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Parents' knowledge and attitudes about youths' interrogation rights

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ABSTRACT

Some states and police agencies require youth to consult with parents before or during interrogation by police, yet these policies rely on the untested assumption that parents themselves are knowledgeable about police interrogation practices and youths' rights. This study assessed knowledge of, and attitudes about, juvenile interrogations in a sample of parents ($N = 294$) recruited from urban locales. On average, parents correctly answered fewer than half of the questions about juvenile interrogation practices; knowledge about parental notification procedures was especially poor. At the same time, parents strongly endorsed youths' rights to support (including support from parents) during police questioning contexts and only moderately endorsed youths' decision-making autonomy, even for older youth who are legally adults.

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police

The latter half of twentieth century witnessed a dramatic policy shift toward a punitive, as opposed to rehabilitative, approach to juvenile justice. In 1967, the Supreme Court recognized that juvenile justice proceedings were becoming increasingly adversarial and subsequently extended to adolescent defendants the constitutional rights to counsel, notice of charges, and protection against self-incrimination (*In re Gault*, 1967). In the last two decades in particular, fueled in part by fears of teenage 'superpredators' and a spike in juvenile crime (Griffin, Addie, Adams, & Firestone, 2011), dozens of states expanded the mechanisms by which juvenile defendants could be transferred to adult criminal court. Currently 22 states allow offenders as young as 14 to be tried as adults, potentially subjecting them to lengthy sentences and incarceration in adult prisons; another 22 states permit juvenile transfer to adult criminal courts for youth of any age (www.jjgps.org). Thus, the role of adolescents' rights during legal proceedings has become central to contemporary issues of due process and procedural justice for youth.

However, youths' rights are unlikely to actualize if adults do not support them (Peterson-Badali, Ruck, & Ridley, 2003). It is paramount that research examines adults' (especially parents') attitudes about youths' rights, particularly rights relevant to police interrogation. The importance of defendants' legal decision-making during police interrogation cannot

be overstated. Confession is the most powerful form of evidence in the courtroom (Kassin, 2012); suspects who confess to interrogators are set on a path toward conviction that is difficult to evade. Feld (2013) has argued that in contemporary American justice 'the inquisitorial stage – the interrogation room – effectively determines the outcome' (p. 248). Abundant research has demonstrated that both justice-involved and 'normative' youth display substantial deficits in comprehension of their Miranda rights (e.g. Zelle, Romaine, & Goldstein, 2015) – a vulnerability that the Supreme Court has recognized (*Fare v. Michael C.*, 1979; *JDB v. North Carolina*, 2011) – raising concerns about youths' ability to effectively assert their rights or otherwise advocate for themselves during interrogation. For precisely these reasons, the United Kingdom requires the presence of an 'appropriate adult' during police interrogation of persons under age 17 (Police and Criminal Evidence Act, 1984). An appropriate adult is a parent, guardian, social worker, or volunteer who is not a party to the investigation (e.g. victim, witness, or co-defendant).

Recent trends in American case law and policy suggest that parents' role in juvenile interrogations is important and likely to increase. Several states require a parent's presence and consultation during a youth's interrogation (King, 2006), presumably to compensate for youths' comprehension deficits and serve as a buffer from police coercion (Feld, 2013). While policymakers' motivations or assumptions are not always clear, procedural requirements derived from court opinions do sometimes provide insight into states' presumptions about parents' legal abilities. For example, in requiring that police involve parents in interrogations of youth under 14, the Supreme Court of New Jersey noted

When younger offenders are in custody, the parent serves as a buffer between the juvenile, who is entitled to certain protections, and the police, whose investigative function brings the officers necessarily in conflict with the juvenile's legal interests. Parents are in a position to assist juveniles in understanding their rights, acting intelligently in waiving those rights, and otherwise remaining calm in the face of an interrogation. (*State v. Presha*, 2000)

However, this requirement is problematic on many fronts. First, it presumes an identity of interests between parent and child – a presumption that may be premature, given the inherent conflicts parents face during their child's interrogation. Both legal scholars and developmental scientists have noted parents' dual, often incompatible roles in the interrogation room: on the one hand, protecting their children from legal consequences, and conversely, teaching children to take responsibility for their actions (Cleary, 2014; Farber, 2004; Feld, 2013; Woolard, Cleary, Harvell, & Chen, 2008). Additionally, the presence of a parent is an influential factor in judges' determinations of whether a youth knowingly and intelligently waived his or her Miranda rights during police interrogation (Feld, 2013). Finally, the requirement presumes that parents possess the fundamental knowledge and capacities to execute this protective function.

Despite the increasingly prominent role of parents in the interrogation room, few studies have examined parents' knowledge, attitudes, and behavior concerning juvenile interrogations. Observational studies of juvenile interrogations have shown that parent behavior can vary considerably; while some parents attempt to advocate for their children's legal rights by exercising their right to counsel, many others endeavor to assist police in eliciting information from the youth or simply do not participate in the interaction at all (Cleary, 2014; Feld, 2013). Self-reports of detained youth corroborate the notion that parents may provide either no advice or advice against the youths' best

interest (e.g. waive Miranda rights, 'tell the truth'; Viljoen, Klaver, & Roesch, 2005). One study found that most parents indicated they would advise their children to talk to police, either immediately or after the parent's arrival at questioning (Grisso & Ring, 1979). However, the sample's lack of socioeconomic diversity raised questions about whether parents from different backgrounds hold similar attitudes.

The limited evidence available suggests that parents may be less effective during juvenile interrogations than the law presumes. Parents' ineffectiveness in the interrogation room may be partly a function of their own inadequate legal knowledge, and research does indicate that parents demonstrate some fundamental misconceptions about the parameters of legal police interrogation procedures (Woolard et al., 2008). Additionally, it is possible that parents' attitudes and beliefs about youths' legal rights influence their perceptions of the interrogation process as well as their own behavior and decision-making during their child's interrogation. Understanding parent attitudes about youths' rights could generate critical (yet currently missing) information about the legal rights parents think youth *should* have – information that is conceptually distinct from (and equally as important as) parents' knowledge about the rights youth *do* have.

Literature review

Parents' knowledge about interrogation practices

Surprisingly little is known about how adults understand the interrogation process. In fact, no study has comprehensively examined parents' general legal knowledge of the juvenile justice process (Cavanagh & Cauffman, 2017). A recent study assessing legal knowledge (mostly of probation- and court-related processes) among mothers of justice-involved youth reported only 66% accuracy (Cavanagh & Cauffman, 2017). Some studies have assessed adults' comprehension of Miranda warnings, either independently or in comparison to a juvenile sample (Grisso, 1981). While adults' performance on Miranda comprehension measures is typically greater than that of adolescents (Frumkin, Lally, & Sexton, 2012; Grisso, 1998), both dispositional and situational factors have been associated with adults' impaired comprehension. For example, several studies have reported impairments driven by IQ or cognitive abilities (Cooper & Zapf, 2008; Rogers, Harrison, Hazelwood, & Sewell, 2007). In one study, Frumkin et al. (2012) assessed Miranda comprehension in a large forensic sample of defendants referred for Miranda waiver competency evaluations and found that verbal IQ was the strongest predictor of performance. A few studies report that psychiatric symptoms or diagnoses negatively impact Miranda comprehension in adults (Cooper & Zapf, 2008; Viljoen, Roesch, & Zapf, 2002; but see Rogers et al., 2007). Finally, variations in the wordings of the warnings themselves have been shown to impact readability and therefore comprehension (Rogers et al., 2012).

While Miranda comprehension studies yield important information about current or potential defendants' competency to waive their rights, they do not necessarily tell us how those individuals understand the actual interrogation process. Miranda comprehension is, by definition, a set of abilities related to pre-interrogation. What do individuals understand or expect to happen once the interrogation commences? In the case of juvenile interrogations, do parents possess the necessary knowledge about the circumstances and legally permissible practices of police interrogation to fulfill a protective function?

To our knowledge, only one study has examined parents' practical interrogation knowledge – that is, knowledge about the parameters of typical and legally permissible interrogation procedures (e.g. whether police have to notify parents when a child is taken into custody; whether police can lie during interrogations). Woolard et al. (2008) reported that parents understood some interrogation practices well (e.g. ability to stop questioning at any time) but demonstrated substantial knowledge deficits in other areas. For example, 90% of parents incorrectly believed that parents must be notified if a child is considered a witness or suspect in a case, two-thirds of parents incorrectly believed that police must wait for parents before commencing interrogation (a policy not in place in the local jurisdiction), and half of parents did not understand that police can lie to suspects (Woolard et al., 2008). These findings suggest that parents may enter the interrogation room with significant misconceptions about what is legally permitted to transpire.

Parents' attitudes about youths' rights

Despite the centrality of legal rights issues for today's adolescent defendants, research on adults' (especially parents') attitudes about youths' rights is surprisingly sparse. The prevailing conceptual paradigm classifies children's rights into two categories: *nurturance rights*, which involve children's rights to care and protection from harm or exploitation, and *self-determination rights*, which involve personal freedoms and autonomous decision-making (Rogers & Wrightsman, 1978). The literature on adults' attitudes toward youth rights indicates that support for nurturance rights is consistently high across samples, while support for self-determination rights varies considerably by respondent age, gender, socioeconomic status, nationality, and sociopolitical attitudes, as well as age of the child in question (Peterson-Badali & Ruck, 2008).

With respect to nurturance rights, most studies have reported strong respondent support for children's rights to care and protection. Two studies examining mothers' support for nurturance rights reported mean scores of 5.4 (Day, Peterson-Badali, & Ruck, 2006) and 5.7 (Peterson-Badali, Morine, Ruck, & Slonim, 2004) on a 6-point scale, and another study examining college students' attitudes reported a mean nurturance support score of 5.3 out of 6 (Peterson-Badali et al., 2003). Most studies have reported strong support for nurturance rights irrespective of the age of the 'target child' (Peterson-Badali & Ruck, 2008). While some evidence suggests that women are more supportive than men (Peterson-Badali et al., 2003; Rogers & Wrightsman, 1978), in the literature overall, endorsement of nurturance rights does not consistently vary and appears to reflect the traditional notion of children as dependents in need of support and care (Peterson-Badali & Ruck, 2008). One study specific to Canadian youths' legal rights found that justice officials were generally supportive, though police were less supportive than other types of criminal justice professionals (Peterson-Badali & Broeking, 2009).

In general, adult respondents are less supportive of youths' rights to self-determination compared to nurturance (Day et al., 2006; Grisso & Ring, 1979; Peterson-Badali et al., 2003; Peterson-Badali et al., 2004), and the construct of support for self-determination rights is more variable (Peterson-Badali & Ruck, 2008). Characteristics of both the respondent and the 'target child' in question have been associated with respondents' willingness to endorse youths' decision-making autonomy, though results are often mixed. Adults are more willing to extend self-determination rights to older as compared to younger

adolescents (Peterson-Badali et al., 2003; Ruck, Peterson-Badali, & Day, 2002). Adult respondents' own age has also been linked to support for self-determination rights; several studies have reported that support declines with respondent age (Borhnstedt, Freeman, & Smith, 1981; Rogers & Wrightsman, 1978). Attitudinal differences associated with adult respondents' socioeconomic status, race/ethnicity, nationality, and religious affiliation have also been reported, though inconsistently (Peterson-Badali & Ruck, 2008), leading some scholars to speculate that such differences may reflect broader socio-political attitudes (i.e. the liberal-conservative spectrum; Peterson-Badali et al., 2003).

Overall, comparatively few studies have specifically examined parents' perspectives (Peterson-Badali et al., 2004). Most have surveyed the general public (e.g. Borhnstedt et al., 1981; Rogers & Wrightsman, 1978) or college students (Peterson-Badali et al., 2003). The few studies investigating parents' attitudes have found that the age of the child is a key factor in parents' willingness to extend self-determination rights to children (Grisso, 1981). Given the justice system's assumption that parents can and will protect youths' legal rights (Feld, 2013), it is essential to better understand parents' perspectives – which rights they feel youth should be bestowed, in which contexts, and under which circumstances.

Grisso and Ring (1979) reported that parents were generally favorable toward youths' legal nurturance rights but not toward self-determination rights in legal or educational settings; they also found that both the child's age and delinquency status impacted parents' judgments. In a separate component of the study, a vignette described an adolescent arrested on robbery charges and asked respondents how they would advise him if he were their child. One-third of respondents indicated they would advise the youth to confess to police – a recommendation inconsistent with youths' legal best interests – and many parents who advised silence seemingly indicated that youth should remain silent only until a parent arrived to help the youth clarify or explain his or her criminal involvement. However, the authors noted the lack of socioeconomic diversity in the sample, which comprised primarily White, middle-class parents recruited from parent-teacher organizational meetings. Moreover, given evolving societal expectations about law enforcement and recent, highly publicized strain in police-community relationships, there is a pressing need for updated research.

Additionally, much more research is needed on parents' attitudes about youths' interrogation rights in particular. Grisso and Ring's (1979) findings suggest that parents are not generally supportive of youths' decision-making autonomy during police questioning. In that study, more than half of parent respondents disagreed that youth should be permitted to withhold information from police, and approximately two-thirds were not willing to allow youth to decide whether they needed a lawyer. This apparent reticence on the part of parents raised serious concerns about whether youths' due process rights are upheld in everyday interrogations; nearly 40 years later, as transfer laws have expanded and waiver to criminal court have increased dramatically (Griffin et al., 2011), a better understanding of parent attitudes is even more critical.

The present study

The present study examines parents' knowledge of the parameters of legal police interrogation as well as their attitudes about youths' interrogation rights. With respect to

interrogation knowledge, the study builds upon prior work on Miranda comprehension by assessing adults' factual and functional understanding of youths' interrogation rights as well as typical police interrogation procedures, including parental notification practices. With respect to parent attitudes, the study adds to the literature on adults' attitudes toward youths' legal rights by (1) employing a parent (as opposed to mother-only, general adult, or college student) sample, thus more closely approximating the population most likely to accompany a child in interrogation; (2) surveying a more economically under-resourced sample, in contrast to the only existing study on parents' interrogation attitudes (Grisso & Ring, 1979), which assessed a middle class, predominantly White sample; and (3) including a young adult age group in the stimulus materials, consistent with the contemporary developmental perspective of emerging adulthood (Steinberg, 2014). The study's specific research questions are as follows:

- (1) What is the extent of parents' knowledge about juvenile interrogation procedures?
- (2) Which respondent (parent) characteristics are associated with support for youths' interrogation rights?
- (3) What is the relationship between parents' interrogation knowledge and their attitudes about youths' legal self-determination rights?

Method

Participants

A total of 303 participants were recruited from city/municipal community centers and YMCAs/YWCAs. Six participants' data were excluded because they did not have a child under age 18 and three were excluded because of incomplete or unreliable data, yielding a final sample of $N=294$ parents. The mean age was 36.9 years ($SD=9.2$; range = 18–67 years) and the sample was predominantly (80.2%) female. Most respondents (80.9%) were Black, with the remainder indicating White (10.4%) or multiple/other races or ethnicities (8.7%). Nearly one-third of the sample (33.0%) was currently married, 39.9% had never been married, 12.0% were living with a partner, and 15.1% were divorced, widowed, or separated. More than two-thirds of respondents (69.3%) reported an annual total family income of \$50,000 or below, and the modal income category was \$20–30,000. Approximately one-fifth (22.6%) of the sample reported an educational attainment of high school diploma/GED or less, 46.4% reported some college/associate's degree, 19.8% reported a bachelor's degree, and the remainder reported at least some postgraduate education. Slightly more than half of the participants (53.0%) reported a moderate political orientation, while the remainder of the sample was evenly split between conservative or very conservative (22.8%) and liberal or very liberal (24.2%). On average, parents in this sample had 1.97 children ($SD=1.20$; range = 1–7 children).

Procedure

The target population was defined as adults who currently had at least one child under age 18. In an effort to complement the findings of Grisso and Ring (1979), we assessed

the perspectives of a more socioeconomically diverse sample of participants by focusing recruitment efforts on urban locations with child- or family-centered programming (e.g. after-school care, recreational sports). After obtaining advanced permission from agency staff, research team members visited local YMCA/YWCA chapters and municipally funded community centers in a central Virginia municipality. The study was introduced as a survey about parent perspectives on youths' rights. Potential participants were informed that the survey would take approximately 20 minutes to complete and that participants would receive a \$10 gift card as a token of appreciation. Individuals who chose to participate were given a blank survey and directed to a quiet space to complete it. Researchers thanked each participant and distributed a gift card upon completion.

Measures and design

Respondents completed an interrogation knowledge assessment, attitudinal measures, and a demographic questionnaire. For the attitudinal measures (described below), participants were randomly assigned one of four age group conditions: 11–13 years, 14–15 years, 16–17 years, and 18–21 years. These age groups were selected to reflect developmentally and legally relevant stages of adolescence and have been used in prior research (e.g. Grisso et al., 2003; Woolard et al., 2008). Respondents were instructed to think about youth of the specified age group when answering the items. There were no significant differences across conditions in terms of respondent age, gender, race/ethnicity, income, or educational attainment (all p 's > .05).

Understanding police interrogation questionnaire

Factual knowledge of police interrogation procedures has rarely been assessed in the literature, and no normed measures of interrogation knowledge exist. The understanding police interrogation questionnaire (UPIQ) was originally developed to address this gap (Woolard et al., 2008) and was later modified by Vidal, Cleary, Woolard, and Michel (*in press*). The UPIQ contains 17 yes/no items pertaining to youth rights and police practices in various interrogation-related situations. Minor modifications were made to the instrument used in the present study, such as refining item wording. Youth rights items assess the right to silence in various contexts (e.g. on the street, at a police station; 4 items), the right to stop answering questions at any time ('fifth prong' of the Miranda warning; 1 item), and perceptions of custody (4 items). Police practices items assess respondents' knowledge about the permissibility of police deception during interrogation (1 item), parental notification and involvement (5 items), and police videorecording of interrogations (2 items). Example items include 'Does a youth have to answer a police officer's questions if the officer stops the youth while he is walking down the street?' (right to silence), 'Are police allowed to videotape an interview with a youth at the police station without the youth's knowledge?' (videorecording), and 'Can a youth get up and leave while a police officer is questioning him if the youth voluntarily agreed to go to the police station?' (perceptions of custody). Because some police interrogation policies and practices vary by jurisdiction (e.g. videorecording, parental notification), the factual accuracy of all items was verified by multiple independent sources (both attorneys and law enforcement officers) prior to survey administration. A sum score of correct answers was computed, ranging from 0 (all items answered incorrectly) to 17 (all items answered correctly).

Youth Legal Rights Attitude Scale

The Youth Legal Rights Attitude Scale (YLRAS) (Peterson-Badali & Broeking, 2009) is a 14-item measure assessing support for youths' due process rights during both police interrogation and court proceedings. Items assess respondents' attitudes about youths' rights to support from attorneys and parents during legal interactions (e.g. 'Young people should have the right to a lawyer present during police questioning'), youths' rights to autonomous decision-making (e.g. 'Young people should be able to say they don't want to have a parent or other adult present during police questioning'), and additional legal rights for youth (e.g. 'Young people need extra legal rights compared to adults'). All items are measured on a 6-point scale (1 = strongly disagree to 6 = strongly agree) where higher values indicate greater support for youth rights and autonomy. The scale's original authors examined its psychometric properties and reported a three-factor structure which they termed (1) Extra Rights (4 items), (2) Right to Support (RTS) (6 items), and (3) Right to Self-Determination (RSD) (4 items) (Broeking, 2008). The present study utilized the five scale items that specifically ask about police questioning (two regarding RTS, three regarding RSD). Items asking about youths' rights during court proceedings or the need for extra legal rights were not included in the analysis because they focus on larger procedural issues beyond the interrogation context.

Demographic questionnaire

Respondents reported age, gender, race/ethnicity, educational attainment, annual household income (ordinal categories), political orientation (1 = very conservative to 6 = very liberal), number of children, and age and gender of children.

Results

Parents' knowledge about interrogation practices

Descriptive analyses for both individual UPIQ items and the total UPIQ score were conducted to examine knowledge among the total parent sample. One item was dropped because of concerns that respondents misinterpreted the wording, yielding a total UPIQ score comprising 16 items. Overall, parents answered fewer than half of the questions correctly ($M = 7.8$, $SD = 2.7$, range = 1–15 correct answers). Parents with a four-year degree or higher ($n = 91$) demonstrated higher total UPIQ scores ($M = 8.7$, $SD = 2.8$) than parents with less than a four-year degree ($n = 202$, $M = 7.4$, $SD = 2.5$; $t = 3.79$, $p < .001$, $d = .49$). In addition, a variable was created to compare participants who have parented (or currently parent) an adolescent to participants who have not parented an adolescent. Overall, we found no differences in UPIQ scores among parents whose oldest child was 13 or older ($n = 104$) compared to parents whose oldest child was 12 or younger ($n = 190$; $t = .32$, $p = .752$). No other parent characteristics were associated with differences in UPIQ scores. Knowledge about the items related to youths' interrogation rights and perceptions of police custody were higher than knowledge about police interrogation practices (Table 1). Knowledge was greatest for the item regarding Miranda's 'fifth prong': 90% of parents knew that a youth can stop answering police questions after having already started. The rights to silence items assessed whether parents believed this right is context-dependent (it is not);

Table 1. Parent accuracy on individual UPIQ items.

UPIQ items	% of sample answering correctly
Fifth prong	
Stop answering police questions	89.8
Right to silence	
Stopped on the street	69.4
Youth went to station voluntarily	76.9
Parent brought youth to station	57.1
Police arrested youth	77.2
Perceptions of custody	
Stopped on the street	68.7
Youth went to station voluntarily	68.7
Parent brought youth to station	54.4
Police arrested youth	86.1
Videotaping interrogations	
Without youth knowledge	18.7
Without youth consent	24.8
Police deception	
Police can lie	22.8
Parental notification/involvement	
Youth went to station voluntarily	11.9
Wait for parent before questioning youth	21.1
Tell parents if youth are suspects	17.4
Parent can assert presence during questioning	16.0

accurate understanding of the right to silence varied across contexts from 57% correct (right to silence when parent brings youth to police station) to 77% correct (right to silence when police arrest youth). The perceptions of custody items all began with the clause 'Can a youth get up and leave while a police officer is questioning him ...' and the proportion of the sample demonstrating accurate knowledge ranged from just over half to 86% across the four contexts.

Parents demonstrated substantially less accurate knowledge about police practices regarding interrogation of youth. Three-quarters of parents *incorrectly* believed that police cannot videorecord interrogations without youth consent, and more than four out of five *incorrectly* believed that police cannot videorecord without the youth's knowledge. Only 23% of parents understood that police are permitted to lie to youth. The parental notification questions assessed parents' expectations about whether and when police are required to notify or involve parents in youth interrogations, and accuracy across the five items was low. Four in five parents in this sample *incorrectly* believed that police must wait for a parent to arrive at the police station before questioning a child. Eighty-three percent of parents *incorrectly* believed that officers have to tell parents if their child is being considered a suspect.

Parent attitudes about youths' interrogation rights

For the YLRAS, parents were randomly assigned to one of four age conditions and asked to think about youth in the specified age condition when completing the measure. The four age groups were 11–13 years, 14–15 years, 16–17 years, and 18–21 years. *Ns* for the referent age group conditions ranged from 65 to 79. Mean scores were calculated to examine parents' attitudes regarding youths' interrogation rights for the two RTS items (pertaining to support from attorneys and parents, respectively) and three RSD items of the YLRAS that specifically asked about youths' rights during police questioning.

Right to Support

Overall, parents strongly endorsed youths' rights to support during police questioning, regardless of referent age group ($M = 5.3$, $SD = 1.2$); mean scores for all conditions were above five (see Table 2). A one-way between-subjects ANOVA was conducted to test any differences in parent attitudes for the RTS items across age conditions. Results of the ANOVA revealed no differences in parent attitudes as a function of referent age condition, $F(3, 289) = 1.28$, $p = .282$. Consistent with the analyses examining parents' interrogation knowledge, exploratory analyses were conducted for the demographic characteristics of the sample and the YLRAS (see Table 3). Parents who identified as having a liberal political orientation reported significantly higher support on the RTS compared to parents who identified as conservative or very conservative, $F(4, 279) = 3.30$, $p = .012$, $\eta^2 = .045$. However, all parents, regardless of political orientation, scored high on the RTS items as all means ranged from slightly below five (very conservative; $M = 4.9$) to nearly six (very liberal; $M = 5.8$). A between-subjects ANCOVA was conducted to identify any differences in parent attitudes for the RTS items among participants who have parented (or currently parent) an adolescent compared to participants who have not parented an adolescent, using parent age as a covariate. Results of the ANCOVA revealed no differences in RTS scores among parents whose oldest child was 13 or older compared to parents whose oldest child was 12 or younger, $F(1, 283) = .10$, $p = .752$. There were no other significant differences for RTS items by parent demographic characteristics (all p 's $> .05$).

Right to Self-Determination

Compared to attitudes regarding youths' RTS during police interrogation, parents' mean ratings for the RSD interrogation items were lower ($M = 2.9$, $SD = 1.5$; see Table 2). However, similar to the results for RTS mean scores, a one-way between-subjects ANOVA also revealed no differences in parent attitudes for RSD scores, $F(3, 289) = 1.26$, $p = .288$ as a function of age condition. Analyses of parent demographic characteristics and RSD scores indicated that White respondents ($M = 3.4$, $SD = 1.30$) reported higher support for youths' self-determination rights during police interrogation than Black respondents ($M = 2.8$, $SD = 1.5$), $F(1, 260) = 4.92$, $p = .027$, $\eta^2 = .019$. Results of the ANCOVA revealed no differences in RSD scores among parents whose oldest child was 13 or older compared to parents whose oldest child was 12 or younger, $F(1, 283) = 2.59$,

Table 2. Dependent variable mean scores as a function of referent age group.

	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	η^2
<i>RTS</i>						
Total sample	293	5.3 (1.2)	3, 289	1.28	.282	–
11–13 years old	79	5.5 (1.1)				
14–15 years old	77	5.3 (1.3)				
16–17 years old	72	5.4 (1.0)				
18–21 years old	65	5.1 (1.4)				
<i>RSD</i>						
Total sample	293	2.9 (1.5)	3, 289	1.26	.288	–
11–13 years old	79	2.7 (1.5)				
14–15 years old	77	2.8 (1.4)				
16–17 years old	72	2.9 (1.4)				
18–21 years old	65	3.1 (1.7)				

Table 3. RTS interrogation item mean scores as a function of parent characteristics.

Parent characteristics	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	η^2
Gender			1, 290	0.68	.408	–
Male	58	5.2 (1.3)				
Female	234	5.4 (1.2)				
Race			1, 260	0.32	.570	–
White	30	5.4 (0.9)				
Black	232	5.3 (1.2)				
Political orientation			4, 279	3.30	.012	.045
Very conservative	18	4.9 (1.4)				
Conservative	46	4.9 (1.5)				
Moderate	151	5.4 (1.1)				
Liberal	48	5.4 (1.1)				
Very liberal	21	5.8 (0.6)				
Educational attainment			1, 290	2.47	.117	–
Less than four-year degree	201	5.2 (1.3)				
Four-year degree or higher	91	5.5 (0.9)				
Parented adolescent			1, 283	0.10	.752	–
Oldest child 13 or older	104	5.4 (1.2)				
Oldest child 12 or younger	190	5.3 (1.2)				
Parent age ^a	286	36.9 (9.2)	1, 283	4.73	.030	.016

^aA covariate in the model.

$p = .108$. There were no other significant differences for RSD items by parent demographic characteristics (all p 's > .05; see Table 4).

To address our third research question, we computed correlations between UPIQ sum score and the RTS and RSD mean scores. Parent interrogation knowledge as measured by the UPIQ sum score was not associated with attitudes about youths' nurturance or self-determination rights (both p 's > .05).

Discussion

The present study assessed factual and functional knowledge about the parameters of police interrogation of youth as well as attitudes about youths' interrogation rights in a

Table 4. RSD interrogation item mean scores as a function of parent characteristics.

Parent characteristics	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	η^2
Gender			1, 290	0.37	.542	–
Male	58	2.8 (1.4)				
Female	234	2.9 (1.5)				
Race			1, 260	4.92	.027	.019
White	30	3.4 (1.3)				
Black	232	2.8 (1.5)				
Political orientation			4, 279	1.27	.281	–
Very conservative	18	3.5 (1.4)				
Conservative	46	2.7 (1.5)				
Moderate	151	2.8 (1.4)				
Liberal	48	3.0 (1.7)				
Very liberal	21	3.0 (1.7)				
Educational attainment			1, 290	0.76	.384	–
Less than four-year degree	201	2.9 (1.5)				
Four-year degree or higher	91	2.8 (1.4)				
Parented adolescent			1, 283	2.59	.108	–
Oldest child 13 or older	104	2.6 (1.4)				
Oldest child 12 or younger	190	3.0 (1.5)				
Parent age ^a	286	36.9 (9.2)	1, 283	1.29	.256	–

^aA covariate in the model.

sample of nearly 300 parents. Parents in this sample demonstrated substantial deficits in their understanding of certain police interrogation procedures, and knowledge about police involvement of parents in youth questioning was particularly poor. At the same time, parents strongly supported the notion that youth should have extra support during police interrogation (including support from parents themselves) and that youth – even older youth – should not have full autonomy in interrogation decision-making.

Parents' knowledge about interrogation practices

Parents in this sample answered only about half of the interrogation knowledge items correctly on average, and knowledge of individual rights or practices varied widely. While parents with a college degree scored higher than those without, which is somewhat consistent with prior work (Cavanagh & Cauffman, 2017), even college-educated parents averaged only 50% accuracy on our measure. This is largely consistent with the limited existing research on parents' interrogation knowledge. Specifically, Woolard et al. (2008) reported that 91% of parents understood the 'fifth prong' of the Miranda warning, as did 90% of parents in the present study. While only approximately half of parents in the Woolard et al. (2008) study understood that police can lie to suspects, knowledge was even poorer in the present study (23%). This study assessed a broader range of interrogation rights and practices than prior work (Woolard et al., 2008), so additional direct comparisons are limited. However, overall, parents performed poorly on the knowledge measures in this study, and while the present study did not assess parents' advice to youth suspects, these data on poor parent knowledge provide context for earlier work indicating that parents are negatively disposed toward advising youth to invoke their right to silence (Grisso & Ring, 1979).

Patterns of findings were similar for the items pertaining to parents' perceptions of youth custody, which is concerning on several levels. These findings suggest that adults in general demonstrate sometimes substantial misconceptions about youths' liberty interests in police questioning contexts and cast doubt on states' implicit or explicit reliance on parents as guardians of youths' interrogation rights. Several states require parental consultation as a condition of a valid Miranda waiver and/or require parents to be present for interrogations of younger children (King, 2006). Feld (2013) enumerated a number of potentially faulty assumptions inherent in these policies, including the parent will compensate for youths' competence problems or increase the reliability of youths' statements. This study's findings suggest that a substantial number of parents may not understand the fundamentals of youths' rights to silence and liberty in police questioning contexts. Moreover, it seems that parents may enter an interrogation situation with certain expectations about police conduct, such as consent for videotaping, the prohibition of police deception, and parental notification practices, that are simply inaccurate.

When examining the pattern of accuracy across the UPIQ items, the interrogation practices that parents knew the least about are, paradoxically, those practices actually involving parents (e.g. notification, presence during questioning). Performance on all other sets of items – youths' rights to silence, perceptions of custody, police deception, and even electronic recording of interrogations – was comparably better than the items assessing parents' factual knowledge of their own rights and roles in juvenile interrogations. Perhaps this is due to the 'availability' of Miranda language via popular media, whereas

specific police practices or parents' involvement are rarely discussed. Both legal scholars and developmental scientists have noted the potential disconnect between parents' expectations about police interrogation of juveniles (and their subsequent involvement) and the actual laws and policies in place in local jurisdictions (Cleary, 2017; Feld, 2013). The present study indicates that parental knowledge of their legal role in youths' interrogations is poor, and parents overestimate law enforcement officers' obligation to involve them in the process.

Parent attitudes about youths' interrogation rights

Consistent with the broader literature on adults' support for youths' nurturance rights in various (including legal) contexts, parents in this sample showed consistent and strong endorsement of youths' rights to support from adult authority figures during police questioning, with mean scores above 5.0 on a 6-point scale across referent age conditions. Similar to prior studies manipulating the target child's age (Grisso & Ring, 1979; Peterson-Badali et al., 2003), we found no differences according to youth age. Notably, parents strongly endorsed youths' RTS from attorneys and parents even for the 18–21 age group, suggesting that parents are tuned into the notion that even youth who have reached the age of legal majority are still in need of adult support when questioned by police. This is consistent with the robust evidence that youths' neurological and psychosocial development continues well into the third decade of life (Steinberg, 2014).

When examining the role of parent characteristics in attitudes about youths' right to interrogation support, only political orientation was a significant predictor. Parents identifying as liberal were more supportive of youths' rights to support than conservative parents. This is consistent with the few studies that have explored sociopolitical attitudes as predictors of parent support. Specifically, two studies involving adolescents and their mothers reported that mothers' conservatism was negatively correlated with support for nurturance rights (Day et al., 2006; Peterson-Badali et al., 2004). That no significant differences were found across other parent characteristics (e.g. race/ethnicity, gender, education, income) is also generally consistent with the broader literature on nurturance rights (Peterson-Badali & Ruck, 2008). However, it is important to note that overall support was still high across both groups suggesting that nearly all parents value adult involvement for their children during the questioning process. Yet, given the findings of parents' relatively poor procedural knowledge of the interrogation process, it appears that parents may tend to overestimate the extent to which they can effectively protect their child's legal interests. Further research is needed to explore how parents view their supportive roles for their children during questioning versus that of an attorney. From a policy perspective, requiring an interested adult's presence, similar to the UK policy and observed in some US states specifically for the Miranda waiver decision (Krzewinski, 2002), may be the only way to ensure youth receive appropriate support (see Cleary, 2017, for a discussion of policy and practice considerations).

The present study also measured parent support for youths' rights to autonomous decision-making in the specific context of police questioning. Overall, parents in this sample were less supportive of youths' interrogation autonomy (regardless of youth age) than youths' RTS from adult authority figures, which is consistent with prior research comparing respondents' endorsement of self-determination versus nurturance (Day et al.,

2006; Grisso & Ring, 1979; Peterson-Badali et al., 2003). Contrary to prior research (Peterson-Badali et al., 2003; Ruck et al., 2002), we did not find that endorsement of self-determination rights increased with target child age. However, Ruck et al. (2002) measured parent support for youths' self-determination using vignettes involving a child's right to (1) keep a diary secret from his or her parents and (2) attend a school of the child's choosing. It is possible that parent support for self-determination rights – and age-graded differences therein – is domain specific such that parents view legal decision-making differently from educational or family decision-making.

Again, it is noteworthy that respondents only moderately endorsed interrogation self-determination rights even for 18–21-year-olds – an age group legally entitled to exactly the same rights as parents or any other adults. While this is consistent with developmental science on adolescent brain development and psychosocial maturity (Steinberg, 2014), it is not consistent with the legal age of majority in most states (www.jjgps.org). These findings may indicate that parents subscribe to the notion of emerging adulthood and wish to retain some decision-making control even for young adults. Future research might combine youth rights attitudes measures with measures of developmental knowledge and attitudes in order to further unpack the factors underlying parent perspectives about young adults' self-determination.

With the exception of respondent race/ethnicity, parent demographic characteristics were not associated with their attitudes about youths' interrogation self-determination rights. This is consistent with most prior work reporting few or no differences according to socioeconomic status, gender, or educational attainment (Day et al., 2006; Peterson-Badali & Ruck, 2008). In the present study, White respondents were more supportive of youths' self-determination rights than Black respondents. While this is consistent with a few early studies reporting stronger endorsement from White respondents compared to Black respondents (e.g. Borhnstedt et al., 1981), those studies assessed children's rights more broadly, and the sample size for White respondents in the present study was small. More recent studies have not reported ethnocultural differences in adults' attitudes (Peterson-Badali & Ruck, 2008). One explanation is that this finding reflects a larger overall distrust of police tactics and investigative procedures from the Black community. For example, one recent study found that Black respondents were more likely to believe that police in an interrogation vignette would display aggressive tactics and ignore the vignette character's request for an attorney (Johnson, Citron-Lippmann, Massey, Raghavan, & Kavanagh, 2015). Therefore, Black respondents may be more concerned with Black youth making decisions on their own when speaking with police because they view these interactions as less legitimate. Future research on race/ethnicity-based differences in attitudes toward youths' interrogation rights might also assess perceptions of police legitimacy in order to clarify this association.

Limitations and conclusions

Several limitations should be considered when interpreting this study's findings. First, due to the limited published literature on parents' knowledge and attitudes regarding police interrogation of youth, established measures were limited in both nature and scope. Current measures only inquire broadly about the involvement of parents and attorneys

during questioning and, consistent with the existing literature, assessed attitudes about parent and attorney involvement simultaneously. Future research might develop a more extensive measure of attitudes toward youths' legal rights in the specific interrogation context and explore the potentially different views about support from parents versus support from legal professionals.

Similarly, parents' attitudes about their role during police questioning was not assessed. It seems clear that parents are in favor of being involved in the process but the manner in which they view their role is unclear. For example, do parents view their role as providing emotional support and comfort to youth during a potentially stressful, high-stakes situation? Do they conceptualize their role as providing guidance in the decision-making process or acting as a legal advocate on their child's behalf? Based on these findings, the latter would be rather concerning as parents are inadequately informed about common procedural and legal tactics used in police interrogations. Additional research could clarify whether parents share states' assumptions about parental protections and subsequently aid researchers in developing more tailored assessments of parents' capacities as legal advocates for their children.

Finally, the study employed a nonrandom sample and did not assess several potentially relevant variables. For example, respondents' history of legal involvement (e.g. arrests, interrogation experience) or that of their children was not assessed. It is quite plausible that parents with justice-involved children harbor different attitudes regarding youth rights compared to parents of children with no history of legal involvement. This is particularly important for parents of youth who have been questioned by police. Given the robust literature on quality of police contact as a predictor of procedural justice among adolescents (e.g. Fagan & Tyler, 2005), the nature and extent of respondents' police experiences would be important to assess. Additionally, future research directly comparing parents' and their own youths' knowledge (similar to Woolard et al., 2008) would paint a clearer picture of the level of family functioning in this context.

In sum, understanding parents' attitudes about youths' rights as well as their knowledge about police interrogation is essential to understanding their behavior in the interrogation room, unpacking the reasoning underlying advice they provide children, and ultimately evaluating the efficacy of required parental presence policies. In the present study, patterns of knowledge about police interrogation procedures as well as attitudes toward youths' interrogation rights seemingly indicate that parents want to retain decisional control, as evidenced by their strong endorsement of youths' rights to interrogation support (including parental presence) and their limited endorsement of youths' legal autonomy (even those beyond the legal age of adulthood). At the same time, parents generally demonstrate poor knowledge of both youths' legal rights in the events both preceding interrogations and police practices during interrogations. This is concerning in light of the assumptions inherent in recent policy shifts toward mandating or encouraging parents' presence or active involvement. Though states – and even parents themselves – may hope and expect that parents can serve as a 'line of defense' against police questioning experiences that are confusing, stressful, or gravely serious, such policies are ill-advised at best and harmful at worst if parents do not possess a basic working knowledge of police interrogation procedures and youths' legal rights during interrogation.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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