

# **Young drivers, road policing, deterrence theory and punishment avoidance**

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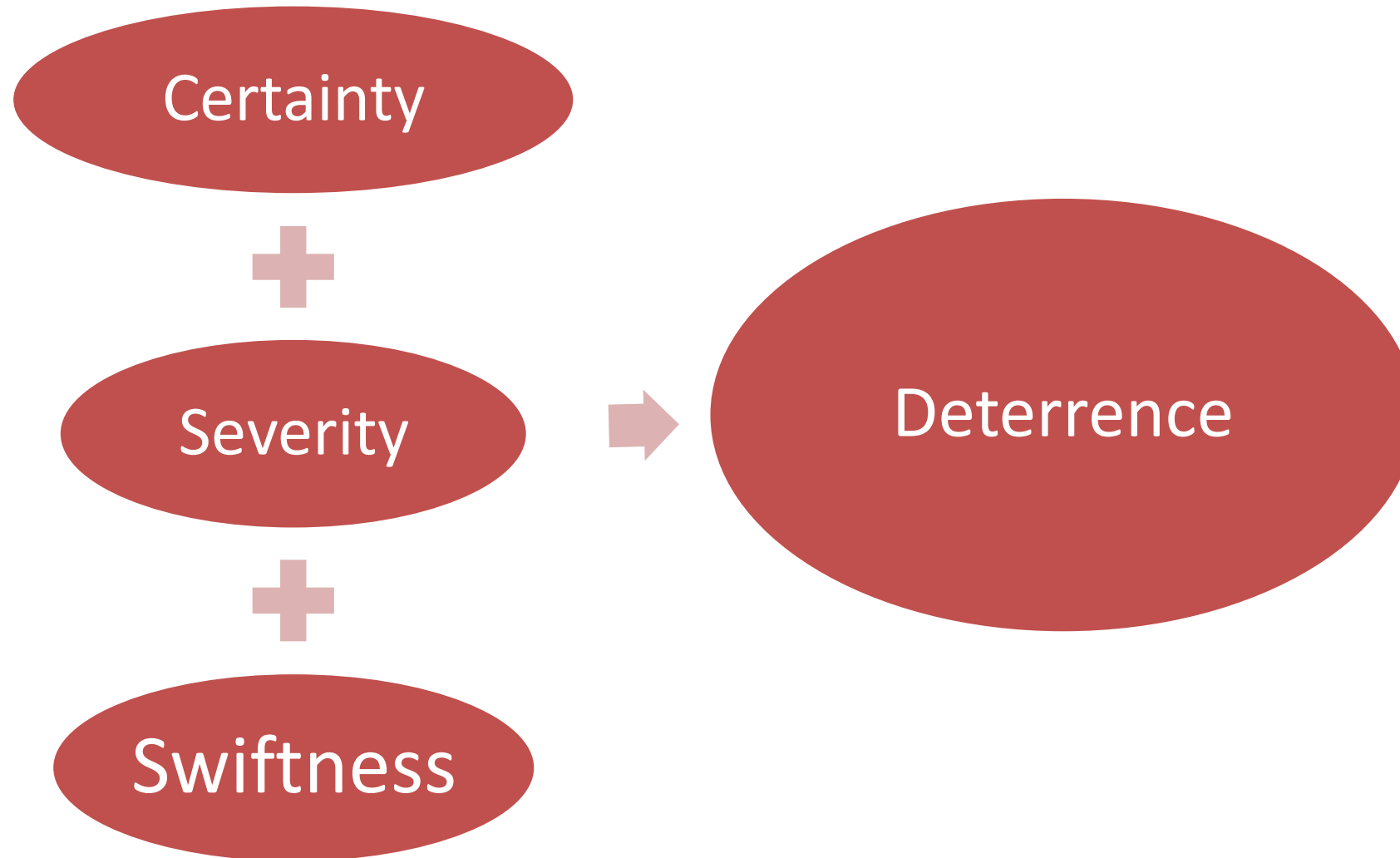
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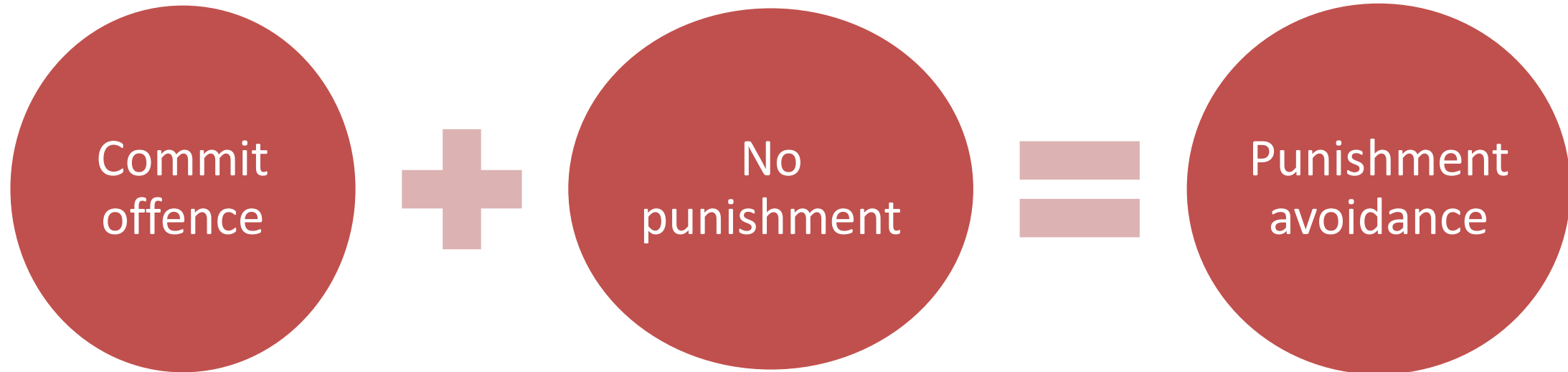
# Acknowledgements

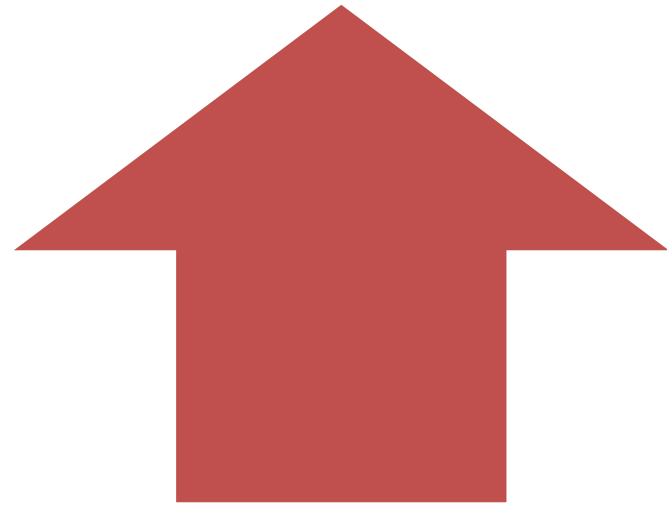
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# Deterrence theory



# Punishment avoidance





Punishment  
avoidance

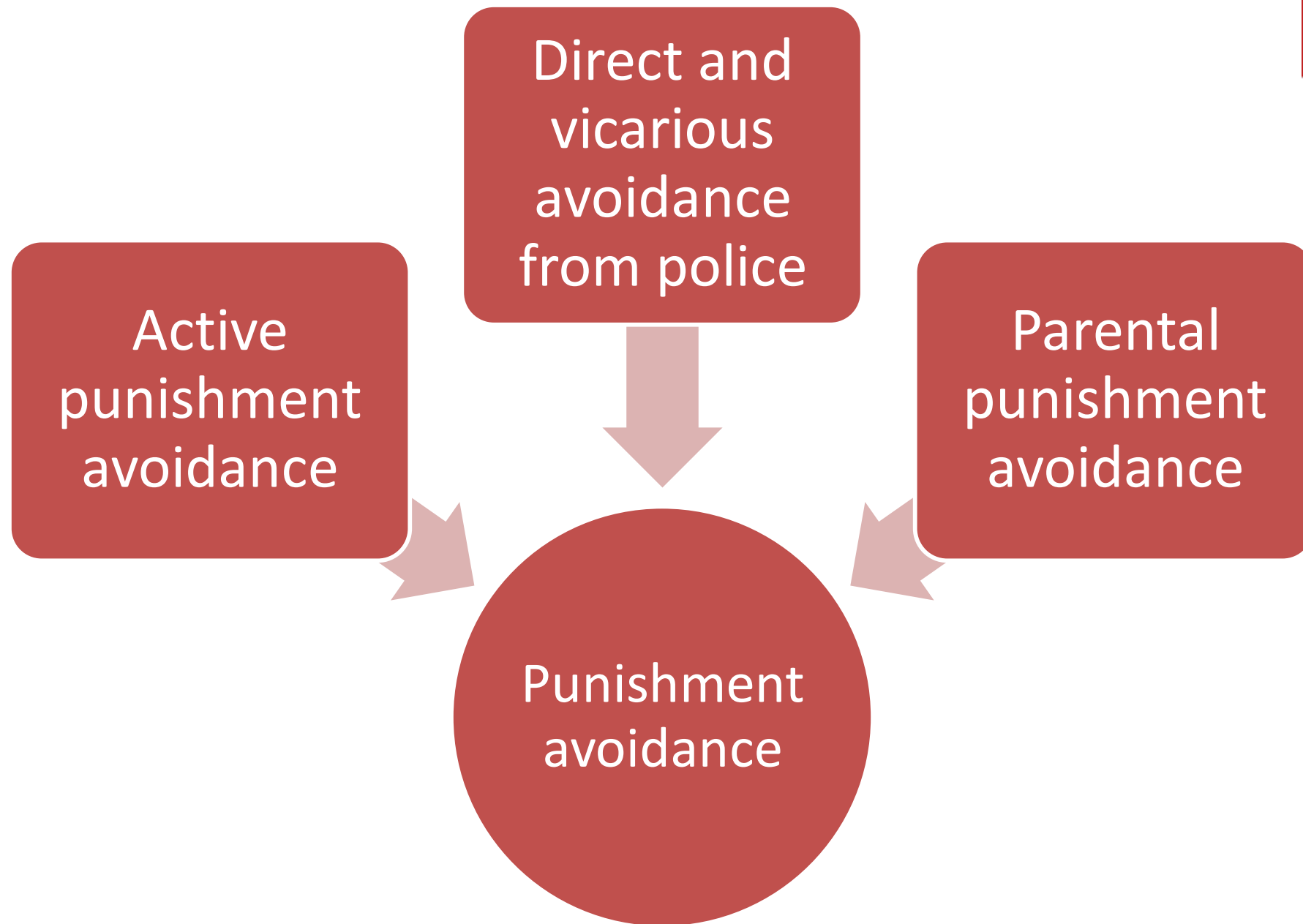


Certainty and  
severity

# Focus groups

- Two Australian states: Queensland and Victoria
- 31 participants
- Participants ages:
  - Queensland 17 to 25 years
  - Victoria 18 to 25 years
- 45% male
- 11 focus groups
  - 45% in Queensland
  - 55% in Victoria
  - 63% in regional locations









## **ACTIVE PUNISHMENT AVOIDANCE**

Deliberate and conscious efforts to avoid police and their operations

# Remove P plates that indicate licence status

*'Often people just take off their P plates so – and pretend they're, like, full[y] licensed. So they can carry more people.'* (Male, Queensland, Regional)



## Select the roads they travel on

*'It's like when I'm driving home on the highway, the bits that I know have speed cameras on it, I'll be a lot more cautious than just like the back-road strips.'* (Male, Queensland, Metropolitan)

*'...so there are roads, back roads and no one travels on them, so [I] tend not to care as much and never been caught, so I'm going to keep doing it.'* (Female, Victoria, Regional)

# Perceived that avoiding punishment meant they could engage in illegal behaviours

*'... it's like a rural road and the speed limit's 110, and there's no one on it, like you know, no one's going to see if you do 120...' (Male, Victoria, Regional)*

*'I know it's quite a common thing back where I live in Sydney. Often people just take off their P plates so - and pretend they're, like, full licence. So they can carry more people.' (Male, Queensland, Regional)*



## **DIRECT AND VICARIOUS AVOIDANCE FROM POLICE**

Caught by the police for illegal behaviours but the officer decided not to punish them

If it involved the young driver themselves, it was  
direct punishment avoidance

*'This one time I came home for our town's races and I was driving home the next morning and a local cop who I know pulled me over and then when he pulled me over and saw that it was me, like oh crap, I better not breatho [roadside breath test] you because you're definitely going to blow over. So I reckon they know the rules, but they're just a bit lax on them [regional police].'* (Male, Victoria, Metropolitan)

# If it occurs to others, it was vicarious punishment avoidance

*'I was in the car with my dad when he was speeding and he talked himself out of a ticket.'* (Male, Victoria, Regional)

'I was in a car with my friend, she was on her green Ps, and she was doing 17 over the speed limit, and the same happened - the cop just gave her a warning and stuff, and then she just kept going - she didn't get a fine or anything, and it didn't really phase her or anything - like she still speeds and stuff.' (Female, Queensland, Metropolitan)

# Can be both punished and avoid punishment

*'I'm a New South Wales P plater, so I'm green Ps and I've had my Ps since I was 17, and I could have got my full licence last April but I've moved here and just been pretty lazy about it. But over the Good Friday weekend, I was done speeding and got away with a DUI, that one, just because she knew that she was going to take my licence anyway, she was like, oh, well, I won't do your DUI as well. So I lost my licence for three months and by the time I get it back I'll just go get my fulls [open license] and back on it.'*

*(Male, Victoria, Metropolitan)*



# Perceived that avoiding punishment meant they could engage in illegal behaviours

*'She even said to me if you ever got pulled over just tell them that's your sister, your brother. They can't tell you it's not. Yeah, I think it made her do it a few more times.'* (Female, Queensland, Regional)

*'I feel like yeah because they think well they didn't get a fine, they're like oh well, I can just get away with it and stuff, it doesn't really matter.'*  
(Female, Queensland, Metropolitan)



## **PARENTAL PUNISHMENT AVOIDANCE**

Even when punished by police, parents can facilitate punishment avoidance

# Parents take monetary fine and/or demerit points for speed camera offences

*'I know my parents would do that for me if that was the case but it hasn't happened yet.'* (Female, Queensland, Regional)

*'I reckon my parents would, but not for more than one time. It would be, like, a one-time thing.'* (Male, Queensland, Regional)

# Conclusions and implications

- Young drivers experience punishment avoidance in a range of ways
- Encourages them to continue to engage in offending on the roads
- Police officers should not allow young drivers to escape punishment
  - There may be a need to provide training to officers around the implications of punishment avoidance

# Questions?

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