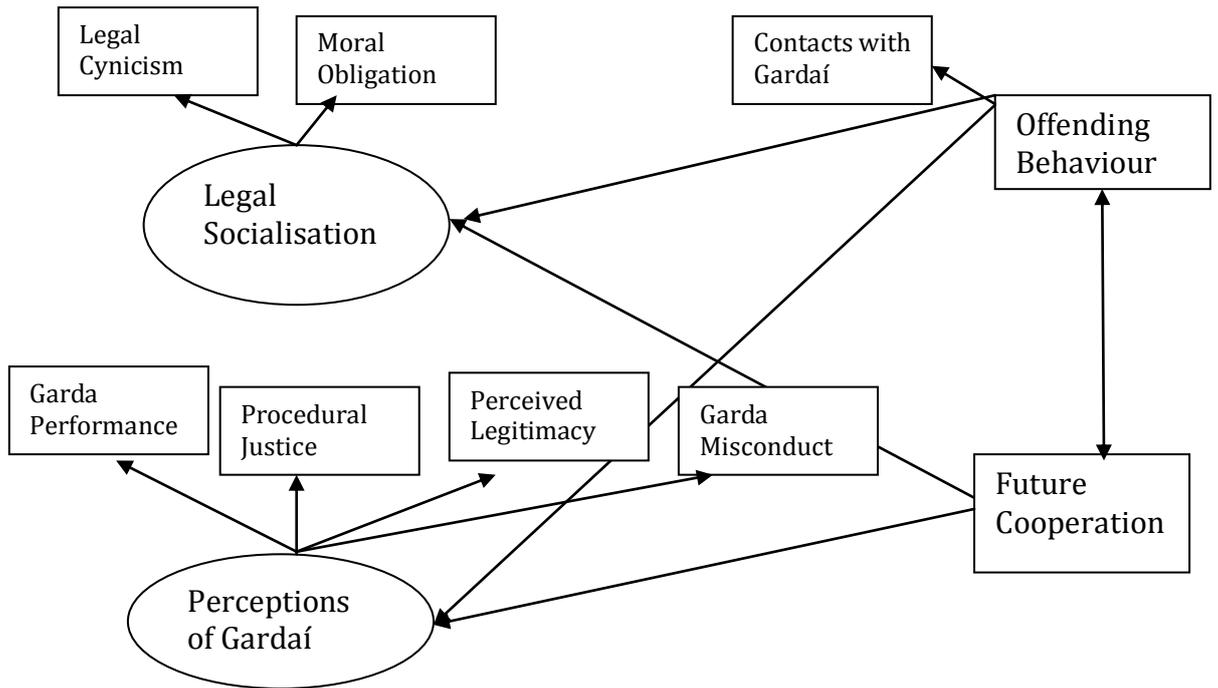


Figure 8.3 Hypothesised path diagram for Model B

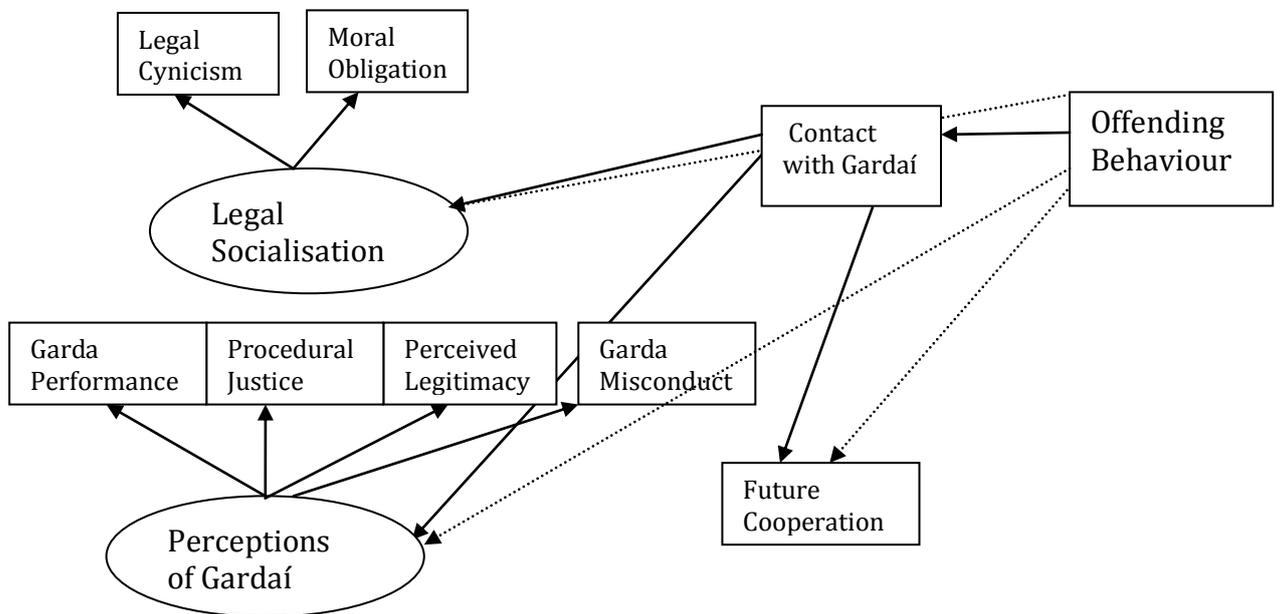


Figure 8.4 Hypothesised path diagram for Models C and D (with dashed lines) *Note:* Offending behaviour was tested for both direct and indirect effects from the latent variables as indicated by the dashed lines.

Model B showed a poor fit to the data ($\chi^2 (27) = 179.351, p = .00$, RMSEA = .157 (90% CI; .135: .179), TLI = .58, CFI = .67) indicating that offending and future cooperation with the Gardaí are poorly explained by attitudes toward Gardaí as measured here. Nonetheless all coefficients between the variables included were statistically significant at the .05 level and there was a negative correlation between offending behaviour and future cooperation ($r = -.31, p < .01$). In addition, modification indices suggest an improvement in model fit if delinquent behaviour is freed to predict contacts with Gardaí. This is further supported by examination of residual covariances between offending and Garda contact which suggests that this model does not adequately explain the relationship between these two variables and that there is merit in investigating a direct effect from delinquent behaviour to contact with Gardaí as was the case in the first structural model.

Model C was tested allowing for both direct and indirect effects of offending behaviour on legal socialisation, future cooperation and perceptions of Gardaí leading to two versions of the model to be tested, the first model (Model C) tested for indirect effects only, whereas the next model (Model D) tested for direct and indirect effects of delinquency simultaneously. Contact with Gardaí appears in all versions of the model to be directly influenced by levels of offending in young people. Both of these models were intended to test the proposition that regardless of other factors, those who engage in more offending will have the most negative attitudes toward the police (e.g. Piquero et. al, 2005).

Model C, assessing indirect effects of delinquency on other attitude variables, showed a poor fit to the data ($\chi^2 (29) = 170.581, p = .00$, RMSEA = .15 (90% CI: .128; .171), TLI = .62, CFI = .69). Model D, which included both direct and indirect effects showed a slight improvement on Model C but was still indicative of a poor fitting model ($\chi^2 (25) = 123.256$, RMSEA = .13 (90% CI: .111; .158), TLI = .69, CFI = .79). Also in this model contact with Gardaí no longer significantly

predicts either legal socialisation, future cooperation or, perceptions of Gardaí ($p > .05$). While Model D showed a closer fit to the data it still implies that this model does not sufficiently explain it and that delinquent behaviour is not an adequate predictor of either of the latent variables. **Table 8.8** shows the fit statistics for each of the models tested.

Table 8.8

Comparative Fit Statistics for each of the Models Tested

Fit Statistic	Model A	Model B	Model C	Model D
χ^2	34.713	179.351	170.581	123.0256
<i>Df</i>	24	27	29	25
<i>p</i>	.073	.00	.00	.00
<i>RMSEA</i>	.045	.157	.15	.13
<i>(90% CI)</i>	(.000-.076)	(.135-.179)	(.128-.171)	(.111-.158)
<i>TLI</i>	.97	.58	.62	.69
<i>CFI</i>	.98	.67	.69	.79
<i>AIC</i>	94.713	231.351	220.581	181.256

As can be seen from **Table 8.8**, the initial structural model where there are three latent variables of perceptions of Gardaí, legal socialisation and, compliance and cooperation with Gardaí, was the best fitting model of those tested. In addition to the fit statistics Akaike's Information Criterion (AIC) is also reported in the table which is used to compare models based on both fit statistics and parsimony with the lower value being the preferred one (Byrne, 2010). Therefore, the first (Model A) structural model was accepted as having the best explanatory power in understanding young people's attitudes toward the Gardaí.

8.11 Analysis of Qualitative Comments

Comment boxes were included after each set of questions in the survey, where participants were invited to add to the topics presented in the questions if they wished to do so, as was suggested during the piloting

phase of the questionnaire (see **Chapter 4** for details). These boxes allowed participants to expand on their experiences with and opinions of the Gardaí and related to perceptions of treatment from Gardaí, details of interactions and, views on the behaviour of Gardaí. Given that these comments are short (mostly one to two sentences long), a full qualitative analysis is not appropriate for this data. Instead the comments were analysed within the context of the themes that emerged from the first study and the grounded theory analysis that was conducted with that data.

In general there was much more negativity in these comments compared to those from the qualitative study but this may be a reflection of the fact that most of the participants who made comments come from the Youthreach group who, as seen from quantitative analyses, were more likely to have had negative contacts with the Gardaí. Nonetheless the comments don't deviate substantially from the themes and opinions expressed already through interviews.

Overall, there was much reference to being mistreated by Gardaí, either physically or verbally, and to feeling that the Gardaí harass young people because they can get away with it. There was a general consensus that the Gardaí should be held responsible for this type of treatment and that Garda officers should be subject to the same rules as citizens, yet there was also the belief that young people would 'never win' against Gardaí reflecting the opinions of participants from study one in this regard. Also reflective of study one interviews, young people expressed their anger and disappointment in finding that their views of how the Gardaí should conduct themselves and treat people are often not matched by their experiences with them.

The themes outlined below were produced through reference to study one themes and questionnaire themes as presented to participants in the survey.

8.11.1 Experiences with Gardaí. Almost all of the experiences reported in this part of the survey related to negative and antagonistic interactions with Gardaí. Many involved the use of physical or verbal aggression and threatening behaviour from the Gardaí. There was a strong sense of injustice in relation to these incidents and participants expressed their beliefs that the Gardaí are generally not answerable for their actions;

“Because they deserve to face the same consequences that other normal people face. [for assault]” (Male, 16 years old, Youthreach).

“Most of them are corrupt they will beat you up in the station or even when pulled over for nothing and they would just say offensive names because they know they can get away with it.” (Male, 17 years old, Youthreach).

There was also a sense that the Gardaí abuse their authority to an extent and use their social status to their own advantage, which makes young people feel as if they themselves are powerless;

“I remember them throwing my friend against railings three times because they thought he had said something to them that he hadn’t. Walking towards us with pepper spray while shouting get back from him. He completely lost his temper for no reason and aggressively pulled a girl by the arm. One Ban Garda said I don’t have to listen to you I’m a Guard and you are only a silly little girl.” (Female, 18 years old, Youthreach)

“The Gardaí strongly abused me and told me if I didn’t fuck home they would get me alone. The Guards are a joke and they should be ashamed of themselves getting money that they don’t deserve” (Male, 17 years old, Youthreach)

“I don’t like the Gardaí clearly because they get away with so much the way they speak to us and when arrested beat you like, but there’s point bringing a Guard to court, you’d never win” (Female, 17 years old, Youthreach)

Participants also reported that they feel they are harassed by the Gardaí because of their own past behaviour. If they are ‘known’ to the

Gardaí as offenders previously, they feel they are continuously treated as suspects whether they have offended again or not;

“If the Guards know you they will hate you forever more and try their best to put you behind bars” (Female, 17 years old, Youthreach)

“If you have ever been in trouble before, it doesn’t matter how long ago, they will still treat you like a criminal when you are called for questioning” (Female, 23 years old, Youthreach)

The themes that can be discerned from these comments reflect those that emerged in the qualitative study in that young people feel they are discriminated against and that the *“Guards tend to pick on teenagers... even if [they’re] doing nothing wrong”* (Female, 14 years old, Community School). They also reported that they feel the Gardaí don’t listen to them because of their age and that Garda treatment of young people is unfair, often unjustified and sometimes violent. As with participants in the qualitative study, survey participants felt that they have no opportunity to complain about their treatment as they wouldn’t be taken seriously and they believe that Gardaí will “get away with it” (Female, 17 years old, Youthreach).

8.11.2 Perceptions of Gardaí. There were few references to Garda performance in the comments sections, however some of the more positive comments referred to the Gardaí as being “a vital part of society” (Female, 13 years old, Community School) and that “...they do a good job and should get more credit for what they do for the community” (Female, 16 years old, Mainstream School). Nonetheless the majority of comments give the sense that young people see the Gardaí as using their power and status in order to control others rather than to do their jobs.

There is little evidence from these comments to suggest that young people generally see the Gardaí as legitimate or as using procedurally just means of dealing with the public;

“I hate them they stop us for no reason, so we’ve no respect for them” (Male, 17 years old, Youthreach)

“It’s who you know, if you know a Garda they will sort your problems out, I know this from past experience” (Male, 16 years old, Vocational School)

“They make assumptions and don’t like to be proved wrong when given all the details” (Male, 19 years old, Youthreach)

These feelings that the Gardaí are unfair in their treatment of young people are most pronounced for those who have had personal encounters with Gardaí and are left feeling unfairly targeted, stereotyped and poorly treated.

8.11.3 Cynicism and obligation to obey the law. The group that expressed the most apparent cynicism toward the law and the legitimacy of the Gardaí were again the group that have had negative and antagonistic experiences with the Gardaí. This was shown through a lack of trust in the Gardaí and a suspicion of their motivations, that they are seen as ‘power hungry’ or that they target young people because ‘they get bored’.

In line with findings from the qualitative study there was reference to the lack of respect for Gardaí reflecting the lack of respect young people feel they are shown. Also in a similar vein to qualitative findings, young people’s comments here referred to not being listened to by Gardaí and of not knowing enough about their own rights to defend themselves. In addition there were similar comments that related to the reciprocal nature of respect and good relations between Gardaí and young people more generally;

“Overall when you talk to a Guard no matter what state you’re in, they’re good craic and if you co-operate they’ll go easy on you” (Male, 16 years old, Mainstream School)

“I think the Gardaí are fair with people if they are fair with them” (Male, 14 years old, Community School)

Overall there were few positive comments relating to the Gardaí these being mainly more general comments about the purpose of having a law enforcement service compared to the more negative comments that tended to relate to personal experiences. It is likely that

those who have had these negative experiences were more inclined to add further to the survey through comment boxes than those who felt generally positive toward the Gardaí so these open ended statements should not be seen as a reflection of the group as a whole. Nonetheless, there are a large number of references to being both verbally and physically threatened and assaulted by Gardaí which will no doubt encourage negative and hostile attitudes towards them from young people which are potentially more likely to be enduring into later adulthood than more general, benign attitudes toward them.

8.12 Discussion of Study Two Results

The purpose of this quantitative study was to test the theoretical model developed through qualitative data analysis with a larger sample and to test for a variety of relationships between identified factors that contribute to the formation of attitudes toward the Gardaí. Results suggest that attitudes toward the Gardaí is a multi dimensional construct where perceptions of the performance, effectiveness and fairness of the Gardaí contributes to overall attitudes, aspects of legal socialisation of young people including levels of cynicism toward the law and moral obligation to obey the law and, past offending and future intentions to cooperate with the Gardaí combine to illustrate the complex attitudes that young people hold toward the Gardaí.

This study showed support for attitudes toward the Gardaí as a three factor construct including perceptions of Gardaí, legal socialisation and cooperation and compliance with the law. Each of these latent factors showed a unique effect on overall attitudes toward the Gardaí within this sample of young people. Those with more positive attitudes were identified by more positive perceptions of Garda performance, fairness and legitimacy, higher levels of legal socialisation, less offending and greater intentions to cooperate with the Gardaí in the future. Negative attitudes were identified by more negative overall perceptions of Gardaí, lower levels of legal socialisation, higher levels of offending and, lower intentions to cooperate in the future.

More contact with Gardaí of any type was significantly associated with more offending, and was negatively correlated with all other attitude measures, although it was non-significant across these variables. This was in line with findings from the qualitative study where young people made distinctions between their own experiences with Gardaí and their more general, overall, views of the Gardaí, suggesting that this sample also have ambivalent attitudes toward Gardaí to some extent. In addition, more offending behaviour in the past 12 months was negatively correlated with all other measures of attitudes toward the Gardaí. While this shows a relationship between negative attitudes and law breaking behaviour, it does not allow for causation to be determined in this study. The other behavioural variable, future cooperation was, as predicted, positively correlated with all other attitude variables (with the exception of offending) indicating an association with this variable and with more positive overall attitudes toward the Gardaí.

These results show that attitudes toward the Gardaí are formed through more than just experiences with officers, and that more general perceptions and the young person's own behaviour are also important factors to consider. However, negative experiences appear to have a greater impact on attitudes than positive experiences as has been found in previous studies (Skogan, 2005). This can be explained somewhat by the qualitative comments from participants where they reported their experiences as being unfair, involving aggressive treatment from Gardaí and the feeling that they are stereotyped and unfairly targeted by Gardaí.

While age was not significant within the final model of this data, it does show some effect as seen from the descriptive statistics, where the youngest group of participants (aged 12 to 14 years old) showed the most positive attitudes compared to the other two age groups. In contrast to other studies however, the group showing the most negative views of the Gardaí was the over 18 group, whereas the mid adolescent

group (15 to 17 years) would be expected to show a peak in negative attitudes becoming more positive as they reach 18 years old (e.g. Fagan & Tyler, 2005; Piquero et. al, 2005). This may be a feature of the current sample however, where the majority of participants over 18 years were from Youthreach centres who are more likely to have had negative experiences with the Gardaí and to have more offending behaviour in their pasts.

Also in this model gender appeared to have no effect on attitudes toward the Gardaí with both males and females reporting largely similar scores for each of the measured variables and having no impact on the model overall as a covariate. The structural model tested here indicates a number of interactions between the development of cognitive understandings of justice and the role of the Gardaí and how young people perceive these to be applied in the real world.

In Tyler's (2006b) theory of procedural justice, perceptions of legitimacy stem from procedurally just treatment from police, and are related to wider perceptions of police performance and effectiveness. Tyler measures moral obligation to obey the law as a factor of perceptions of legitimacy, in the current study, however, moral obligation is a related factor in terms of overall attitudes toward police but is separate to perceptions and is more explanatory as a factor of legal socialisation. This is in line with other studies that have focused on the psychometric properties of procedural justice and legitimacy and their related factors (e.g. Gau, 2011).

There is evidence that young people in this study hold both global, or general, attitudes toward the Gardaí and more specific attitudes usually relating to their own or witnessed experiences as has been found in previous research with this age group (Brandl, Frank, Worden & Bynum, 1994). It also highlights the need to consider both perceptions of fairness of treatment from police and also perceptions of the overall performance of police in measuring the attitudes of young people.

This model also shows the merit in arguing for the development of age specific measures for use with adolescents and that scales originally developed for use with adults may not be capable of tapping the unique developmental aspects of attitude formation in this age group. While many studies have found a striking difference between the attitudes of young people and adults (see Brown & Benedict, 2002 for a review), there has been little investigation as to why these differences occur. The current study can go some way toward explaining this by indicating a need to consider different aspects of experiences and attitudes in understanding young people's attitudes compared to those of adults.

A more detailed discussion of these results and results from the qualitative study will be presented in the following chapter.

8.13 Summary

Data for 221 (out of 226) participants were suitable for inclusion in the final data analysis. Prior to structural equation model testing all data were screened for normality, validity and reliability. A small number of items were removed following data screening due to their unsuitability for inclusion in final model testing. Descriptive statistics showed gender and age differences for offending behaviour and contact with Gardaí where older males had higher scores on both of these measures. All other measures relating to perceptions of Gardaí and legal socialisation showed age, but not gender, differences in the expected directions, where older participants expressed more negative views of the Gardaí compared to younger participants.

Structural equation analysis was performed in three steps, (1) initial measurement testing, where the predictive ability of each observed variable was assessed for each of their latent constructs, (2) modification of the model to improve overall fit according to modification indices and theoretical considerations and (3) final structural model testing where the final model was tested for fit to the current data. In addition a number of alternative model constructions

were also tested as this was an exploratory study and other possible models should also be considered. The most appropriate model for the current data indicated a three factor model of attitudes that included: (1) perceptions of the Gardaí, (2) legal socialisation and, (3) cooperation and compliance as latent variables. Age, gender and attitudes toward other authorities showed no effects on the model when added as potential covariates.

Qualitative analysis of open ended comments, completed by approximately 25% of participants, on the questionnaires showed similar results to those from study 1. Participants expressed the belief that they are targeted by the Gardaí because of their age, and that they were generally treated unfairly by Gardaí including some cases of overly aggressive treatment. Experiences with Gardaí were generally negative, with few positive statements made on these parts of the questionnaires and perceptions of procedural justice and legitimacy were low. However, only a relatively small proportion of participants made use of these comment boxes so they may reflect only the views of those who have had particular negative experiences with Gardaí and wished to offer more detail on their responses to the questions around contact and offending and most likely do not reflect a balanced view of all participants in this part of the study.

Chapter 9: Discussion and Conclusion

9.1 Aims of the Chapter

The aim of this chapter is to present a summary of the key findings from both the qualitative and quantitative studies and to discuss these in light of current theory and practice. Methodological issues and limitations will also be discussed and directions for future research will be presented. The possible policy and practical implications of the current study findings will also be outlined.

9.2 Summary of Key Findings

The current study sought to explore the attitudes of Irish young people toward the Gardaí and to use this understanding to facilitate the development and testing of a theoretical model of attitudes. This was achieved through the use of an exploratory sequential mixed methods research design where qualitative data was collected and analysed in the first stage followed by quantitative data collection and analysis. The data from both studies were integrated at two main points of the study. Firstly, analysis of qualitative data, using a grounded theory approach, was used to inform the development of a theoretical model which led to the construction of the quantitative survey instrument. The model tested through this second study was analysed using structural equation modelling. The second point of integration was at the discussion stage where results from both studies were integrated to give a broader understanding of young people's attitudes toward the Gardaí and the factors that influence these attitudes.

9.2.1 The nature of young people's attitudes toward the Gardaí. The existing attitudes of young people toward the Gardaí were explored through qualitative, semi-structured interviews in study one and with reference to the quantitative descriptive statistics from study two.

The attitudes expressed by participants in both of these studies were highly ambivalent toward the Gardaí. Positive attitudes were reported when participants referred to general views of the Gardaí and

their importance in society and also when participants reported personal experiences they had with a Garda officer where they felt they were listened to and had been treated fairly. Negative attitudes were reported by participants when they referred to antagonistic experiences they had with the Gardaí where they felt they were singled out as troublemakers because of their age, when they had experienced aggressive treatment from Gardaí or where their concerns had not been taken seriously. This included the views of the three participants who had reported crimes in the past and who felt that the Gardaí failed to investigate their reports due to the participant's age.

Participants in study one appeared to have a good understanding of the complexities of police work and the difficulties that Gardaí encounter in investigating crime. However, they also had high expectations of the Gardaí in terms of how they behave and treat citizens they deal with. There were indications of disengagement and cynicism with the justice system among participants when these expectations of service were not met.

9.2.2 The effects of uncertainty on attitudes toward the Gardaí.

Uncertainty emerged as the core category from study one qualitative data analysis. This category was found to influence all subsequent themes and sub themes within the theoretical model and was found to have an overarching effect on young people's attitudes toward the Gardaí. When young people felt that they were unable to anticipate how they would be perceived or treated by the Gardaí this led to a sense of fear and mistrust and permeated young people's relationships with Gardaí in a negative way.

Feelings of uncertainty affected both the behaviour of young people within interactions with the Gardaí and their interpretations of these interactions. The sub themes identified through qualitative data analysis included;

- Uncertainty in interactions with Gardaí, where young people were unable to anticipate how they would be treated by Gardaí or the outcomes of their interactions
- Uncertainty of Garda behaviour, where young people were unsure if they would be treated fairly or with aggression
- Uncertainty of expectations from Gardaí, where young people's views of how the Gardaí should behave were challenged through their experiences and,
- Uncertainty of rights and status, where young people were unsure of their own rights and legal status within interactions with Gardaí and regarding their treatment from them.

Both personal and vicarious experiences were important in influencing young people's attitudes toward the Gardaí and a number of participants stated that their own opinions of the Gardaí had been changed through these experiences, and had become less idealised as they got older and gained more knowledge and experience of Garda-youth relationships.

The themes identified in study one were subsequently grouped into the three components of attitudes of affect, cognition and behaviour as proposed by previous researchers within the final theoretical model (e.g. Azjen, 2001; Maio & Haddock, 2010). The affective elements of attitudes within the current model reflected overall perceptions of Garda performance, effectiveness and fairness and was measured using the variables of procedural justice, legitimacy, Garda performance and, Garda misconduct. The cognitive component of attitudes reflected the unique legal socialisation period of adolescence and was mapped onto the variables of legal cynicism and moral obligation to obey the law. The behavioural component of attitudes reflected a young person's cooperation and compliance with the law and was mapped onto the variables of offending behaviour and future intentions to cooperate with Gardaí.

9.2.3 Testing the theoretical model. The survey instrument administered in study two contained nine individual variables that were measured with separate scales. The correlations between each set of variables were analysed concurrently to give an indication of young people's overall attitudes toward the Gardaí and the factors that influence them. Each of these individual variables was also mapped onto one of three latent variables that represented one of the main themes from the qualitative data analysis. The first latent variable, perceptions of Gardaí, was measured through the variables of perceptions of Garda performance, perceptions of procedural justice, legitimacy of Gardaí and perceptions of Garda misconduct. The second latent variable, legal socialisation, was measured through the variables of legal cynicism and moral obligation to obey the law. The third latent variable, cooperation and compliance, was measured through intentions for future cooperation with Gardaí and offending behaviour in the past 12 months.

Each of these latent variables showed a significant effect on overall attitudes toward the Gardaí in model testing. However, one modification was required to ensure a good fit of the full model to the data. Perceptions of Garda misconduct was found to have no significant relationship to overall perceptions of Gardaí. Instead misconduct showed a significant correlation with cooperation and compliance. Once the model was respecified in this way the structural model showed a good fit to the data as indicated by a number of fit indices and with reference to the chi square statistic.

The finding that perceptions of Garda misconduct was a more appropriate indicator of cooperation and compliance than of overall perceptions of Gardaí was unexpected. It had been hypothesised that perceptions of misconduct would relate directly to other variables measuring Garda practice and fairness that included perceptions of Garda performance, procedural justice and legitimacy. There were no significant relationships between misconduct and these three other

measured variables, and misconduct failed to aid in predicting the latent variable of perceptions of Gardaí. However, despite a now significant relationship between perceptions of Garda misconduct and the remaining variables in the model, this was not in the expected directions where misconduct appeared to improve overall attitudes toward Gardaí. Possible reasons for this finding are discussed in the following section.

All other relationships within the model were significant in the expected directions so that those with more positive overall attitudes toward the Gardaí showed higher levels of perceptions of Gardaí, higher levels of legal socialisation, greater intentions to cooperate with Gardaí in the future and lower levels of past or current offending.

Age, gender and attitudes toward other authorities were each added to the model as potential covariates to test for their effects on overall attitudes toward the Gardaí. However, the addition of these covariates, whether added together or individually, reduced the fit of the model to unacceptable levels and they were subsequently removed from the final analysis. While gender showed an almost complete non-significant effect on any of the study variables, indicating that gender was not relevant to attitudes toward the Gardaí in this sample, both age and attitudes toward other authorities did show some relation to overall attitudes. It may be that in the current sample age and attitudes toward other authorities do not have any direct impact on attitudes toward the police but instead are reflective of the dynamic nature of attitudes toward all authorities that is thought to occur throughout the adolescent years (Steinberg, 1993; Turiel, 1983). However, descriptive statistics from study two showed age differences across a number of the measured variables in the current study indicating that age may be a significant variable to consider in future studies as it has the potential to influence general attitudes toward the police.

However, this possible age effect in the current study may have been due to the composition of the final sample (as outlined in Section

7.12) where there was an over representation of participants from Youthreach centres compared to mainstream secondary schools. It is likely that over sampling of those from the Travelling community (through sampling in Youthreach centres) moderated the effects of age on attitudes to the point that it was no longer a significant factor in overall attitudes toward the police. As this was an unanticipated feature of the final sample when constructing the questionnaire for Study two, questions relating to ethnic background were not included in the survey and it was not possible to test for this effect in the final analysis. Future research in this area should take account of potential differences in attitudes toward the Gardaí that may be influenced by the factor of ethnic/cultural background.

In line with findings from study one, participants in study two appeared to hold both global and specific attitudes toward the Gardaí where they distinguished between the Gardaí in general and individual Garda officers. This is further supported by the finding from the overall study that attitudes toward the Gardaí are best conceptualised as being comprised of at least three factors that include different aspects of attitudes but also takes account of the importance of their correlations with each other in fully explaining attitudes toward the Gardaí.

9.3 Integration of Findings with Previous Research

The results from the present study indicated that young people's attitudes toward the Gardaí are influenced by a complex combination of affective, cognitive and behavioural factors. These results also suggest that it is important to take account of the cognitive and social development of adolescents when measuring their attitudes toward the police. Findings also indicate that young people's attitudes toward the Gardaí are a complex set of inter-related factors and cannot be measured fully through the use of single variables or simple correlational studies.

9.3.1 Socialisation and attitude formation. Descriptive statistics from study two showed that there are some age differences in young people's attitudes toward the Gardaí. The youngest group in this study (12 to 14 years) reported the most positive attitudes as measured through legal cynicism, perceptions of Garda performance, procedural justice and legitimacy of Gardaí, moral obligation to obey the law, offending behaviour and, future intentions to cooperate with the Gardaí. This supports findings from previous research where attitudes have been found to become more negative in mid adolescence and gradually become more positive as individuals move into adulthood (Fagan & Tyler, 2005; McAra & McVie, 2005; Rubini & Palmonari, 2006). However, in contrast to these previous studies, the participants with the most negative perceptions of the Gardaí were not the mid-adolescent group (15 to 17 years) but those in the 18 years and over group. This indicates that instead of attitudes toward the Gardaí becoming more positive as individuals get older, they are increasingly negative.

One possible explanation for this may be the particular composition of the current sample. Almost all of the participants aged 18 years or over were attending Youthreach centres rather than mainstream education. As Youthreach is a second chance education scheme, (designed for young people who have left mainstream education before sitting state examinations for a variety of reasons to gain formal qualifications in a more personalised environment), many of these students may have left mainstream schools due to particular problems with school authorities which could affect their attitudes toward policing authorities as well. Also, many of the students within the Youthreach system are from the Traveller community, a group previously found in Ireland to have largely negative views of the Gardaí (Buckley & O'Sullivan, 2007; McCullagh, 1996).

The experiences that young people have with the Gardaí do appear to have an impact on their attitudes. This is in line with much

previous research where the type and frequency of contact with police is often found to be the most significant influencing factor on overall attitudes (Flexon, Lurigio & Greenleaf, 2009; Hinds, 2007; Tyler, 2006b). Findings in the current study also support Tyler's (2006a; 2006b) theory of procedural justice in that young people are more concerned with the way that they are treated by Gardaí than the outcomes of their interactions if they perceive those outcomes to be the result of fair and unbiased decision making on the part of Gardaí. However, reasons why participants in this study felt they had been treated unfairly were often due to the perception that they were stereotyped by the Gardaí as troublemakers or as guilty regardless of their actual behaviour. This factor has not been considered in previous studies where measures of perceived procedural justice and legitimacy are often the same as those used for adult samples (e.g. Fagan & Tyler, 2005; Hinds, 2007; 2009; Piquero, Fagan, Mulvey, Steinberg & Odgers, 2005), and may be one reason why Dai and colleagues found that procedurally just practices by police have less influence on the attitudes of young people than of adults (Dai, Frank & Sun, 2011).

The importance of considering young people's perceptions of how they are viewed by authorities can be further highlighted by findings from study one where participants stated that they would be reluctant to approach Gardaí when they felt they would not be taken as seriously as an adult. This is in line with Bandura's theory of attitude formation and socialisation where he argues that adolescent's attitudes are formed through the changing sociocultural attitudes of others in society towards them (Bandura, 1989; 2001). However, sociocultural attitudes toward those from the Traveller community may not change as they get older and Gardaí may continue to see them as troublemakers (McCullagh, 1996), which could potentially be another reason why this group reported the most negative views of the Gardaí in the current study.

When young people in study one reported that they believed the Gardaí made assumptions about their guilt based on their age, this contributed to their feelings of uncertainty, mistrust and fear of interactions with Gardaí. Findings from this study suggest that uncertainty such as this affects aspects of both the relationships that young people have with the Gardaí and the ways that they interpret their experiences with them. As a concept within the attitude toward police literature however, it has not been researched to date. While uncertainty as a concept has not been included in past research in young people's attitudes toward the police, one study measured the effects of anticipatory injustice on these attitudes. Woolard, Harvell and Graham (2008) interviewed young people who had been arrested by police and investigated their expectations of treatment by police, the courts and the justice system. They found that those with more experience of the justice system overall, were most likely to report expectations of unfair treatment and were least likely to cooperate with the police or the courts compared to those with less experience.

Such expectations may in turn influence the ways that young people interpret their experiences with the police. As seen from the qualitative findings in the present study, participants who had reported crimes to the Gardaí also reported the most negative views of Garda performance. Previous studies have found that negative information about the behaviour of the police has a greater impact on overall attitudes than positive information (e.g. Bradford, Jackson & Stanko, 2009; Skogan, 2005). While expectations of treatment from police were not measured in either of these studies, it is argued that such negative information influences attitudes toward the police because it challenges the expectations of the individual and forces them to reassess their views of the police in subsequent interactions.

9.3.2 The performance and procedural justice perspectives of attitudes toward the police. Results from both studies support both the performance and procedural justice perspectives of attitudes

toward the police. Participants in this study were concerned with the effectiveness of the Gardaí while also showing an understanding of the difficulties of police work. Participants also reported concern with the way in which they and other citizens are treated by Gardaí and stated that they should be able to carry out their duties in non-aggressive, fair and unbiased ways lending support to the procedural justice perspective of attitudes toward the police (Tyler, 2006b).

The current study also found that perceptions of the performance of Gardaí were better situated alongside perceptions of procedural justice and legitimacy of Gardaí than as a separate variable in explaining the influences on young people's attitudes. This is similar to findings from Hinds (2009a; 2009b), where performance of the police was found to be an important factor in explaining overall attitudes toward the police, but in contrast to findings reported by Tyler (2006b) where each variable was conceptualised as separate, but related, variables with procedural justice being the most significant. However, findings from both studies do support Tyler's theory of procedural justice in that young people reported that fairness and lack of bias in their interactions with a Garda were more important to them than the actual outcomes of those interactions (Sunshine & Tyler, 2003; Tyler, 2009). This was the case for participants in study one when describing a range of types of interactions including, being moved on, being arrested and reporting a crime. Perceptions of procedural justice in study two were also related to the behavioural aspects of attitudes that measured cooperation and compliance as has been found in previous research (Hinds, 2007; Paternoster, Brame, Bachman & Sherman, 1997; Tyler, 2001).

Despite this young people in study one tended to report that fair procedures were atypical of the Gardaí. A single positive experience, or knowing a Garda that they perceive as being generally fair, didn't appear to impact on their attitudes or behaviour in future interactions. This is in line with other qualitative studies in particular where young

people were found to make distinctions between different types of officers and experiences (e.g. Dirikx, Gelders & Parmentier, 2012). The effects of having such positive interactions may serve to further entrench negative views of the Gardaí by offering young people a comparison that they can judge more negative interactions by. There is some evidence within the literature to suggest that expectations of negative treatment may serve to increase compliance within a particular interaction in order to avoid sanctions, but it has little impact on overall attitudes toward the police (Choongh, 1997; Dai, Frank & Sun, 2011). This was supported in the current study where participants reported that they had agreed with Gardaí and acquiesced with their requests in order to avoid punishment even when they felt they were being unfairly targeted.

Participants in this study also showed evidence of holding both global and specific attitudes toward the Gardaí which may explain some of the ambivalence reported by participants, particularly in study one. It was found by Brandl and colleagues that individuals may have differing views of the police depending on whether they were asked general questions about police performance or more specific questions about their own experiences or particular aspects of police work (e.g. preventing the sale of drugs) (Brandl, Frank, Worden & Bynum, 1994). General, or global, satisfaction with the Gardaí in both of the current studies was generally high and was related to other aspects of positive attitudes such as cooperation and compliance with the law. However, as seen through both the qualitative and quantitative studies, participants also reported negative views of their own experiences (specific attitudes) simultaneously. This is in contrast to previous studies where participants were found to hold negative global attitudes while reporting positive views of personal experiences (Carr, Napolitano & Keating, 2007; Hurst, Frank & Browning, 2000).

Holding both global and specific attitudes toward the Gardaí can also explain the finding of general ambivalence across participants in

the current study. Participants in study one expressed support for the concept of policing and held mature views on the difficulties encountered in investigating crime. However, most participants who had personal experience with the Gardaí perceived these interactions as negative largely due to the manner in which they were treated by Garda officers. It is possible that young people will hold a somewhat idealised view of how the police should conduct themselves and carry out their duties which may not be matched by their own personal experience leading them to make distinctions between 'the police' and individual police officers that they encounter. Participants in this study also made distinctions between Garda officers where they stated positive attitudes toward individual Gardaí and more negative attitudes toward Garda officers they didn't know before. This suggests that young people hold not only global and specific attitudes toward the police in a larger sense but also that they have different attitudes toward different types of officers. Similar findings were reported by Dirikx et. al in their qualitative study of Flemish young people and their attitudes toward the police (Dirikx, Gelders & Parmentier, 2012).

It has been argued that procedurally just practices by the police are important in influencing attitudes toward the police because they offer information to the individual about their status within society (Gau, 2011; Tyler, 2009). This would help to explain why participants in the current study expressed negative perceptions of their own experiences with the Gardaí in terms of being stereotyped or not being listened to by Gardaí. If young people feel that they are being treated with disrespect and see this as a reflection on how they are viewed by the Gardaí more generally this may lead to a lack of reciprocal respect for the Gardaí. Adolescence is thought to be an important time for the development of both personal identity and the acceptance of social norms (Steinberg, 1993), and having such a status challenging experience with the Gardaí may lead young people to question both the authority of the Gardaí and their own obligation to obey them.

As found by Hinds in her studies with Australian youth and adults (Hinds, 2009a; 2009b), perceptions of performance were a significant predictor of overall attitudes toward the Gardaí in study two. In US based studies performance has been found to have little to no effect on attitudes to police overall (e.g. Sunshine & Tyler, 2003; Tyler, 2006b). Model testing in study two showed that in the present sample perceptions of Garda performance and fairness had similar correlations to overall attitudes toward the Gardaí as legal socialisation variables (.79 and .80 respectively). This further highlights the need to ensure that measures of attitudes toward the police in countries outside of the US are culturally specific and that there is not an assumption that the same variables will show the same effects in different countries. In Ireland, for example, policing practices are different to those in the US in that Gardaí are unarmed and jurisdictions are much smaller and more community based (O'Donnell, 2005), which could affect both how the Gardaí interact with the public and how the public perceives the Gardaí.

9.3.3 Factors affecting attitudes toward the Gardaí. The results from study two showed some effects for age on attitudes toward the Gardaí which is in line with previous research where younger adolescents tend to hold the most positive attitudes (e.g. Brick, Taylor & Esbensen, 2009; Fagan & Tyler, 2005; Hurst, Frank & Browning, 2000; Taylor, Turner, Esbensen & Winfree, 2001). However it has been argued that age is most likely to interact with other factors, such as experience with police, rather than serve as a single explanatory variable (e.g. Brown & Benedict, 2002). This may be one reason why age failed to improve the model in the quantitative study despite individual measurement scales showing age differences. Also, as with previous research in other countries, both offending behaviour and contact with Gardaí increased with age in the current sample (Fagan & Tyler, 2005; McAra & McVie, 2005). This would suggest that the attitudes of participants in this study are affected by both age and

experience with Gardaí rather than a simple effect of age alone. It is likely that the young person's attitudes toward police change with both cognitive and moral development and interaction with their social environments which is a dynamic process that changes over the course of adolescence (Bandura, 1989; Turiel, 2006).

There were no effects for gender on overall attitudes toward the Gardaí or on individual measurements when tested in study two, in contrast to findings in previous studies (Brick, et. al, 2009; Smith & McVie, 2003) where females have shown more positive attitudes than males. Females in this study also showed comparable levels of offending to males which is in line with a similar study based in Scotland (Smith & Ecob, 2007). However, in contrast to previous research (Bradford, Jackson & Stanko, 2009; Skogan, 2005), females in the current study showed no differences to males in their expectations of either performance or treatment from Gardaí which may mean that females in the current study are inclined to interpret their experiences with Gardaí in a similar way to males. This would suggest that both males and females in the present sample also have similar negative experiences with Gardaí, which would contrast with findings from previous research in other countries (Bradford et. al, 2009; Dai, Frank & Sun, 2011; Hinds, 2007) where studies show that females have less antagonistic interactions with police compared to males. It is possible that, as reported by participants in study one, Gardaí approach all young people in a similar stereotypical manner and don't differentiate between males and females in terms of their potential guilt as other police forces may do. However, it should be noted that findings in relation to gender in this study may also be confounded by an over-representation of participants from Youthreach centres where other factors, such as more generalised problems with authority, may be at the fore to a greater extent than gender.

Participants in both studies who had higher levels of offending also reported more negative attitudes compared to those with lower

levels. This is in line with much previous research (e.g. Hurst & Frank, 2000; Piquero, Fagan, Mulvey, Steinberg & Olson, 2005; Slocum, Taylor, Brick & Esbensen, 2010). There was also a direct correlation between level of offending and contact with Gardaí in study two as has been shown in previous research (Brick et. al, 2009; McAra & McVie, 2005). Those who engage in the most frequent and most serious types of offending are likely to be at the greatest risk of negative contact with Gardaí. As experience, and in particular negative experience, is an influencing factor on overall attitudes toward the Gardaí those who have the most experience of negative interactions would be expected to have the most negative attitudes. The current study findings suggest that this is the case in the present sample. However, it is not possible to infer causation between offending, contacts with Gardaí and, negative overall attitudes as it is a cross sectional study and there are likely to be other interacting factors affecting each of these variables.

Measures of the influence of peers on attitudes toward the Gardaí were not included in the current study. As a variable this was excluded from the quantitative study as qualitative analysis revealed that young people are likely to view the experiences and opinions of peers as 'stories' rather than accurate reports of actual interactions or attitudes. Also, there appear to be differences between what young people perceive as the attitudes of peer groups, which they feel are presented as negative in order to enhance their reputations among other young people, and the attitudes of friends which were generally reported to be more positive. Also, as a source of vicarious experience, the interactions that participants heard from peers were considered to only be those that were negative and that young people in general do not share more positive stories with their peers. Previous research has found that these types of vicarious experiences that are shared among peer groups have an impact on the individual's own attitudes toward police (e.g. Brezina & Piquero, 2007; Flexon, Liurgio & Greenleaf, 2009; Hurst & Frank, 2000; Leiber, Nalla & Farnworth, 1998). However, it

was decided not to include a measure of peer or friend attitudes to the Gardaí as it would be impossible to determine whether these attitudes were taken at face value by participants or if they had any direct impact on attitudes toward the Gardaí.

Garda behaviour and perceptions of misconduct among Gardaí did not show the expected relationship to attitudes in this study. It was predicted that the greater the perception of Garda misconduct in participants the more negative their attitudes would be as has been found in previous research (Crawford, 2009; Hough, Jackson, Bradford, Myhill & Quinton, 2010). This variable of perceived misconduct also failed to significantly predict overall measures of perceptions of Gardaí as had been expected. Instead modification indices and factor loadings showed that misconduct was a better predictor of cooperation and compliance. After respecification of the model however, perceptions of misconduct were positively related to a majority of the other measured variables and to overall attitudes toward the Gardaí and only negatively correlated with offending behaviour and legal cynicism (reversed). This would suggest that those who perceived higher levels of misconduct among the Gardaí were also more likely to cooperate with them in the future, to engage in less offending behaviour and, have more positive overall attitudes toward the Gardaí than those who reported less perceived misconduct. This is in contrast to findings from previous studies using the concept of misconduct, or abuse of power, in assessing attitudes toward the police where it is generally found to be related to more negative overall attitudes (Hough et. al, 2010; Miller & Davis, 2008)

There are two possible explanations for this finding in the current study. Firstly, it is possible that the measurement scale used here failed to fully measure perceptions of misconduct among the Gardaí. As a scale developed initially for use with adult participants there may be a need to develop a more appropriate scale to use with younger people. However, the current version of the scale included in

this study reflected the views of participants in the qualitative study and it was thought to be a relevant variable for inclusion in the survey instrument. The use of this scale with young people would therefore warrant further investigation in the future to assess its relevance to their attitudes to police and its validity. The second explanation for this finding may relate to the expectations of participants in their interactions with Gardaí. Some level of force by Gardaí may be seen as acceptable by young people when they are arresting people or investigating crime. As seen from the qualitative study, young people reported that they support the overall purpose of the Gardaí and may believe that there are circumstances where force or aggression is warranted. Young people were also likely to view such misconduct as relating to specific instances and may view this behaviour separately from the more general views of Garda performance or fairness. This possible explanation would also suggest the need for further investigation of the scale as used in the current study to determine its usefulness in explaining overall attitudes toward the police and its relation to cooperation and compliance with the law.

Contacts, or experiences, with Gardaí showed a strong effect on overall attitudes and more contact was associated with more negative attitudes as was expected from previous findings (Flexon et. al, 2009; Hinds, 2007; Skogan, 2005; Tyler, 2006b). Previous research has found that any type of contact a young person has with police was likely to be interpreted as negative (Bradford et. al, 2009) and findings from study two support this. As expected from previous studies (e.g. Fagan & Tyler, 2005; McAra & McVie, 2005), participants aged between 15 and 17 years old had the most contact with Gardaí when compared to either younger or older participants. This age group was also most likely to have experienced the more arbitrary types of contact with Gardaí such as being moved on or being stopped and searched on the street. This study also supported previous findings that males were more likely to experience these types of contacts than females and had been arrested

or cautioned more frequently than females (McAra & McVie, 2005), although just 13% of the overall sample in study two reported having been arrested in the past 12 months. Being moved on or stopped and searched by police have previously been found to be perceived as most negative and unfair by young people even when arrest and caution is included in such measures (Crawford, 2009; Fagan & Tyler, 2005; Hurst & Frank, 2000), reports from participants in study one about their own experiences with Gardaí would also support this finding.

Contact with Gardaí was also found to significantly predict levels of offending behaviour in study two. This is in line with previous research where higher levels of offending have been shown to be a risk factor for greater levels of contact with police (Leiber, et. al, 1998; McAra & McVie, 2005; Piquero et. al, 2005). McAra and McVie (2005) found that the most significant predictor of antagonistic contact with police in their sample of Scottish youth was the amount and frequency of offending committed by the individual. There was a strong correlation between offending behaviour and contact with Gardaí in study two that indicates similar interpretations of the data in this sample. Those who engaged in more offending behaviour were most likely to experience negative contact with the Gardaí and those who offended more frequently were also likely to show lower levels of moral obligation to obey the law. This could lead to more general negative attitudes toward the Gardaí through the measurement of legal socialisation and perceptions of Garda fairness and legitimacy. However, as seen from the qualitative study, participants who had reported a crime in the past also expressed largely negative attitudes toward the Gardaí due to their belief that they were not listened to. This finding is also in line with previous research where individuals who reported a crime to the police had higher expectations of them and reported greater levels of disappointment when these expectations were not met (Rosenbaum, Schuck, Costello, Hawkins & Ring, 2005; Wilkinson, Beaty & Lurry, 2009). This may mean that all types of

contact between young people and Gardaí are likely to be interpreted as negative whether they are seen to be antagonistic or not.

Tyler's model of procedural justice argues that those who hold more positive attitudes toward the police are also more likely to cooperate with police and comply with the law in the future (2006a; 2006b; 2009). Results from study two in the present sample showed a significant positive relationship between intentions for future cooperation and overall attitudes toward the Gardaí indicating that those with more positive attitudes would also be more likely to report crime to Gardaí and to offer information to them. Such cooperation is thought to be important in order for the police to effectively investigate and solve crime (Sunshine & Tyler, 2003). In the current study participants were asked about their future intentions to cooperate rather than their past cooperative behaviour in an attempt to measure how likely they would be to engage with the Gardaí in the future. Scores on this scale were largely similar across age and gender and participants reported greater likelihood of contacting the Gardaí themselves in the more serious situations (such as seeing another person being attacked).

Future intentions to cooperate with Gardaí are likely to be made with reference to past experiences and more general attitudes toward the Gardaí in terms of trust, performance and the perceived legitimacy of the Gardaí. In study two future cooperation was positively related to both the legal socialisation variables and the perceptions of Gardaí variables. As expected those who engaged in more offending behaviour, and therefore had more contact with Gardaí showed the lowest levels of intentions to cooperate in the future. This would support previous research that has found that those with more negative overall attitudes toward the police are least likely to cooperate with them on any level (Slocum, Taylor, Brick & Esbensen, 2010; Sunshine & Tyler, 2003; Tyler, 2006b; Woolard et. al, 2008).

9.4 Theoretical Significance of Current Findings

To date research on young people's attitudes toward the police has failed to present an integrated theoretical framework that explains how these attitudes are formed or influenced. The current study presents a comprehensive model of attitudes toward the police that includes a range of important factors and goes toward offering a broader explanation of young people's attitudes and how they are likely to be influenced in either positive or negative ways. One of the main criticisms of the existing literature in this area has been its atheoretical nature (e.g. Bradford et. al, 2009; Liu & Crank, 2011; Maguire & Johnson, 2010), this study offers a step toward defining a theory that explains the development of young people's attitudes toward police and the relationships between factors that influence these attitudes.

The findings from the current study provided support for the integration of different perspectives on attitudes toward the police, namely the procedural justice perspective and the performance perspective. Both of these factors were shown to be significant predictors of young people's attitudes toward the Gardaí yet current research tends to rely on one or other of these perspectives alone in measuring attitudes to police (Hinds, 2009a; Gau, 2011). The current study also highlighted the need to consider cultural variation in factors that may influence the attitudes of young people toward the police. For example, while studies based on US populations have found that general perceptions of the performance of the police are distinct from perceptions of procedural justice of police practice (Tyler, 2006b; 2011), the current study is more in line with research from other countries where perceptions of performance are significantly related to perceptions of fairness and procedural justice (e.g. Hinds, 2009a; 2009b).

Social cognitive theory states that attitudes are formed during the lifespan through the interaction between environmental factors, the behaviour of the individual and cognitive processes (Bandura, 1989).

There is evidence to support this theory in the current study where attitudes toward the Gardaí were shown to be influenced by a variety of factors across these domains. Participants in study one agreed that there is a need for social control as exerted by the Gardaí which indicates an internalisation of social rules and norms (Steinberg, 1993). However, participants also argued that this can be achieved through fair and unbiased means and showed an ability to distinguish between those rules and laws that they believe are morally right to follow and those they believed should be more discretionary, suggesting support for the domain theory of socialisation as proposed by Turiel (1983).

Results in this study also showed that there is a need to consider the attitudes of young people toward the police as having unique indicators that are not present for adults. Many studies include age as a variable in determining attitudes toward the police but don't consider the reasons behind age differences in findings in these studies. Findings from the current study suggest that particular aspects of socialisation and cognitive development are important in influencing attitudes toward the Gardaí during adolescence and may have an enduring effect on attitudes into adulthood. Theories of social development and legal socialisation argue that adolescence is an important time for the formation of attitudes toward social norms and values (Fagan & Tyler, 2005; Steinberg, 1993). With this in mind it is important to place any study of young people's attitudes toward authority figures such as the police within the context of such development and to include measures that are designed to account for these factors.

The theoretical model developed in study one and tested in study two suggests that some of the factors most commonly measured as influences on attitudes toward the police, such as experience with police, may be mediated by other factors that can determine their effect on overall attitudes. In particular, it highlights the need to take account of the ways that young people interpret their experiences with the

police rather than assuming that certain experiences will always be seen as either positive or negative. Also, as young people have more contact with the police than adults (Hurst & Frank, 2008; McAra & McVie, 2005) it is important to consider the cumulative effects of these contacts on more general attitudes toward the police.

The current study has offered an understanding of the attitudes of Irish young people toward the Gardaí, an area of research that has received little attention in the past in Ireland (O'Donnell, 2005; O'Dwyer, 2002). While the police in Ireland have traditionally been held in high regard by the adult public (Browne, 2008), it should not be assumed that younger people also hold positive views of the Gardaí. This study has shown that Irish youth place importance on issues such as procedural justice, fairness of treatment and legitimacy of the Gardaí as has been found in studies from other countries (e.g. Hinds, 2007; Hurst & Frank, 2005; Piquero et. al, 2005). However, the participants in this study also reported some differences in their views of Gardaí compared to other populations (e.g. Carr, Napolitano & Keating, 2007; Hurst, Frank & Browning, 2000), in particular the finding that Irish youth hold generally positive overall views of the Gardaí while also viewing their own experiences in more negative ways.

9.5 Practical Implications

Ireland ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) in 1992 which outlines a number of guiding principles that should be adhered to when government bodies deal with children. One of these principles relates to giving children a voice, in particular within the juvenile justice system. The current study shows that young people themselves see this as important in their dealings with the Gardaí and the juvenile justice system and report feeling frustrated and disengaged with the legal system when they feel they're not given a voice or are not listened to by officers. Given that Ireland has stated that it is willing to uphold the principles of the UNCRC, it adds to the uncertainty that young people already have around issues of their own

rights when they perceive them to be abused by Garda officers in their interactions with them.

Results from the current study show that young people are more concerned with being treated fairly and respectfully during their interactions with the Gardaí than they are with the actual outcomes of those interactions. This was also the case with participants who had been arrested or cautioned where, if participants felt the decisions taken by Gardaí were based on fairness and they were following procedures, these interactions were viewed positively. Overall results give support to the procedural justice model of attitudes toward police (Tyler, 2001; 2006) as has been found in previous research with young people (e.g. Fagan & Tyler, 2005; Hinds, 2009a). Procedural justice is an important component of effective policing and has the potential to make a visible impact in the form of increased law abidance and greater cooperation from the public (Sunshine & Tyler, 2003). Adopting a more transparently unbiased and fair process of decision making with young people could lead to a more efficient use of present Garda resources and help to develop more positive interactions with young people over the long term.

In addition, the general good opinion of the Gardaí that appears to be held by most young people in this study is encouraging. This indicates that there is a basis for building better relationships between young people and the Gardaí. When asked about actions that could be taken to improve relations between young people and the Gardaí in study one most participants referred to the need to be listened to and not to feel that they were being stereotyped by Garda officers. This implies that young people felt that while the Gardaí are doing a good job overall, they also saw a need for better interpersonal relations between Gardaí and young people. If as proposed by Tyler (2009) interactions with authority figures are an important source of information about ones status in society, negative interpretations of experiences with Gardaí may come about when young people feel that the Gardaí view

them as having little status and this in turn may lead to a reduction of respect for the Gardaí more generally. As borne out by both the qualitative study and from qualitative comments in study two, young people in this study felt that in order to have respect for the Gardaí they also need to feel that they are given respect in return.

The results in the current study revealed overall positive sentiments toward the concept of a police force and the granting of legitimate authority to them by young people. This is envisioned as fair, respectful and impartial by young people and shows that they are not necessarily inclined to view the work of the Gardaí in only negative ways but could be a more supportive group of police work if given the opportunity. In order to achieve this however, the Gardaí need to be made aware of the effects of their own behaviour toward young people. While officers may believe that their actions are productive in preventing young crime and instilling compliance through the threat of punishment, it is clear from the current study and others that such practices may only serve to further alienate young people and affect their views of the legitimacy of the Gardaí.

The differences in some of the measures of attitudes shown across groups in the current study (i.e. where older Youthreach participants tended to have the most negative attitudes) may highlight the need to directly address negative attitudes of particular groups in society. Those reporting the most negative overall attitudes toward Gardaí also tended to be the group with most negative and aggressive types of contacts with Gardaí. In this sense it may be more important for Gardaí to focus on reducing negative contacts, by taking the time to listen to young people and explaining decisions to them, than to increase positive contacts with officers such as community Gardaí. This could be achieved through the construction of guidelines for use within the Gardaí on how best to reduce antagonism in interactions with young people and increase the chances of compliance with their directives.

While the issue of procedural justice from Gardaí was found to be an important factor in influencing young people's attitudes in the current study it appears that it is not sufficient in fully explaining these attitudes. Young people may be inclined to react to Gardaí in different ways depending on whether they are alone or in a group of other young people. Analysis of qualitative data in the current study showed that most young people perceived the 'stories' of their peers about their experiences with Gardaí as likely to be exaggerated, they also reported a sense that young people generally are expected to have negative views of the Gardaí. Although this is an area that requires further research and understanding it may be useful for Gardaí to anticipate audience effects in young people when interacting with them as a group. These types of interactions may require different approaches by Gardaí in order to ensure that they do not escalate into highly antagonistic situations in this context.

The largely positive relationship reported by participants in study one with the community Garda in their area shows the potential for the development of better relationships between young people and Gardaí more generally. This officer was considered fair, just and approachable by participants and they reported having greater trust in both her decisions and her actions when compared to other Garda officers. The time and effort that is given to establishing these more positive relationships with young people within the community appears to be worthwhile in improving relations between young people in that community and that Garda officer. However, this officer may be seen as an exception rather than the rule in terms of the ways that they interact with young people. Due to differences in how they are treated by different types of officers, participants did not extend their positive opinions to the Gardaí in general. If young people had greater experience of similar treatment from other Garda officers in addition to the community officer this could potentially improve attitudes in a more general sense.

9.6 Methodological Considerations and Limitations

The current study findings should be understood with reference to a number of limitations of both the qualitative and quantitative studies.

The model developed in this study may not be generalisable to other populations. In particular the current study sample was exclusively an urban population and findings may not be applicable to those living in rural areas where Gardaí may be less visible and contact less frequent. While this study attempted to provide a comprehensive theoretical model that helps to explain the complexity of young people's attitudes toward the police, it should be remembered that the sample that this model was tested on is a relatively small number based in one general area in the West of Ireland. As shown in the results from the current study there are likely to be cultural variations in the factors that influence the development of attitudes toward the police. In addition the cross sectional design of this study will limit the predictive value of the theoretical model in that causation cannot be established from these results. However, as an exploratory study it gives some indications of the directions that can be undertaken in future research in order to verify the relationships thought to influence attitudes toward the Gardaí found in this study.

Also due to the eventual over sampling of participants from the Travelling community in the current study, results should be read with caution as this may have led to overall more negative attitudes being shown in the group as a whole. It is possible that those from Traveller backgrounds also experience more negative contacts with Gardaí compared to other participants and this may have affected results by placing more emphasis on the link between contact and more negative attitudes toward Gardaí (although this link was still non-significant in the current study). The finding that older participants in the current study showed the most negative attitudes toward Gardaí through descriptive statistics may also be explained by this over representation

as those in the older age group were primarily based in Youthreach centres.

Secondly, the quantitative survey used here was a self report set of measures and there is no way to verify either the types of contacts experienced or the levels of offending reported by participants in the current study. As with all surveys of this type there is the inherent possibility that participants may be inclined to exaggerate or to present particular, more socially acceptable, images of themselves in their responses. An attempt to reduce this particular potential bias was made by ensuring that all participants were aware of the anonymity of their responses. A further potential disadvantage in using self report data is that when asking respondents to recall their past experiences or behaviour they may not be able to remember all relevant details at the time of answering. Questions of this type were limited to the previous 12 months in the current study as has been used in similar surveys (e.g. McAra & McVie, 2005) as this time frame is thought to be a reasonably reliable time frame for participants to recall. By their nature self report surveys tend to contain only closed questions, such as the Likert type scale used in the current study. The inclusion of open ended comment boxes following each section of questions allowed for participants to offer any additional information that they felt was pertinent and added depth to their responses on particular topics within the questionnaire.

The self report approach is the most commonly used in similar studies and has been found to have reasonable reliability in terms of reporting of offending in particular (Thornberry & Krohn, 2000). Self report methods are also the most appropriate means of gathering phenomenological data, such as views and perceptions of Gardaí, in larger samples when qualitative methods cannot be used. The use of a self report questionnaire for this study also allowed for a large number of participants to take part in the study in a relatively short space of time.

Furthermore, the order of presentation of measures in Study 2 did not alter across participants and this may have caused a priming effect for responses on some of the questions. For example, it may be that more personal questions, about family and offending behaviour, influenced responding on subsequent sections pertaining to attitudes toward Gardaí, or that having responded to questions around procedural justice affected responses on Garda misconduct. Varying the order of sections across participants would have eliminated any potential ordering bias in the questionnaire and would have lent greater confidence to the results overall. However, the issue of placing the delinquency scale towards the front of the questionnaire was discussed during piloting and was found not to be a deterrent to participants in continuing with the questionnaire. Future research may further examine if such ordering effects are present in questionnaires on this topic.

Thirdly, attitudes by their nature are subjective. In this study attitudes were understood to be a measure of the meanings that young people ascribe to their relationships with the Gardaí, as such even though young people in the qualitative study report that they would have greater respect for the Gardaí if they were treated better by them, it may make no difference to their actual behaviour in interactions with Gardaí. Likewise, reports of factors such as moral obligation to obey the law and intentions for future cooperation can only be interpreted as subjective reports from participants dependent on how they view the Gardaí and may not translate to actual behaviour in a given situation.

A fourth point relates to the relationship between attitudes and behaviour which is a complex issue that has been a concern of researchers for many decades (Ajzen, 2001; Maio & Haddock, 2010). In this sense, even though behavioural factors are included in the current study model, it does not presume a causal relationship between cognitive, affective and behavioural components of attitudes. Most likely it is a reciprocal relationship as outlined by Bandura in his social

cognitive theory of adolescent development (Bandura, 1989; 1991). While the current study implies that there are links between legal or compliant behaviour and overall attitudes toward the Gardaí it would not be possible to infer the direction of the influence between these two factors.

Also, the questions relating to participants contacts with the Gardaí were more focused on negative types of contact than positive ones in this study. These questions were based primarily on qualitative data analysis and similar studies in other countries (e.g. McAra & McVie, 2005) and were led by participants within qualitative interviews. However, it is possible that if the study were to focus more on positive interactions the findings may have been different to those found here and may have suggested further variables to include in the final theoretical model. Nonetheless, the focus on more negative aspects of attitudes toward the Gardaí follows that of previous research with young people (e.g. Hurst, Frank & Browning, 2000; Leiber et. al, 1998; McAra & McVie, 2005; Taylor, et. al, 2001; Woolard et. al, 2008). This focus was taken with the expectation that a better understanding of negative attitudes toward police may lead to solutions to improve them as was the intention of the present study also.

As with all studies there are inherent problems with using quantitative survey designs in measuring what are subjective opinions. This limitation was somewhat offset by including all potentially relevant factors that may influence young people's attitudes toward the Gardaí as understood through qualitative data analysis and the use of established quantitative measures. Also, particular attention was given to assessing both the reliability and validity of all measures used in the quantitative study and to the ability of each indicator to predict each latent variable in the model.

Finally, the focus in this study was primarily on the social and contextual aspects of attitude influence in relation to Gardaí. There are likely to be other environmental and interpersonal factors that play a

part in the formation of attitudes toward police in young people that were not investigated in the current study such as family, neighbourhood and peer influences that would be relevant to socialisation processes during adolescence. The inclusion of these factors in the model for the current study may have moderated the effects of other factors in influencing the overall attitudes toward the police shown here.

9.7 Directions for Future Research

A number of areas for future research can be suggested from the results of the current study.

Further exploration of the concept of uncertainty on both attitudes and behaviour among young people is warranted in order to fully establish the effects of this feeling on the development of attitudes toward the Gardaí (and police in other countries) and what measures may be taken to limit its effects. Means of reducing uncertainty within young people could also be further investigated to assess whether this would improve overall attitudes toward police. As seen from the qualitative study, having a positive relationship with a single Garda where young people were able to anticipate their treatment, failed to improve more general attitudes toward the Gardaí or to reduce uncertainty of treatment from different officers. Future research could investigate whether reducing this uncertainty from other interactions with the police would have an effect on the other variables measured in this study.

A comparative sample from another country, setting or culture would lend greater support to the themes and variables discussed and tested throughout this study. This would help to better define the relationships between factors and to investigate whether they apply to other groups of young people outside of the current sample. Also, all participants in the current study were based in large towns or cities which means that those from rural areas, who would potentially have much less contact with Gardaí, may have different views of the Gardaí

and may show a different set of potential indicators of their attitudes.

Those from urban areas are likely to have greater contact with the Gardaí than young people living in more rural areas. This may have had a biasing effect on the results found in the current study by placing too much emphasis on personal experience with Gardaí for this population. As contact with Gardaí was found to be a significant predictor of attitudes in the current study it would be reasonable to assume that different results would be shown in samples from rural communities if they experience less contact. Future studies could investigate whether the patterns of influence on attitudes toward the police shown in the current study are the same or different in a comparative sample based in a rural area and whether there are any additional factors that should be considered in that population compared to those in the current study. While contacts with Gardaí may be less frequent in rural areas there is no evidence to suggest that levels of offending behaviour would be different between rural and urban youth. Future research in this context therefore would add to the literature in helping to determine the differential effects of law breaking and interactions with Gardaí in forming positive or negative attitudes toward the Gardaí.

While support for the procedural justice model was found in the current study it would be useful to determine whether this really affects future cooperation or compliance with the law as stated in the theory (Dirikx, Gelders & Parmentier, 2012; Hinds, 2009a; Tyler, 2006b). Longitudinal research would help to establish the links between positive or negative relationships with Gardaí in adolescence and future behaviour and attitudes. Some authors have criticised the procedural justice literature on its failure to fully address psychometric issues of measurements, in particular the validity of these measures (e.g. Gau, 2011; Maguire & Johnson, 2010; Reising, Bratton & Gertz, 2007). Results from the current study support calls for more rigorous testing of factors within this model when used with populations outside of the US. In the

current study factors other than procedural justice, such as perceived performance of Gardaí, showed equally strong influence on overall attitudes toward the Gardaí suggesting there is a need for future research to further investigate the factors that affect young people's attitudes in addition to this model. How each of these factors interact with each other also warrants further investigation in order to support a multi-dimensional model of young people's attitudes toward Gardaí and to support the theoretical model developed in the current study.

Future research could also investigate whether attitude ambivalence, as found in the sample for the current study, is a common state of belief among adolescents toward authority figures in general, toward the law and, towards concepts of justice. This could lead to a greater understanding of the long term effects of such ambivalence and the factors that are likely to encourage the development of either positive or negative attitudes into adulthood. Adolescence is the time when young people begin to both accept social norms and internalise them (Steinberg, 1993) and when they begin to question the rules of justice, morality and the law (Smetana, 2006; Turiel, 1983). Future studies could investigate whether the ambivalent attitudes as reported in this study are a feature of the measured variables of attitudes, such as perceptions of police performance and procedural justice, or are influenced more by these conflicting cognitive and social developmental tasks.

The theoretical model developed in the current study warrants further testing in terms of the variables included in the model and their relative influence on attitudes toward the police. Longitudinal data would help to establish the causal relationships within the model and to better assess the most pertinent factors that influence young people's attitudes. This approach could also potentially help to explain findings in previous research where adults tend to have largely positive attitudes toward the police when compared to younger people (e.g. Brown & Benedict, 2002; Brick et. al, 2009; Dai, Frank & Sun, 2011;

Flexon, et. al, 2009). A longitudinal design may also facilitate the further investigation of the correlations between contact with the police and adolescent socialisation processes. In addition, research with Gardaí would offer valuable insight in this area and help to assess Garda officer's views of young people and how the Gardaí feel they could improve relationships with them.

9.8 Summary and Conclusion

A number of conclusions can be drawn from this research. This study contributed to the literature by identifying the attitudes of Irish youth toward the Gardaí, a previously under researched group. Findings suggest that there are unique factors that explain young people's attitudes toward police that have been neglected in previous studies that base their models on those found relevant for adults. These include factors relating to aspects of legal socialisation and the possibility that all interactions with police will potentially be interpreted as negative by young people. This study highlighted the need to consider a range of factors that have some influence on attitudes toward the police and the need to integrate differing perspectives in this area and to ensure the psychometric validity of measurement scales and model construction. The current study also highlights the need for further theoretical investigation into this issue and the need to develop and test theoretical models in order to better understand the formation of and influences on attitudes toward the police. The generally positive views that participants hold of the Gardaí, and the perceptions of a need for such an authority, suggests that small changes to the ways that Garda officers treat young people within interactions, by taking more time to listen to them for example, may help to improve relationships overall and into the future.

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Appendix A: Ethical Approval

Ethical Approval

From: eithne.oconnell@nuigalway.ie

To: h.gleeson1@nuigalway.ie

CC: molly.byrne@nuigalway.ie; saoirse.nicgabhainn@nuigalway.ie

Subject: Ethics Application 10/AUG/05 - Full Approval

Date: Fri, 19 Nov 2010 14:50:25 +0000

Sent on behalf of Dr Saoirse NicGabhainn, Chairperson, Research Ethics Committee.

Dear Ms Gleeson

RE: Ethical Approval for “An exploration of the factors that influence young people’s attitudes toward Gardaí in Ireland. A mixed methods approach.”

I write to you regarding the above proposal which was submitted for Ethical review. Having reviewed your response to my letter, I am pleased to inform you that your proposal has been granted **APPROVAL**.

All NUI Galway Research Ethic Committee approval is given subject to the Principal Investigator submitting an annual report to the Committee. The first report is due on or before 31st August 2011. Please see section 7 of the REC’s Standard Operating Procedures for further details which also includes other instances where you are required to report to the REC.

Yours Sincerely

Dr Saoirse NicGabhainn

Chairperson

Appendix B: Information Sheet for Qualitative Study



Phase one: Qualitative: Teenagers

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Who is doing this study? My name is Helen Gleeson and I am a researcher based in the School of Psychology in NUI Galway.

What is the name of this study? This study is about the attitudes that teenagers in Ireland have about the Gardaí.

What is this study about? You are being invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide if you want to take part it is important for you to understand why this research is being done and what you will be asked to do. This sheet will tell you more about the study. If you agree to take part, you will be asked to sign a Consent Form.

One of your parents will also be asked to sign a Consent Form which has to be returned to me for you to take part. You can still decide not to take part even if your parents send back the consent form.

If there is anything you are not clear about, I will be happy to explain it to you. Take as much time as you need to read it. You should only agree to take part in this research study when you feel you understand what you are being asked to do and you have had enough time to think about it.

I am doing this study to find out about the attitudes that teenagers have about the Gardaí. I want to talk to lots of teenagers about what they think about the Gardaí, whether they have had contact with them or not.

What am I being asked to do? It is up to you to decide if you want to

take part or not. Even if you agree to take part now, you are free to change your mind at any time without giving a reason.

If you decide to take part, you will be asked to take part in an interview with myself. During the interview, I will ask you some questions about what you think of the Gardaí and if you have had any contacts with them. The interview will be in a place that suits you; it can be in Cois Abhann, in NUI Galway, at your own house, or in a private room in a community centre. It will not take any more than one hour to do.

If there are any questions that you don't feel comfortable answering you can say so and we will move on to the next one. You can stop the interview at any time if you don't want to keep going and you don't need to give me any reason.

You might find, while answering some questions that you would like to talk to someone about some the issues it raises. I will be happy to recommend someone to you if this happens.

Where can I get more information?

If you have any questions about this study please contact me at the phone or email given at the end of this sheet.

If you have any concerns about this study and wish to contact someone independent and in confidence, you may contact 'the Chairperson of the NUI Galway Research Ethics Committee, c/o Office of the Vice President for Research, NUI Galway, ethics@nuigalway.ie

What happens to my information? All interviews will be tape recorded. These tapes will only be available to me and no one else will be able to listen to them including your parents or the Gardaí. Your name won't be kept with any of the tapes or any other information about you.

The tapes will be kept for 5 years and will then be destroyed. At some time in the future, the results from this study might be published for other researchers to read. All names will be changed in any reports and no one will be identifiable in any results.

Appendix C: Consent Form for Participants – Both Studies



Centre Number: Study Number: Participant Number:

CONSENT FORM

Title of Project: Attitudes to the Gardaí among Young People in Ireland

Name of Researcher: Helen Gleeson.
School of Psychology,
NUI Galway

Please tick box
to confirm:

1. I confirm that I have read the Information Sheet dated.....
(version 2.0)
for the above study and have had the chance to ask questions.
2. I understand the information provided and have had enough
time to think about the information.
3. I understand that I am free to decide whether to take part or not
and that I can change my mind at any time even after the study
has started and without giving any reason.
4. I agree to take part in the above study.

Name of Participant: _____ Date _____ Signature

Name of Researcher: Helen Gleeson Date _____
Signature _____

Appendix D: Letter to Youth Club Leaders

Name: Helen
Gleeson,
Centre: School of
Psychology,
NUI Galway,
Email:
h.gleeson1@nuigalway.ie
Phone: 086 1992459

Dear _____,

My name is Helen Gleeson. I am a PhD student with the School of Psychology in NUI Galway. I am conducting a research project, under the supervision of Dr. Molly Byrne, that is looking at the attitudes young people in Ireland to the Gardai. This kind of research is important because it is necessary to get young people's views on the services that affect them. I am hoping to interview a total of about 30 young people in the Galway area which I will recruit through a number of youth organisations.

I would very much appreciate your help in putting me in touch with some young people who are attending your service. All the interviews will be strictly confidential and all data will be kept anonymously.

The university Research Ethics Committee has given approval for this research project to be carried out.

All the interviews will be strictly confidential and all write ups will be kept anonymous. Any young person interested in taking part will be given full details of the research and what they are being asked to do and will be asked to sign a consent form. They will also have to have parental consent before they could be interviewed.

I would like to have the chance to come to your youth centre/club to explain my research to members and to answer any questions they or you might have about it.

I will contact you again in the next week to confirm if your centre/club would be interested in allowing me to come and give more information about this project or not.

Yours sincerely,
Helen Gleeson,
PhD student in Child and Youth Studies,
NUI Galway,
Galway,
Ireland.

Appendix E: Interview Protocol

Interview Introduction:

Confidentiality: First of all, anything that we talk about in here is entirely private and confidential. I will only be using a number to record the interview when I write it up later, your name won't be used at any point, so there is no chance that anyone will know what you've said to me here, unless you want to tell them yourself. The only time that I might have to talk to someone else about what we talk about is if I think someone is in danger of being hurt, then I would have to do something to try and prevent that.

The study: This interview is going to be mostly about what you think of the Gardaí and your experiences with them, be as honest as you can during the interview. If any of the questions aren't clear, just say so and I'll explain them.

Withdrawal: Of course, if there are any questions you don't want to answer you don't have to. Also, if at any point you don't want to continue with the interview, just say so and we can finish.

Audiotaping: So that I don't have to try and remember everything when the interview is over, I'm going to use a tape recorder to record the interview if that's ok with you. Afterwards, I will be typing out the interview from the tape, your name won't be used with either the recording or the typed interview, and no-one except me will be allowed to listen to it.

Do you have any questions for me before we start?

Ok, before we start the interview proper, I just need to get some details from you first:

Gender: _____

Age: _____

Year in school: _____

Who do you live with?

Parents: _____ Siblings: _____
_____ Other

Relatives: _____

Others, not related: _____

Are your parents working? Mother _____ Father: _____

If yes, what do they do? Mother: _____

Father: _____

Interview Questions:

1. I'd like to start with some general questions about the Gardaí and the things they do, so, what do you think are the main jobs that the Gardaí have to do?
2. What do you think is the most important job they should be doing?
3. Do you think they're good at doing their jobs?
4. Are they good at stopping crimes from happening?
5. Are they good at catching people who have broken the law?
6. What do you think they could do to be better at that?
7. Do you think they treat people your age the same way they treat adults?
8. Why do you think that is?
9. Do you think that Gardaí are fair when they deal with younger people?
10. Do they have any respect for them?
11. How do you think people your age/your friends, feel about the Gardaí? Respect, fear etc?
12. Why do you think that is?
13. What would you say the relationship between people your age and the Gardaí is like?
14. I'd like to ask you now about some of the times you've met with Gardaí, have you ever spoken to or been approached by a Garda?
15. Can you tell me about that, when it happened, who else was there, what happened, and, what happened afterwards?
16. Do you think that changed the way you feel about Gardaí?
17. What did you think of them before? And what do you think now?
18. How would you expect a Garda to treat you the next time you meet one?
19. Do you think people should always obey the law, or are there times when it's ok not to?
20. Do you think you would report a crime if something happened to you or someone else?
21. Would you say you trust the Gardaí to do their jobs?
22. How would you like Gardaí to behave when they are talking to you/your friends?
23. Do you think there are any things that could be done to make the relationship between you and the Gardaí better?
24. Is there anything else you would like to add?
25. Is there anything you would like to ask me before we finish?

Thank you for your time and your views.

Appendix F: Example of Memo from Qualitative Study

Procedural Justice

6th March 2011.

What seems to be emerging from the data thus far can be explained by Tyler's theory of procedural justice. There is a real sense that fairer, more objective treatment from Gardaí would be a factor in how adolescents perceive them and react to them.

What isn't covered by Tyler's somewhat simplistic view with this theory is that perceptions are also based on vicarious experiences and general feelings and interpretations of peer attitudes. I think this is another example of how trying to understand and explain adolescent's attitudes to Gardaí is not nearly as straightforward and easy to compartmentalise as is suggested by previous studies in the area.

One question remains here though, and that is: seeing as I am focusing on an Irish cultural context as the basis for this study – can I say that differences are due to cultural uniqueness or could they be generalised to other populations of adolescents?

8th April 2011

Tyler proposes a two stage model where people's perception of the justice of their experiences influences their perceptions of legitimacy, which in turn impacts on compliance. From my interviews I don't see how this kind of linear process could be determined. There is certainly a relationship between legitimacy and compliance but, at least from my analysis, I don't think a causal relationship can be shown. Isn't it just as possible that those who are inclined to compliance (maybe because of future desires, lifestyle etc.) are also more likely to perceive police authorities as legitimate anyway?

On Legitimacy:

Tyler examines legitimacy in two ways; perceived obligation to obey the law and; as support for legal authorities. Findings from the Chicago study show a weak correlation between obligation and support – so the question then would be is this actually measuring legitimacy here - if it

is supposed to be a psychological concept that's related to other factors – especially compliance?

I am wondering if this is another feature of using surveys to measure subjective experiences and perhaps the answer options are too limited to reflect real attitudes. Tyler though is only looking at them as they relate to behavioural compliance, so maybe is less interested in the underlying process(es) that define legitimacy. I need to look at this in more detail for my data and see if I should use this term, if so what are the elements that I will use to make up an overall perception of legitimacy.

Performance is also measured as it relates to compliance, and Tyler makes a distinction between this obligation to obey the law. This is similar to data in my analysis – most respondents agree with obligation to obey the law but there is much more variation around the questions relating to support (e.g. how good are they, fairness, trust, reporting a crime etc.). This links to expectations of treatment.

In Tyler's findings, his participants see themselves as being treated better than or equal to others – despite seeing widespread unfairness within the police system. My data seems to be very different to this – which has to be due to the age factor – young people generally see themselves as being treated differently to adults.

Appendix G: Full Questionnaire from Quantitative Study

Section 1 Some Questions About You A few questions about you and your family

Please tick the answer that applies to you in the space provided. Remember; all of your answers are anonymous, don't write your name anywhere on the questionnaire.

1.1 Are you; Male_____ Female_____

1.2 How old are you? _____ years old.

1.3 How many people live in your house? _____ people.

1.4 Who do you live with? (please tick just one box)

- Both parents
- Mother only
- Father only
- One parent and a another adult (e.g. your parent's partner)
- Adults who are not your parents
- Live alone
- Other (please give details) _____

1.5 What country were you born in? _____

1.6 Thinking about the adults that you live with (parents or another adult), are they?(Please tick the one that applies)

1.6.1 Adult 1	1.6.2 Adult 2
<input type="checkbox"/> Unemployed	<input type="checkbox"/> Unemployed
<input type="checkbox"/> Working part time	<input type="checkbox"/> Working part time
<input type="checkbox"/> Working full time	<input type="checkbox"/> Working full time
<input type="checkbox"/> Don't know	<input type="checkbox"/> Don't know
<input type="checkbox"/> Doesn't apply	<input type="checkbox"/> Doesn't apply

1.7 Thinking about the adults that you live with (parents or other adult), at what point did they leave school? (please just tick one answer, that shows the highest level of school that they attended)

1.7.1 Adult 1	1.7.2 Adult 2
<input type="checkbox"/> Primary School only	<input type="checkbox"/> Primary School only
<input type="checkbox"/> Secondary School only	<input type="checkbox"/> Secondary School only
<input type="checkbox"/> Third level (i.e. college or university)	<input type="checkbox"/> Third level (i.e. college or university)
<input type="checkbox"/> Is studying now	<input type="checkbox"/> Is studying now
<input type="checkbox"/> Don't know	<input type="checkbox"/> Don't know
<input type="checkbox"/> Doesn't apply	<input type="checkbox"/> Doesn't apply

1.8 Does your family have a medical card at the moment? (please tick the one that applies)

- Yes
- No
- Doctor only card
- Don't know

1.9 Is anyone in your family a member of the Garda Síochána?

- Yes
- No
- Not Sure

SECTION 2 Things You Do

These questions ask you about some of the things you might have done IN THE PAST YEAR. Answer all questions even if your answer is 'never'.

	<i>Never</i>	<i>Once or twice</i>	<i>Every 2 or 3 months</i>	<i>Once a month</i>	<i>Every week</i>
2.1 Skipped school without your parent(s) knowing					
2.2 Bought something that you knew or suspected was stolen					
2.3 Stole something from a shop worth less than €20					
2.4 Stole something from a shop worth more than €20					
2.5 Damaged or destroyed property that did not belong to you on purpose (e.g. windows, furniture, street lights)					
2.6 Broken into a car or van to try and steal something out of it					
2.7 Taken a car/van/motorbike without the owner's permission					
2.8 Broken into a house or building to try and steal something from it					
2.9 Bought or smoked hash/pot/marijuana					
2.10 Bought or taken other illegal drugs (e.g. ecstasy, acid, cocaine)					
2.11 Sold illegal drugs of any type to another person					
2.12 Hit, kicked, punched or attacked someone with the intention of hurting them					
2.13 Stolen money or property (e.g. phone) that someone was carrying or holding at the time					
2.14 Set fire to or try to set fire to something on purpose (e.g. bus shelter, letter box, car, building)					
2.15 Avoided paying for things such as the cinema, bus journey, food					

	<i>Never</i>	<i>Once or twice</i>	<i>Every 2 or 3 months</i>	<i>Once a month</i>	<i>Every week</i>
2.16 Carried a hidden weapon (e.g. knife, stick, hammer) for protection or in case it was needed in a fight					
2.17 Been loud or rowdy so that other people complained					
2.18 Sprayed graffiti on walls, buses or places					

2 A.1 DURING THE LAST YEAR; did you drink a whole alcoholic drink (e.g. beer, wine, shot, spirits such as vodka or whiskey)? Please tick the box that applies.

Yes - Answer the questions in the box

No - Go to section 3



2A.2 Over the past year, how often did you drink alcohol? (tick one)

At least once a week

At least once a month

Less than once a month

Hardly ever (only once or twice in the year)

2A.3 Where do you usually drink alcohol? (e.g. at home, in a park, friend's house)

2A.4 Who do you drink alcohol with (tick as many boxes as you need to)?

With my parents
 relatives

With other
 relatives

With friends (without parents knowing)

By myself

With friends when your parents know about it

2A.5 Have you ever been caught drinking by the Gardaí? (tick one)

Yes

No

2A.6 If YES; how often has this happened in the past year? (tick just one)

Once or
than
twice
times

3 to 6
times

7 to 10 times

More
10

SECTION 3 The Garda Síochána
Some questions about your contact with the Garda Síochána in
the past year

How often IN THE PAST YEAR did you have contact with the Gardaí for any of these reasons? (Please answer all questions by ticking the relevant box even if your answer is 'never'). Remember that all answers are anonymous.

	<i>Never</i>	<i>Once or twice</i>	<i>3 to 6 times</i>	<i>7 to 10 times</i>	<i>More than 10 times</i>
3.1 Reported a crime that had happened to you					
3.2 Reported a crime that had happened to someone else					
3.3 Talked to a Garda on the street for no special reason					
3.4 Been told off or told to move on by a Garda					
3.5 Stopped by a Garda and asked questions about a crime					
3.6 Stopped by a Garda and searched or asked to empty your pockets					
3.7 Picked up and taken to a Garda station					
3.8 Picked up and taken home to your parents					
3.9 Given a formal warning or caution by a Garda					
3.10 Been arrested and charged with a crime					
3.11 Any other type of contact? (please give details)					

- 3.12 Do you have a Community Garda where you live? Yes No
Not sure
- 3.13 If Yes; do you know them by name? Yes No
- 3.14 If you do know them, how approachable do you think they are? (tick one)
 very a little not sure not much at all
- 3.15 Have you ever taken part in a Diversion Project or Programme run by a Garda?
 Yes No Not Sure

If you have had any type of contact with the Gardaí the past year please answer the questions in the box



If you have had N with the Gardaí in in the past year, go to section 5



These questions ask you about how you felt you were treated by the Gardaí when you had contact with them. **Thinking about the last time that you had contact with the Gardaí, do you feel that; (please tick just one box to indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with each statement)**

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
4.1 The Gardaí treated me the same as they would treat anyone else in that situation					
4.2 I felt that the Garda(i) listened to me					
4.3 The Gardaí just picked on me because of my age					
4.4 The Gardaí tried hard to get all the information they needed before they made any decisions					
4.5 If I wanted to make a complaint about a Garda, I would know where to go					
4.6 The Gardaí were polite to me on this occasion					

4.7 Is there anything else you would like to add about your experiences with Gardaí?

SECTION 5 Your Views and Opinions.

Thinking about the Gardaí and the law IN GENERAL or MOST OF THE TIME, please tick the box to show if you agree or disagree with the following statements.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
5.1 The Gardaí treat young people with respect					
5.2 The Gardaí usually give people a chance to say their side of the story					
5.3 The Gardaí treat adults with respect					
5.4 The Gardaí make their decisions based on facts, not on their personal feelings					
5.5 The Gardaí try hard to get all the information they need before they make a decision					
5.6 When people are unhappy with a Garda decision, it is easy to have the matter corrected					
5.7 The Gardaí are usually polite to people					
5.8 Laws were made to be broken					
5.9 It's okay to do anything you want if no one else gets hurt					
5.10 There are no right or wrong ways to make money					
5.11 If I have a fight with someone it's nobody else's business					
5.12 A person has to live for today and not worry about the future					
5.13 You should accept the decisions made by the Gardaí, even if you think they are wrong					
5.14 You should do what the Gardaí tell you to do even when you don't understand the reasons for their decisions					
5.15 You should do what the Gardaí tell you to do even when you disagree with their decisions					
5.16 Sometimes you have to bend the law for things to					

come out right					
5.17 Some people with power use the law to control people like you					
5.18 The Gardaí should be allowed to hold someone they suspect of a crime until they get enough evidence to charge them					
5.19 The Gardaí should be allowed to stop people on the street and tell them to identify themselves					

5.20 Is there anything else you would like to add about your views on the Gardaí or the law?

Section 6 Teachers and Parents
Some questions about your teachers and parents

These statements are about your teachers and your parents or guardians, please indicate whether you agree or disagree by ticking the response that most closely resembles your feelings.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
6.1 Teachers are usually working in the best interests of their students					
6.2 Teachers don't really understand what it's like for students these days					
6.3 Students are usually listened to by their teachers					
6.4 There is a good reason for most of the rules and regulations in my school					
6.5 Teachers have a tough job to do and should be shown respect for this					
6.6 Parents/guardians know					

more about life than their kids and should be listened to					
6.7 Sometimes parents/guardians don't know what's best for their kids					
6.8 My parents/guardians usually discuss issues with me before coming to a decision that will affect me					
6.9 Most adults look down on teenagers and treat them like kids					
6.10 Adults usually show young people the respect they deserve					

6.10 Is there anything else you would like to say about either your teachers or parents/guardians?

Section 7 The Gardaí
Some questions about your opinions of the Gardaí

Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statements by ticking the box that most closely resembles your feelings.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
7.1 Garda relationships with people my age are very good					
7.2 The Gardaí see all young people as 'troublemakers'					
7.3 I have a lot of respect for the Gardaí					
7.4 Overall, the Gardaí are honest					
7.5 I feel proud of the Gardaí					
7.6 I feel people should support the Gardaí					
7.7 You should do what the Gardaí tell you to do, even when you don't like the way					

they treat you					
7.8 Sometimes it's okay to ignore what the Gardaí tell you to do					
7.9 The Gardaí will help you if your car is broken down and you need help					
7.10 If the Gardaí see someone who needs help they will do their best to help them					
7.11 The Gardaí do a good job at stopping crime					
7.12 The Gardaí do a good job of stopping people from using drugs					
7.13 The Gardaí do a good job of stopping people from selling drugs					
7.14 The Gardaí do a good job in keeping my estate/ neighbourhood quiet at night					
7.15 The Gardaí do a good job of stopping people from hanging around on street corners and causing trouble					
7.16 In general, I'm satisfied with the Gardaí where I live					
7.17 In general, the Gardaí do a good job					

Section 8 What the Gardaí Do
Some questions about the behaviour of Gardaí

Thinking about the Gardaí in general, HOW OFTEN do you think they?
(please tick the box that you think is closest to your feelings)

8.1 Stop people without good reason

Never *Hardly* *Sometimes* *Most of A lot of* *All the*
Ever *the time* *the time* *time*

8.2 Use offensive language

Never *Hardly* *Sometimes* *Most of A lot of* *All the*
Ever *the time* *the time* *time*

8.3 Use excessive force (e.g. when arresting or questioning someone)

<i>Never</i>	<i>Hardly Ever</i>	<i>Sometimes</i>	<i>Most of A lot of the time</i>	<i>All the the time</i>	<i>All the time</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

8.4 Break the law or police rules

<i>Never</i>	<i>Hardly Ever</i>	<i>Sometimes</i>	<i>Most of A lot of the time</i>	<i>All the the time</i>	<i>All the tim</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Section 9 What You Might Do
Some questions about times you might contact the Gardaí

Thinking about the future, how likely do you think it would be that you would call the Gardaí if each of the following were to happen in the near future?

	<i>Very Likely</i>	<i>Maybe</i>	<i>Not Really</i>	<i>Not At All</i>
9.1 If your home was broken into				
9.2 If you had something worth less than €50 stolen from you				
9.3 If you had something worth more than €50 stolen from you				
9.4 If you were attacked and hurt by someone else				
9.5 If you saw someone else being attacked and hurt				
9.5 In an emergency (e.g. if there was an accident or someone else was hurt)				
9.6 To report something suspicious where you live				
9.7 To report someone being loud or rowdy where you live				

9.8 To offer information to help the Gardaí solve a crime				
9.9 To ask for help from the Gardaí not related to a crime				
9.10 Any other reasons why you would contact the Gardaí? (please give details)				

Appendix H: Letter to School Principals

Helen Gleeson,
PhD Candidate in Child and Youth Research,
School of Psychology,
National University of Ireland,
Galway
Phone: 086 1992459
Email: h.gleeson1@nuigalway.ie

Date:

Dear Principal _____

My name is Helen Gleeson and I am a researcher with the school of psychology at NUI Galway. I am conducting a study about young people's attitudes toward the Gardaí. I am interested in trying to understand the types of relationships that young people have with the Gardaí as this is a very under researched area. It is hoped that ultimately this research study would be used to help improve these relationships and foster greater understanding between Gardaí and young people. I have received ethical approval for this study from the Research Ethics Committee at NUI Galway.

I am writing to you to ask for your assistance in recruiting participants for this study through your school. I would like to distribute a questionnaire to students aged 12/13 years and 15/16 years old to be completed during school time. This questionnaire will take no more than 30 minutes to complete and will be entirely confidential. The questions will centre on young people's opinions about the Gardaí, and will also include questions relating to their own offending behaviour and contacts with Gardaí.

If your school is interested in taking part in this research project, students will be given an information sheet outlining the study, and also consent forms that will need to be signed by their parents and themselves before they take part. There will be no obligation on any student to take part if they do not wish to.

I will telephone your school in the next week to follow up on this letter, but please feel free to contact me at any time before this if you require any further information.

Thank you for taking the time to read this, and I look forward to speaking with you soon.

Yours sincerely,
Helen Gleeson