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Law enforcement officers' romantic relationships strengths : a mixed methods analysis

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LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS' ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS STRENGTHS:

A MIXED METHODS ANALYSIS

A

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the diversity of personal and interpersonal features associated with relationship quality for law enforcement officers and their romantic partners. A concurrent, embedded, mixed methods design was used to address the central research question, "What interpersonal characteristics and work- and home-based contextual factors are associated with relationship quality for law enforcement officers and their romantic partners?" Specific efforts were made to account for the gaps left by existing literature on the romantic relationships of law enforcement officers.

Participants were recruited from four Midwestern communities of similar size and demographic composition in the winter of 2018-2019. One hundred ten (110) participants completed a voluntary and anonymous online survey: 82 police officers and 28 romantic partners (including 26 paired couples). The survey included three highly regarded relationship quality inventories. Twelve (12) qualitative follow-up questions served to clarify and enhance quantitative findings.

Results indicated that the majority of participants in this study were relatively, if not highly satisfied in their romantic relationships. However, more than 25% of individuals fell on the cusp of a distress/non-distress designation, calling attention to the positive impact that informed interventions like supportive interpersonal interactions and family-friendly institutional changes could make in bolstering relationship quality for law enforcement officers and their romantic partners.

Chapter I

THE PROBLEM AND JUSTIFICATION FOR THE STUDY

Police work places unique stressors on law enforcement officers and their romantic partners (Borum & Philpot, 1993; Howard, Donofrio & Boles, 2004; Karaffa, Openshaw, Koch, Clark, Harr & Stewart, 2015; Miller, 2007). Job stress has been positively linked with marital distress (Roberts, Leonard, Butler, Levenson & Kanter, 2013; Roberts & Levenson, 2001). Though it is arguable whether or not policing is actually more stressful than other occupations (Malloy & Mays, 1984; Maynard & Maynard, 1982; Webster, 2013), the culture of the profession, combined with organizational complaints, and the physical and emotional requirements of the job can be a toxic combination for an officer's romantic relationship (Karaffa et al., 2015; Kirschman, Kamena & Fay, 2013; Miller, 2007; Roberts & Levenson, 2001).

Adding to these stressors are recent and widespread civic debates over law enforcement practices in this country stemming from incidents of perceived racial bias and abuse of power (T. Shaw, 2015; Williams & Wines, 2016). Some departments are reporting low officer morale as a result of the subsequent increased organizational oversight (Gorner, 2016) and growing pockets of anti-police sentiment (Bello, 2014). The culture of United States law enforcement is under attack internally and externally (Shortell, 2014; Williams & Wines, 2016; Williamson, 2015), adding pressure to an already porous work-family interface (Howard, Donofrio & Boles, 2004; Roberts et al., 2013; Roberts & Levenson, 2001).

The challenges that a career in law enforcement places on officers and their spouses have been well documented in peer-reviewed research (Borum & Philpot, 1993; Kirschman, et al., 2013; Maynard & Maynard, 1982; Miller, 2007). For example, shift assignments often dictate when family events and holidays are scheduled (Borum & Philpot, 1993), and police culture has

been found to drive emotion-avoidant communication styles and coping mechanisms that can put strain on romantic relationships (Kirschmran et al., 2013; Miller, 2007). Despite what is known about the romantic relationships of law enforcement officers, research is lacking in terms of identifying strengths or offering solutions for struggling couples.

The focus of this research study was to begin to explore the interpersonal characteristics and work- and home-based contextual factors associated with relationship quality among law enforcement officers and their romantic partners. The intention was threefold: 1) to contribute meaningful relational research to the field of marriage and family therapy, 2) to pay respect to the thousands of men and women serving our communities and country as officers of the law, and 3) to provide practical, strength-based tools for struggling couples and the counseling professionals who support them.

Statement of the Problem

Police work infiltrates an officer's romantic relationship on multiple levels (Kirschman et al., 2013; Maynard & Maynard, 1982; Miller, 2007). Role strain and role conflict stemming from workplace stress and pressure can bleed into the dynamics of an officer's romantic relationship (Beehr, Johnson & Nieva, 1995; Borum & Philpot, 1988; Jackson & Maslach, 1982; Karaffa et al. 2015; Kirschman, 2006; Miller, 2007; Roberts & Levinson, 2001; Torres, Maggard & Torres, 2003). Known stressors include unpredictable schedules, bureaucratic oversights, a culture of machoism, and a watchful public (Borum & Philpot, 1993; Finn & Tomz, 1997; Karaffa et al., 2015; Paoline, 2003; Stoughton, 2015; Torres et al., 2003).

The spouses of law enforcement officers often report feeling that their relationship and family take a back seat to the profession (Karaffa et al., 2015; Maynard & Maynard, 1982). For example, quality time together and officer attendance at social events or family holidays are

limited or must be planned around his/her shift/schedule (Borum & Philpot, 1988; Miller, 2007).

Depending on their shift, police officers often miss their children's school-related activities and

extra-curricular endeavors. On an average day, as well as during environmental or other local

crises, parenting responsibilities can fall unduly on an officer's spouse (Kirschman, 2006).

Wives report perceiving that their spouse values their career more than their marriage or

family (Maynard & Maynard, 1982). Compounding this issue is the private and exclusive nature

of police socialization (Finn & Tomz, 1997; Waddington, 2002). In addition to feeling less

important than work responsibilities, the spouses of law enforcement officers also report being

frequently excluded from their partner's social life and inner circle (Miller, 2007). Furthermore,

many spouses feel that departmental administrators do little to acknowledge or prioritize family

values. Some spouses report believing that their department encourages divorce (Maynard &

Maynard, 1982).

Communication patterns and coping styles cause additional stress in the romantic

relationships of law enforcement officers. For example, the nature of police work generally calls

for some level of emotional detachment and an authoritarian style of communication that can

unintentionally spill into home-based interactions (Borum & Philpot, 1993; Kirschman et al.,

2013; Miller, 2007). Additionally, officers tend towards emotion-avoidant coping mechanisms,

including a preference for keeping feelings and experiences to themselves; these traits leave

spouses feeling isolated and left out, and can further distance already tense relationships

(Maynard & Maynard, 1982).

In response to the recognition that many families struggle in their "transition into law

enforcement culture," (Torres et al., 2003, p.108) some departments have incorporated spouse

training programs into their new employee orientations (Maynard & Maynard, 1982; Torres et

al., 2003). These programs educate the family members and romantic partners of law enforcement officers on some of the hazards of police work. They introduce loved ones to the potential for personality and behavioral changes in their officer family member as a result of his/her employment in law enforcement. Spouses and immediate family are encouraged to make use of available support programs "before the situation deteriorates too far and family relationships are irreparably damaged" (Torres et al., 2003, p. 108).

The relational impact of police work has been well documented in peer-reviewed literature. However, existing research is highly problem-saturated and has failed to offer solutions for struggling couples or identify behaviors and attitudes that might buffer against relational distress. This research study attempts to address these gaps through quantitative and qualitative exploration of contextual and behavioral attributes shared by officers and romantic partners who report high levels of relationship satisfaction.

Rationale

It has been said that "two of the most important spheres in the lives of human beings [are] those of work and family" (Perry-Jenkins & Wadsworth, 2017, p.219). Since the formal emergence of the field of Marriage and Family Therapy (MFT) in the early 1930s (Broderick & Schrader, 1991), the work-family interface has comprised a considerable portion of family social sciences research (Perry-Jenkins & Wadsworth, 2017). Contemporary family scholars have focused their interest on topics such as the division of household labor, work-family conflict, work-related stress and health, and work-family policy (Perry-Jenkins & Wadsworth, 2017). Following suit, but with a strengths-based twist, this study explores the work-family interface of a specific population: municipal law enforcement officers.

In his first editorial as the editor-in-chief of the Journal of Marital and Family Therapy, Fred Piercy encourages MFT scholars to conduct research that will "make a difference, be informed by theory and have relevance for practice" (Piercy, 2012, p. 1). This study aims to achieve all three objectives, as outlined below.

Making a Difference

Police work is routinely regarded by scholars as a highly stressful occupation that places unique demands on an officer's loved ones; romantic relationships in particular (Beehr, et al., 1995; Kirschman et al., 2013; Maynard & Maynard, 1982). Existing law enforcement relational/family research tends to focus on identifying problems and clarifying stressors (Beehr et al., 1995; Karaffa et al. 2015; Maynard & Maynard, 1982; Miller, 2007; Roberts & Levinson, 2001). Only a handful of these studies include spouses as participants (Beehr et al., 1995; Jackson & Maslach, 1982; Karaffa et al., 2015; Maynard, Maynard, McCubbin & Shao, 1980; Maynard & Maynard, 1982; Roberts et al., 2013; Roberts & Levenson, 2001), and even fewer formally assess relationship quality/satisfaction (Cherry & Lester, 1979; Lester & Guerin, 1982; Lester & Karsevar, 1980; Roberts et al., 2013; Roberts & Levenson, 2001). To date, not a single study could be found that formally considers partnerships other than marriage.

This study aimed to make a difference for law enforcement officers and their romantic partners by addressing these gaps. First, through the use of validated instruments; three highly regarded relationship quality inventories were included in the study. Second, the inclusion of romantic partners, including those who are not married, gives voice to both of the individuals in a given relationship and acknowledges the diverse structure of the modern American family. Third, the study has a positive focus, aiming to provide some insight into the interpersonal,

work-, and home-based variables associated with high levels of relationship quality for police officers and their romantic partners.

Informed by Theory

General systems theory is the philosophical heart of the field of marriage and family therapy (Becvar & Becvar, 2009). Grounded in the understanding that individuals do not behave in isolation, MFT researchers and practitioners consider relationships, context, and interaction patterns as influential to an individual's behaviors and attitudes, including those that drive communication, boundaries, and conflict-management (Becvar & Becvar, 2009; Bubolz & Sontag, 2009). Following suit, the current study assessed the relational, behavioral, and contextual characteristics that are associated with relationship satisfaction for law enforcement officers and their romantic partners.

Additionally, social scientists have long turned to ecological perspectives to guide their exploration of family relationships (Bubolz & Sontag, 2009; Perry-Jenkins & Wadsworth, 2017). Accordingly, human ecology served as the framework for this study's literature review. The narrower scope of family ecology guides the methodology and conclusions drawn from the data.

Relevance for Practice

Despite growing awareness of the interconnectedness between work-life and home-life, work-family balance/conflict is typically not addressed on clinical intake paperwork, and a large number of family therapists report feeling insufficiently prepared to tackle related issues with couples in therapy (Haddock & Bowling, 2001).

In a 1999 study of 82 clinical members of the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy, 56.1% of participating clinicians reported receiving little to no training on "work-related decisions in families" (Haddock & Bowling, 2001, p. 110). Participants estimated

that nearly 30% of their cases involved work-family issues. However, nearly nine percent of participants felt "not at all" prepared to assist couples in this area, and 35.3% felt only "minimally" prepared (Haddock & Bowling, 2001).

Additionally, despite the field's focus on social justice issues and theoretical underpinnings in family systems, the researchers reported that nearly 80% of therapists in the study either conveyed negative attitudes about dual-earner families or did not make mention of societal context at all (Haddock & Bowling, 2001). The authors urged therapists to increase awareness of context in helping couples deal with normative challenges of the work-family interface; in this particular study, those of dual-earner couples specifically (Haddock & Bowling, 2001).

In addition to adding to work-family research in general, the current study served to enhance clinical understanding of an extremely private population: police officers (Borum & Philpot, 1993; Finn & Tomz, 1997; Miller, 2007; Waddington, 2002). Police culture tends to promote suspiciousness and a narrow circle of trust. These characteristics make police research challenging in general and have been shown to interfere with an officer's willingness to participate in mental health services (Borum & Philpot, 1993; Paoline, 2003; Wester & Lyubelsky, 2005). The potential for occupational stigma has also been found to play a role in an officer's reluctance to engage in counseling (Waters & Ussery, 2007; Wester & Lyubelsky, 2005).

Rapport-building techniques (Borum & Philpot, 1993) and gender-sensitive therapy models (Wester & Lyubelsky, 2005) have been suggested as key strategies associated with "hooking an officer into treatment" (Borum & Philpot, 1993, p. 129). The current study aimed to support clinicians interested in working with this highly insular population (Paoline, 2003;

Workman-Stark, 2017) by enhancing understanding of the behaviors and contexts associated with relationship satisfaction specific to the culture and demands of the law enforcement profession.

Research Questions

The aim of this study was to explore the interpersonal characteristics and work- and home-based contextual factors that are associated with relationship quality among law enforcement officers and their romantic partners. The study used a purposeful convenience sample of law enforcement officers and romantic partners living in four Midwestern urban communities. Data collection was completed in the form of an anonymous and voluntary online questionnaire. The central research question was, "What interpersonal characteristics and work- and home-based contextual factors are associated with relationship quality for law enforcement officers and their romantic partners?" The following were subquestions:

1. "Is there a significant association between work-based variables and relationship quality?"

2. "Is there a significant association between home/family-based variables and relationship quality?"

3. "Which of the following relationship constructs are most significantly associated with relationship quality: satisfaction, commitment, intimacy, trust, passion, or love?"

4. "Which of the following interpersonal areas are most significantly associated with relationship quality: consensus, satisfaction, or cohesion?"

A concurrent, embedded, quantitative-qualitative mixed-methods design was used to address the research questions in this exploratory study (Creswell, 2009). Correlational and

means analyses served as the foundation of the quantitative processes. Predictive analysis followed. Qualitative data served to enhance and affirm quantitative findings.

Limitations

The potential for confounding variables and the use of convenience sampling are the primary limitations of the study. An additional weakness can be found in the overarching challenge associated with the construct of marital satisfaction and/or relationship quality in general. The methodological choices that contributed to these limitations were motivated by time and resource restrictions.

Confounds arose primarily from the exploratory nature of the study. Prior studies have focused solely on relationship problems associated with a career in law enforcement. This study appears to be the first to look at quantifiable associations between relationship satisfaction and the personal and interpersonal work- and family-based characteristics of police officers and their romantic partners. As a result, there was an abundance of factors that could have been included as variables. Variables were narrowed to reduce the length of the survey.

The decision to use convenience sampling is a second potential limitation of the study. Convenience sampling was selected as the recruitment tool due to the insular nature of most law enforcement agencies and officers (Borum & Philpot, 1993; Finn & Tomz, 1997; Miller, 2007). Achieving a fully representational sample did not seem feasible given the limited resources and this researcher's lack of affiliation with reputable law enforcement scholars. To counter the limitation of the non-probability sampling method while still controlling for as many confounds as possible, attempts were made to ensure that participating recruitment communities were similar in terms of residents and departmental demographics. In this way, a specific significant finding was more likely to be representative of the impact of the variable in question, versus the

influence of some other untested factor.   In sum, given the confines of a graduate study and the recruitment difficulties assumed with the population of interest, a smaller, homogeneous sample was sought (as opposed to a broader, more varied sample) in order to limit confounds, such as community-based dynamics/demographics.

Finally, measures of marital satisfaction, marital quality, and marital adjustment have been criticized for conceptual ambiguity (Heyman, Sayers & Bellack, 1994), and thus create a potential limitation for the study. In response, this study attempted to enhance the validity of reported "relationship quality" by using three separate relationship inventories. Participants' scores were analyzed for consistency across measures.

Definitions of Terms

Afternoon/Swing Shift – Shift assignment beginning between 12 noon and 7 pm (Fekedulegn et al., 2013).

Committed relationship – Refers to a relationship involving two individuals who are 1) married, 2) living together and are romantically involved, or 3) not living together but are exclusively dating, with no other partners, and with no intention to break up (Arriaga & Agnew, 2001). This phrase is used interchangeably with intimate relationship and romantic relationship.

Day Shift – Shift assignment beginning between 4 am and 1 am (Fekedulegn et al., 2013).

Law Enforcement Officer – Any officer of the law employed by a local police department or sheriff's office. For the purpose of this study, all participating officers were required to be municipal officers, indicating that they are employed and overseen by the city government, as opposed to county, state, or federal.

Municipal Police Officer – Municipal police officers were chosen as the population of interest for this study, as opposed to officers serving in county, state, or federal law enforcement positions, as a way to minimize the likelihood of confounding variables.

Night Shift – Shift assignment beginning between 8 pm and 3 am (Fekedulegn et al., 2013).

Officer(s) – A phrase used to reference police officers who participated in the study.

Paired Couple – A phrase used to reference two individuals in a committed relationship who both completed the online survey. Paired couples were matched by the researcher using unique identifiers embedded within the survey. Participant's identities remained confidential.

Relationship Quality – The composite evaluation of a variety of relational processes, typically falling along a continuum ranging from low to high (Lawrence, Barry, Langer & Brock, 2009; Norton, 1983).

Relationship Satisfaction – The degree of favorableness one has in regard to their romantic relationship as a whole (Lawrence et al., 2009; Roach, Frazier & Bowden, 1981).

Romantic relationship – A phrase used to reference a committed relationship.

Romantic partner – A phrase used to reference a person in a committed relationship with a law enforcement officer.

Chapter II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Police work is widely accepted as a highly stressful occupation (Beehr, Johnson & Nieva, 1995; Borum & Philpot, 1993; Havassay, 1994; Karaffa et al., 2015; Roberts & Levenson, 2001). Organizational oversight (Malloy & Mays, 1984; Patterson, 2003), the pressures of a watchful public eye (Hays, 1994; Havassay, 1994; Karaffa et al., 2015; Rose & Unnithan, 2015; Scriver & Reese, 1994) and conflicting responsibilities (Paoline, 2003) contribute to the complexities of the work. Job stress and role characteristics are often carried over into family life and can take a toll on officers' romantic relationships (Beehr et al., 1995; Borum & Philpot, 1988; Jackson & Maslach, 1982; Karaffa et al. 2015; Kirschman, 2006; Miller, 2007; Roberts & Levinson, 2001; Torres et al., 2003).

The following literature review centers on two conceptual lenses that support understanding of the complexities of work and family life for police officers in the United States: the work-family interface and human ecology theory. The literature review is divided into four sections, beginning with an introduction to the population of interest: The United States municipal police force. A brief history of policing in the United States will be followed by demographic information, including statistics related to gender, ethnicity, education, and known family structures of police officers in the United States. The attitudes, experiences, and primary sources of occupational stress affecting officers are included.

The second section of this literature review focuses on the work-family interface. A summary of key concepts and findings from contemporary work-family research is presented. Spillover, roles, and factors associated with work-family fit are differentiated and explained. These same concepts are revisited in the subsequent section with regard to the work-based stressors and work-based family experiences specific to U.S. police officers.

The third section of this literature review centers on officer stress, presented within the framework of human ecology and specific to the social ecology of marriage. With emphasis on the work-family interface, the human ecological lens serves to highlight the trickle-down effect that work stress can have on officers' romantic relationships. The impact of natural (macrosystem), social-political (exosystem), human-made (mesosystem), and personal (microsystem) attributes are detailed. Studies specific to law enforcement relationship quality are examined and critiqued.

The literature review concludes with a summary of marital research as it exists in law enforcement literature. Plans for how the proposed study aims to fill research gaps are presented.

The United States Municipal Police

Four hundred, seventy-seven thousand (477,000) men and women staff the 12,000 local municipal police departments the United States (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2015). They are almost always the first line of authority, assistance, and protection for their local communities. In the current era of policing, officers not only enforce legal mandates, but also act as investigators, arbitrators, safety transport for the ill, and a first point of intervention for individuals in mental health or other crises. They are the citizenry's first contact with municipal government. They are goodwill ambassadors, unflinching protectors, and the Solomonic judges of non-criminal disputes in most municipal spaces. They are celebrated by some; they are loathed by others.

This section of the literature review briefly reviews the history of U.S. municipal patrol officers, beginning with a history of policing in America, and concluding with work-family trends and statistics.

Brief History of Municipal Policing

The history of U.S. law enforcement is plagued by controversy and includes multiple

attempts at reform. From the earliest days of colonial policing and continuing into the 21st

century, police have been accused of bias, excessive brutality, and corruption (Archbold, 2012;

Kelling & Moore, 1989; Potter, 2013). Reform attempts have been popular with some groups

but have failed others. Public support for the police is often divided (Kelling & Moore, 1989).

Politics, the media, and modern technological advancements have added to the complexity of the

profession (Bromwich, Victor & Isaac, 2016; Loricchio, 2016; Solar, 2015).

The following presentation of the history of U.S. police accomplishes two goals. First, it

affirms, for law enforcement officers and their romantic partners, the long-standing issues that

police have faced in trying to effectively and ethically enforce law and order. The country's

police history helps explain the magnitude of society's ongoing frustrations with the tactics and

attitudes displayed by some officers, and the attempts by local departments to address these

concerns while upholding duties. Second, as individual and family identity is increasingly

centered around professional identity (Jurich & Russell, 1993), professional pride is an ever

more salient issue for officers and their romantic partners. This portion of the literature review

highlights the major shifts in and expanding roles of local police in the United States.

Beginning with the country's earliest attempts to enforce law and order, and concluding

with an analysis of the strengths, limitations, and challenges of modern policing, this section also

covers departmental distributions and pay averages, as well as general demographic trends (age,

race, gender, and the known marriage and family) and general professional experiences of the

average U.S. police officer.

Colonial policing: 1630s-1840s. North American colonists appointed constables to oversee and maintain order in their settlements. Night patrols warned citizens and business owners of fire or other dangers (Potter, 2013). They were responsible for pursuing individuals suspected of lewd or criminal activity, including those who were caught cursing or who failed to appropriately pen their animals (Johnson, 1981). These volunteer watchmen were known to spend the majority of their shift drinking or asleep; they were not particularly effective in deterring crime (Potter, 2013)

In 1838, with North American exploration in full swing, the country's first formally recognized police force was established in Boston, MA; New York City followed-suit around 10 years later (Potter, 2013). These early police departments were accountable to their central government and paid by the public. Officers were formal employees (as opposed to volunteers), whose behavior was guided by fixed rules and procedures (Archbold, 2012; Potter, 2013). However, despite sanctions, the officers of this era were notoriously corrupt (Archbold, 2012; Potter, 2013). Training was insignificant and formal procedures were often disregarded during investigations and arrests (Archbold, 2012). Payoffs and bribery were commonplace (Potter, 2013) and supervision was minimal (Archbold, 2012).

Slave patrols. Despite being some of the first publicly funded law enforcement agencies in the country, the southern slave patrol is an often-overlooked aspect of U.S. policing (Archbold, 2012). Notoriously ruthless and brutal, slave patrols were developed with the sole purpose of maintaining control and order over slave populations. Their authority would eventually expand to include white indentured servants. Primary tasks included keeping slaves off of roadways and disassembling the organized meeting of slaves (Archbold, 2012).

The political era: 1840s-1920s. The 1840s through the early 1900s constitute the

political era of policing. Sanctioned and resourced by local politicians, these police forces could

easily be considered political adjuncts. In addition to crime control, police would rig elections in

favor of a particular party or pressure citizens to vote for a particular candidate (Kelling &

Moore, 1989). Most officers were required to buy their way into a department and to pay an

ongoing stipend to the dominant political party (Archbold, 2012).

The reform era: 1930s-1970s. The 1930s signify the beginning of the reform era in

American policing. During this time, criminal law and heightened standards of police

professionalism were created in an attempt to authenticate the profession (Kelling & Moore,

1989). State governments took control of local police forces and new protocols were developed

for recruitment and training. Police commissions were established, and in some cities, contracts

were designed to stagger the tenure of police chiefs with those of local politicians to interrupt

political agendas (Kelling & Moore, 1989).

Crime control and criminal arrest were the primary functions of the reform-era of

policing. Standardized police practices and detailed record-keeping requirements were created to

limit challenges associated with officer discretion. Strategies were put in place to separate the

police from the public; a visible presence with professional distance was the goal (Kelling &

Moore, 1989). For example, emergency 9-1-1 systems were established and citizens were

discouraged from communicating with their local district or precincts directly. Criminal

apprehension became the standard measure of police success.

Changes were met with mixed support from the general public. Overall, the

depersonalized strategies of crime control and prevention proved generally unsuccessful.

Minorities alleged inequitable treatment, and police practices were called into question yet again,

particularly during the civil rights and antiwar movements of the 1960s and 1970s. Citizens were becoming fearful of their local police (Kelling & Moore, 1989). As public confidence in the police decreased, so did political support. The resulting fiscal challenges and departmental cutbacks created a divide between patrol officers and administrators. In many departments, tensions ran high both internally and externally (Kelling & Moore, 1989).

Community policing: 1980s & 1990s. By the 1980s, in an attempt to re-establish intimacy and legitimacy, many police departments resumed neighborhood patrols and were turning to local citizens' groups for direction. Police learned that citizens were craving information and more control over police intervention in their homes and communities (Kelling & Moore, 1989). The result was an entirely new organizational approach, including redefining the function of local law enforcement to include conflict resolution and problem-solving. As "community policing" got underway, many neighborhood police departments were reopened and field offices were established in schools. Gang, drug, and other task forces were created to further organize and engage patrol officers in the planning and implementation of community-based programs and strategies (Kelling & Moore, 1989).

21st century policing. In the 21st century, the dominant model of United States policing remains community policing, also referred to as "problem-oriented policing" or "zero-tolerance policing" (Hopkins Burke, 1998; Spelmen & Eck, 1987). Community policing is theoretically aligned with the goals of decreasing large-scale criminal threats by (a) focusing on smaller, precipitating events; (b) encouraging officer discretion and creativity in problem-solving; and (c) increasing sensitivity to community-driven needs (Fleissner & Heinzelmann, 1996; Spelmen & Eck, 1987). The highly debated "broken windows" model and affiliated "stop and frisk" tactics are included within the scope of community policing (Hopkins Burke, 1998; Sampson &

Raudenbush, 2004; Spelman & Eck, 1987; Fleissner & Heinzelmann, 1996; Wilson & Kelling, 1982).

As the effectiveness of modern police strategies continues to be scrutinized, police agencies have repeatedly found themselves at the center of a nationwide discourse on the fine line between protecting and violating people's rights (Comey, 2015; Rickford, 2016; C. Shaw, 2015; Williamson, 2015). Though these issues are not new to U.S. police, in 2012 the shooting death of an unarmed African American teenager in Ferguson, MO and the decision by a grand jury not to indict the white officer responsible re-ignited civic debates over law enforcement practices in the United States (Cobb, 2016; McClain, 2016; T. Shaw, 2015; Williamson, 2015). Since then, other similarly publicized incidents have increased public outrage and added to the scrutiny of American law enforcement practices nationwide (Cobb, 2016; Douglas & Mueller, 2016; Von Drehle et al., 2015; Weitzer, 2015).

Technology and social media. Body cameras, cell phone videos, and social media are a 21st-century phenomena that have only added to the complexities of the profession (Bromwich et al., 2016; Solar, 2015). Technological advances have been "a mixed blessing" for today's law enforcement agencies (Solar, 2015, p.1). For example, 3-D crime scene imaging and predictive intelligence (identifying crime hotspots, for example) have helped improve officer efficiency. Body cameras are being used to authenticate arrest encounters, and recordings can be used for training purposes (Solar, 2015). Many police departments now have their own Facebook and Twitter accounts; they are using social media platforms to connect with and inform their communities. On the other hand, social media and other technology have made it easier for gangs and other criminals to communicate and plan crimes or attacks (Bromwich et al., 2016). Citizens often take to social media to post encounters with the police – some positive, some

negative. However, police argue that sometimes during filming, citizens violate officers' rights or break laws, like those related to trespassing, for example (Loricchio, 2016). Despite the controversy, technology will remain heavily intertwined in U.S. policing well into the future (Police Executive Research Forum, 2014).

The future of U.S. policing. According to a 2014 Police Executive Research Forum cooperative, the future of policing in the United States will be focused on improving 1) the quality of police services, and 2) officer accountability (Police Executive Research Forum, 2014). The vision includes maximizing the use of technology to increase efficiency, tailor community and federal partnerships to maximize public safety, utilize police foundations to fill funding gaps, and possibly even revamp traditional police hierarchy to match the career interests of young recruits (Police Executive Research Forum, 2014). Specific strategies are focused on the continued use of predictive technology and online/text crime reporting. GPS tracking of individuals on probation/parole is possible, as well as using non-sworn personnel to respond to low-risk service calls (Police Executive Research Forum, 2014). The intent is to create a "smarter and more professional" (p. 24) U.S. police force; one with greater pride, less turnover, and a decrease in disciplinary actions and health consequences for officers (Police Executive Research Forum, 2014).

Municipal Policing by the Numbers

According to the most recent Law Enforcement Management and Administrative Statistics (LEMAS) Survey, there are roughly 477,000 sworn police officers in the United States, composing more than 12,000 local police departments (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2015). The average officer is a 39-year-old white male who earns a salary of about $60,000 per year (Bureau

of Labor Statistics, 2018). The starting pay for a new police recruit is around $44,000, annually

(Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2015).

Race and gender. Roughly 27% of U.S. police officers are racial or ethnic minorities;

up 12% from 1987 (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2015). In total, women account for less than

15% of all sworn officers in the United States and make up just one-tenth of all first-line

supervisors (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2015).

Education requirements. The vast majority (84%) of U.S. police departments require

their officers to have at least a high school diploma. Fifteen percent (15%) require their officers

to have completed at least some college. Ten percent (10%) require a two-year degree, and one

percent require a four-year degree (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2015).

Marriage and children. Nationally representative marriage and family demographics

specific to municipal police officers could not be located for this literature review. Relationship

demographics are rarely included in scholarly articles on law enforcement. Often, even studies

specifically addressing marriage issues do not specify the number of officers who were excluded

from the research due to non-married status; nor do they frequently include specifics with regard

to family size or structure. A few studies over the past three decades, however, provide some

information that is useful in beginning to understand the marriage and family life of the United

States municipal police force.

Patterson (2003) surveyed 233 officers in a mid-sized northeastern police department.

From a gender and age perspective, the sample was found to be representative of the department

as a whole ($n = 644$) and aligns with national law enforcement demographics reported by the

Department of Justice. For example, the average officer was 37 years old ($SD = 7.0$) and had

served about 12 years ($SD = 7.0$) in the profession. Also, in accordance with national police

averages, women accounted for just 12% of the sample (8% of the department), and nearly three-quarters (72%) of participating officers identified as Caucasian (Patterson, 2003). Fourteen percent (14%) of officers in the study had never been married; three percent were separated; and 11% divorced (Patterson, 2003). Thirty-nine percent (39%) of participating officers reported that their current marriage was their first, and five percent reported that they or their spouse had been previously married. Twenty-eight percent (28%) of participants identified as unmarried but cohabitating with their significant other (Patterson, 2003).

Two earlier studies provide some comparatives and additional insight into the family structures of U.S. police officers. Roberts and Levenson (2001) interviewed 19 male police officers and their female spouses; Maynard and Maynard (1982) surveyed 42. Similar to Patterson's (2003) findings, the officers in the Roberts and Levenson study (2001) averaged about 37 years of age ($M = 36.5$; $SD = 5.9$) and just over nine years (x = 9.4) of tenure. The couples in the study had been married an average of eight years ($M = 7.9$, $SD = 7.6$). For 68% of participants, their current marriage was their first (Roberts & Levenson, 2001). Maynard and Maynard's (1982) findings were similar with regard to officer tenure ($M = 7.1$ years) and average marital length ($M = 8.8$ years). Additionally, in both studies, the vast majority of participants reported having children; 73.7% for Roberts and Levenson (2001) and 80.9% for Maynard & Maynard (1981).

Uniquely, Roberts and Levenson (2001) also asked participating law enforcement spouses about their professional lives. In total, seven of the spouses reported full-time paid employment outside of the home, seven worked full-time in their homes or identified as students, and five reported being self-employed or working in part-time paid positions (Roberts & Levenson, 2001).

Though the marriage and family findings mentioned here are specific only to the time and location of the studies themselves, they provide a rare glimpse into the family lives of police cohorts around the country. If the aforementioned studies are at all representative of broader national trends, then it could be hypothesized that the average officer is a white male, around age 37, who is fairly new in his career (under 10 years of tenure). He is likely a parent and is married or cohabitating with his significant other. If he is married, he and his spouse were probably married around the same time that he began his career in law enforcement. Finally, it would be safe to assume that his partner/wife is also employed, at least part-time, outside of the home.

Attitudes and Experiences

Results of a nationwide survey of U.S. police officers provides some additional insight into the attitudes and experiences of nearly 8,000 police men and women. The survey was conducted by the Pew Research Center and is touted as "one of the largest ever conducted with a nationally representative sample of police." The 2016 study was limited to municipal police and county sheriffs' departments with 100 or more sworn officers on staff (Morin, Parker, Stepler, Mercer & Mercer, 2017). General findings from the study are included in this section of the literature review as an introduction to the attitudes and experiences of the average U.S. police officer, and as a preface to a more detailed examination of the ways that these experiences can impinge on officers' romantic relationships.

Frustrations, pressures, and pride. Police work can be a highly frustrating profession. Police officers in the Pew study (2017) reported experiencing more frustration with and less fulfillment from their jobs than the average American worker. Specifically, 51% of officers, the white males in particular (54%), reported feeling generally frustrated with their job (Morin et al.,

2017). Only 29% of individuals in the general population of American workers said the same.

Less common, though noteworthy, is that close to a quarter of all officers reported feeling angry

about their work (23% of white officers, 21% of Hispanic officers, and 17% of black officers)

(Morin et al., 2017). Perhaps contributing to this finding is that 53% of officers reported that

they question the fairness of their department's disciplinary procedures. Seven in 10 (72%)

perceived that poorly performing officers are not held accountable by their departments (Morin

et al., 2017).

Still, most individuals in law enforcement (58%) reported that they "nearly always" or

"often" feel proud of their job. However, the majority of career-based pride was found among

administrators (73%), as opposed to patrol officers (57%) or sergeants (59%). Only four in 10

officers (42%) reported frequently feeling fulfilled by their work; just over half (52%) of

employed adults feel the same (Morin et al., 2017).

Personal safety concerns. Safety fears were identified as a primary occupational concern

for officers in the study, something most working adults don't typically worry about (Morin et al.

2017). Specifically, the vast majority of American workers (67%) report never being seriously

worried about their physical safety while at work. Only 16% of police officers say the same

(Morin et al., 2017). In fact, among participating officers in the Pew study, 42% reported

"nearly always" or "often" being concerned about their safety, while another 42% said they

"sometimes" have these concerns. In comparison, only 14% of working adults report feeling

regularly concerned about their physical safety while on the job (Morin et al., 2017). Over time,

safety concerns and other chronic stressors can impact an officer's personality and physiology

(Gilmartin, 2002; Roberts & Levenson, 2001); romantic relationships are often negatively

affected (Kirschman et al., 2013; Miller, 2007).

The Police Personality. Formal evaluations of the personality characteristics of working officers could not be found for inclusion in this literature review. Public assumption is that police officers generally share some distinguishing, often negative traits, including aggressiveness, cynicism, prejudice, suspiciousness, and authoritarianism (Balch, 1972; Twersky-Glasner, 2005). However, it has also been suggested that these traits can be found in many Americans, not just police. Scholars believe that the visibility of the policing profession only serves to make these characteristics more noticeable among law enforcement (Balch, 1972).

A more likely scenario is that certain traits, like assertiveness and a general respect for rules, are evident in officers even prior to starting in their careers; officer selection programs make sure of this. Overly passive or overly guarded individuals; those demonstrating careless or deviant pasts (a felony conviction, example); and those exhibiting poor impulse control, hostility, or tendencies towards alcohol/drug abuse are generally not selected for law enforcement training programs. The hiring process has specific mechanisms in place to weed these people out including drug tests, thorough background investigations, psychological assessments, and in some cases, polygraph tests (Morison, 2017; Roufa, 2019).

In the past five years, the practice of weeding out undesirable candidates has shifted to proactively identifying individuals who possess desirable traits, a move from eliminating the negative to seeking out the positive (Morison, 2017). Desirable traits include integrity, service orientation, empathy, courage, general intelligence, communication and human relations skills, an ability to tolerate supervision, self-control, team orientation, dependability, and problem-solving skills (Morison, 2017; Roufa, 2019). About 20% of candidates are excluded from invitation to law enforcement academies on the basis of their psychological evaluations alone (Roufa, 2019).

Once an individual is approved for an academy, and as they move into their career, occupational-socialization including training practices, safety concerns, and peer engagement further shapes existing traits, and results in the raw development of others (Twersky-Glasner, 2005). For example, a hypervigilant mindset and avoidant coping tendencies have been found to result from police training and socialization (Borum & Philpot, 1993; Gilmartin, 1986; Smith, 2008; Stoughton, 2015). These processes and the implications on officers' romantic relationships are examined and explained in more detail in the "exosystem" section of this literature review.

Relationship with the general public. According to the study, the large majority of officers (86%) ultimately believe that the public does not understand the job pressures and safety concerns they face on a daily basis (Morin et al., 2017). Two-thirds of officers reported that they had been verbally abused by a member of the community in the past month while on duty. On the other hand, eight in 10 (79%) reported that during the same time period they had been thanked for their service (Morin et al., 2017). Clearly, citizens differ in their views of and their experiences with the police. Still, nearly half of all officers in the Pew study reported feeling disconnected from the communities they serve. For example, 45% reported believing that "very few" or "none" of the people in the neighborhoods they patrol share their values (Morin et al., 2017).

Safety concerns, a sense of disconnection from the public, and the inconsistent reception officers receive in their patrol communities make it easy to understand the challenge that they face trying not to internalize negative perceptions of the police, and trying to separate work from home. These and other occupational stressors, such as bureaucratic stress and environmental or man-made catastrophes, have the potential to impact officers' romantic relationships, and often

times they do (Borum & Philpot, 1993; Karaffa et al., 2015; Kirschman, 2007; Maynard &

Maynard, 1982).

Sources of Stress

Police work has long been cited as a profession unequal to others in stress and pressure

(Malloy & Mays, 1984; Reese & Scrivner, 1994; Zavala, Melander & Kurtz, 2015). Scientific

studies have debunked these claims, but in the process, police scholars have been successful in

clarifying and ranking sources of officer stress (Malloy & Mays, 1984; Maynard & Maynard,

1982; Miller, 2007; Super, 1994; Webster, 2014). For example, it is often assumed that acute

stress, like a high-speed chase or the potential to be shot while making an arrest, is the most

significant source of stress for the average police officer. However, in formal studies officers

identify the chronic stress associated with bureaucratic restrictions and organizational oversights

as the most stressful aspect of their job (Crank & Caldero, 1991; Violanti & Aron, 1994).

Health considerations. Though not immediately physically threatening, untreated

chronic stress can result in significant health issues including anxiety, insomnia, muscle pain,

high blood pressure, depression, obesity, and heart disease (American Psychological Association,

2016a). Acute stress, on the other hand, can actually have a positive effect on an individual

(American Psychological Association, 2016b), and some scholars have suggested that this could

be particularly true for police officers (Webster, 2014). Webster (2014) explains that "certain

dangerous aspects of the work which have been assumed to produce distress may actually be

sought-after by officers as noble or stimulating aspects of the profession" (p. 840). In other

words, an officer may not consciously register potentially life-threatening situations as

negatively stressful because their experience of stress is dominated by the excitement of the

moment and the prestige that follows some of these experiences. Scholars researching critical

incident stress in police officers have come to similar conclusions (Perrin, DiGrande, Wheeler, Thorpe, Farfel & Brackbill, 2007).

Bureaucratic stress. Crank and Caldero (1991) assessed sources of work-stress in 205 patrol officers from eight municipal police departments in the state of Illinois. Officers were asked to write a statement about their greatest source of occupational stress. Qualitative responses were divided into five categories, with organizational complaints being the most common. Specifically, 68.3% of participating officers cited personnel problems, procedures and protocols, or shift work as their primary sources of stress. One participant referenced the "indolence and inconsistency" (p.343) of his command staff. Others complained about arbitrary rules and restrictions, "like where we smoke and how we park our cars" (p. 345). Some officers (n=28) mentioned shift work as their primary complaint; half of those complained specifically of night shift, and the other half expressed a distaste for rotating shifts (Crank & Caldero, 1991).

Interestingly, Crank and Caldero (1991) speculated that their findings may actually be under-representative of the bureaucratic stress experienced by patrol officers. They noted that a number of participants privately communicated a reluctance to write about the organization as a source of stress for fear of retribution from superiors. In fact, 19% of respondents chose not to answer the question at all. One participant disclosed that he had made a point to hand his completed survey to a member of the research team, as opposed to placing it in the anonymous collection box, for fear of the supervisor reading his criticisms (Crank & Caldero, 1991).

A unique aspect of the Crank and Caldero (1991) study lies in the qualitative nature of the questionnaire. Other researchers who have inquired about police stress have utilized ranking systems or other pre-set criteria to determine the sources of police stress. For example, Violanti and Aron (1994) issued the 60-item Police Stress Survey (developed by Spielberger, Westberry,

27

Grier &Greenfield, 1981) to officers in an undisclosed area of the country (*N*=103). Officers

were asked to rank each stressor on a 0-100 scale, where zero indicated "no stress" and 100

indicated "maximum stress." Participants were instructed to base ratings on personal experience

as well as what they have seen to be the case for other officers (Spielberger et al., 1981).

Violanti and Aron (1994) found that the potential to kill someone in the line of duty and

for a fellow officer to be killed were ranked as the most distressing aspects of police work by

participants in their study. These findings contradict the qualitative responses received by Crank

and Caldero (1991), where only six officers mentioned the possibility of danger or injury as an

occupational stressor. Further examination of the Police Stress Survey itself might reveal why

Violanti and Aron's (1994) findings differ from Crank and Caldero's (1991). Specifically,

instructions for the Police Stress Survey direct participants to make stress ratings that take into

account the amount of time and energy that would be necessary to adjust to or cope with various

events (Spielberger et al, 1981). It seems plausible that respondents ranked the stress *would*

result from a given incident, as opposed to ranking stress that is regularly experienced as a part

of the job.

Still, even in the fixed responses of the Police Stress Survey, Violanti and Aron (1994)

found that half of the top 20 stressors identified by participants were organizational or

administrative in nature. Participants ranked shift work as the highest administrative stress (*M* =

61.2, *SD* = 29.2), followed by inadequate departmental support (*M* = 60.9, *SD* = 29.2), and then

insufficient personnel (*M* = 58.5, *SD* = 27.6) (Violanti & Aron, 1994).

Situating police officer stress. Though organizational stress is clearly high for police

officers, one research team has determined that the level of structural/administrative stress

experienced by law enforcement does not significantly differ from the workplace stress

experienced by the average adult male in the U.S. (Zhao, He & Lovrich, 2002). Data for the study was drawn from surveys of two large police departments in the Northwestern United States ($N = 335$). Officers provided feedback on various aspects of their work environment including their perceptions of organizational bureaucracy. They also completed the 52-question Brief Symptom Inventory (BSI), which measures psychological and physical symptoms of stress. A strength of the BSI as the dependent variable is that the measure includes formal comparative norms for college students, adults, and elderly samples in the United States with regard to depression, anxiety, obsessive-compulsive tendencies, interpersonal sensitivity, and anger/hostility (Zhao et al., 2002).

Zhao, et al. (2002) found that officers' perceptions of their work environment, along with their educational attainment, significantly impacted their level of stress. Least squares regression analyses revealed that officer perceptions of workplace autonomy and the quality of the feedback they received from supervisors significantly and negatively impacted their physical and psychological symptoms of stress. Education was positively related to stress in that officers with higher educational attainment reported even higher levels of stress than their less-educated peers (Zhao, et al, 2002). The researchers supposed that a college education increases an individual's desire for autonomy and feedback. Thus, the higher-educated officers in the study felt even more alienated by the constraints of the bureaucracy than their peers without college educations (Zhao et al., 2002).

Furthermore, though officers in the study were found to experience marginally higher levels of interpersonal sensitivity, obsessive/compulsive tendencies, and anxiety than the average working U.S. male, they scored significantly lower than the average working male in the areas of depression and anger/hostility. Across the board, police officers' stress scores were significantly

lower than the stress scores of the average American elderly male, college male, and juvenile male (Zhao et al., 2002).

The researchers conclude that stress is a multidimensional concept that deserves more attention by scholars, particularly as it relates to the complexities of police work. With regard to the officers in the study reporting similar levels of stress as same-aged males and less overall stress than others, they speculate that police work is not as stressful as the media tends to portray and the general public tends to perceive. Or perhaps selection processes, training, and support services are just that effective in preparing candidates for the challenges associated with police work (Zhao et al, 2002).

Critical incidents. Critical incidents are a unique type of stressor experienced by police and other first responders. Critical incidents are typically transient experiences, but with the potential for long-term effects. Critical incidents are sudden and unexpected. They are emotionally and psychologically overwhelming for those involved (Digliani, 2012; Malcolm, Seaton, Perera, Sheehan & Van Hasselt, 2005). A critical incident includes any experience involving a threat of death or bodily injury or witnessing the death or severe injury of another (Digliani, 2012).

Exposure to a critical incident can strip psychological defenses, overwhelm coping skills, and challenge core beliefs (Carlier et al., 1998; Digliani, 2012; Malcolm et al., 2005). Sometimes symptoms take weeks, months, or years to develop. For example, the September 11th terrorist attacks on New York city directly took the lives of 60 law enforcement officers (CNN Library, 2016), but in the months following, and for the next three years, calls by New Jersey law enforcement officers to a confidential suicide hotline increased markedly (Violanti, Castellano, O'Rourke & Paton, 2006).

Some researchers have suggested that the impact of critical incidents could be made worse or buffered-against based on the occupation and training of the individual responding (Perrin et al., 2007). For example, Perrin et al. (2007) found that 8.3% of law enforcement officers enrolled in the World Trade Center Health Registry ($N = 3,925$) reported symptoms of diagnosable post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), as compared with 39.4% of enrolled firefighters ($N = 3,232$), 47% of construction and engineering workers ($N = 4,498$) and 50.8% of civilian volunteers ($N = 4,263$). Perrin et al. (2007) concluded that occupational training helps protect against psychological distress. However, they also hypothesized that 1) police officers were more likely than other first responders to underreport symptoms of distress based on fears of organizational backlash and consequence, and 2) police officers may constitute a more psychologically resilient workforce in general, due to rigorous screening and selection procedures both pre-employment and during training.

Critical incident training. Out of increased sensitivity for the systemic impact of critical incident exposure on officer well-being, family and interpersonal wellness, and police-community relationships, a variety of critical incident training programs are available to police departments nationwide. Trainings range in length and topic. Seminars may focus on first responder mental health, de-escalation and use-of-force practices, pre-incident planning, or critiquing agency responsiveness during a recent critical event (Digliani, 2012; Fraternal Order of Police, 2016; Romo, 2012). A department could choose a four-hour workshop on officer-involved shootings or a multi-day certification course in critical incident stress debriefing including peer-to-peer crisis counseling/intervention techniques, for example (Fraternal Order of Police, 2019). Increasingly, the impact of first-responder stress on home-based functioning and

family dynamics are being included in these workshops (International Critical Incident Stress Foundation, n.d.).

The Work-Family Interface

Work-life and family-life have long been conceptualized as interdependent domains that can exert both a positive and negative influence on each other (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985; Grzywacz, Almeida & McDonald, 2002; Grzywacz & Marks, 2000; Pleck, 1977; Rogers & May, 2003; Voydanoff, 1993; Voydanoff, 2005). In some situations, roles and responsibilities in the home affect the way a person feels about or executes roles and responsibilities in the workplace. In other instances, workplace demands affect the way a person pursues/completes tasks and roles in the home. This intersection between work and family characteristics is referred to by social scientists as, "the work-family interface."

Work-family themes span North American history. They are evident in gender roles, political movements, and socio-cultural climate. Work and family matters are heavily intertwined in the development of the social sciences and the field of family therapy (Barnett, 1996; Perry-Jenkins & Wadsworth, 2017). They have long been a topic of interest in law enforcement research (Beehr, et al., 1995; Kirschman et al., 2013; Maynard & Maynard, 1982; Miller, 2007) and will provide the vocabulary for understanding how the stresses of the job can spill into an officer's romantic relationship. Central concepts include role strain, role conflict, role balance, work-family fit, and home- and work-based resources and demands.

This section of the literature review will describe the current economic conditions and work-family challenges facing the average U.S. worker. Work-family research developments and trends will be presented, along with core concepts in modern work-family research. Key findings relative to the work-family interface of the general population of American workers will

be included. These same concepts will later be applied to the population of interest: North American municipal police officers and their romantic partners.

Work and Family in the 21st Century United States

In the modern United States, globalization, technology, and progressive reform are challenging the norms of the day-to-day lives of many Americans. Entire industries, communities, and families are having to adapt to rapidly changing cultural and interpersonal dynamics. While this social shift presents an opportunity for personal and national growth, it also threatens the safety of what is known and controllable for many Americans (Cantle, 2013).

Ultimately, the face of the 21st-century American family and worker is changing (Brubaker & Kimberly, 1993; Cantle, 2013). Mixed race, single, and same-gender families are increasingly common in the Western world (Brubaker & Kimberly, 1993; Cantle, 2013). Dual-earning households are nearing 50% (United States Department of Labor, 2017), and reproductive rights and technology have made childbearing a true choice for more and more Americans.

The most recent data released by the U.S. Department of Labor (2017) shows that rates of women in the workforce are nearing that of men; 56.8% compared with 69.2%, respectively. Working mothers are now the norm. For example, in 2016, 63.9% of mothers with children under age six were also holding down paid employment outside of their home; up 25% from 1975 (United States Department of Labor, 2017). Still, women remain underrepresented in political seats and corporate leadership positions (Brown, 2017). Additionally, a recent PEW Research poll found that 42% of women are still experiencing discrimination in their place of work because of their gender (Parker & Funk, 2017).

The onset age of motherhood and the rapidly growing elderly population in the United States adds another component to the complexities facing today's North American family and worker; women in particular. To begin, in the United States, women are giving birth later in life (now closer to their early 40s than their early 20s) (Allen & Martin, 2017). Many of these women are simultaneously caring for ailing or elderly family members. The Family Caregiver Alliance (2016) estimates that among Americans who work full-time, one in six is also caring for an elderly or disabled family member or friend. Seventy percent (70%) of these individuals report experiencing work-related challenges directly related to their caregiving responsibilities (Allen & Martin, 2017).

Work-family trends and research development. In recent decades, a variety of disciplines, including psychology and sociology, gerontology, law, and occupational health, have taken up work-family studies in an attempt to better understand the relationship between work life and family life (Barnett, 1996; Eby, Casper, Lockwood, Bordeaux & Brinley, 2005; Perry-Jenkins & Wadsworth, 2017). The diversity in field and focus lends itself to the importance of work-family issues among employers and workers alike.

Scholars have been particularly curious about 1) gender, time, and the division of labor in the home, 2) maternal employment and child outcomes, 3) work-family conflict, 4) work-family policy, and 5) work-based stress and individual/family health outcomes (Bianchi & Milkie, 2010). However, the research is often laden with conceptual redundancies and ambiguous causal relationships that have undermined findings and limited their applicability (Edwards & Rothbard, 2000; Lambert, 1990). As a result, the next portion of this literature review is focused on summarizing and clarifying some of the core concepts associated with work-family research. The work-family experiences of the average American worker will be included and will lay the

groundwork for the subsequent section of this literature review, which will focus on work-family experiences specific to U.S. police officers.

Key Concepts in Work-Family Theory and Research in the Family Social Sciences

  Spillover. In work-family research, the term "interface" is often used synonymously with "spillover." Both indicate the crossing-over of affects, values, skills, or behaviors from one domain to another; in this case, that of work and that of family (Edwards & Rothbard, 2000; Greenhaus & Allen, 2011; Grzywacz & Marks, 2000; Perry-Jenkins, 2017). Spillover is often associated with negative outcomes, including stress and interpersonal conflict (Goode, 1960; Grzywacz & Marks, 2000; Jones & Fletcher, 1993; Rook, Dooley & Catalano, 1991; Westman & Etzion, 1995). Recently, however, scholars have begun to research work-family spillover associated with more positive outcomes, including personal growth and interpersonal wellbeing (Edwards & Rothbard, 2000; Greenhaus & Powell, 2006; Hanson, Hammer & Colton, 2006; Marks & MacDermid, 1996; Sieber, 1974; Voydanoff, 2002).

  The most recent, thorough, and large-scale studies of the work-family interface of American workers were completed by researcher Joseph G. Grzywacz and two separate teams of researchers (Grzywacz & Marks, 2000; Grzywcz et al., 2002). Both studies analyzed data from The National Survey of Midlife Development in the United States (MIDUS) collected by The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation Research Network on Successful Midlife Development in 1995 ($N = 2,130$). However, the latter of the studies, published in 2002, also incorporated data from the daily stress diaries of 741 MIDUS participants. The results of the Grzywacz studies (2000; 2002) are unique in that through regression modeling, the researchers were able to isolate personal characteristics and contextual aspects of work and family that are directly related to spillover.

Grzywacz & Marks (2000) confirmed "four distinct dimensions" (p. 122) of the work/family interface: positive spillover from family to work, negative spillover from family to work, positive spillover from work to family, and negative spillover from work to family. For the purposes of this literature review, as the proposed study is focused solely on work-to-family spillover, family-to-work findings will be excluded from the remainder of the chapter.

Workplace characteristics and work-to-family spillover. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the greatest influence on work-to-family spillover appears to be related to workplace characteristics. For example, individuals who reported low levels of decision-latitude and low levels of perceived support at work also reported significantly more negative spillover and less positive spillover from work-to-family. High levels of workplace pressure was associated with less positive spillover form work-to-family. On the other hand, individuals who reported less pressure at work (i.e. low levels of general busyness and few demands placed on them) showed significantly less negative work-to-family spillover (Grzywacz & Marks, 2000). Additionally, participants who reported working more than 45 hours per week were found to experience more negative spillover from work to family. However, for female participants only, working fewer than 20 hours per week decreased negative spillover (Grzywacz & Marks, 2000). Finally, individuals in service jobs reported more positive spillover than individuals in sales or those in technical or administrative positions. Industry-wide, the highest levels of positive spillover from work-to-family were found among individuals working in agriculture (fishing, farming, and forestry, for example) (Grzywacz et al., 2002).

Personal and family characteristics and work-to-family spillover. With regard to the way personal and home-based dynamics can affect work-to-family spillover, Grzywacz et al. (2002) found that more positive spillover was reported among female participants, and less

negative spillover was reported among black participants. Additionally, individuals aged 55 and older reported significantly lower levels of negative spillover from work-to-family than younger individuals (Grzywacz et al., 2002). Positive spillover from work-to-family was also found among men parenting toddlers or babies (< age 5). On the other hand, for women in the study, having toddlers and babies was associated with less positive spillover from work-to-family (Grzywacz et al., 2002). Finally, less education equated with less negative spillover, and no association was found to exist between income and spillover experiences (Grzywacz et al., 2002).

Grazywacz & Marks (2000) ultimately determined that for the average American worker, work-to-family spillover was "uniquely associated" (p ≤ .01) (p. 117) with an individual's physical and mental health, life satisfaction, and overall and marital quality. The determinants of spillover have a lot to do with an individual's role responsibilities and the emotional stressors or resources available to him/her in each domain (Grazywacz & Marks, 2000).

Roles. Interwoven into spillover outcomes is the notion of *roles*. Heiss (1981) defines a role as the expectation of (as opposed to the behavior of) an individual in a given position or social category. The various roles that an individual holds at one time are referred to as his/her *role set* (Goode, 1960; Heiss, 1981). Any given role in a set can include a variety of *sub-roles,* which are determined by the function of a role in time or based on setting (Heiss, 1981). For example, in a father-son relationship, the expectations of the father are likely to differ based on if he is disciplining the child or playing with the child. Sometimes role expectations conflict. Social scientists refer to the subjective experience of conflicting role obligations as "*role strain"* (Goode, 1960).

Role strain. Role strain occurs when an individual struggles to meet all of the expectations and demands associated with a given role. Conforming fully to one aspect of a role can make participation in another aspect more difficult (Goode, 1960). For example, a teacher may struggle to be compassionate to students while also upholding course expectations. Perhaps he/she has to give a failing grade to a student who is known to have a difficult home life.

Across domains, navigating roles becomes even more complex. The terms "*role conflict*" (Kahn, Wolfe, Quinn, Snoek & Rosenthal, 1964), and "*role enhancement*" (Sieber, 1974) have been used to describe how roles in one domain either: 1) compete with roles in another for an individual's resources (i.e. time & energy), producing strain or 2) complement roles in another, promoting personal growth and optimizing performance.

Role conflict. The term "role conflict" has been used to account for the experience of conflicting role expectations across an individual's many roles (Goode, 1960). For example, a woman may struggle with the competing demands of being a mother and a student. Perhaps in order for her to complete her dissertation, she needs to spend a substantial number of hours away from her children. However, she also knows that if she gives more attention to her children, she will likely fail to complete her dissertation.

From Goode's (1960) perspective, it is nearly impossible for an individual to meet all of the role demands placed on him/her by the individuals and institutions around him/her; role conflict is inevitable for most people (Goode, 1960).

Role enhancement. Contrary to Goode's role strain theory (1960), Sieber (1974) argues in favor of a *role enhancement* hypothesis. Sieber (1974) asserts that multiple roles generally serve to enhance an individual's performance, status, or privileges within, and often across domains. For example, a promotion at work could result in a positive attitude or esteem-boost

that a woman may carry into home-based interactions with her spouse and children. Or perhaps

the birth of a child improves a teacher's ability to empathize with the parents of his students.

Sieber (1974) contends that multiple roles serve as a type of natural occurring resource for

individuals, including protecting the ego from offenses or emotional wounds that occur within a

particular domain. For example, the sting of a poor performance review at work might be

buffered by the pride an individual feels in his role as the coach of his son's baseball team.

   Role balance. For role theorists, "the individual's problem is how to make his whole role

system manageable, that is, how to allocate his energies and skills so as to reduce role strain to

some bearable proportions" (Goode, 1960, p. 485). The act of adjusting time and energy

allocations across commitments is referred to as *role balance.* The ease with which an individual

is able to achieve balance (meet both work- and home-based demands) is referred to as "fit"

(Barnett, 1996; Voydanoff, 2005).

   Work-family fit. Spillover, role balance, and role strain/conflict play an important part

in an individual's ability to achieve fit between their work life and their family life. If an

individual can easily meet their work, personal, and family goals, given existing demands, then

they have good "fit." If they are unable to do so or do so with difficulty, they do not have good

fit (Barnett, 1996).

   Ultimately, the extent of role strain, conflict or enhancement that an individual

experiences as a result of their various roles depends on a complex relationship between

personal, interpersonal, and cultural/institutional norms and expectations (Goode, 1960). Too

many demands and not enough resources lend themselves to role strain/conflict and a lack of fit.

Having enough resources to counteract demands typically eases role balance, and ultimately,

results in greater fit (Marks & MacDermid, 1996). Whether an experience/situation serves as a

demand or a resource depends on how it impacts an individual's time and energy across domains (Voydanoff, 2005).

Demands. Common workplace demands include a hectic work environment and abundant or contradictory expectations from coworkers/supervisors (Grzywacz & Marks, 2000). Inconsistent scheduling and job insecurity have also been found to affect an individual's difficulty achieving work-family fit (Voydanoff, 2005).

In the home, disagreements over finances, household tasks, and leisure time have been identified as widespread barriers to effective work-family balance (Grzywacz & Marks, 2000). Additional home-based demands include caring for young children, elderly, or ailing family members (Grzywacz & Marks, 2000; Voydanoff, 1993, 2005), along with single parenting and parenting in a blended family (Voydanoff, 1993).

Resources. The American workers in the Grzywacz & Marks (2000) study underscored the importance of decision latitude and autonomy as a job-related resource. Having a say in how job responsibilities are carried out, as well as which responsibilities are carried out was meaningful for the participants and helped buffer against stress. In other studies, paid leave has also been found to protect against role strain and contribute to fit, along with having a general sense of pride in one's career, feeling respected, and finding work to be meaningful (Voydanoff, 2005).

In the home, feeling emotionally supported and cared for by family and friends are key to buffering stress and achieving fit (Grzywacz & Marks, 2000). Having a partner that contributes to household finances has also been identified as a resource contributing to fit (Voydanoff, 2005).

Work-Family Considerations in Law Enforcement

Overall, the quality of an individual's romantic relationship is highly dependent upon his/her ability to balance work responsibilities and family roles within a mutual give-and-take; to achieve a healthy work-life balance (Rantanen, Kinnunen, Mauno & Tillemann, 2011; Voydanoff, 1993). Psychological well-being, esteem, and overall life satisfaction have been linked to an individual's ability to do so, and to the ease with which they can achieve it (Rantanen et al., 2011).

For municipal police officers, occupational demands are powerful, numerous, and often conflicting. Role strain and role conflict are common experiences (Kirschman, 2006; Morin et al., 2017). Both can take a toll on an officer's psychological functioning and negatively affect romantic relationships (Beehr et al., 1995; Borum & Philpot, 1988; Jackson & Maslach, 1982; Karaffa et al. 2015; Kirschman, 2006; Miller, 2007; Roberts & Levinson, 2001; Torres et al., 2003). The subsequent section of this literature review will explore these processes in more detail. Human ecology theory will provide the organizing framework and lens through which police work will be examined. Emphasis will be placed on the relationship between occupational pressures and known relationship outcomes for police officers and their romantic partners.

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The Ecology of Law Enforcement

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Emerging from family systems theory and rooted in home economics, theories of human ecology developed as a means to explain and understand human social organization using an ecological framework (Bubolz & Sontag, 2009). Put simply, ecology is the study of the interaction between living things and their environment (Chowdhury, 2007). Ecology is often associated with plant and animal sciences; however, this same framework is applicable to

humans and can be narrowed to focus on a family unit, a couple, or a single individual.

Contextual human developmental philosophies, including Bronfenbrenner's (1979) nested model

of child development, contributed to the conceptualization of modern human ecological

perspectives. In family and relationship studies, an ecological perspective is useful in

highlighting 1) the interplay between individual traits and the dynamics of the dyad, as well as,

2) how nature, culture, employment settings, and community impinge on individuals and the

relationships between them (Bubolz & Sontag, 2009; Huston, 2000).

Following Bronfenbrenner's (1979) nested system model of child development, modern

conceptualization of a marital ecosystem includes, from the largest and most abstract to the

smallest and least abstract: the macrosystem, the exosystem, the mesosystem, and the

microsystem. These four environments, or domains, provide helpful boundaries for beginning to

dissect the complexities of the dynamics between humans and their environment from a

relational perspective. Figure 1 provides a depiction of the human/family ecosystem, including

considerations specific to each environmental level.

Macrosystem
Natural Environment
Climate & weather events

Exosystem
Social-Political Influences
Political conditions
Occupational practices/norms/ideals

Mesosystem
Human-Built Environment
Neighborhood & community
dynamics

Microsystem
Relationship Dynamics
Communication Patterns
Individual coping behaviors
Individual personalities
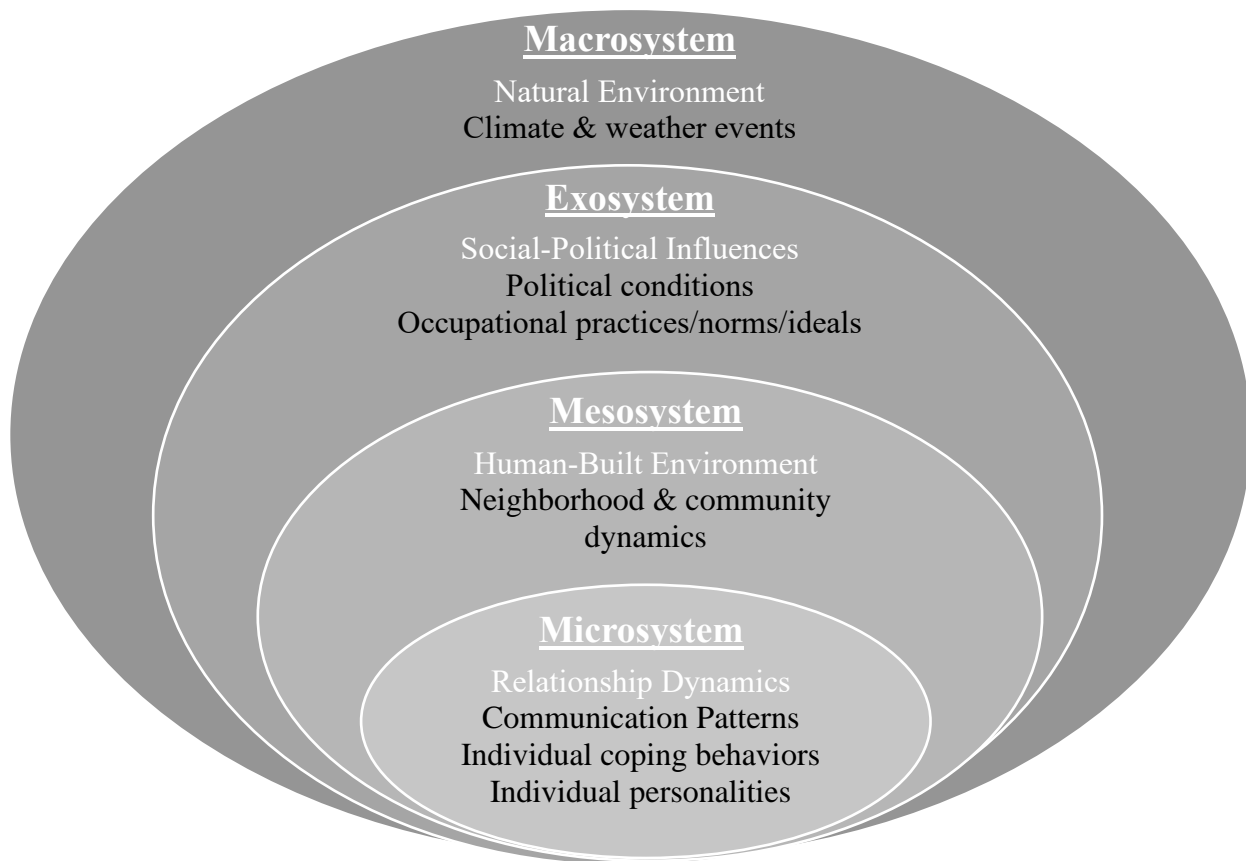
Figure 1. The law enforcement ecosystem. Adapted from "Human ecology theory" in the "Sourcebook of Family Theories and Methods" by M. M. Bubolz and M. S. Sontag, 2009.

The Macrosystem – The Natural Environment and Law Enforcement

The macrosystem of human ecology consists of natural environmental components including the climate and specific weather events (Bubolz & Sontag, 2009). Overall, the link between the natural environment and policing is not given much attention in family research. However, natural disasters are known to pose a serious threat to officer safety (Benedek, Fullerton & Ursano, 2007; Hammond & Brooks, 2001), and around-the-clock work requirements have been found to contribute to both individual health and relationship strains for officers and their romantic partners (Kirschman, 2007; Vogel, Braungardt, Meyer & Schneider, 2012). Climate change is expected to add to these stressors (Abbott, 2008; McMichael, Woodruff &

Hales, 2006; Patz, Campbell-Lendrum, Holloway & Foley, 2005; Ranson, 2014), and will likely add new challenges to relationship health for officers and their romantic partners.

The chronology of crime. Ultimately, criminals do not take vacations, and so neither do police officers (Smizinski, 2016). In the United States, the majority of police calls for service take place in the afternoons and evenings, on weekends (Fridays and Saturdays), and during the warmer months of spring and summer (May through September) (Cohn, 1996). Furthermore, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (2014) reports that the most violent crimes typically take place between 6 pm and 6 am, with peak occurrences around 10 pm. One scholar linked an increase in domestic violence calls to school closings, evening hours (after sun-down), and warm weather (Cohn, 1996). For families, these particular times: evenings, weekends, school closings, holidays, etc, tend to be particularly meaningful, as they are usually times for togetherness and tradition (for example, going on vacation, eating meals together, or getting kids ready for bed/school). It is easy to understand why officers' schedules demand heavy coverage during these times, and it is easy to understand how spouses and family members, in turn, miss out.

Shift work requirements. Shift work can have physiological consequences for the shift-assigned worker, and emotional consequences for his/her relationship. As a result of shift work requirements, the spouses and partners of law enforcement officers are often left fending for themselves in the evenings and overnight. Officers are frequently absent from family holidays and their children's school events (Kirschman, 2007; Borum & Philpot, 1993). The spouses of police officers report these absences as one of their biggest complaints about the profession (Kirschman, 2007; Borum & Philpot, 1993).

Health outcomes. A comprehensive review of medical research on the physiological and psychological implications of shift work reveals a connection between shift work and cardiovascular disease, anxiety, depression, gastrointestinal disorders, and even cancer (Vogel et al., 2012). Shift workers experience problems stemming from sleep deprivation and desynchronized circadian rhythms (Vogel et al., 2012). In nurses, shift work has been found to contribute significantly to obsessive-compulsive tendencies, interpersonal sensitivities, anxiety and paranoia (Vogel et al., 2012). A similar study was not found to have been replicated with law enforcement officers, but the researcher asserts that, in general, "there is little dispute that shift work, mostly night work, interferes with physical, mental and social well-being" (Vogel et al., 2012, p. 1128).

Relationship outcomes. Shift work has been consistently found to negatively impact marital quality for couples where at least one member of the dyad is working a job with a non-standard schedule (Grosswald, 2004; Presser, 2000; White & Keith, 1990). One study found that holding other variables constant, shift work directly increases the likelihood that a couple will divorce by 36% (White & Keith, 1990).

 A 1980s longitudinal telephone survey of over 1,500 ($N = 1,668$) married men and women assessed the impact of shift work across seven marital domains: marital happiness, marital interaction, marital disagreement, marital problems, sexual problems, child-related problems, and divorce. Gender, race, age, education, family income, spouse's employment, years married, and number of children served as control variables (White & Keith, 1990). Ordinary least squares regression analysis determined that over the three-year period under investigation (1980-1983), shift work was "associated with significantly lower marital happiness and significantly higher sexual problems" among participants (White & Keith, 1990, p. 457).

Similar findings resulted from a logistic regression analysis of 3,476 married couples, drawn from the National Survey of Families and Household data (1997-1988; 1992-1994). The study revealed that the combination of shift work and parenting significantly impacted divorce rates among participants. Rotating shifts were determined to cause the most significant distress (Presser, 2000).

Though shift work can be a strain for the worker, their non-shift working family members are the ones left to function in the traditional world without them; in police relationships, this is often the case. Many families take to planning their special events around the schedule of their officer loved-one (Borum & Philpot, 1993). Law enforcement scholars recommend pets and home security systems for law enforcement spouses who are concerned about their own safety while their spouse is at work (Kirschman, 2007). They encourage partners and spouses to get together with other police spouses on holidays or during evening and weekend shifts to reduce feelings of loneliness and to offer/obtain mutual support (Kirschman, 2007).

Crime and climate change. Climate change is adding a unique component to law enforcement research and planning, particularly as it relates to global security concerns and local police practices. For example, security experts predict that global climate change will challenge law enforcement agencies in unprecedented ways, including testing cultural competencies and an increase in criminal activity across the board (Abbott, 2008; McMichael et al., 2006; Patz et al., 2005; Ranson, 2014).

Ranson (2014) examined U.S. crime and weather data from 1960 to 2009 for nearly 3,000 counties in the United States ($N = 2,972$). Monthly reports from 17,000 law enforcement agencies and historical weather data from 75,000 weather stations world-wide were merged to "generate a dataset with 1.46 million unique county-by-year-by-month observations" (Ranson,

2014, p.1). Incorporating crime and weather regression coefficients with a climate model created by the U.S. National Center for Atmospheric Research, Ranson (2014) estimates that global warming could result in an additional 393 murders and 4,500 robberies annually; 3.6% and 1.6% increases, respectively. Assuming these estimates are even close to actual numbers, the impact on local police forces would be staggering, affecting everything from budgets and staffing to policies and tactics.

Furthermore, the Security Council estimates that by the year 2050, one billion people will find themselves displaced by climate- and weather-related catastrophes. The United States anticipates assuming responsibility for an estimated 200 million refugees (Abbott, 2008). Chris Abbott, Program Coordinator at the Oxford Research Group, explains that for law enforcement officers, climate change will result in "a greater need for a wide range of interpreters, sensitive community liaison programs, and better cooperation between the police and various embassies and consulates" (Abbott, 2008, p. 6). Abbott (2008) anticipates that law enforcement should be prepared to deal with an associated backlash as well. He states, "there will undoubtedly be resistance to some of the very measures that will be necessary to protect and provide for people" (p. 4).

Natural disasters. From an occupational standpoint, the immediate implications of weather for law enforcement seems clear: weather influences crime rates and crime rates influence police activity. However, with regard to natural disasters in particular, the implications for officers and their romantic partners begins long before a storm hits, and often extends long after the storm has passed.

During times of environmental crises, law enforcement officers and other first responders have to put their own needs and the needs of their families on hold in order to care for others. In

short, when others are running away from disasters, they are running toward them. Accordingly, officers not only shoulder the stress as first responders to disaster events, but they must also work to cope with mounting stress and concern about their families of procreation and origin, too. In addition, many officers have little to no opportunity to decompress or debrief from their experiences of trauma prior to returning home to anxiously-awaiting family members. After a natural disaster, officers and their families alike are typically exhausted and overwhelmed by what they have seen and by what they have been forced to cope with on their own. This perfect storm of warring priorities may comprise officers' safety and family dynamics.

     Officer responsibilities. Even before a natural disaster hits, police agencies are already on the move. For example, in 2012, in preparation for Hurricane Sandy, local and auxiliary officers were placed on call days before the storm even hit. Officers were mandated to 12-hour shifts prior to the storm. They were advised to bring additional clothing, hygiene items and phone chargers with them, as they were expected to sleep at headquarters for the duration of the storm (City of Summit Office of Emergency Management, 2012).

     During a disaster, police officers assume a multitude of traditional and non-traditional roles and responsibilities. Their presence helps protect the community against looting and other crimes, but officers also aide in evacuation efforts, provide life-saving interventions, and take part in displacement support services, including delivering food, blankets or water to citizens in need (Herron, 2015; Hylton, 2013). According to the Summit, New Jersey Office of Emergency Management, during and after Hurricane Sandy, Summit police officers logged 993 hours of overtime and responded to 1,316 service calls over a 15-day stretch before and after the storm. Official documents place 181 of the service calls during the height of the storm (City of Summit Office of Emergency Management, 2012).

After the natural disaster has subsided, emotional and mental turmoil often lingers for police officers and other first responders, placing those who just got done helping others potentially in need of help themselves (Benedek et al., 2007; Castellano, 2013). For example, in New Orleans in 2005, after Hurricane Katrina, 45% of 912 officers who took part in response efforts reported symptoms of depression or post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) (Castellano, 2013). Complicating support efforts is that post-disaster, mental health and physical health outreach is generally prioritized based on an individual's or groups' proximity to the devastating effects of the event. Police and other first responders are considered "third-level survivors" (Cohen, 2002, p. 149) along with clergy and medical/nursing staff (Cohen, 2002). Primary survivors (individuals with direct/maximum exposure to a disaster event) and secondary survivors (close relatives of primary victims) generally receive the most post-disaster support (Cohen, 2002).

Partner health and safety implications. Most couples and families face natural disasters together as a unit. For the spouses and families of police officers, this is not the case. Natural disasters are stressful for those responding, but they can be just as overwhelming for those left behind and left fending for themselves (Krischman, 2007). To begin with, an officer's partner and family will unquestionably worry about his/her safety before and during a disaster event. They may go for hours or days at a time without communication (Kirschman, 2007). An officer's partner or spouse will be left to turn to friends or other family for support and, if necessary, their own evacuation. If there are children in the family, spouses and partners will carry these added responsibilities on their own. Single-parenting in a two-parent household is difficult enough on an uneventful day, but much more so during a disaster.

For law enforcement spouses, the challenges do not end when the disaster is over. Post-disaster, the spouse of law enforcement officers often report feeling underappreciated and unacknowledged for their own stress and efforts during the disaster (Kirschman, 2007). Furthermore, in addition to having to manage their own emotions, they must also consider the trauma that their law enforcement spouse has endured (Kirschman, 2007).

In her book, *I Love a Cop,* Psychologist and law enforcement spouse Ellen Kirschman (2007) explains that for many couples, connecting and communicating can be a challenge once an officer returns home from a disaster event. She states that based on the length of the deployment, it is not uncommon for couples to report feeling awkward or distant. In addition, media attention and community honors, like award/recognition ceremonies, sometimes leave intimate partners left to hear details of the officer's disaster experiences from news interviews, as opposed to during personal communication (Kirschman, 2007). The spouses and romantic partners of police officers can get lost in the first responder limelight.

Kirschman (2007), encourages police spouses and partners to "be patient" (p. 27) and keep their expectations realistic after a crisis (Kirschman, 2007). She suggests giving the officer time to rest and regroup. She says, "avoid scheduling too many things … your officer needs rest" (Kirschman, 2007, p. 27).

In sum, though at first glance natural weather events may seem distant from the overall wellbeing of the romantic relationships of law enforcement officers, the trickle-down effect resulting from shift work requirements and the possibility of trauma experiences is real and significant. The environmental pressures placed on an officer from within the macrosystem directly affect work hours, scheduling, and health, and can lead to role strain, role conflict, and ultimately spill over negatively into family life and relationship dynamics. The microsystem of

law enforcement takes a toll on the mental and emotional health of officers and romantic partners alike.

The Exosystem – Society, Culture and Law Enforcement

The exosystem of a human ecology encompasses the socio-cultural aspects of an individual's or couple's world. Governmental policies, group norms, and cultural values are included within (Bubolz & Sontag, 2009). For police officers, the country's political agendas, inter-and intra-agency practices and ideals, and the overarching culture of the police profession are of particular relevance.

The politics of U.S. policing. It is nearly impossible to conceptualize U.S. law enforcement without considering politics. From the attainment and allocation of departmental funds to punitive standards, law enforcement practices are highly influenced by (and in some cases, influential of) the broader political climate (Bayley, 1971; Lyons, 2002; Reynolds, 2014; Stucky, 2005; Wozniak, 2016). In the United States, police officers bear the responsibility of enforcing the laws that have been enacted by legislators. However, at times budgets do not support tactics, or tactics do not align with the theoretical underpinnings of the profession (Kelling & Moore, 1989). At other times, citizens demand reform in the form of social unrest, forcing the re-examination of procedures, funds, or policies (Cobb; 2016; Rickford, 2016; Von Drehle et al., 2015; Weitzer. 2015). Surrounding these challenges is a watchful, and often critical public (Bayley, 1971; Hays, 1994; Karaffa et al., 2015; Kirschman, 2007). Within these responsibilities is an organization fueled by a rigid hierarchical structure, often with minimal opportunities for advancement; a culture of machoism; and extensive paperwork requirements (Borum & Philpot, 1993; Finn & Tomz, 1996; Karaffa et al., 2015; Paoline, 2003; Stoughton, 2015; Torres et al., 2003). Police scholar Ellen Kirschman (2007) explains that officers face:

a terrible dilemma of being simultaneously powerful and powerless: powerful because their every action has potentially critical consequences; powerless because they are constantly scrutinized, supervised, and reined in by their own department and by the community in ways that can be irritating, humiliating, and sometimes irrelevant to their actual job performance (p. 67).

Occupational Socialization. Police scholars have found that officers tend to respond to the pressures of their occupational and organizational demands by aligning their attitudes and behaviors with the model of policing most deeply rooted in the profession's history and identity: fighting crime (as opposed to social service) (Stoughton, 2015). The problem with this is two-fold: 1) the tendency for some officers to assume a crime-fighting mentality can inadvertently support the traditional notion of "the aggressive street cop," further straining police-community relationships and affirming for some depictions of police as cynical and pessimistic elitists who legitimize violence (Paoline, 2003,p.203; Stoughton, 2015; Workman-Stark, 2017), and 2) a crime-fighter mentality that aligns with other potentially destructive personality characteristics, including social isolation and hypervigilance (Gilmartin, 2002; Paoline, 2003; Stoughton, 2015).

Social isolation, secrecy, and solidarity. Police scholars explain that the act of putting on a police uniform immediately separates police officers from the public (Borum & Philpot, 1993; Hays, 1994; Havassay, 1994; Karaffa et al., 2015; Scriver & Reese, 1994); the prescription of authority only serves to further this divide (Borum & Philpot, 1993; Paoline, 2003; Stoughton, 2015). Disconnection from the public on a professional level often leads to disconnection from the public on a personal level. For example, most officers tend to socialize primarily with other officers. Togetherness on the job and togetherness off the job enhances their allegiance to each other and strengthens the alignment of their attitudes and values (Borum & Philpot, 1993; Karaffa et al., 2015; Paoline, 2003; Stoughton, 2015; Torres et al., 2003).

Included in the notion of police solidarity is an assumed doctrine of secrecy to protect group members from exposure of wrong-doing. This "blue wall of silence" (Paoline, 2003, p. 200), as it is referred to in some police literature, is believed to be one of the main challenges to successful police reform. However, loyalty among officers has also been considered a positive aspect of police culture; one that unites the law enforcement community in a shared understanding of mission, stress, and sacrifice (Borum & Philpot, 1993; Paoline, 2003; Rose & Unnithan, 2015).

In addition to being very private, police officers tend to be highly suspicious of the public, but also of new recruits (Paoline, 2003; Workman-Stark, 2017). New members of a police force represent a threat to established group cohesion (Paoline, 2003). Belonging is not automatic for every officer. An officer's placement within the subculture of his/her department can affect perceptions of organizational and occupational stress.

Rose and Unnithan (2015) analyzed data from a 1995 study of 1,632 officers from 51 agencies spread across three contrasting regions of the United States: Minnesota, Texas, and New York. Ordinary least squares (OLS) regression analysis determined that individuals who perceived the professional subculture of their department to be a group that they were not a part of (outgroup status) also reported significantly higher occupational stress, while officers who reported feeling included in the professional subculture (ingroup status) reported significantly lower stress. Outgroup status was not found to correlate with gender, marital status, or education (Rose & Unnithan, 2015).

While solidarity and social isolation is often perceived as a negative trait, the study highlights the usefulness of occupational subculture as a buffer against burnout. The authors

suggest that their findings support the use of mentoring programs as a way to buttress inclusivity and reduce officer stress (Rose & Unnithan, 2015).

Hypervigilance. Hypervigilance is a unique outcome of law enforcement training and socialization that can result in biological changes for an officer and social implications for their relationships. From the first days of training, officers are pounded with the belief that the world is a hostile place that is "quite literally, gunning for them" (Stoughton, 2015, p. 227), and that they run the risk of injury or death nearly every day while on the job (Dunphy, 2015; T. Shaw, 2015; Stoughton, 2015). Officers are trained to "maintain the edge" (Paoline, 2003, p. 202). This includes being encouraged to carry their weapon off duty and to be on the constant lookout for cues that could indicate danger, including stimuli that the average citizen might perceive as mundane (Gilmartin, 1986, 2002; Smith. 2008).

Police psychologist Dr. Kevin Gilmartin (1986, 2002), has written extensively about the physiological causes and effects of hypervigilance in law enforcement. Gilmartin (1986) refers to hypervigilance as a "pseudo-paranoia" (p. 445) and a "disease of adaptation" (p.443), that while not uncomfortable for an officer in the moment, can have devastating effects on his/her home life. Gilmartin explains that over time, the centers in an officer's brain that regulate alertness become habitually overactive, (Gilmartin, 2002). He describes the consequence as a "sympathetic/parasympathetic pendulum," (p. 444) in which mental overexertion at work leads to detached lethargy in the home, as the body and brain, sensing safety, revitalize and relax, often to an extreme (Gilmartin, 1986). Situational isolation, disengagement, and procrastination are just a few behavioral consequences of hypervigilance that tend to cause interpersonal distress for an officer and his/her romantic partner (Gilmartin, 2002).

Relationship implications. In the essay, "Cultural Hurdles to Healthy Police Families",

Bradstreet (1994) affirms that many officers unconsciously adopt professional traditions and

norms as part of their personalities, and that many of these norms "conflict with the principles of

healthy relationships and healthy families" (Bradstreet, 1994, p. 32). For example, policing

responsibilities typically call for an authoritative style of communication and emotional

detachment, skills that are not easy to turn off at home (Kirschman et al., 2013; Miller, 2007).

Emotion-avoidant coping mechanisms and fatigue-induced irritability or aggressiveness have

been found to strain the intimate relationships of law enforcement officers (Maynard & Maynard,

1982). Kirschman (2007) explains further:

> From the beginning, cops are taught to maintain an occupational persona: a 'public face'
> that makes them always appear to be in control, on top of things, knowledgeable and
> unafraid …They rarely show sadness, fear, or uncertainty in front of each other because
> they dread losing support and respect. … officers are rewarded for maintaining
> emotional distance in the performance of their duties and punished for doing so in their
> personal relationships, where this same emotional control causes them to hurt and
> alienate those they love and need (p. 29-30).

Taking a back seat to the profession. Maynard and Maynard (1982) conducted a job-

stress impact analysis on spouses of midwestern law enforcement officers ($N = 42$). The

researchers were surprised to find that shift rotations, schedule changes, and perceptions of

politically-influenced promotional practices were reported as the most significant stressors

among participants. Like Zhao et al. (2002), they had expected safety concerns would be of

primary concern. Instead, the spouses in the study reported some of the greatest difficulty in

dealing with the bureaucracy and culture of policing (Maynard & Maynard, 1982).

Of the 42 participants, over half (54.8%) reported that their law enforcement partner is

"always psychologically/emotionally with the job" (p.304) and that the job places strain on the

family by pulling the officer away (Maynard & Maynard, 1982). Eighty-one percent (81%) of

participating spouses reported feeling it was "necessary to make personal sacrifices" (p. 304) because of their partner's job as a police officer, including 52.4% who reported that their own job opportunities or personal plans were limited due to their spouse's career obligations (Maynard & Maynard, 1982). Only 9.5% of participating law enforcement spouses reported believing that the police department "understands and supports families" (p. 304). Furthermore, 57.1% of spouses agreed that the department does not think marriage or families are important, and 54.8% felt that their department actually encourages officers to be single or divorced (Maynard & Maynard,1982). Seventy-four percent (74%) of the participating wives indicated that they and their husbands disagree over whether family life and marriage are more important than his police career (Maynard & Maynard, 1982).

Similar themes were realized by Karaffa et al. (2015), in their mixed-methods analysis of officer stress and marital challenges. Eighty-two (82) officers and 89 spouses in the Dallas/Fort Worth area completed a needs assessment. T-test and chi-square analyses affirmed career-necessitating personality factors as primary stressors for participating couples. Specifically, after financial stress (36.0%), participants equally associated a lack of emotional intimacy (23.6%) and poor communication (23.6%) with responsibility for the majority of the conflict in their marriages. Qualitative data indicated that participants attributed problems in these areas directly to their spouse's employment as a police officer (Karaffa et al.)

Nearly 50 percent (49.5%) of participating spouses reported that their law enforcement partner gave most of his/her energy to the police profession ($M = 3.36$, $SD = 1.15$), and that unmet family needs (45%), including missed family events and holidays, caused stress for the entire family ($M = 45.0$, $SD = 1.09$) (Karaffa et al., 2015). One spouse stated, "our families are always trying to accommodate his schedule… [I] feel guilty that others have to be flexible for it,

but we can't be flexible for them" (p. 125). Another spouse compared herself to a single parent, "trying to get the children to all the events they are involved in" (p. 125). An officer explained that the lack of appreciation and awareness departmental administration appeared to have regarding this issue added to his job stress and decreased his job satisfaction (Karaffa et al., 2015).

Additionally, although a large majority of spouses (77.5%) reported that they openly shared intimate thoughts and feelings with their law enforcement partner ($M = 4.08$, $SD = 1.11$), nearly one-third of participants (30.3%) stated that their spouse was, at times, "closed off" (p.124) from emotional connection ($M = 2.28$, $SD = 1.40$). One participant stated, "it's not difficult to be married to a police officer, it's difficult being married to a person with the characteristics that make a good officer, such as being controlling, and the inability to show emotion and share their feelings" (Karaffa et al., 2015, p. 126).

The bleeding of police work into personality and home life was dually noted by officers and spouses in the study. One officer described how his job "robbed him of compassion and the ability to feel emotion" (Karaffa et al., 2015; p.126). The spouse of an officer was noted to have said that her husband was "changed" by the job, stating, "he is not as joyful and carefree as he once was… he trusts no one" (Karaffa et al., p,126).

Nearly one-third of the spouses (32.7%) also reported feeling stressed by the negative attitudes and rude treatment they have received from the public because of their spouse's career in law enforcement ($M = 3.19$, $SD = 1.05$). One spouse commented on the difficulty she has been having "seeing the erosion of respect for police officers that has occurred over time" (Karaffa et al., 2015, p.126). This same respondent felt her husband was a target for disgruntled citizens,

noting that his squad car had once been vandalized while it was parked in front of their house (Karaffa et al., 2015).

    Cohort support. A quick Google search of the phrase "police family" or "police wife" reveals a barrage of internet memes, image macros, and webpages dedicated to supporting and encouraging the families and spouses of police officers. Communal recognition and backing are evident. For example, hundreds of Facebook (2019) groups exist specific to police wives and thousands of motivational images related to "police wife life" can be found on the website, Pinterest (2019). Furthermore, in 2005, the not-for-profit, National Police Wives Association (NPWA) was established to provide emotional support and resources to the spouses of law enforcement officers and their families (National Police Wives Association, n.d.). The NPWA promotes itself as "a sisterhood bound by the badge." Its website explains, "we are unique women, in a unique situation, and are doing something positive with it!" (National Police Wives Association, n.d).

The Mesosystem – Neighborhoods, Community and Law Enforcement

    In human ecology theory, the mesosystem consists of all aspects of the human-built environment, including the land allocations that delineate neighborhoods and communities from each other. Man-made boundaries influence community characteristics and arguably, police tactics (Bubolz & Sontag, 2009; Smith, Visher & Davidson, 1984; Varano, Schafer, Cancino & Swatt, 2009). However, for law enforcement officers, the majority of experiences within the mesosystem flow almost directly from the political and occupational circumstances of the exosystem. For example, the police are frequently entangled in some of the country's most important and highly publicized social and political movements (Lyons, 2002; Felker-Kantor, 2017). Protests and other politically-charged events play out on local streets and in local homes,

and the public is not always shy about sharing their opinions with their local officers.

Furthermore, some departments still impose residency requirements on their officers (Eligon &

Nolan, 2016; Le, 1993; Murphy & Worrall, 1999). Officers typically oppose residency

requirements based on freedom of travel rights, housing costs, and safety concerns, while

citizens argue that residency requirements promote officers' empathy for and investment in the

communities that they serve (Eligon & Nolan, 2016).

      Neighborhood characteristics, crime and police tactics. It seems that for law

enforcement, the relationship between officers and the communities they patrol is reciprocal in

nature: police practices are often shaped by the ecological context of an officer's assignment or

given beat (Sobol, 2010), and at the same time police have the potential to empower/disempower

neighborhoods and entire communities through just or unjust practices (Kelling & Moore, 1989;

Silver & Miller, 2004). Ultimately though, police have a large amount of discretion in the way

that they conduct themselves on duty, including the decision to interact with citizens at all as

well as in their ultimate approach to the interaction (Smith et al., 1984; Varano et al., 2009).

Researchers have long called into the question the equity of police decision-making (Garner,

Maxwell & Heraux, 2002; Ingram, 2007; Son, Davis & Rome, 1998). Curious scholars have

found that neighborhood characteristics, including racial demographics and resident

socioeconomic status, influence the way that police carry out their business, as well as the

attitude that they have in doing so (Smith et al.; Sobol, 2010; Sun, Payne & Wu, 2008; Terrill &

Reisig, 2003; Varano et al., 2009).

    Hotspot policing. Crime is not evenly distributed within or among communities.

Criminal patterns affect where and how officers carry out their work. Nationwide, over half of

all crimes are committed in small areas with significant clusters of crime, known as 'hotspots.'

Proponents of hotspot policing argue that the features of a given neighborhood make certain types of crime more or less likely, justifying a stronger or weaker police presence (Braga, 2005). For example, the areas around bars, churches, and apartment complexes tend to have higher incidences of criminal behavior (Braga, 2005). Opponents of hotspot policing proclaim that the bias inherent within it leads to unfair and abusive practices (Weisburd, 2016). Police work is rarely without controversy.

   Use of force trends. In the past 20 years, it has become clear that males, minorities, and low-income residents are more likely to be interrogated, searched, handcuffed, and arrested than those who are white, female, or part of an upper socio-economic class (Sun et al., 2008). Police have also been found to exert significantly more force in socially disadvantaged neighborhoods as compared to high-income areas (Sun et al., 2008). However, some have argued that police use-of-force decisions stem from an officer's perception of danger, or from the culture of the neighborhoods under patrol, as opposed to any personal characteristics of the perpetrator (Terrill & Reisig, 2003). It has been suggested that in some situations, "officers may simply be more likely to resort to use of force because this is the manner in which conflict is resolved in these types of neighborhoods…the use of force may be seen as an acceptable way of doing business" (Terrill & Reisig, 2003, p. 308).

   Public confidence in the police. As previously stated, the current dominant philosophy of American policing is known as "community policing." Aimed at making police more accessible and more in-tune with the neighborhoods they serve, community policing models aspire to decrease tension between police officers and community members, improve the quality of services that police provide to citizens, increase police accountability, and improve officer morale (Goldstein, 1987). Police are encouraged to get to know the individuals in the

neighborhoods they patrol in order to break down psychological barriers and to identify needs

specific to their assigned beats (Goldstein, 1987).

In support of the community policing philosophy, Ren, Cao, Lovrich and Gaffney (2004)

found that voluntary contact with the police increased citizens' positive perceptions of the police

and overall confidence in the police. In their Midwestern sample ($N = 838$), participants

revealed that even in high-crime areas, officers could restore order and positively impact public

confidence in the police by "participating in local gathers and by facilitating such gatherings"

(Ren et al., 2004, p. 62).

Similar findings emerged from Silver & Miller (2004), who analyzed data from the 1995

Community Survey of the Project on Human Development in Chicago Neighborhoods (PHDCN)

($N = 2,782$). In their search for factors that mediate informal social control and neighborhood

characteristics, the researchers discovered that police relationships made a significant difference

in citizens' willingness to intervene in youth misbehaviors in the community. Ultimately,

residents were more willing to protect their neighborhoods when they felt positive connections to

and communication with their local police force, even when their underlying attitudes towards

police were cynical in nature (Silver & Miller, 2004).

Murphy & Worrall (1999) note that confidence in the police is also strongly related to the

demographic makeup of the individuals and families in a given neighborhood. Wealth and race

appear to play a key role in how individuals perceive the police. For example, individuals

residing in households with an average income between $30,000 to $60,000 held the most

confidence in the police with relation to crime prevention, while households with incomes of

$60,000 or more reported the least amount of confidence in this area. African-American

participants and individuals with prior police contact reported lacking confidence in the ability of

the police to protect them. African-Americans also reported significantly less confidence in the ability of the police to solve crimes (Murphy & Worrall, 1999).

Personal and family safety. Although the country's criminal justice system includes prosecutors, courts, and corrections, in the eyes of the public the police tend to be the most visible and thus are often held the most publicly accountable (U.S. Department of Justice, n.d.). Kirschman (2007) asserts that "police officers are treated like public property" (p. 21). She notes that the insular nature of their work and social lives often leaves their families and friends to "bear the brunt of listening to negative opinions about cops, or to parry questions about the latest police scandal" (Kirschman, 2007, p. 21). Bayley (1971) states: "it is increasingly difficult to approach [the police] without having, or being required to have, a point of view about their use (p. 110).

Police often find themselves at the center of social and political controversies; sometimes through intentional alignments with special interest groups, other times just by doing their jobs (Lyons, 2002; Reynolds, 2014; Stucky, 2005). It is not uncommon for police spouses and loved ones to find themselves triangulated into public complaints or hostility (Kirschman, 2007). For example, in 2016 a North Dakota news station reported that some Dakota Access Pipeline protestors had taken to social media to publish the home addresses of some of the officers patrolling the protest sites. The report detailed how the incident struck fear in the families of law enforcement officers in the area. A local Sheriff called the attacks "terrorizing" for himself and his family. To deter additional problems, one highway patrol lieutenant ordered his officers not to wear their name tags while on pipeline duty (Valley News Live, 2016).

The Microsystem – Romantic Relationships, Family Life and Law Enforcement

The microsystem is the focal point of an officer's romantic relationships. Relevant

considerations related to officer identity and family life include physical-biological, and

psychological-social components (Bubolz & Sontag, 2009). For a police officer, the

microsystem is the trickle-down point for all of the stressors placed on an officer and his/her

romantic partner by the macro-, exo-, and meso-systems affiliated with a career in law

enforcement. Beginning with the way that stress is managed by the officer and extending into

the way that his/her spouse responds, microsystemic considerations include everything from

communication and emotional attunement, to suicide and divorce potential.

Coping with stress. A PsychTests online database search (2018) reveals 2,519 scales or

inventories related to "coping." A review of the measures indicates that coping is not a

homogeneous concept. The majority of coping literature related to law enforcement focuses on

coping as a reaction to stressful work conditions (Beehr et al., 1995; Maynard & Maynard, 1982;

Patterson, 2003). Police scholars have determined that the coping strategies employed by

officers and their spouses can have a profound impact on the couple's personal and interpersonal

wellbeing (Beehr et al., 1995; Maynard & Maynard, 1982; Patterson, 2003).

A 2003 study of police officers ($N = 233$) in a mid-sized northeastern police department

in the United States assessed the relationship between coping styles and psychological distress.

Participants were asked about stressful work events, stressful life events, symptoms of

psychological distress, and coping methods (Patterson, 2003). A hierarchical regression analysis

determined that, overall, coping style did not have a direct or significant positive or negative

effect on participating officers' psychological well-being. However, in general, emotion-focused

coping (attempts to regulate emotional responses through sleeping, positive thinking, or

avoidance, for example) was found to reduce the negative effects of distressing life events but did little to impact feelings associated with distressing work events (Patterson, 2003). On the other hand, social support (ex: sharing feelings with someone) was found to mitigate the negative effects of stressful work events but did not impact distress resulting from life events. Problem-focused coping (attempting to solve problems: i.e. making a plan of action and following through) was found to have a reverse-buffering effect on workplace distress, meaning that when an officer focused on finding solutions to work-based stressors, he/she ended up actually increasing overall stress. The researchers theorized that for police officers who report the majority of their workplace stress results from organizational and administrative oversight, problem-focused coping does little to solve or mitigate distress because solutions to these problems are generally out of patrol officers' hands (Patterson, 2003).

A more recent study considers how the coping methods of officers and their spouses impact personal wellbeing as well as relational dynamics. A stratified sample of married officers from two departments in the Eastern United States ($N = 725$) and their spouses ($N = 479$) were surveyed to assess for preference of coping mechanisms based on hypothetical vignettes of stressful work- and./or home-based situations (Beehr et al., 1995). Coping styles were divided into four categories for the purpose of data analysis: religiosity (relying on God to get through, prayer, or meditation), problem-focused (making a plan of action or trying to work out problems), emotion-focused (looking for the silver lining or rethinking problems), and rugged individualism (standing your ground and making your voice heard). Variables associated with strain were also considered, including suicidal thoughts, alcohol use, divorce potential, emotional exhaustion, and somatic complaints (Beehr et al., 1995).

The researchers examined both the personal and interpersonal impact of coping choices. Across the board, emotion-focused coping strategies were found to be consistently helpful for reducing the personal strains felt by both officers and their spouses. On the other hand, for officers in particular, a rugged individualistic style of coping was found to significantly increase strains, including drinking behaviors, emotional exhaustion, and depersonalization (feeling disconnected/detached from one's body/experiences/thoughts) (Beehr et al., 1995).

Significant findings emerged with regard to the way officers and their partners respond to each other's style of coping. For example, among officers, divorce potential was negatively correlated with their spouse's use of problem-focused and emotion-focused coping strategies. For spouses, strain variables were reduced and satisfaction variables were increased when their officer partner reported using problem-focused, emotion-focused, or religiosity as coping methods (Beehr et al., 1995). Across the board, rugged individualism, the coping method most closely related to stereotypical police attributes, was not effective in decreasing stress for officers. In fact, rugged individualism related positively to strains for both officers and their spouses. The researchers considered going so far as to label rugged individualism as a "harming coping mechanism" (Beehr et al., 1995, p.19).

A strength of the study lies in the researchers' decision to incorporate stress language found in law enforcement literature into the vignettes. The researchers also took into account the intentionality of coping, as described in the literature, when considering the validity of their coping measure. That is, an individual's coping methods are believed to be deliberate (as opposed to impulsive) in nature, making the hypothetical and self-reported response to stress appropriate for use in the study (Beehr et al, 1995). An additional area of strength and diligence lies in the decision to include spouses in the research, as existing studies on law enforcement

coping skills commonly exclude relational considerations (Anshel, 2000; Hart, Wearing &

Headey, 1995; Patterson, 2003).

     Spousal reliance on self. A seminal study on police occupational demands and the

coping strategies of officers and their spouses demonstrates that despite officers' attempts at

focusing on their families, their spouses remain feeling somewhat slighted and fairly isolated in

the relationship (Maynard & Maynard, 1982). Participating couples were recruited from a large

Midwestern city in the United States ($N = 42$). Occupational stress was measured using a

true/false instrument created by the researchers: The Occupational Demands and Family Life

Scale (ODFLS). Focus groups informed and validated the measure (Maynard & Maynard,

1982). The 58-item Inventory of Coping Strategies (ICS) was used to assess participants' coping

behaviors (Maynard & Maynard, 1982).

     Ultimately, husbands and wives both reported primary coping strategies of focusing on

the family and trusting each other. Wives also reported self-reliance as an important aspect of

their self-care. For example, the police officers in the study (all male) reported their primary

coping behavior was "trusting wife" ($M = 3.738$). "Doing things as a family" ($M = 3.595$) was

the second most-utilized behavior, and three additional family-based activities rounded out the

top five ("being a supportive husband and helping her" ($M = 4.376$), "planning special activities

the family can count on" ($M = 3.405$), and "leaving 'work' at the office" ($M = 3.328$),

respectively) (Maynard & Maynard, 1982). The wives in the study also reported a variety of

coping patterns, including doing special things with the family (rank 1, $M = 3.905$), trusting their

husband (rank 2, $M = 3801$), doing things together as a family (rank 3, $M = 3.738$), and equally,

showing that they are "strong and able" and developing themselves as a person (tied rank 4, $M =

3.429$) (Maynard & Maynard, 1982).

Due to the relatively small sample size, the results of the study may be specific to the departmental culture of the participants more so than broad-scale law enforcement coping patterns. However, findings suggest that wives experience distress associated with their husband's career in law enforcement and that although officers report attempts to engage in family events, spouses remain feeling isolated and alone. For example, nearly three-quarters of the wives (73.8%) reported that they and their spouse disagree on whether or not their family is more important than his career. Eighty-one percent (81%) agreed that it was necessary for them to make personal sacrifices for their husband's job. Additionally, just over half (54.8%) found truth in the statement, my "husband is always psychologically/emotionally with the job" (Maynard & Maynard, 1982, p. 304).

Stress and interpersonal communication. High levels of job stress have been associated with a collapse in communication for both officers and their spouses (Roberts & Levenson, 2001). A study of 19 California police officers and their spouses revealed that on days when officers reported high job stress, both officers and spouses communicated with less positive affect than on days when job stress was reported to be low.   Additionally, after a high-stress day, participating male officers were found to communicate with more outward negativity. Although spouses' communication also leaned towards less positive on high-stress days, their communication styles were found to be consistently less outwardly negative than officers' (Roberts & Levenson, 2001).

Participating couples were recruited from four Oakland-area police departments, including the University of California – Berkeley Campus Police Department. Participants were paid to complete questionnaires related to home and work stress. They kept daily stress diaries that included a measure of marital satisfaction. Concurrently, the couples participated in four,

90-minute laboratory sessions to assess interaction content and dynamics, including measures of emotional expression and physiological arousal (Roberts & Levenson, 2001). Results of the study support the notion that job stress can negatively impact a police officer's marriage by contributing to communication problems. For officers in the study, job stress was found to stifle positive marital interactions overall, including clouding judgment and problem-solving abilities (Roberts & Levenson, 2001).

Researchers Roberts and Levenson (2001) noticed that officers in the study carried their stress home with them in the form of psychological and physiological "vigilance and defensiveness" (p. 1063); stress-reactions that were then mirrored by their spouses. Specifically, the researchers found that during interactions with each other, after high-stress days, both officers and their spouses registered high levels of physiological arousal (elevated heart rates, for example), but low levels of somatic activity (bodily movement). The researchers described this combination of elevated internal systems and reduced external expression as a "freeze response" (p.1063), similar to what would be expected during a state of "intense fear" (Roberts & Levenson, 2001, p. 1063). Roberts and Levenson (2001) found that high levels of officer work stress resulted in decreased expressions of affection among officers and their spouses, despite marital satisfaction, work shift, or parenting responsibilities (Roberts & Levenson, 2001).

Interestingly, contrary to the negative reactions generally associated with high levels of job stress for officers, high levels of physical exhaustion were found to positively correlate with the couple's communication and affect. For example, on days when officers reported high levels of physical exhaustion, the couple demonstrated more positive affect towards each other during laboratory interactions. In general, when officers were physically exhausted, their female

spouses expressed lower levels of negative affect, and both spouses were more likely to reciprocate positivity and ignore negativity (Roberts & Levenson, 2001).

While the correlational analysis did little to confirm the predictive ability of the variables, the results of the study add to the literature on law enforcement stress and intimate relational dynamics. Additionally, the researchers modeled their laboratory data collection strategy after the rigorous model developed by Levenson & Gottman (1983). Laboratory interactions were highly structured, including consistent discussion prompts and multiple measures of cardiovascular, electrodermal and somatic activity. Participating couples viewed video recordings of their interactions and indicated affect using a 180-degree rating dial, ranging from "extremely negative" to "extremely positive" (Roberts and Levenson, 2001). A final strength of the study lies in the inclusion of officers' spouses, supporting a more systemic analysis of occupational stress and coping.

Negative affect. A similar study from a related group of researchers supports Roberts and Levenson's (2001) notion of a work-related, stress-induced "freeze-response" (p.1063). The additional data suggests that an officer's home-based withdrawal behaviors are a way to avoid potentially problematic expressions of negative affect after a particularly stressful day on the job (Roberts et al., 2013).

Roberts et al. (2013) assessed stress-related emotional reactions using a stress-diary and laboratory observation model similar to that of Roberts and Levenson (2001). Roberts et al. (2013) noticed that on particularly stressful days, officers ($N = 17$) tended to mirror their wife's ($N = 17$) expressions of love while deflecting hostile behaviors. Contrarily, wives tended to attune more to their husband's negative affect. For example, after a particularly stressful day in law enforcement, when officers displayed hostile behaviors towards their spouse in the

laboratory, their wives were likely to return the hostility. However, when officers displayed warmth, their wives did not consistently return the gesture (Roberts et al, 2013). The research team hypothesized that the spouses of law enforcement officers may be particularly attuned to their husband's underlying stress and so respond defensively, regardless of his outward emotional expression (Roberts et al., 2013). Another possibility is that some of the spouses of police officers are so beaten down by chronic stress associated with their spouse's career that they are now skeptical of their partner's affection or are simply too emotionally exhausted to respond positively. Ultimately, the research team concluded that for police officers, "job stress may be associated with fewer opportunities for shared moments of affection" (Roberts et al., 2013, p. 280).

Potential Outcomes of Unresolved Stress

Unresolved stress stemming from environmental, cultural, political, social, or bureaucratic stress can impact an officer and/or his spouse through desperate and damaging actions. For example, suicide, domestic violence, and divorce have been identified as ways that police officers have attempted to cope with the pressures of the profession and the associated personal/interpersonal stress (Anderson and Lo, 2011; Crosbie, 2018; Neidig, 1992; O'Hara, 2017). Each is discussed in the following sections.

Police suicide. Law enforcement publications and magazines often reference an epidemic of sorts, with regard to suicide rates among law enforcement officers (Crosbie, 2018; O'Hara, 2017; O'Hara, 2018). However, scholars refute these claims, noting a lack of empirical and reliable evidence (Hem, Berg & Ekeberg, 2004). Hem et al., (2004) reviewed 41 police suicide studies and determined that rates varied widely; some report higher than average levels of suicide among law enforcement officers while others report lower than average levels. Hem and

colleagues (2004) documented methodological shortcomings and possible publication bias as the likely source for the varied findings. Specifically, they noticed that the majority of police research in the United States is conducted with narrow samples, for example, with officers from a single geographic area or from within a single department. Hem et al. (2004) suggest that local and regional characteristics may have more to do with findings in these types of studies than do police characteristics. Furthermore, they assert that in some instances research on police suicides may be motivated by a surge of officer suicides in a specific geographic area, making findings specific only to the subgroup of officers being studied (Hem et al., 2004).

One of the most recent attempts to provide national descriptives on police suicides was completed by the research team of O'Hara, Violanti, Levenson, and Clark (2013). Web surveillance provided data for the longitudinal study. Collection points were the years 2008, 2009, and 2012. The researchers tracked police websites, forums, and blogs looking for information about officer suicides. In 2012 alone, 55,000 articles were generated and analyzed. Findings reveal trends related to gender, motive, and manner of the self-inflicted deaths of police officers (O'Hara et al., 2013).

To begin, if 2012 was any indicator, then suicide rates may be on the decline among police officers (O'Hara et al., 2013). In 2008, 141 police suicides were acknowledged on the internet. In 2009, numbers were similar: 143. However, in 2012, 126 suicides were reported in online posts, accounting for an 11.9% decrease from earlier years (O'Hara et al., 2013).

Across the three time periods, suicide by male and female officers occurred at similar rates on average but with the majority of suicides (92%) being by men, which would be expected, given that the majority of police officers are men. Additionally, perhaps

unsurprisingly, between 2008 and 2012 gunshot wounds accounted for the primary method of police suicide (91.5% on average) (O'Hara et al., 2013).

In 2012, the majority of police suicides documented on the internet were attributed to personal problems (83%), followed by work-based legal problems (13%). Most police suicides occurred in California (n = 10) and New York (n = 12) (O'Hara et al., 2013). However, this finding should not be surprising, as New York and California have the largest number of sworn law enforcement officers in the entire country (Loudermilk, 2017).

Domestic violence. Though police officers are typically situated on the intervening end of domestic violence encounters, they are not immune from committing or experiencing intimate partner violence (IPV) in their own relationships (Anderson & Lo, 2011, Johnson, Todd & Subramanian, 2005; Lott, 1995; Neidig, Russell & Seng, 1992). Scholars have examined the age, race, and gender variables associated with IPV in law enforcement marriages (Anderson & Lo, 2011; Neidig et al, 1992; Wetendorf, 2013; Zavala, Melander & Kurtz, 2015). They have been able to link IPV with various work-related contexts, including duty assignment (Neidig et al., 1992), critical incident exposure (Anderson & Lo, 2011), and shift work (Neidig et al., 1992). Some have hypothesized that IPV is a coping response that some officers inadvertently use to deal with the stress associated with their career (Anderson & Lo, 2011; Neidig et al., 1992; Zavala et al., 2015). Others have suggested that police officers may be prone to domestic violence because some of the very tactics and attitudes required of officers on the job are the same tactics and attitudes associated with domestic violence in the home (Wetendorf, 2013). Indeed, one study found that a greater percentage of law enforcement officers report IPV in their marriages (41%) than do military servicemen (32%), or a sample of the civilian population (16%) (Neidig et al., 1992).

Two noteworthy studies assessing domestic violence in law enforcement marriages are highlighted in this section of the literature review because 1) they were conducted around the same timeframe (both in the 1900s), but in varied parts of the country, and 2) they provide some basic demographic and correlational properties of intimate partner violence occurrences among law enforcement officers and their romantic partners.

Anderson and Lo (2011) analyzed secondary data from a late- '90s survey of police officers in Baltimore, MD ($N = 1,104$). Participants indicated (via a "yes" or "no" response) whether they had "ever lost control and become physically aggressive (including grabbing, pushing, and shoving) with a spouse or significant other" (Anderson & Lo, 2011, p. 1180). Neidig et al (1992) surveyed individuals attending a law enforcement training conference in Arizona (n = 465). Participants included 425 police officers (385 male; 40 female), and 40 females who identified as the spouse of a police officer (Neidig et al., 1992). Participants filled out the Modified Conflict Tactics Scale, which measures 25 conflict behaviors along a seven-point scale ranging from "never" to "more than 20 times per year." For analysis purposes, violent acts were grouped into two categories: 1) minor violence: throwing something at spouse; pushing, grabbing, or shoving spouse; slapping spouse; and kicking, biting, or hitting spouse with a fist, and 2) severe violence: choking or strangling spouse; beating up spouse; threating use or actual use of a knife or gun on spouse (Neidig et al., 1992).

Only nine percent of participants in Anderson & Lo's (2011) study admitted to physical violence with a partner at some time in their life. This finding greatly contrasts with Neidig et al.'s (1992) results, in which 28 percent of participating male officers and 27 percent of participating female officers acknowledged having been violent with their spouse. Specific

findings from the studies with regard to demographic trends and other noteworthy correlates are summarized in the table below.

Demographic correlates. In some instances, interpersonal violence among law enforcement officers and their romantic partners follows national trends related to age, ethnicity, and gender. In other instances, they don't. Research by two groups of scholars provides insight into this very private world within a very private group of people (Anderson & Lo, 2011; Neidig et al., 1992).

Neidig et al.'s (1992) chi-square analysis revealed a significant relationship between age and IPV. IPV rates were noted to be highest among the youngest and the oldest participants, with a dip in the middle. The highest percentages of IPV were reported among officers between the ages of 21 and 29 (64%), and those age 50 or over (49%). Meanwhile, 43% of the 30-39-year olds in the study reported violence in their marriage, as did 29% of 40-49-year olds (Neidig et al., 1992).

Of the nine percent of officers who acknowledged perpetrating IPV in the Anderson and Lo (2011) study, 55% identified as African American and 45% as white. Anderson and Lo confirm that their findings on ethnic disparity in IPV are consistent with national outcomes. However, they speculate that for African American law enforcement officers, workplace burnout could be contributing to incidents of home-based violence. Regression results indicated a strong relationship between negative emotions, including feeling inefficient and physically/emotionally exhausted at work, and IPV among African American participants (Anderson & Lo, 2011).

In the general population, women typically report being on the receiving end of domestic violence (24.3%) far more often than men (13.8%) (Breiding, Chen & Black, 2014). However, some scholars argue that both genders perpetrate IPV fairly equally (Carney, Buttell & Dutton,

2007), and others have suggested that women are actually more likely to be physically violent in their romantic relationships than men are (Whitaker, Haileyesus, Swahn & Saltzman, 2007).

The female participants in Neidig et al's (1992) and Anderson and Lo's (2011) studies admitted to engaging in IPV to a greater degree than their male counterparts. Specifically, 27% of female officers and 30% of the female spouses of officers reported in Neidig et al's (1992) study that they had engaged in minor acts of physical violence in their marriages; only 25% of male officers reported having done so. However, Neidig et al (1992) note that female officers reported being on the receiving end of severe violence (20%) more than male officers (6%), or the female spouses of male officers (3%).

Work-based correlates. IPV in the romantic relationships of law enforcement officers tends to correlate with the work-based variables of critical incident exposure, duty assignment, and the authoritarian personality style of the stereotypical police officer. Law enforcement researchers and scholars provide some useful hypotheses about these connections. For example, Anderson and Lo (2011) determined that among participating officers, IPV perpetration increases along with self-reports of involvement in a job-related critical incident. Specifically, Anderson & Lo (2011) found that perpetration of IPV rose by eight percent with each unit increase in critical incident exposure. As part of the study, the research team hypothesized that negative affect would moderate this relationship. Participants were asked to report on the frequency with which they experience each of 11 negative emotional states, including irritability, emotional withdrawal, difficulty concentrating, and depression (Anderson & Lo, 2011). A 13% increase in IPV likelihood was evident for each unit of increase in negative emotion (Anderson & Lo, 2011). The researchers consider their findings to be in alignment with general strain

theory, which asserts that the negative affective states associated with stress can serve as a trigger for deviant behavior.

Along similar lines, Neidig et al. (1992) considered how work responsibilities might correlate with IPV. They found that uniformed (32%) and narcotics (42%) officers perpetrated violence more than Detectives (26%), plainclothes officers (20%), or those assigned to administrative (18%) or traffic (8%) duties. The highest percentage of severe aggression was reported by narcotics officers: 14%. At most, only three percent of officers on other assignments reported severe aggression (Neidig et al., 1992).

Based on the known ecosystem-wide stressors placed on the traditional uniformed officer, and those that could be assumed for an officer working strictly in narcotics, it seems plausible that Neidig et al's (1992) findings coincide with the general strain assumption proposed by Anderson and Lo (2011). In fact, Neidig et al (1992) also found significantly higher rates of IPV among officers working midnight or swing shifts than among those working days (Neidig et al., 1992). Neidig et al. (1992) go so far as to question whether police departments could or should be held liable for incidents of IPV in their officer's romantic relationships (p.37). Author Diane Wetendorf (2013) would likely agree. In the publication Police Domestic Violence: A Handbook for Victims, she argues that police are particularly well situated to engage in acts of domestic violence because of their "entitlement to authority" (p. 9). She explains:

> …police officers are professionally trained to establish who's in charge using their presence, voice, and stance. They gather information in order to gain and maintain control of a situation. …If all else fails, they are expected to apply increasing levels of force to accomplish their task. They have mastered these skills because their survival on the job depends on them. (p. 8).

She affirms that it can be dangerous for an officer to carry this mindset into his/her home.

Only a few years before Wetendorf's (2013) publication, Anderson & Lo (2011) assessed for spillover of authoritarian work demeanor to household attitudes among their officer

participants. Authoritarian work demeanor was measured via Likert-style responses to four prompts: "I feel like I need to take control of the people in my life"; "I catch myself treating my family the way I treat suspects"; "At home, I can never shake off the feeling of being a police officer"; and "I expect to have the final say on how things are done in my household" (Anderson & Lo, 2011, p. 1181). A logistic regression revealed that negative affect and authoritarian spillover intensified the relationship between critical incident exposure and perpetration of IPV for participating officers. In general, the likelihood of an officer committing an act of IPV increased by nine percent for each unit increase in reported authoritative attitude.

Limitations of IPV studies in law enforcement research. The primary limitation associated with studies of violence in the marriages of law enforcement officers is the risk of inaccurate data. Anderson and Lo (2011) noted that only 79% of their surveys were returned with the IPV portion complete. It is probably safe to assume that participating officers may have been fearful of admitting to IPV, and therefore avoided the questions altogether. Perhaps officers were fearful of being held accountable for their survey responses. In the fall of 1996, the U.S. Federal Government enacted an amendment to the Federal Gun Control Act of 1968 that banned the possession of firearms by individuals convicted of a domestic violence crime (U.S. Department of Justice, 2013). For officers then, even a misdemeanor domestic violence charge would likely ensure termination from employment in law enforcement (Zavala et al, 2015).

Divorce. Divorce rates among law enforcement officers have long been publicized to top national averages (Jurkanin & Hillard, 2006; Kappeler & Potter, 2000; Roufa, 2017; Territo & Sewell, 2007; Wasilewski & Olson, 2015; Wells & Alt, 2005). However, in the past 20 years this claim has been repeatedly refuted (Honig, 2007; Kappeler & Potter, 2000; McCoy & Aamodt, 2010; Stratton & Stratton, 1982). In the United States, the five occupations with the

highest divorce rates are actually dancers and choreographers (43.1%), bartenders (38.4%), massage therapists (38.2%), gaming cage workers (34.7%), and extruding machine operators (32.7%) (McCoy & Aamodt, 2010). In an evaluation of United States census data from the year 2000, McCoy and Aamodt (2010) determined that the divorce/separation rates for law enforcement officers are not only lower than national averages but are lower than what would be expected in individuals of similar demographic and income characteristics.

Still, certain aspects of a career in law enforcement have been found to take a negative toll on an officer's marriage (Beehr et al., 1995; Borum & Philpot, 1988; Jackson & Maslach, 1982; Karaffa et al. 2015; Kirschman, 2006; Miller, 2007; Roberts & Levinson, 2001; Torres et al., 2003). A 1993 study demonstrates the extent to which divorced officers hold their career responsible for some or all of their divorce. Gentz &Taylor (1994) conducted a telephone survey of officers in Tulsa, Oklahoma ($N = 124$). In total, 47% of the divorced officers in the study believed their profession had "quite a bit" or "a great deal" of an impact on the dissolution of their marriage. For officers who had been divorced more than once, the percentage who believed that their career played a significant role in marital problems rose to 53%. Participating officers had all spent at least 15 years in law enforcement at the time of the study (Gentz & Taylor, 1994).

Resources and Support Programs

As recognition of the physical and emotional toll that a career in law enforcement takes on an officer and his loved ones grows, so does the network of personal and professional support available to them. Most federal, state, and local police departments offer mental health and emotional support services for officers and their families (Edwards & Meader, 2015; Finn & Tomz, 1997; First Responder Support Network, 2017; Torres et al., 2003). Many of these

programs are peer-based support interventions (Edwards & Meader, 2015; First Responder Support Network, 2017), others provide formal trainings to officers and their families during departmental orientation (Finn & Tomz, 1997; Torres, et al, 2003).

   Informal support. A quick internet search for information on police life or police families reveals an abundance of online blogs, informal support groups, and image macros dedicated to police pride and unity. Police wives have a particularly strong presence on the internet. One of the most popular Facebook groups, the Proud Police Wives Group reports more than 2500 members (2019). Short of the United States Military, no other profession appears to have developed a social support system quite like the spouses of U.S. law enforcement.

   Even with the abundance of studies indicating that a career in law enforcement can negatively impact an officer's home-based interactions and romantic relationships, few studies have directly talked to romantic partners or formally assessed relationship quality. Findings from existing studies on the romantic relationships of law enforcement officers follow.

<p align="center">**Key Research on Law Enforcement Officers' Relationships**</p>

   In family social science research, marriage relationships are typically formally evaluated through measures of adjustment, quality, and/or satisfaction (Sabatelli, 1988). This type of formal assessment of relationship satisfaction arise grossly underrepresented in U.S. law enforcement research, and the few studies that have inquired about relationship satisfaction among participants have typically done so without the use of a validated instrument (Cherry & Lester, 1979; Lester & Guerin, 1982; Lester & Karsevar, 1980; Roberts & Levenson, 2001; Roberts et al., 2013). As a result, comparisons between the romantic relationships of law enforcement officers and those of the general population are difficult. Furthermore, to date, not a

<p align="center">79</p>

single study could be found in law enforcement literature addressing any aspect of an officer's

relationship (stress, coping, satisfaction, etc.) with an unmarried partner.

This portion of the literature review will examine the five studies that were found to

detail the outcomes of measured relationship quality/satisfaction/adjustment for police officers

and their romantic partners. Conclusions and a brief introduction to the proposed study will

follow to complete the chapter.

1979: Characteristics of Satisfied Versus Unsatisfied Police Officers

In 1979, Cherry and Lester completed one of the earliest assessments of marital

satisfaction among law enforcement officers. The researchers were interested in the

characteristics that differentiated police officers who were satisfied with their marriages from

those who were not. Fifty-five (55) officers from an unspecified, suburban area of the country

took part in the voluntary study via an anonymous questionnaire. Officers averaged 45.6 years

of age ($SD = 7.1$) and had an average of 8 years ($SD = 4.9$) established tenure in the profession

(Officers were asked to rate their level of marital satisfaction on a six-point Likert-style scale. In

total, 30 participants reported being "very satisfied" in their marriage, 19 were "satisfied", five

were "somewhat satisfied", and one was "somewhat dissatisfied". No officers reported being

"dissatisfied" or "very dissatisfied" in their current marriage (Cherry & Lester, 1979).

Overall, marital satisfaction was found to be most likely for officers who 1) were actively

working in law enforcement prior to marriage ($r = .30$), 2) were "favorable of the women's

liberation movement ($r = .20$), 3) had fewer children ($r = .28$), and 4) were more likely to spend

time with their wives when off-duty ($r = .43$) (Cherry & Lester, 1979). No difference was found

in satisfaction scores for officers whose wives worked outside the home, in comparison to those

whose wives did not. However, for officers whose wives did work outside the home, more

satisfied officers also reported that their wives worked more hours than less satisfied officers ($r =$ .27). Satisfied officers described their wives as interesting and fun to be with, affectionate, understanding of their problems, interested in them, someone they could confide in, sexually satisfying, independent, and less disagreeable, thoughtless, and lazy. No difference was described with respect to supportiveness, authoritativeness, or dependency (Cherry & Lester, 1979).

Satisfaction was not found to relate to an officer's age, rank, education, years of experience, shift, or prior employment outside of law enforcement. Prior marriage, wife's age, and off-duty activities did not correlate with marital satisfaction reports either. Ultimately, Cherry and Lester (1979) determined that securing employing in law enforcement prior to marriage was the key to marital satisfaction.

1980: Marital Satisfaction Among State Troopers

A similar study focused on State Troopers yielded some additional though conflicting results related to law enforcement marital satisfaction (Lester & Karsevar, 1980). Thirty-four Troopers volunteered to participate in the study and completed the same six-point marriage satisfaction survey as the officers in Cherry and Lester's 1979 study. Participants also completed a stress survey in which they were asked to rank 15 sources of stress on a four-point Likert-style scale (Lester & Karsevar). The average participant was 31.2 years old ($SD = 5.8$) with 7.1 years ($SD = 5.2$) of police work under their belt.

The State Troopers who rated themselves as more satisfied in their marriage also reported less stress from all sources, including problems with coworkers ($r = -0.44$), lack of support from prosecutors and courts ($r = -0.39$), shift work ($r = -0.34$), and problems at home ($r = -0.69$). These officers also reported less stress from having to intervene in crises at work ($r = -.31$), less

stress from living in the same town where they worked ($r = -.52$), and less total stress ($r = -0.45$) (Lester & Karsevar, 1980).

Satisfaction with marriage was not related to the State Trooper's age, his wife's age, or the age difference between them. Satisfaction with marriage was also not determined to correlate with the number of years served in law enforcement, whether and for how long the officer had worked a second job, the number of children he had, or previous marriages (Lester & Karsevar, 1980). Additionally, marriage prior to or after the officer took his job as a State Trooper was not reflected in marriage satisfaction scores. Lester and Karsevar concluded that in this cohort, marital satisfaction was most strongly correlated with stress. Statistical analysis did not allow for the determination of a causal relationship.

1982: Affirming the Significance of Tenure, Children, and Stress

In 1982, Lester and Guerin tested the reliability of the findings from Lester's two prior studies mentioned above: Cherry and Lester (1979) and Leter and Karsevar (1980). Lester and Guerin (1982) were interested in evaluating previous findings that officer marital satisfaction was related to 1) a law enforcement career established prior to marriage, 2) fewer children, and 3) lower levels of overall stress.

Thirty-one (31) married patrolmen from a small, undisclosed police department participated in the study. As with the previous studies, officers ranked their marital satisfaction on a six-point scale. Participating officers also completed a stress test and rated 15 sources of stress, each on a four-point Likert-style scale (Lester & Guerin, 1982).

Lester and Guerin (1982) found that among the participating cohorts, marital satisfaction was not related to police employment prior to marriage, nor was it related to the officer's age, his wife's age, or the difference in years between them. No relationship was found to exist between

marital satisfaction and the number of years the officer had been married, prior marriages, the number of children the couple had, nor the officer's tenure in the profession (Lester & Guerin, 1982). Higher satisfaction in marriage was related to the officer's perceptions of his wife's satisfaction with his career (Lester & Guerin, 1982).

Regarding stress outcomes, no significant relationship was found between marriage satisfaction and stress test results. Marital satisfaction was also not significantly related to the extent of stress that officers perceived from the 15 sources of stress that had been significant to the Troopers in the 1980 study. Nor was marital satisfaction significantly related to the extent to which the officer believed his occupation contributed to marital problems. However, among participating officers, satisfaction with marriage was associated with less stress from shift work and more stress from having to intervene in crises (Lester & Guerin, 1982). Lester and Guerin (1982) hypothesize that department location and size may have contributed to the discrepancies between the 1982 study and Lester's earlier studies. Additionally, they note that the 1980 study targeted State Troopers, while the 1982 study and the 1979 study were focused on police officers. Perhaps departmental nuances contributed to the conflicting results (Lester & Guerin, 1982).

2001: Including Spouses

One aspect missing from Lester's research (1979; 1980; 1982) was the inclusion of spouses. However, the aforementioned studies by Roberts and Levenson (2001) and Roberts et al. (2013) both included spouses and a formal marital satisfaction assessment. In both studies, officers and their non-officer spouses completed the 15-item Locke-Wallace Marital Adjustment evaluation. The recommended cutoff score for determining marital satisfaction on the Locke-Wallace is a score of 100. Individuals scoring 100 or more on the inventory are considered to be

non-distressed, indicating marital satisfaction, while individuals scoring under 100 are considered "maladjusted," indicating marital distress (Freeston & Plechaty, 1997).

The couples ($N = 19$) in the Roberts & Levenson (2001) study averaged 7.9 years married ($SD = 7.6$). Fourteen (14) of the couples had one or more children; five did not have any. Twelve (12) of the participating officers were patrol officers, seven held investigative "desk jobs" (Roberts & Levenson, 2001, p. 1055). Thirteen (13) of the participating officers were working a day-shift at the time of the study; six were working nights. Officers averaged 9.4 years of tenure in law enforcement ($SD = 5.2$). Seven of the wives reported full-time paid employment, seven were full-time homemakers or students, and five were self-employed or worked in part-time paid work outside the home (Roberts & Levenson, 2001). Mean marital satisfaction scores averaged 115.7 ($SD = 24.0$), with a median score of 122.0 (range: 53-142).

The couples ($N = 17$) in the Roberts et al. (2013) study were strikingly similar to those in the Roberts and Levenson (2001) study. The Roberts et al., (2013) couples averaged 7.7 years of marriage ($SD = 7.8$) and 13 indicated that they were raising children. Six of the spouses reported part-time employment, five reported full-time employment, and six did not work outside of the home. Nearly three-quarters of the participating couples reported that their current marriage was their first. The majority of participants were White (58.8%), with 14.7% identifying as Hispanic/Latino, 11.8% identifying as African American, 11.8% identifying as American, and the remainder, multiracial (2.9%). The officers reported 8.6 years ($SD = 5.6$) in law enforcement on average (Roberts et al., 2013). Locke-Wallace scores for participating officers ranged from 57 to 148. Wives' satisfaction ratings ranged from 49 to 146 (Roberts et al., 2013).

Results of both studies indicate that participating law enforcement officers and their spouses were generally satisfied with (or at least well-adjusted to) their marriages, though little

more attention was paid to this aspect of the study in the analysis or discussion sections of the

research summary (Roberts et al., 2013; Roberts & Levenson, 2001). Future studies on

relationship satisfaction among law enforcement officers could do more to identify

demographics or other variables as they relate. The proposed study aimed to provide such data,

along with qualitative descriptions of how interpersonal, home-, and work-based experiences

impact relationship quality. The goal was to provide a demographic and behavioral snapshot of

law enforcement officers and their romantic partners who have particularly strong relationships

and to provide suggestions of therapeutic interventions for those who are not.

Summary of Research

In summary, the majority of U.S. police officers are married or cohabitating (Levenson,

2001; Maynard & Maynard, 1982; Roberts & Patterson, 2003). For these couples, the stressors

and culture of the profession tend to shape an officer's attitudes and behaviors in a way that can

stress marital interactions (Kirschman et al., 2013; Maynard & Maynard, 1982; Miller, 2007).

The majority of research on the romantic relationships of law enforcement officers tends to be

sharply focused on identifying the most stressful aspects of a career in law enforcement and how

those stressors can spill into relationship dynamics or affect individual attitudes and functioning

(Grzywacz et al., 2002; Grzywacz & Marks, 2000; Karaffa et al., 2015; Maynard & Maynard,

1982). Other studies assess the consequences of the coping strategies that officers and their

spouses use to deal with the stress associated with police work (Borum & Philpot, 1993;

Kirschman et al., 2013; Maynard & Maynard, 1982; Miller, 2007). However, these studies

rarely include the perspectives of spouses (Beehr et al., 1995; Jackson & Maslach, 1982; Karaffa

et al., 2015; Maynard, Maynard, McCubbin & Shao, 1980; Maynard & Maynard, 1982; Roberts

et al., 2013; Roberts & Levenson, 2001), and non-married partners are intentionally not included

at all. Furthermore, studies that do include spouses typically have not included a formal relationship quality/satisfaction indicator as part of their assessment procedures; those that have generally did not use validated instruments (Cherry & Lester, 1979; Lester & Guerin, 1982; Lester & Karsevar, 1980; Roberts et al., 2013; Roberts & Levenson, 2001).

Ultimately, a career in law enforcement has been found to spill into an officer's romantic relationship in multiple and often negative ways (Kirschman et al., 2013; Maynard & Maynard, 1982; Miller, 2007). The culture of the profession adds to the complexity of these challenges (Paoline, 2003; Rose & Unnithan, 2015; Workman-Stark, 2017) and tends to discourage officers from pursuing outside, professional support like counseling services. Police wives appear to seek and create their own sources of social support in validation of their experiences, and they struggle within the culture of the profession. An abundance of internet and social media images can be found referencing the pride and struggle associated with being an officer's spouse (wives in particular), or the perils associated with police work in general. This researcher could not find any other profession, aside from the branches of military service, with similar saturation or content.

Given the evolving nature of policing, shifting expectations and demands of the profession can have a direct impact on officers' lives and romantic relationships, systemically-oriented family social scientists would be remiss in failing to understand how the scope of occupational demands and the very public performance of policing affect individual officers, their departments, community relationships, and their romantic partnerships.

The natural environment (macrosystem), although distant and often imperceptible, affects levels of crime, definitions of crime, numbers of disaster events, and resources to enforce the law. Occupational demands resulting from this environment pose some of the greatest threats to

officer mental health and physical safety. Associated long deployments and shift work

requirements leave romantic partners and family members alone or relying on others for their

own physical and emotional support.

Shifting social and cultural attitudes (exosystem) redefine and interpret law enforcement

practices according to the prevailing social consensus or political ideology of the day. These

trends can vilify or extol accepted practices into which officers have been formally or informally

indoctrinated. The culture and subcultures of the law enforcement profession have the potential

to alter an officer's brain chemistry and personality, and directly contribute to morale. For

officers, police work is an identity-encompassing commitment that renders partners and wives

feeling like a mistress to their officer's heart.

At the community level (mesosystem), the relationship between police practices and the

neighborhoods they serve is multidirectional, having the potential to impact citizens, officers,

and police families alike. Community characteristics may influence police practices, but police

practices impact the behaviors and attitudes of citizens as well. The families of law enforcement

officers are not exempt from this equation; often trapped in the emotional crossfire between the

public and the police. In the past five years, an undeniable and salient ecological shift occurred

in the lives of police officers at the mesosystemic level. The positive gains in police-community

relations fostered during the 80s and 90s erodes quickly after 2010. Positive regard and

unquestioned beneficence afforded law enforcement officers, especially patrol officers, steadily

decline into the end of the decade. Police judgment and integrity no longer exist beyond

reproach but invite public suspicion, anger, and labels of injustice. For officers, the threat of

being watched recorded and constantly publicly scrutinized adds to the weight of professional

responsibilities and personal safety concerns.

At the most intimate level (microsystem), romantic relationships are directly affected by the coping mechanisms, choices, and attitudes of the individuals in the dyad. The boundaries of patrol officers' personal and family lives have always been tenuous. Compartmentalization, a commanding presence, and direct or emotion-avoidant communication are work-based demeanors that become a way of life for officers, spilling into interpersonal dynamics, alienating romantic partners, and stressing romantic relationships. It is imperative for systemically-oriented family social scientists to understand the impact that the very public performance of policing duties has on individual officers, their departments and their family relationships, and how changes occur sequentially or concurrently throughout these systems and the broader ecosystem in which they are embedded.

Social science research on the relational lives of police officers is limited. Existing studies suggest that their romantic relationships are at best, unhappy, and at worst, deeply troubled. Unidimensional data (collected mostly from officers) provides a narrow and perhaps skewed view into the romantic relationships of law enforcement officers. Most officers are married or in committed relationships, but spouses are rarely included in evaluations of officers' stress and outcomes. This gap in the literature, i.e., limited data from officers' romantic partners and or little data on the strengths of happy or satisfied relationships, requires attention. The current state of the science warrants research that 1) collects data from police officers and their romantic partners, 2) includes validated measures of relationship quality and satisfaction, and 3) provides strategies for strengthening hurting relationships.

The Current Study

The current study addressed gaps in existing literature on law enforcement officers' romantic relationships. The study was strengths-based, meaning that the focus was on those

aspects of life and work associated with relationship quality, as opposed to distress.

Furthermore, unlike prior research, both married and non-married partners were invited to

participate. Finally, validated instruments formally assessed for relationship quality; qualitative

data were used to clarify and enhances findings. Suggestions for clinical interventions with

struggling law enforcement officers and their romantic partners were developed.

The central research question was, "What interpersonal characteristics and work- and

home-based contextual factors are associated with relationship quality for law enforcement

officers and their romantic partners?" The following were subquestions:

1. "Is there a significant association between work-based variables and relationship

   quality?"

2. "Is there a significant association between home/family-based variables and relationship

   quality?"

3. "Which of the following relationship constructs are most significantly associated with

   relationship quality: satisfaction, commitment, intimacy, trust, passion, or love?"

4. "Which of the following interpersonal areas are most significantly associated with

   relationship quality: consensus, satisfaction, or cohesion?"

A quantitative-qualitative mixed-methods, concurrent embedded design was used to

address the aforementioned research questions (Heiselt & Sheperis, 2010). First, relationally

non-distressed individuals were differentiated from relationally distressed individuals based on

established cutoff scores specific to two of the assessments (Crane, Middleton & Bean, 2000).

Subsample groups (all participants, officers, romantic partners, and paired couples) were

examined for similarities and differences in their relationship quality (RQ) scores across

inventories. Finally, associations and relationships were drawn between interpersonal

characteristics, work-, and home-based contextual factors, and participant reports of global relationship quality. Four subsamples of the population of interest were examined: all participants, officers, romantic partners, and paired couples. Qualitative data served to illustrate, enhance, and affirm the quantitative findings.

The theoretical underpinnings of the study align Huston's (2000) triad of marriage ecology, including that consideration of social, individual, and relational components is imperative to sound relational science. The recruitment methods took into account the cautionary tales of early police scholars (Maynard & Maynard, 1982) and followed in the footsteps of those who have successfully recruited couples for law enforcement relational studies where financial resources have been limited (Karaffa et al., 2015; Maynard & Maynard, 1982).

Chapter III

RESEARCH METHODS

Knowledge concerning the state of relationship quality between law enforcement officers and their romantic partners remains limited. Technology, time and sociopolitical issues affect the nature of policing and officer safety concerns. In the first two decades of the new millennium, social regard for law enforcement, municipal police in particular, shifted decidedly negative. The prospect and experience of unanticipated negative public reactions affect officers' relationships with the public and, ultimately, individual morale. Reasoning from a systemic or ecological perspective, the contextual features of law enforcement officers' work inevitably impact their family and partner relationships. The purpose of this quantitative-qualitative mixed-methods study was to begin to explore the various interpersonal, work-, and home-based factors that are associated with relationship quality among law enforcement officers and their romantic partners. The primary research question was "What interpersonal characteristics and work- and home-based contextual factors are associated with relationship quality for law enforcement officers and their romantic partners?" Subquestions were:

1. "Is there a significant association between work-based variables and relationship quality?"

2. "Is there a significant association between home/family-based variables and relationship quality?"

3. "Which of the following relationship constructs are most significantly associated with relationship quality: satisfaction, commitment, intimacy, trust, passion, or love?"

4. "Which of the following interpersonal areas are most significantly associated with relationship quality: consensus, satisfaction, or cohesion?"

A pragmatic epistemology and a post-positive worldview informed the design and methodological approach. The use of electronic questionnaires supported the researcher's desire for efficient, inexpensive and anonymous data collection. Quantitative and qualitative data were collected simultaneously. The open-ended questions served to enhance the interpretation of quantitative findings by providing a means for participants to explain and expand on quantitative responses in their own words.

Research Design

A concurrent quantitative-qualitative mixed-methods embedded design was used to address the research questions (Heiselt & Sheperis, 2010). A concurrent quantitative-qualitative embedded design was chosen as the specific strategy for this study because, 1) the primary research questions are quantitative in nature, and 2) limited research in the area of non-distressed law enforcement relationships warrants the use of qualitative questions to enhance understanding of the quantitative findings. In line with the traditional use of the embedded design, quantitative findings were framed by qualitative data (Heiselt & Sheperis, 2010).

A similar model was used by Karaffa et al. (2015) in their study of the impact of police work on the spouses and marriages of law enforcement officers. Participating couples completed anonymous questionnaires that focused on quantitative measures of stress, conflict, and support. Quantitative findings were enhanced by participants' qualitative responses to open-ended questions about the most difficult aspects of being a police officer or the spouse of an officer. (Karaffa et al., 2015).

The proposed study followed similar methodologies as employed by Karaffa et al (2015). However, the current study focused on identifying specific behaviors and attitudes that may buffer against the many relational stressors that other scholars have identified (Beehr et al., 1995;

Borum & Philpot, 1993; Howard et al. 2004; Karaffa et al., 2015; Kirschman, 2006; Maynard & Maynard, 1982; Miller, 2007; Roberts et al., 2013; Torres et al., 2003).

Strengths. A primary strength of the study lies in the concurrent embedded mixed methods design, in that its use limited the potential for confounding variables or alternative explanations of findings (Creswell, 2009). Concurrent strategies have been identified as the most effective means of integrating quantitative and qualitative data to provide a "composite assessment of a problem" (Creswell, 2009, p. 2014). The "problem" that was addressed by this study was the known stressors that challenge relationship quality for law enforcement officers and their romantic partners. Quantitative findings were supported though qualitative data to "build a coherent justification of themes" (Creswell, 2009, p. 191). Direct quotations from participants serve to illustrate broader themes while giving voice to individual officers and their significant others. Additionally, the concurrent embedded strategy made the study more manageable, as two kinds of data were collected simultaneously, maximizing the researcher's time and effort (Heiselt & Sherpis, 2010).

Procedure

Participants were recruited from four communities in two ways. Two communities requested that the researcher attend shift briefings to introduce the study to officers in person. These took place over two weekends for each department. The researcher attended all three pre-shift musters on a day determined by the Chief or coordinating contact. During these meetings, the researcher briefly introduced herself and the study. Informational flyers were handed out to qualifying and interested participants (Appendix A).

In the other two communities, department leads did not believe that face-to-face contact with the researcher was necessary. These departments chose to email their officers information

about the researcher, the study, and the link to the online survey. One of these departments

included a formal family support group (FSG). The researcher worked with the FSG coordinator

to post an informational recruitment video to the group's Facebook page.

Informational flyers were provided to all participating departments for internal posting to

support recruitment. Interested participants were directed to a Qualtrics link to complete the

online questionnaire (https://bit.ly/2mXwdd2). Officers were asked to provide information about

the study to their significant other. Participation in the study was voluntary. At no time did

departmental administrators and supervisors have access to information about officers who chose

to participate in the study.

Two weeks after delivering recruitment materials to supporting departments, the

researcher sent follow-up emails to coordinating contacts to thank them for their continued

support and to remind them of the recruitment window (four weeks in total). Coordinating

contacts were asked to remind officers of the option to participate and the importance of

including their romantic partners.

Four weeks after initiating the formal recruitment process, the researcher emailed the

coordinating contact at each department to announce completion of the recruitment process and

to thank those involved for their support. Contact coordinators were asked to remove

informational flyers from the building and inform officers of the completion of the data

collection process. The Qualtrics link was removed from the internet as well to avoid additional

and unnecessary participation.

The online questionnaire. Interested persons consented to participation in the study

upon visiting the pre-established survey link: https://bit.ly/2mXwdd2. The consent form

(Appendix B) explained the purpose of the study, risks and inconveniences, benefits,

confidentiality, and intended use of the findings. The consent form also informed participants

that they could exit the survey and withdraw from the study at any time. Participation in the

study was voluntary.

Upon consenting to the survey, participants were directed to two more questions

confirming fit for the study. Specifically, participants were required to be a police officer or the

romantic partner of a police officer, and must be in a "committed relationship." For the purposes

of this study, a committed relationship was defined as one where the dyad is either married,

cohabitating, or are exclusively dating with no other sexual partners and with no intention to

break up.

In the event that a participant did not consent to partake in the survey or if they indicated

that they did not fit the patrol and relational requirements, they were automatically directed to the

end of the survey and thanked for their interest. If consent, officer/romantic partner designation,

and relationship requirements were met, participants were invited to complete the remainder of

the inventory (Appendix C), beginning with self-identification as an officer or an officer's

significant other, followed by individual demographic questions and the creation of a shared

identification code.

A unique aspect of the study was the researcher's ability to compare officers' reports of

relational quality and strengths with those of their significant others. In order to appropriately

pair surveys among officers and their significant others while protecting both parties' identifying

information, participants were prompted to create a unique identifier at the start of the survey.

Participants were prompted to create a six-unit code consisting of the first and middle initials of

the participating officer and romantic partner, along with the number of pets between them, and

the first letter of the officer's employing department. For example, John A. Jones (officer) and

Sara P. Smith (spouse), with a cat and a dog, of Davenport would have combined to create the following identifier: JASP2D.

The remainder of the survey entailed specific questions related to the interpersonal experiences and work- and home-based contextual factors of the participants. Officers answered questions associated with their tenure, shift assignment, and history of special assignment. Romantic partners answered questions related to their employment and student status. Both parties were asked to indicate if they had participated in prior or ongoing marriage counseling (including with a previous spouse/partner). Both parties were also asked about the length of their relationship, if they have a family history in law enforcement, and about the number and ages of any children in their immediate family.

Three relationship inventories accounted for the majority of the survey. Twenty-three (23) Likert-style questions related to relationship quality and adjustment were included. Six open-ended questions specific to experiences of satisfaction, commitment, intimacy, trust, passion, and love, were embedded within.

The survey concluded with six qualitative questions related to relationship quality, the media, recommendations for new officers, and departmental support. The entire inventory was anticipated to take between 10 and 20 minutes to complete.

Participants

Municipal police officers were the focus of the proposed study. This group was chosen as the target population out of 1) respect for the intricacies of police work as dictated by a broad range of influences and pressures, including those that are environmental, political, bureaucratic, and personal, 2) recognition that the romantic relationships and family life of a law enforcement

officer is often complicated by professional demands, and 3) curiosity about the attitudes and behaviors of couples who successfully navigate these challenges.

The municipal police are uniquely situated within the broader population of United States law enforcement in that they are one of the most highly visibly and directly accessible branches of U.S. law enforcement. Likely resulting from this very public presentation, municipal officers don't typically garner the same level of prestige as state officers or federal agents. In the mind of this researcher, the municipal patrol officer is one of the most taxing, underappreciated, and often underpaid roles in the country's entire law enforcement system. Municipal police were chosen as the focal point of this study out of respect and gratitude for these men and women, and for the families who support them in their work.

A convenience sample of 110 Midwestern police officers and their romantic partners were recruited for the study. Participants were recruited from four communities of similar size and demographic composition. Participation in the study was voluntary. Participants were informed of the general purpose of the study, i.e., "to identify the interpersonal characteristics and work- and home-based contextual factors that are associated with relationship quality among law enforcement officers and their romantic partners."

A subject matter expert was not required for this population due to the minimal risk involved and because the population is not a protected group. Additionally, the lead researcher is affiliated with the population of interest and completed this study under the supervision of a dissertation committee in partial fulfillment of a doctoral degree in marriage and family therapy.

Purposeful, criterion-based sampling procedures restricted participation to individuals with the characteristics of interest (Daly, 2007; Heiselt & Sheperis, 2010); in this case, municipal police officers and their romantic partners. To minimize confound variables, municipal officers

were chosen as the population of interest, as opposed to those serving in state or federal

positions. In addition, officers were recruited from communities of similar size and demographic

composition. Interested participants were required to be in "a committed romantic relationship."

This designation included 1) all married couples, 2) individuals who are living together and are

romantically involved, or 3) couples who are not living together but are exclusively dating, with

no other sexual partners, and with no intention to break up.

Before recruiting any participants for this research project, the researcher performed a

power analysis to determine a suitable sample size necessary for a satisfactory power for a linear

multiple regression. Using G*Power 3.1 software (Faul, Erdfelder, Buchner & Lang, 2009), a

software program for performing power analyses, the following information was used to estimate

the sample size required for power: (1-β) at 0.95: α= 0.05 and a medium effect size ($f^2 = 0.15$).

The program calculated a total sample size of 107 participants (ideally, 54 couples; or 54

participants in each sample group) actual power - 0.95; critical $F = 3.09$ and $\lambda = 16.05$,

numerator $df = 2$, denominator $df = 101$. According to the power analyses, a sample size of 54

couples would be a sufficient number of participants to allow adequate statistical power for the

majority of the statistical analyses required for the validation of the most robust inventory, the

Revised Dyadic Adjustment Scale.

A power analysis assumes the use of a random sampling technique (Cohen, 2013).

However, this study used a purposive convenience sample, potentially limiting power and

increasing the possibility of a type II error. In order to account for the use of a convenience

sample, attempts were made to enhance the homogeneity of participants to limit the potential for

confounding variables. The goal was to obtain a heterogeneous sample from within relatively

homogeneous communities (see recruitment inclusion/exclusion criteria below). Although doing

so limited the ability to generalize findings to the broader law enforcement population, it served

to reduce the impact of extraneous factors, such as community demographics. Ideally, this study

will serve as a starting point for future, more large-scale or comparison studies.

Recruitment. The researcher contacted chiefs of police in five municipalities in the

upper Midwest to gauge potential level of interest and institutional support in the recruiting

process. These departments were chosen due to their accessibility to the researcher, including

prior networking and relationships with key contacts. Additionally, the five communities and

their respective police departments share similar demographics in relation to community

composition and geographic location. Four police departments responded to the inquiry and

voiced interest in participation.

Inclusion/Exclusion Criteria. Participants included in the study were required to meet

the following criteria:

- Employed as a municipal police officer.

- The spouse or committed romantic partner of a municipal patrol officer.

- Involved in a committed relationship – including marriage, cohabitation, or
  exclusive dating with no other sexual partners and with no intention to break
  up.

Participants were excluded from the study if they meet any of the following criteria:

- Employed as departmental support staff or administration.

- Patrol officers who are single, casually dating, or intending to break up with their
  current romantic partner.

Measures

The concurrent embedded mixed methods design of this study called for the use of quantitative and qualitative measurements. Quantitative and qualitative data collection occurred simultaneously as part of an anonymous, self-administered, online questionnaire. The cross-sectional survey design allowed for the expedient collection of data that contained a snapshot of participants' attitudes, beliefs, and opinions (Young, 2010).

Quantitative Measures. Non-distressed couples were the primary focus of this investigation. The outcome variable, relationship quality, was calculated quantitatively. Three independent measures assessing for relationship quality were used: The Kansas Marital Satisfaction Scale (KMSS) (Appendix D), the Revised Dyadic Adjustment Scale (RDAS) (Appendix E), and the Perceived Relationship Quality Components Inventory (PRQC) (Appendix F). Correlations between the KMSS and the RDAS are high (r=.783) (Crane et al., 2000); the use of three measures added to the robustness of the study's internal validity. All three inventories were readily available for use through the PsychTests database and did not require a license or fee for non-commercial or student research purposes.

In addition to the relationship inventories, participants were asked about the length of their current relationship and about the number and ages of any children in their care. Participants were also asked to indicate if they have a family history in law enforcement (i.e. having a parent, sibling, grandparent or another close relative who has served or is serving in law enforcement) and whether or not they have participated in marriage counseling. Finally, participating officers were asked to indicate their current shift assignment (day, afternoon/swing, or night), length of their current shift (8-hr, 10-hr, 12-hr, or other), frequency of shift rotation, current duty assignment (patrol, supervisor, special detail) and whether they have ever served on

a special assignment team or task force that has placed them outside of regular patrol duties.

Patrol officers' significant others were asked to indicate if they are employed outside the home

and/or are students.

Kansas Marital Satisfaction Survey. The Kansas Marital Satisfaction Survey (KMSS)

(Appendix D) is a three-question, brief assessment of marital satisfaction that was chosen for this

study based on its concision, along with its well-established internal consistency, reliability, and

validity (Schumm et al., 1986). Respondents were asked to score their relationship along three

domains, each on a seven-point Likert-style scale. Scores were summed to reveal a total marital

satisfaction rating (ranging from 3-21), with 17 serving as the cutoff indication of distressed/non-

distressed couples. Individuals who score a 17 or higher were considered non-distressed, while

individuals scoring a 16 or lower were considered to be in some degree of distress within the

relationship in question (Crane et al., 2000).

Revised Dyadic Adjustment Scale. The Revised Dyadic Adjustment Scale (RDAS)

(appendix E) included 14 items specific to a couple's consensus on key issues, satisfaction in the

relationship, and cohesion with regard to exchanges of ideas and shared projects (Busby,

Christensen, Crane, & Larson, 1995). Participants ranked responses along five- and six-point

Likert scales, indicating a level of agreement with statements of consensus, or frequency of

occurrence of satisfaction and cohesion (Busby et al., 1995).

The RDAS is well established as a reliable and valid instrument (a = .90) that quickly

assesses dyadic functioning (Busby et al, 1995). A cutoff score of 48 has been established to

differentiate distressed from non-distressed couples (Crane et al., 2000).

Perceived Relationship Quality Components Inventory. The Perceived Relationship

Quality Components Inventory (PRQC) (Appendix F) is an 18-question survey that examines

overall relationship quality along with satisfaction across six, quasi-independent subscales:

satisfaction, commitment, intimacy, trust, passion, and love. These six constructs are unique

with respect to other relationship satisfaction/quality inventories in that they allow for

independent assessment of domain-specific strengths and weaknesses (Fletcher, Simpson &

Thomas, 2000). In other words, the constructs work together to inform the overall quality of a

couple's relationship, but can independently vary in direction and strength (Fletcher et al., 2000).

For example, an individual may feel very committed to his/her partner but could indicate that the

relationship is lacking in trust and intimacy. Contrarily, someone may indicate their relationship

is very passionate, though lacking in commitment.

The six constructs of the PRQC were separately assessed through three questions each,

independently rated on seven-point Likert-style scales. The subscales have high internal

reliability and face validity ($\alpha = .96$). Each of the 18 indicator variables has been confirmed to

load on the six respective constructs, which in turn load on the second-order factor of overall

perceived relationship quality (Fletcher et al., 2000). One subquestion in each domain (questions

1, 4, 7, 10, 13, and 16) has been identified as "the best exemplar" (p. 351) of the respective

relationship quality component by Fletcher et al. (2000). Researchers typically average these six

scores to account for a single relationship quality indication, with higher scores signifying

greater relationship quality overall (Crespo, Davide, Costa & Fletcher, 2008; Givertz & Safford,

2011; Philippe, Koestner & Lekes, 2013; Slotter & Luchies, 2014). For the purposes of this

study, only the six exemplar questions were used to measure relationship quality and the six

components within. Individually, the exemplars accounted for the respective quality of the

couple in each domain. The exemplars were averaged to provide a single relationship quality

score; as with the individual domain scores, higher global quality averages were indicative of more relationship quality.

The PRQC provided the study's preliminary look at domain-specific strengths contributing to a satisfying marriage among law enforcement officers and their romantic partners. Embedded, open-ended, qualitative questions provided narrative descriptions of participant's experiences with respect to each domain. The qualitative descriptions were a key aspect of the study in that they provided participants with an opportunity to clarify quantitative responses. Qualitative data were examined for noteworthy themes and served as subjective examples of quantitative findings.

Qualitative Measures. Participants were asked a total of 12 open-ended questions. First, after each above-mentioned PRQC subscale, participants were prompted to: "Briefly explain your responses. Give specific examples of experiences and/or interactions that come to mind when you think of *satisfaction; commitment; intimacy; trust; passion; love* in your relationship." Participants were also given an opportunity to describe any additional interactions or experiences of the past few years that they believe contributed significantly to the quality of their relationship. They were prompted to provide an example of advice they would give to a new officer and his/her romantic partner. They were asked about their greatest relational strength. Three additional questions accounted for noteworthy aspects of the literature review that were either called to attention during informal conversations with key informants or have received substantial amounts of media attention in recent years: departmental support and personal/interpersonal implications of the media's (primarily-negative) focus on law enforcement.

Maynard and Maynard (1982) and Violanti and Aron (1994) reported that lack of departmental support was a notable stressor for officers and spouses alike. Two informants from an urban upper Midwest community also suggested the survey include a question related to departmental support and family welfare. The informants clarified that they often receive complaints from patrol officers or family members who are dissatisfied with departmental communication and policies. They sought additional information about occupation-based family needs and ideas as to how the department could help.

Additionally, over the past 10 years, debate over police use-of-force tactics has been reinvigorated as a result of multiple high-profile incidents involving apparent racial bias and possible abuses of power (T. Shaw, 2015; Williams & Wines, 2016). Police controversies have topped national headlines consistently in recent years (Clarke, 2016; Hickey, 2012; Keneally, 2015; Leitsinger, 2014). Some communities and activist groups are demanding criminal justice reform (Cobb, 2016; McClain, 2016; Rickford, 2016). Many departments have increased organizational oversights as a result, and several are reporting low officer morale (Bello, 2014; Gorner, 2016). A USA Today article reported on perceptions of a nationwide "anti-police sentiment" (Bello, 2014, p.1) and in one formal study, a police spouse shared perceptions of an "erosion of respect" for the law enforcement community (Karaffa et al., 2015, p.126).

Three related qualitative survey questions were included as a part of the current study: 1) "Is there anything the department (i.e. your local precinct or local department leadership) can do to better support your family/relationship?", 2) "Has the media focus on law enforcement affected [your/your spouse's] morale? If yes, how?" 3) "Has the media focus on law enforcement affected your romantic relationship? If yes, how?"

Materials

The materials for this study consisted of recruitment flyers (see Appendix A) as well as the online survey and associated consent form (see Appendix B & C). Participants were responsible for finding their own means of completing the online questionnaire (via personal cell phone, laptop, tablet).

The materials associated with this study did not require any personally identifying information from participants. The consent form (Appendix B) informed participants of this information, as well as participants' rights to withdraw their data within a specific window of time. The researcher stored and processed collected data on her private laptop, protected by a sign-on password and up-to-date virus protection software. A copy of the data also resides on the dissertation chair's office password-protected computer in a restricted, locked office.

Research Questions

The current study asked the question, "What interpersonal characteristics and work- and home-based contextual factors are associated with relationship quality for law enforcement officers and their romantic partners?" Four subquestions were generated based on information gathered in the literature review and as a result of informal conversations with key informants during the early planning stages of the study:

1. "Is there a significant association between work-based variables and relationship quality?"

2. "Is there a significant association between home/family-based variables and relationship quality?"

3. "Which of the following relationship constructs are most significantly associated with relationship quality: satisfaction, commitment, intimacy, trust, passion, or love?"

4. "Which of the following interpersonal areas are most significantly associated with relationship quality: consensus, satisfaction, or cohesion?"

Analyses

Data analysis took place on the researcher's personal, password-protected laptop using SPSS software (IBM Corp., 2017). Data collection was anonymous; however, each couple created a six-letter, self-established, unique identifier to allow for within-couple analyses. Quantitative and qualitative data were transferred directly from Qualtrics (2018) into Excel spreadsheets and then SPSS in order to limit the likelihood of human error.

Quantitative data aligned interpersonal, work-, and home-based characteristics with participant reports of global relationship quality. Qualitative analyses served to triangulate quantitative findings and provided additional clues as to the contextual and behavioral strengths that contribute to relationship quality for law enforcement officers and their romantic partners. Qualitative data also gave insight into the ways that police departments might better support their officers' families and provided a first look at the impact that the recent media attention on law enforcement is having on officers and/or their intimate relationships.

Quantitative analyses. Table 1 provides an overview of the quantitative analyses used to address the global research question: **"**What interpersonal characteristics and work- and home-based contextual factors associated with relationship quality among law enforcement officers and their romantic partners?"

The first step in analysis was to match paired couples. This was done using Microsoft Excel and the six-digit unique identifier that individuals created as part of the online questionnaire. Participants were grouped into four, sometimes overlapping, categories: all participants, officers, romantic partners, and paired couples. Descriptive statistics were run on

demographic variables to provide a snapshot of the gender, age, and ethnicity of participants in the various subsamples. Of particular focus during this first portion of analysis was, 1) comparing basic demographics between subsamples (all participants, officers, romantic partners, and paired couples), and 2) comparing relationship quality (RQ) total scores and subscores between participants. The intention was to distinguish relationally non-distressed individuals/couples from relationally distressed individuals/couples. In line with findings from Crane (2000), a score of 17 was used as the established cutoff for a distress indication on the KMSS; a score below 48 indicates distress on the RDAS. A paired-samples t-test was used to determine whether officers' RQ scores significantly differ from their paired romantic partners'.

Next, the three relationship quality indicators were correlated as a means of triangulating RQ outcomes and relational distress/non-distress (Crespo et al., 2008; Fletcher, 2000; Givertz & Safford, 2011; Philippe, et al., 2013; Slotter & Luchies, 2014). Individuals were coded as either distressed or non-distressed. This dichotomous classification was intended to serve as the outcome variable of interest (RQ) for the remainder of the statistical analyses. However, as chapter four will explain, distress indications on the RDAS and KMSS differed for over one-quarter of participants (26.4%), making a pure distress/non-distress designation difficult. Ultimately, it was decided that the outcome variable would be evaluated as a continuous variable, using participants' total scores on the RDAS as indication of the strength of their relationship quality.

The third step in quantitative analysis was to explore correlations among variables of interest with respect to RQ score. One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) and correlational analyses (Pearson, Spearman, or point-biserial) were used to determine the probability of independence among the variables and to measure the strength of associations between work-

and home-based demographics and RQ. Any variables deemed to be significantly different or significantly correlated were then analyzed for a predictive relationship via bivariate regression analysis.

One-way ANOVA. A one-way ANOVA assesses whether means of a dependent variable differ significantly among groups. The one-way ANOVA *F*-test is appropriate for a categorical dependent variable with more than two factors. If significance is determined, post-hoc tests provide a more detailed explanation of similarities and differences between group means. One-way ANOVAs do not provide an indication of the strength of a relationship, but they are an important starting point for assessing significant differences among a dependent variable with multiple categories (Green & Salkind, 2011).

Pearson correlation. A Pearson product-moment correlation, simply called a Pearson correlation, assesses the degree of linear association among two continuous variables. The outcome is presented as a correlational coefficient (*r)* ranging in strength and direction from negative one to positive one (Green & Salkind, 2011).

Spearman correlation. Spearman's rank-order correlation, simply called a Spearman correlation, is the non-parametric version of a Pearson correlation. A Spearman correlation assesses the degree of association among two ranked or ordered variables (ordinal, interval, or ratio). The outcome is presented as a correlational coefficient (r_s) that ranges in strength and direction from negative one to positive one (Laerd Statistics, 2018b). Spearman's correlation is ideal for an exploratory analysis because Spearman coefficients can be indicative of monotonic relationships as well as linear relationships. Additionally, Spearman's correlation is appropriate for variables that may not be normally distributed; it is not very sensitive to outliers (McDonald, 2015).

   Point-biserial correlation. A point-biserial correlation measures the strength and association between one continuous and one dichotomous variable. The outcome is presented as a correlational coefficient (r_{pb}) ranging from negative one to positive one (Laerd Statistics, 2018a).

   Bivariate regression. Regression coefficients indicate whether an independent variable can predict the magnitude and direction of the dependent variable. A bivariate regression is appropriate for studies with a continuous outcome variable and either a categorical or continuous predictor variable (Green & Salkind, 2011). Categorical variables must be dummy-coded prior to analysis (typically as 0s and 1s) to avoid misinterpretation as a continuous variable. The predictive value of the independent variable is indicated via significance in an F-test (ANOVA table) and t-test (indicating degrees of freedom between two variables and represented as a coefficients table). A beta coefficient (β) represents the gradient of the regression line and indicates the direction and change in the outcome variable associated with a single unit change in the predictor variable. The r-squared coefficient (r^2) is also presented as part of the model summary, indicating the percentage of variance in the outcome variable that is accounted for by the predictor variable (Green & Salkind, 2011). In this study, a p-value of $\leq$ .05 was used to indicate significance (a 95% confidence interval).

   Additional quantitative analyses were conducted to support a thorough understanding of the association and/or relationships among variables. First, standard multiple regressions were conducted. The intent was to determine how well all of the variables associated with a given subquestion predicted relationship quality. Then, a stepwise regression was used to evaluate which variable (or combination of variables) best predicted relationship quality, and to what

extent. The regression procedures were conducted for each research subquestion and on each of the four subsamples: all participants, officers, romantic partners, and paired couples.

Standard multiple regression. A standard multiple regression (also called multiple linear regression) is the same as a bivariate regression, but with multiple independent variables. In a standard multiple regression, all included variables are entered into a single model to determine the significance of those variables together as predictive of the outcome variable. As with a bivariate regression analysis, categorical variables must be dummy-coded, an F-test and t-test indicate significance, a beta coefficient (β) and an r-squared coefficient (r^2) are presented (Green & Salkind, 2011). If the model is predictive of the outcome variable, the p-value will be .05 or less.

Stepwise regression. A stepwise regression is a unique type of multiple regression that combines forward and backward regression techniques to account for variables that add to and subtract from the regression. Predictor variables are added to and removed from the equation sequentially to determine which particular variable or combination of variables best predict the outcome variable. Typically, at least one model (i.e. one variable) is identified as the best predictor. Subsequent models add variables as they continue to contribute significantly to the regression line. Variables that do not contribute significantly to the regression are not included in any model (Lewis-Beck, Bryman & Liao, 2003).

Table 1

Summary of Quantitative Analyses

Primary Research Question: "What interpersonal characteristics and work- and home-based contextual factors are associated with relationship quality for law enforcement officers and their romantic partners?"

Variable	Measure	Analysis
Subquestion 1 Is there a significant association between work-based variables and relationship quality?		
Officer tenure		
Whole years	Continuous	Pearson Correlation
5-year increments	Ordinal/Ranked	Spearman Correlation
10-year increments	Ordinal/Ranked	Spearman Correlation
Officer Duty Assignment		
Patrol, Supervisor, Detail/Special Assign.	Categorical	ANOVA
Officer Shift Assignment		
Day, Swing, Night	Categorical	ANOVA
Officer Shift Length		
8-, 10-, 12-hour, or other	Ordinal/Ranked	Spearman Correlation
Frequency of Rotation		
Monthly, Quarterly, 2x/year, Annually, Do not rotate shifts, or Other	Categorical	ANOVA
Prior Detail/Special Assignment Yes/No	Dichotomous	Point-Biserial Correlation
CIT Trained Yes/No	Dichotomous	Point-Biserial Correlation
Subquestion 2 Is there a significant association between home/family-based variables and relationship quality?		
Gender Male/Female	Dichotomous	Point-Biserial Correlation
Age		
Whole years	Continuous	Pearson Correlation
5-year increments	Ordinal/Ranked	Spearman Correlation
10-year increments	Ordinal/Ranked	Spearman Correlation

Ethnicity
American Indian or Alaskan Native, Asian or Pacific Islander, Black, White-Hispanic, or White-non-Hispanic — Categorical — ANOVA

Length of Relationship
Whole years — Continuous — Pearson Correlation
5-year increments — Ordinal/Ranked — Spearman Correlation
10-year increments — Ordinal/Ranked — Spearman Correlation

Marital Status & Living Arrangement
Married, living together; Married, not living together; not married, living together; or not married, not living together — Categorical — ANOVA

Family History of Law Enforcement
Yes/No — Dichotomous — Point-Biserial Correlation

LE Status at Start of Relationship
Joined law enforcement prior to dating, Joined law enforcement while dating, or Joined law enforcement after marriage — Categorical — ANOVA

Romantic Partner Employed
Full-time paid work, Part-time paid work, Not working in a paid position outside of the home — Categorical — ANOVA

Romantic Partner Student
Yes/No — Dichotomous — Point-Biserial Correlation

Parenting
Yes/No — Dichotomous — Point-Biserial Correlation

Ages of Children
Total years — Continuous — Pearson Correlation
By group (0-2 years, 3-5 years, 6-12 years, 13-15 years, 16-18 years, or 19 years+) — Ordinal/Ranked — Spearman Correlation

Number of Children
Total # — Continuous — Pearson Correlation
Grouped (0 children, 1-2 children, 3-4 children, 5-6 children) — Ordinal/Ranked — Spearman Correlation

Type of Children
All kids, All teens, Mix of Kids & Teens, all over 18 — Categorical — ANOVA

Prior Counseling

Yes/No	Dichotomous	Point-Biserial Correlation

Subquestion 3

Which of the following relationship constructs are most significantly associated
with relationship quality: satisfaction, commitment, intimacy, trust, passion, or love?

Satisfaction	Continuous	
Commitment	Continuous	
Intimacy	Continuous	*Standard Multiple Regression on all 6 variables; correlational coefficients affirm significant associations*
Trust	Continuous	
Passion	Continuous	
Love	Continuous	

Subquestion 4

Which of the following interpersonal areas are most significantly associated
with relationship quality: consensus, satisfaction, or cohesion?"

Consensus Extent of agreement on religious matters, demonstrations of affection, major decision-making, sex relations, conventionality, and career decisions.	Continuous	
Satisfaction Frequency of having discussed or considered divorce/separation, quarreling, regretting marriage or living together, and getting on each other's nerves.	Continuous	*Standard Multiple Regression on all 3 variables; correlational coefficients affirm significant associations*
Cohesion Frequency of engaging in outside interests together, having a stimulating exchange of ideas, working together on a project, and calmly discuss something.	Continuous	

Qualitative analyses. Conventional content analysis served as the analytic approach to the qualitative data (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Conventional content analysis is appropriate for studies where there is limited pre-existing literature on the topic of interest. In a conventional content analysis, themes and categories flow directly from the data, as opposed to being motivated by prior findings (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). In total, twelve (12) qualitative questions were included in the survey; all were examined using conventional content analysis. Table 2 provides an overview of the qualitative questions in the order they are presented in the online questionnaire.

Table 2

Qualitative Research Questions*

Question #	Question Stem/Text	Question Focus
Question 1		Satisfaction (PRQC Subscale)
Question 2		Commitment (PRQC Subscale)
Question 3	"Please briefly explain: In the text box below, provide specific examples of experiences and/or interactions with your partner that influenced your choices in this section."	Intimacy (PRQC Subscale)
Question 4		Trust (PRQC Subscale)
Question 5		Passion (PRQC Subscale)
Question 6		Love (PRQC Subscale)
Question 7	"Describe any additional interactions or experiences of the past few years that have contributed significantly to the quality of your relationship."	Additional Experiences
Question 8	"Please describe any ways the department (i.e. your local precinct or local department leadership) can better support your family/relationship."	Departmental Support

Question 9	"Does the media's attention to law enforcement (i.e. television and news reports) affect your/your partner's morale?" (If yes) "Please briefly explain how you believe your/your partner's morale has been affected by the media"	Media & Morale
Question 10	"Does the media's attention to law enforcement (i.e. television and news reports) affect your/your romantic relationship?" (If yes) "Please briefly explain how you believe your relationship has been affected by the media"	Media & Relationship
Question 11	"What do you feel is the greatest strength of your relationship?"	Greatest Strength
Question 12	"What relationship advice would you give to a new officer and his/her spouse/partner?"	Advice to Other Couples

*All questions were analyzed using content analysis.

Qualitative data analysis began with a preliminary reading of participant responses to the 12 qualitative questions. Initial reactions and impressions were noted. Then, key phrases and words were identified. Recurrent themes were labeled. Finally, emergent themes were grouped into broader categories based on how they were related and linked (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005).

For the purpose of comparison, officers' responses were analyzed separately from their romantic partners'. Within subgroups (officers and romantic partners), participants were separated into relationally distressed/relationally non-distressed groups. Twenty-four (24) separate documents and 48 matrices (Appendix G & H) were created to allow for independent analysis of the 12 qualitative questions between the two subsample groups and within relationally distressed/non-distressed designations.

Qualitative responses for each question were copied and pasted from within electronic documents in order to limit the likelihood of human error. Data from police officers were analyzed first (Appendix G), followed by data from romantic partners (Appendix H). The

questions were analyzed in the order that they were presented to participants in the survey (1-12). Thematic similarities and differences between subsample groups and distressed/non-distressed individuals are described and discussed in chapters four and five.

Trustworthiness. Peer debriefing and member checking served to triangulate qualitative findings. Three individuals agreed to review the qualitative data and provide their own summaries of findings. Peer debriefing and member checking are common ways for qualitative researchers to "build evidence for a code or theme" (Creswell & Clark, 2011, p. 212). The three individuals used to triangulate qualitative data for this study were chosen based on their experience with scholarly research, and/or family/personal histories in law enforcement. The first, Dr. Carolyn Tubbs serves as the researcher's committee chair and is the daughter of a former El Paso, Texas Police Officer. Dr. Tubbs is an experienced qualitative researcher. The second and third are both spouses of law enforcement officers. One works as an epidemiologist with a specialty in occupational injury. She has completed a multitude of research studies related to injury epidemiology for first responders, including law enforcement. The second is a special agent of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) who served as a sheriff's deputy for eight years prior to the start of her federal career.

Role of the Researcher

Though the qualitative aspects of this study are primarily triangulatory, an aspect of interpretation remains. This researcher's personal biases and conscious/unconscious expectations and experiences are sure to influence the interpretation of participants' words and explanations. Walshaw (2010) states, "subjectivity is the cornerstone of the research encounter. …the researcher can never hope to be detached" (Walshaw, 2010, p. 592).

Epistemology. I believe that reality can be known and shared through the socially constructed means of human communication (Daly, 2007). My pragmatic stance acknowledges the imperfection of language, and that one can never truly "know" the intentions, thoughts, or feelings of another. However, I believe that by communicating with each other, we can gain some understanding of each other's world and share in a sense of reality (Daly, 2007). For the purpose of this research, participants' realities will be communicated through their objective survey responses (quantitative data) and subjective explanations of those responses (qualitative data). My own experiences as the spouse of a law enforcement officer influence and support my understanding of the feelings and experiences that participants are communicating.

Self-positioning. My professional training in marriage and family therapy has shaped my beliefs about the emotional and behavioral components that contribute to marital satisfaction. These biases undoubtedly influence my interpretation of the data. Likewise, my personal experiences as the spouse of a law enforcement officer influenced my interpretation of existing law enforcement literature and my understanding of the associated relational stressors. However, in addition to the biases that my personal life brings to the research, my experiences as the spouse of a law enforcement officer served as an important feature of the data collection process.

A key aspect of the recruitment process was my association as the spouse of a federal investigator. Law enforcement officers are a notoriously guarded and private group (Waddington, 2002). Published literature and informal conversations with key informants, including my own husband, urged me to make upfront mention of membership in the enforcement family community in order to build rapport with potential participants and to confirm an allied role. As a result, in-group status was announced during initial communications with recruitment sites and potential participants. Still, it is noteworthy to mention that I hold

caution in attempting to over-identify with the population of interest, as my spouse works in a federal branch of law enforcement, as opposed to in a state or local position. I am cautiously aware that some will fail to see me as an insider based on this distinction alone. For the purpose of this study, my research identity is really one of an "in-group outsider." I used my role as the spouse of a federal law enforcement officer as a way to affiliate with the group and as an introduction to the respect with which I approach this research.

My motivations for this research are grounded in advocacy and support, though I cannot deny my own curiosity in relation to how other officers and their romantic partners are making their relationships work. Gottman (1999) asserts that minimizing harsh criticisms and regularly communicating fondness and admiration are key contributions to relationship satisfaction. However, some individuals, including many law enforcement officers, tend to be emotionally disconnected and/or hold rigid beliefs and attitudes that interfere with their ability to communicate or behave in the ways that Gottman has found to be pertinent to satisfying relationships (Kirschman et al., 2013; Maynard & Maynard, 1982; Miller, 2007; Smisinski, 2016). I see my own spouse is much this way. Though he is a loving and playful father, a trustworthy partner, and a responsible provider, he sometimes lacks the nurturing, romance, and empathy that I desire as his spouse. We sometimes struggle to tolerate each other's worldviews. For example, he is quick to label and judge and is, at first meeting, suspicious of people; I tend towards openness and acceptance; I am trusting from the get-go. I want to like people; my spouse wants to know who they are. He is trained to communicate concretely and without emotion. He values rules and looks for facts. I, on the other hand, live in a perpetual grey area. I see most things on a spectrum. I am trained to communicate with curiosity and on an emotional level. I value nurturing, transparency, and perspective.

As a researcher, it is important for me to be mindful of my own story and experiences as I interpret the results of this study. I must be cautious of the possibility that I may unconsciously seek my own truths in the stories of my participants. I cannot assume to know the realities of my participants just because they may sound similar to my own (Walshaw, 2010). I hope that my transparent disclosure of motivations and experiences contributes to the integrity of this study (Daly, 2007) and keeps me mindful of my biases moving forward (Creswell, 2009; Daly, 2007; Walshaw, 2010).

Limitations. The primary challenges associated with a concurrent embedded quantitative-qualitative mixed methods design lies in the difficulty associated with concurrent data collection and analyses. Additional limitations to the design include the potential for confounds and the difficulty in generalizing findings outside of the participating cohort (Creswell, 2009). The concurrent embedded strategy required the researcher to be adept at two procedural methods: qualitative and quantitative. Combining and comparing two types of data can be challenging and discrepancies may not be easily resolved (Creswell, 2009). This researcher felt prepared to dive into the rigor that was required of this design and has expert support in the form of advisors and confederates who are skilled in qualitative and mixed methodology.

An additional limitation of the study's design lies in the area of external validity, namely, a cautious generalization of findings. This researcher does not assume that the results of this study are generalizable to law enforcement officers globally, or even nation-wide. However, the purpose of this study was not to provide a comprehensive guide for assuring satisfaction in officer's romantic relationships as much as it was to begin to explore those interpersonal behaviors and contextual factors that could buffer against previously identified stressors for law

enforcement officers and their romantic partners. The exploratory nature of the study and concurrent embedded design were intended to serve only as a starting point for future research on the topic of relational strengths in this population.

The sample population of this study included law enforcement officers in a subjectively defined "committed relationship". Sexual orientation was not differentiated for the purposes of this study but was an expected constraint for the generalizability of the findings. Similarly, the sample was drawn from four Midwestern communities of similar size and demographics. Therefore, the results may not hold true for couples residing outside of the Midwest, or in smaller, larger, or more rural or urban communities. Furthermore, the results of this study will not necessarily speak to the experiences of all individuals in the participating departments, or even to all of those in similarly sized or censused communities. This research is intended only to describe relational strengths for law enforcement officers and their romantic partners within the context of the time and location of the participants in this study. However, detailed documentation of procedures support the possibility of replication, thereby enhancing any generalizations that might be drawn from future research in this area (Creswell, 2009).

Chapter IV

RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to begin to explore the interpersonal characteristics and work- and home-based contextual factors associated with relationship quality among law enforcement officers and their romantic partners. A concurrent, embedded, quantitative-qualitative mixed methods design was used to address the central research question: "What interpersonal characteristics and work- and home-based contextual factors are positively associated with relationship quality for law enforcement officers and their romantic partners?" Four subquestions were developed to help answer the central research question: 1) "Is there a significant association between work-based variables and relationship quality?" 2) "Is there a significant association between home-based variables and relationship quality?" 3) "Which of the following relationship constructs are most significantly associated with relationship quality: satisfaction, commitment, intimacy, trust, passion, or love?" 4) "Which of the following interpersonal areas are most significantly associated with relationship quality: consensus, satisfaction, or cohesion?"

This chapter is broken down into eight major sections. The first four sections introduce the total sample of all participants (N = 110) and the three affiliated subsamples of officers (n = 82), officers' romantic partners (n = 28), and paired couples (n = 26). These sections include subsample (all participants, officers, romantic partners, and paired couples) outcomes on the three relationship quality inventories included in the study: The Perceived Relationship Quality Components (PRQC) Inventory, the Revised Dyadic Adjustment Scale (RDAS), and the Kansas Marital Satisfaction Scale (KMSS).

The next section provides a comparison of relationship quality outcomes between the four subsamples of participants. Subsample scores are compared across the PRQC, the RDAS,

and the KMSS through a series of one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). Similarities and differences are discussed. A within-groups comparison follows, summarizing the similarities and differences in the scores of individuals in the paired dyads. The intent of the within-groups comparison is to determine if officers' scores on the three relationship inventories differed significantly from their romantic partners'.

The sixth section of this chapter is focused on triangulation of the relationship inventories. A series of bivariate correlation analyses were conducted and summarized; first on the entire population sample ($N = 110$), then on officers ($n = 82$), then on romantic partners ($n = 28$), and finally, on the paired couples ($n = 26$). The goal was to test the validity of the relationship quality measures within the current study. Participant scores should be highly correlated across inventories.

The seventh section of this chapter summarizes the quantitative findings associated with each of the four subquestions. Subsamples were analyzed separately for each subquestion to support exploration of the nuances contributing to relationship quality for each group. Results of the affiliated qualitative analyses are included to support and enhance quantitative findings specific to each research subquestion. The answer to each research subquestion is provided in the conclusion of each section.

This chapter concludes with a discussion of the quantitative and qualitative findings relative to the two conceptual lenses that focus this study: the work-family interface and human ecology theory. The answer to the global research question is found in the discussion. Chapter five (summary, implications, and recommendations), follows.

Results – All Participants

Participants (police officers and their romantic partners) were recruited from four Midwestern communities of similar size and demographic composition during the winter of 2018-2019. In total, 121 individuals began the survey. However, 10 (8.3%) of these completed less than half of the survey or failed to fit criteria for participation (for example, two replied that they were not in committed romantic relationships and one opted not to continue the survey after reading the informed consent page); these individuals were excluded from the final sample. Additionally, one participant took the survey twice (see "paired couples demographics" section below), having stopped near completion on the first go-around and completing it upon the second. Data from the second, complete survey, were kept for inclusion in the study making the final sample size 110 participants.

Demographics

Of the 110 participants in the sample, 82 (74.5%) were officers and 28 (25.5%) were romantic partners of police officers. The majority of participants identified as male ($n = 75$; 68.2%) and White, non-Hispanic ($n = 98$; 89.1%). Participants ranged in age from 21 to 61 years old ($M = 40.95$, $SD = 9.29$) and averaged 15.7 years in their current relationship (range: 1-35 years). Ninety percent (90%) of participants were married ($n = 99$). Of the 11 individuals who were not married, nine reported living together, and two participants did not live with their romantic partners.

Over three-quarters of participants identified as parents (79.1%, $n = 87$), and most ($n = 71$; 64.5%) reported having two or more children (range: 0-6, $M = 1.91$, $SD = 1.49$). Among those who were parenting, 43 reported having only children less than 12 years of age (39.1%), 12

reported having only teenagers (10.9%), 21 had a mix of children and teens (19%), and 11 had

adult children 18 years of age or older (10%).

Finally, nearly half of the participants (49.1%) reported a family history of law

enforcement ($n = 54$) and about one-third (34.5%) identified as having participated in some type

of counseling in the past ($n = 38$). Over 80% of respondents ($n = 91$; 82.7%) reported that the

media attention on law enforcement does not affect their relationship; 13.6% ($n = 15$) believed

that it does. Four participants did not answer this question. Table 3 summarizes the demographic

characteristics of the participants. Information specific to officers' work-based demographics

(tenure, duty assignment, etc.) are presented in the subsequent section of this chapter that focuses

on the officers' subsample. Demographic information specific to the romantic partners in the

study (employment/student status, etc.) follows the officers' section.

Table 3

Participant Demographics (N = 110)

Characteristic	Frequency	Percentage
Relationship to Law Enforcement (LE)		
Officer	82	74.5
Romantic Partner	28	25.5
Gender		
Male	75	68.2
Female	35	31.8
Ethnicity		
White, non-Hispanic	98	89.1
White, Hispanic	11	10.0
Black	1	0.9
Age (range: 21-61)		
20s	17	15.5
30s	28	25.5
40s	42	38.2
50s	22	20.0
60s	1	0.9

Family History of LE		
Yes	54	49.1
No	56	50.9
Prior Counseling		
Yes	38	34.5
No	72	65.5
Length of Current Relationship (range: 1-35)		
1-4 years	13	11.8
5-9 years	19	17.3
10-14 years	18	16.4
15-19 years	22	20.0
20-24 years	14	12.7
25-29 years	15	13.6
30-34 years	8	7.3
35+ years	1	0.9
Marital Status & Living Arrangement		
Married, Living Together	99	90.0
Not Married, Living Together	9	8.2
Not Married, Not Living Together	2	1.8
Parenting Status		
Yes	87	79.1
No	23	20.9
Number of Children (range: 0-6)		
1	16	14.5
2	44	40.0
3	15	13.6
4	3	2.7
5	5	4.5
6	4	3.6
Ages of Children		
Children only	43	39.1
Mix of children and teens	21	19.0
Teens only	12	10.9
Over age 18 only	11	10.0
Media Affect Relationship		
Yes	15	13.6
No	91	82.7
Missing	4	3.6

Relationship Quality Outcomes

PRQC outcomes. The PRQC includes six subscales: satisfaction, commitment, intimacy, trust, passion, and love. Individuals were asked to rate themselves/their relationship along these subscales from 1 (not at all) to 7 (extremely). In total, 108 participants completed the PRQC (98.2%). PRQC scores can range from six to 42. Participants in the study averaged a score of 35.9 ($SD = 4.68$; range: 24.5-42), indicating that the average participant has a fairly high-quality relationship. Participant scores within the subscales were more varied.

Figure 2 depicts a bar graph of average participant scores on each of the six subscales. Participants' scores indicated commitment ($M = 6.75$, $SD = .53$; range: 4-7) and love ($M = 6.74$, $SD = .49$; range: 5-7) as the strongest aspect of their relationships. The majority of participants ($n = 82$; 98%) evaluated themselves as "extremely" (a score of 7) committed to and loving of their partner. Scores were noticeably lower in the areas of intimacy ($M = 4.88$, $SD = 1.60$; range: 2-7) and passion ($M = 4.88$, $SD = 1.47$; range: 1-7). Table 4 summarizes participant scores on the six subscales of the PRQC.
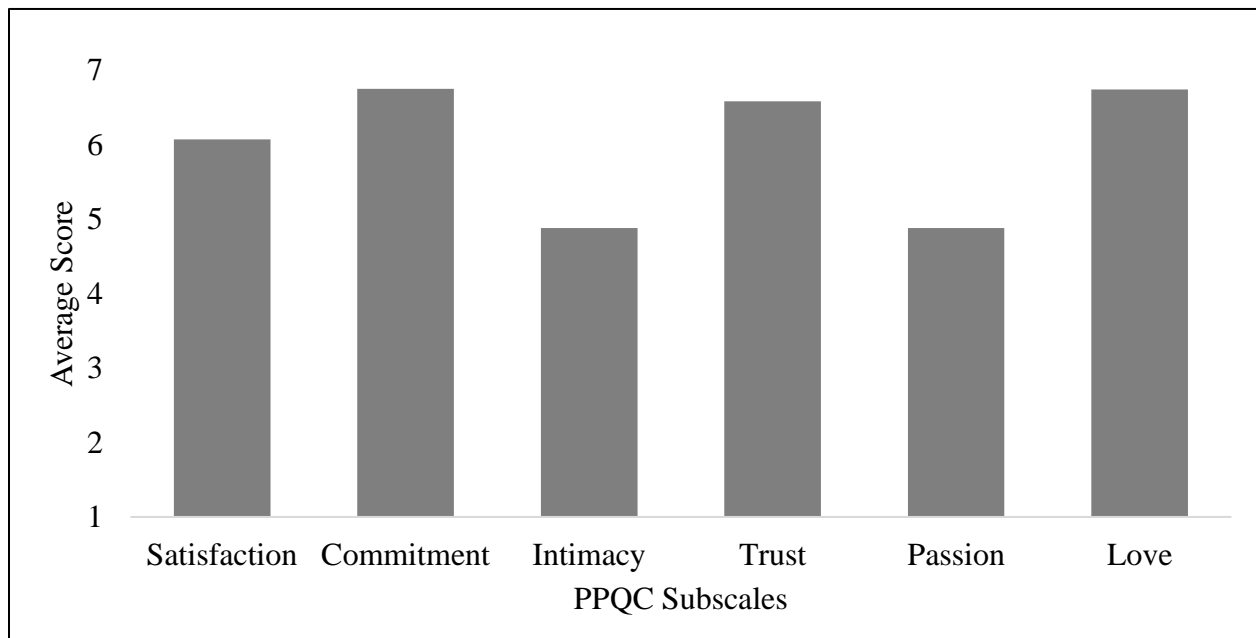
Figure 2. Average PRQC scores across subscales for all participants (n = 108).

Table 4

PRQC Subscale Outcomes for All Participants (n = 108)

	Satisfaction	Commitment	Intimacy	Trust	Passion	Love
M	6.07	6.75	4.88	6.58	4.88	6.74
SD	1.02	0.53	1.60	0.82	1.47	0.49
Range	3-7	4-7	2-7	3-7	1-7	5-7

RDAS outcomes. The RDAS consists of 14 questions across three subscales: consensus, satisfaction, and cohesion. Responses are scored along four- and five-point Likert-style scales. Higher total scores indicate less relationship distress. Sixty-nine (69) is the highest possible score; 48 serves as the established distress/non-distress cutoff.

All 110 participants completed the RDAS portion of the survey. Based on the established cutoff, (a score of 48 or above indicates a non-distress designation) the majority of participants (*n* = 80; 72.7%) scored as relationally non-distressed (*M* = 51.3, *SD* = 6.94; range: 32-63). Across the three subscales of the RDAS, distress levels were more varied. For example, 76.4% of participants (*n* = 84) were non-distressed in the area of consensus (agreement on religious matters, demonstrations of affection, major decision-making, sex relations, etc.) (*M* = 23.6, *SD* = 3.34; Non-distress indicator: $\geq$22), 91.8% (*n* = 101) were non-distressed in the area of satisfaction (determined by frequency of discussing separation or divorce, quarreling, regretting the relationship, etc.) (*M* = 15.9, *SD* = 2.09; Non-distress indicator: $\geq$14), and 64.5% of participants (*n* = 71) were non-distressed in the area of cohesion (frequency of engaging in outside interests together, having a stimulating exchange of ideas, working together on a project, etc.) (*M* = 11.8, *SD* = 3.05; Non-distress indicator: $\geq$11). Table 5 summarizes the maximum possible scores, distress cutoffs, mean participant scores and standard deviations, range of scores, and distress indications on the RDAS and its three subscales for all participants.

Table 5

RDAS Outcomes for All Participants (N = 110)

	Highest Possible Score	Distress Cutoff	*M*	*SD*	Range	Non-Distressed *n*	Non-Distressed %
Total Score	69	48	51.30	6.94	32-63	80	72.7%
Consensus	30	22	23.62	3.33	13-30	84	76.4%
Satisfaction	20	14	15.89	2.09	9-19	101	91.8%
Cohesion	19	11	11.79	3.05	6-1	71	64.5%

KMSS outcomes. The KMSS consists of three questions assessing an individual's satisfaction with 1) their relationship, 2) their spouse/partner as a spouse/partner, and 3) their relationship with their spouse/partner. All 110 participants completed the KMSS, however, during triangulation of the three relationship inventories, four individuals were suspected to have erroneous KMSS scores (see details in the "Triangulation of Relationship Quality Indicators" section below). As a result, these four individuals were excluded from analyses involving the KMSS.

Based on the established cutoff score (a score of 17 and above indicates a non-distress designation) the majority (*n* = 85; 80.2%) of the 106 participants included in the sample were determined to be relationally non-distressed (*M* = 18.32, *SD* = 2.91; range: 6-21), according to the KMSS. Figure 3 depicts the similarities in distress indicators between the RDAS and the KMSS for all participants in the study.
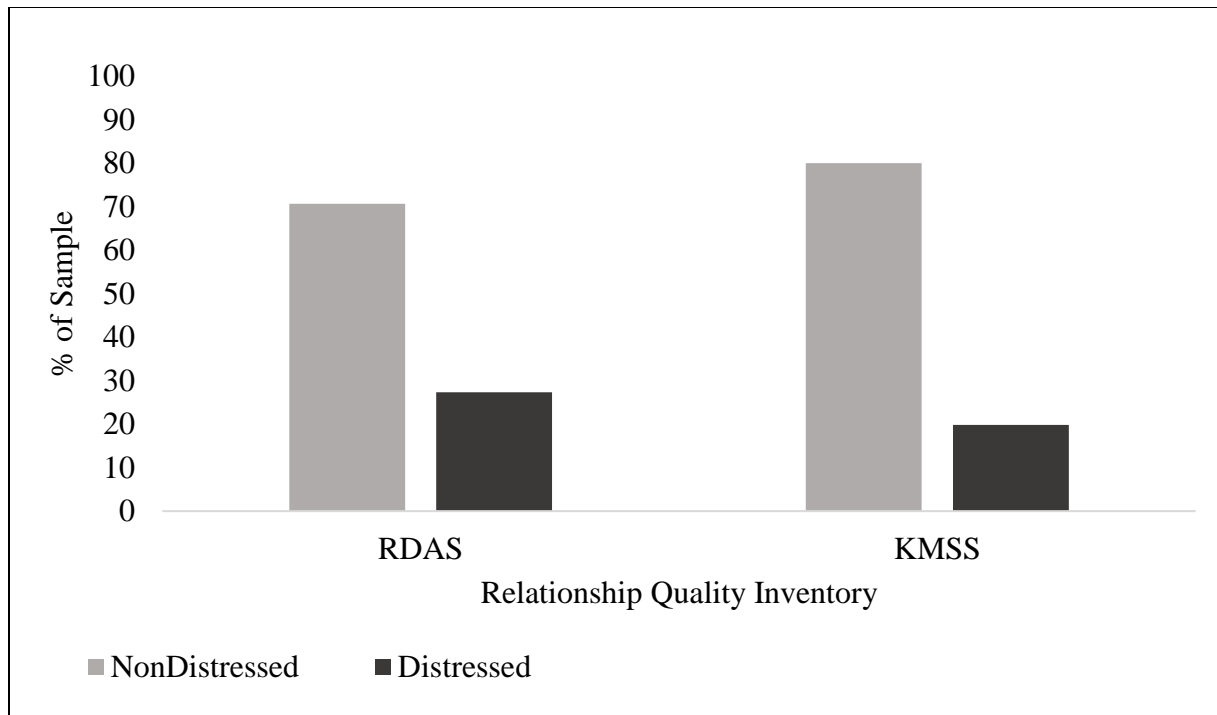
Figure 3. RDAS & KMSS distress indications for all participants (RDAS: n = 110; KMSS: n = 106)

Results – Officers' Data

Officer Demographics

Eighty-two (82) officers completed the online inventory. The vast majority of these were men (*n* = 73; 89%) who identified as White, non-Hispanic (*n* = 71; 86.6%). Only nine (11%) of the officers in the study identified as female and 13.4% identified as an ethnic minority: 10 were Hispanic (12.2%) and one was Black (1.2%). Officers in the study ranged in age from 21 to 56 years (*M* = 40.66, *SD* = 9.25). The majority were in their 40s (*n* = 33; 40.2%).

Work-related data. Participating officers reported a fairly stable distribution of tenure, ranging from two to 35 years (*M* = 16.56, *SD* = 9.08), though only a handful of participants surpassed 30years in law enforcement at the time of the study (*n* = 4; 4.9%). Officers were also fairly equally distributed across duty assignment, with roughly one-third of officers identifying as supervisors (*n* = 31; 37.8%), patrol officers (*n* = 31; 37.8%), and/or officers serving on a detail

assignment or special task force ($n = 20$; 24.4%). Nearly three-quarters of participating officers reported taking part in critical incident training ($n = 63$; 76.8%); 23.2% had not ($n = 19$).

The vast majority of officers reported assignment to a day shift ($n = 50$; 61%), as opposed to afternoon/swing shift ($n = 22$; 26.8%), or night shift ($n = 10$; 12.2%). About half were working a set eight-hour shift ($n = 42$; 51.2%), with the remaining half working 10-hour shifts ($n = 12$; 14.6%), 12-hour shifts ($n = 14$; 17.1%), or some variation (e.g., 8.5 hours, 8.5-9 hours, 8-10 hours, or not specified) ($n = 14$; 17.1%). The majority of officers in the study reported that they did not rotate shifts ($n = 57$; 69.5%). This finding coordinates with the number of officers in the study who identified as supervisors or individuals serving on a taskforce/detail position ($n = 51$; 62.2%); officers in these positions typically do not rotate shifts. Among the patrol officers in the study ($n = 31$), 41.9% reported that they had previously served on a detail or taskforce position ($n = 13$); 58.1% had not ($n = 18$). Finally, nearly three-quarters ($n = 61$; 74.4%) reported that the media attention to law enforcement negatively affects their morale. However, around the same number ($n = 65$; 79.3%) believe media attention does not affect their relationship. Table 6 outlines key demographic characteristics of participating officers ($n = 82$).

Family data. Given that the majority of participants in the study identified as officers (74.5%), parenting frequencies and other key relationship characteristics (years in current relationship, number/ages of children, marital and living together status, family history of law enforcement, etc.) looks similar to that of the larger sample ($N = 110$). However, officers were uniquely asked about the timeframe in which they joined law enforcement with respect to their current relationship. To this question, most reported they had joined law enforcement either prior to dating ($n = 33$; 40.2%) or while dating their current partner ($n = 34$; 41.5%), as opposed

to after marriage (n = 15; 18.3%). Just under 50% of officers reported having a family member

who has also served as a law enforcement officer (n = 37; 45.1%).

Table 6

Officer Demographics (n =82)

Characteristic	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	73	89.0
Female	9	11.0
Ethnicity		
White, non-Hispanic	71	86.6
White, Hispanic	10	12.2
Black	1	1.2
Age (range: 21-56)		
20s	14	17.1
30s	19	23.2
40s	33	40.2
50s	16	19.5
Tenure (range: 2-35 years)		
1-5 years	11	13.4
6-10 years	16	19.5
11-15 years	11	13.4
16-20 years	15	18.3
21-25 years	12	14.6
26-30 years	13	15.9
31+ years	4	4.9
Duty Assignment		
Supervisor	31	37.8
Patrol Officer	31	37.8
Detail/Taskforce	20	24.4
Shift Assignment		
Day	50	61.0
Afternoon/Swing	22	26.8
Night	10	12.2

Shift Length		
8-hours	42	51.2
10-hours	12	14.6
12-hours	14	17.1
Other	14	17.1
Frequency of Shift Rotation		
Annually	8	9.8
2x per year	13	15.9
Do Not Rotate Shifts	57	69.5
Other	4	4.9
Critical Incident Training		
Yes	63	76.8
No	19	23.2
Family History of LE		
Yes	37	45.1
No	45	54.9
Officer Status at Start of Relationship		
Joined LE Prior to Dating	33	40.2
Joined LE While Dating	34	41.5
Joined LE After Married	15	18.3
Media Affect Morale		
Yes	61	74.4
No	17	20.7
Missing	4	4.9
Media Affect Relationship		
Yes	13	15.9
No	65	79.3
Missing	4	4.9

PRQC outcomes. Eighty (80) of the 82 officers in the study completed the PRQC

(97.6%). Total scores on the PRQC can range from six to 42. Officers' total PRQC scores

ranged from 26 to 42 ($M = 35.46$, $SD = 4.69$). In general, officers' scores on the PRQC and its

six subscales were very close to, though consistently ever so slightly lower than the average

PRQC scores of all participants. Still, like all participants, officers' scores on the PRQC and its

six subscales indicate a generally positive relationship quality, with *commitment* and *love* nearing

the highest end of the spectrum, and *intimacy* and *passion* closest to moderate. Table 7

summarizes officers' scores on the six subscales of PRQC.

Table 7

PRQC Subscale Outcomes for Officers (n = 80)

	Satisfaction	Commitment	Intimacy	Trust	Passion	Love
M	5.96	6.70	4.78	6.56	4.79	6.68
SD	4.56	0.58	1.58	0.82	1.44	0.53
Range	3-7	4-7	2-7	3-7	2-7	5-7

RDAS outcomes. All 82 officers completed the RDAS (100%). The highest possible

score on the RDAS is 69. Officers in the study averaged a score of 50.61 (SD = 7.02; range: 32-

63). The large majority were determined to be non-distressed in their relationship (*n* = 58;

70.7%), as measured by the established cutoff score of the RDAS. As with the larger sample of

all participants, officer scores across the three subscales of the RDAS showed some variance.

Still, more than half of all officers in the study were non-distressed within each subscale:

Consensus: *n = 61; 74.4%* (*M* = 23.4, *SD* = 3.4; Non-distress indicator: $\geq$22, Satisfaction: *n* = 75

; 91.5% (*M* = 15.7, *SD* = 2.16; Non-distress indicator: $\geq$14), Cohesion: *n = 49; 59.8%* (*M* = 11.5,

SD = 3.0; Non-distress indicator: $\geq$11). Particularly low levels of distress were indicated in the

areas of relationship satisfaction (determined by frequency of discussing separation or divorce,

quarreling, regretting the relationship, etc.). Table 8 summarizes the maximum scores possible,

distress cutoffs, mean participant scores and standard deviations, range of scores, and distress

indications on the RDAS and its three subscales for participating officers.

Table 8

RDAS Outcomes for Officers (N = 82).

	Highest Possible Score	Distress Cutoff	*M*	*SD*	Range	Non-Distressed *n*	Non-Distressed %
Total Score	69	48	50.6	7.0	32-63	58	70.7
Consensus	30	22	23.4	3.4	13-30	61	74.4
Satisfaction	20	14	15.7	2.2	9-19	75	91.5
Cohesion	19	11	11.5	3.0	6-19	49	59.8

KMSS outcomes. The highest possible score on the KMSS is 21; the lowest is three. Accounting for the assumed erroneous scores, the majority (*n* = 64; 80%) of the 80 officers included in the sample scored in the area of relationally non-distressed (*M* = 18.1, *SD* = 3.05; range: 6-21). As with the other relationship inventories, officer averages on the KMSS closely resemble the broader sample population's averages scores.

<center>**Results – Romantic Partners' Data**</center>

Romantic Partner Demographics

In total, 28 romantic partners completed the online assessment. The overwhelming majority of these were female (*n* = 26; 92.9%) and White, non-Hispanic (*n* = 27; 96.4%). Only two of the participating romantic partners identified as male (1.1%) and only one as an ethnic minority (White, Hispanic; 3.6%). Romantic partners were only slightly older than their officer counterparts, ranging in age from 22 to 61 years old. The majority (*n* = 18; 64.28%) were in their 30s and 40s. Most were working full time (*n* = 15; 53.6%) and few were students (*n* = 4; 14.3%).

Family data. As with the officers in the study, romantic partners' home-based demographics (parenting, number of children, etc.) strongly mirrored the entire sample's

demographics. However, romantic partners reported a family history of law enforcement more frequently than officers. Just over 60% ($n = 17$) of the romantic partners had a family member in law enforcement, as compared to 45.1% of officers. Romantic partners tend to agree with officers when it comes to media influence on their lives and relationships: 74.4% of officers said media impacted their morale while 78.6% of romantic partners said the same. With regard to media and the relationship, wives seem to be more optimistic: 92.9% ($n = 26$) do not believe the media affects their romantic relationship; 79.3% of officers believe it does. Table 9 highlights key demographic trends among romantic partners in the study.

Paid work/student data. Three of the romantic partners indicated that they did not work in a paid-position outside of the home (10.7%). Ten (10) were working part-time in paid positions (35.7%) and 15 in full-time paid positions (53.6%). Four romantic partners identified that they were pursuing college or graduate educations (14.3%).

Table 9

Romantic Partner Demographics (n =28)

Characteristic	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	2	1.1
Female	26	92.9
Ethnicity		
White, non-Hispanic	27	96.4
White, Hispanic	1	3.6
Age (range: 22-61)		
20s	3	10.7
30s	9	32.1
40s	9	32.1
50s	6	21.4
60s	1	3.6

Student Status		
Yes	4	14.3
No	24	85.7
Employment Status		
Home-Maker	3	10.7
Employed Full-Time	15	53.6
Employed Part-Time	10	35.7
Prior Counseling		
Yes	7	25.0
No	21	75.0
Family History of LE		
Yes	17	60.7
No	11	39.3
Media Affect Partner's Morale		
Yes	22	78.6
No	6	21.4
Media Affect Relationship		
Yes	2	7.1
No	26	92.9

PRQC outcomes. All 28 romantic partners in the study completed the PRQC (100%).

Scores ranged from 24.5-42 (M = 37.14, SD = 4.53). In general, romantic partners' scores on the

PRQC and its six subscales are very close to, though consistently ever so slightly higher than the

average PRQC scores of all participants, and the average PRQC scores of participating officers.

Accordingly, romantic partners expressed generally high evaluations of their relationship quality,

particularly in the areas of *commitment* and *trust*. Table 10 summarizes romantic partner scores

on the six subscales of PRQC.

Table 10

PRQC Subscale Outcomes for Romantic Partners (n = 28)

	Satisfaction	Commitment	Intimacy	Trust	Passion	Love
M	6.39	6.89	5.18	6.64	5.14	6.89
SD	0.83	0.31	1.64	0.83	1.56	0.32
Range	4-7	6-7	2-7	4-7	1-7	6-7

RDAS outcomes. All 28 romantic partners completed the RDAS (100%). Total scores averaged 53.32 (SD = 6.38; range: 35-62). Over three-quarters were determined to be relationally non-distressed (n = 22; 78.6%). This trend continued into the three subscales, with more than three-quarters of romantic partners scoring in the non-distressed category in each: Consensus: n =23 ; 82.1% (M =24.4, SD = 2.9; Non-distress indicator: $\geq$22), Satisfaction: n = 26; 92.9% (M = 16.3, SD = 1.8; Non-distress indicator: $\geq$14), Cohesion: n = 22; 78.6% (M = 12.6, SD = 3.0; Non-distress indicator: $\geq$11). Romantic partners evaluated *consensus* and *satisfaction* as particularly strong in their relationships, with upwards of 80- and 90% scoring as non-distressed in these areas, respectively. Table 11 summarizes the maximum score possible, distress cutoff, mean participant scores and standard deviations, range, and distress indication on the RDAS and its three subscales for romantic partners.

Table 11

RDAS Outcomes for Romantic Partners (N = 28)

	Highest Possible Score	Distress Cutoff	*M*	*SD*	Range	Non-Distressed *n*	Non-Distressed%
Total Score	69	48	53.3	6.4	35-62	22	78.6
Consensus	30	22	24.4	2.9	16-29	23	82.1
Satisfaction	20	14	16.3	1.8	11-19	26	92.9
Cohesion	19	11	12.6	3.0	6-18	22	78.6

KMSS outcomes. Two of the romantic partners in the study had questionable KMSS scores, reducing the sample for this analysis to 26 (92.9%). Just over 80% scored as relationally non-distressed on the KMSS ($n = 21$; 80.8%). Total scores averaged 19.0 ($SD = 2.33$). As with the PRQC and RDAS, romantic partners' scores across the individual questions of the KMSS closely align with, though are consistently slightly higher than officers'.

<div align="center">

Results – Paired Couples' Data

</div>

Paired Couples Demographics

Identifying couples from the complete data set required a series of steps. First, survey data ($N = 121$) was exported to a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet and the "custom sort" feature was used to order participants. A chain of six sort levels were created based on participant responses to their unique identifiers embedded within the survey. The first four sort levels were arranged alphabetically based on participants' responses to questions about their initials (officer first initial, officer middle initial, romantic partner first initial, romantic partner middle initial), then in ascending order based on the number of pets reported, and finally, in alphabetical order by reported department city.

In total, 26 couples were matched, including one that appeared to have three individuals in it. Upon further inspection it was obvious that the officer had taken the survey twice, ending prior to finishing on his first go-around. Later, he restarted the survey and completed it in its entirety. Data from the completed survey were included in the final analysis. Four of the couples required a more careful review of their unique identifiers to verify their match. Typically, they miswrote an initial but matched on all other identifiers.

Family data. Most couples were officer and non-officer pairings (96.2%). One couple identified as both being police officers serving in the same community. One hundred percent of

the officer-nonofficer pairings (*n* = 25) were heterosexual pairings; in 92% of these (*n* = 23), the officer identified as male and the romantic partner as female. The majority of couples identified as same-race: White, non-Hispanic (*n* = 24; 92.3%).

Couples in the study averaged 18.23 years together (*SD* = 8.4; range: 4-33 years). When relationship estimates did not match (*n* = 8), the larger of the two was used in analysis. All couples reported that they were living together (100%), and all but one was married (96.2%). The one unmarried couple identified as not married but living together. The majority of the 26 couples were parenting children (*n* = 22; 84.6%). The number of children in these families ranged from one to six, with two being the most common (*n* = 12; 54.5%). Most paired officers reported that they joined law enforcement while they were in a relationship with (dating or married to) their current partner (*n* = 15; 60%).

Regarding the perception of media influence on the relationship, the majority of couples in the study agreed that the media was not impacting their relationship (n = 21, 80.8%). None of the couples in the study agreed that the media was impacting their relationship, but five couples disagreed (19.2%). In 60% of the couples disagreeing, the officer believed the media was impacting the relationship and the romantic partner did not (n = 3). In the remaining 40% of the couples disagreeing, the romantic partner believed the media was impacting the relationship and the officer did not (n = 2).

Work-related data. The average tenure of paired officers in the study (*n* = 25) was 18.96 years (*SD* = 8.93; range: 3-35). Most of these were serving in supervisory positions (*n* = 15; 60%). Nine reported being on a patrol assignment (36%) and only one was serving on a detail or special assignment (4%). Over half of the paired officers reported being on a day shift (*n* = 16;

64%). The remainder were almost equally distributed between afternoon/swing shift ($n = 5$; 20%) and night shift ($n = 4$; 16%).

Among paired romantic partners, the majority were employed full-time outside the home ($n = 14$; 56%). Fewer were employed part-time ($n = 8$; 32%), and only three were home-makers (12%). The majority noted that they were not students ($n = 22$; 88%).

Regarding perception of media influence on officer morale, the majority of couples in the study shared the belief that the media is impacting morale (n = 17, 65.4%); only one couple believed that the media is not affecting the officer's morale (3.8%). Eight couples disagreed with one another in their opinions about the media and morale (30.8%). In five of these, the officer believed the media was affecting him/her, but the romantic partner did not (62.5%); in three of the couples the romantic partner believed the media was affecting the officer's morale, but the officer did not (37.5%).

Table 12 summarizes the demographic information of paired couples in the study ($n = 26$). Some demographics include only 25 couples to account for the one officer-officer pairing; they are noted as such in the table.

Table 12

Paired Couples Demographics (n = 26)

Characteristic	Frequency	Percentage
Gender Distribution ($n = 25$)		
Male Officer, Female Partner	23	92.0
Female Officer, Male Partner	2	8.0
Ethnic Pairings		
Both White, non-Hispanic	24	92.3
Both White, Hispanic	1	3.8
Mixed White, non-Hispanic & White, Hispanic	1	3.8

Relationship Length (range: 4-33 years)		
1-4 years	1	3.8
5-9 years	4	15.4
10-14 years	2	7.7
15-19 years	8	30.8
20-24 years	3	11.5
25-29 years	6	23.1
30+ years	2	7.7
Parenting Status		
Yes	22	84.6
No	4	15.4
Officer Status at Start of Relationship ($n = 25$)		
Joined LE Prior to Dating	10	40.0
Joined LE While Dating	8	32.0
Joined LE While Married	7	28.0
Officer Tenure ($n = 25$; range: 3-35 years)		
1-5 years	3	12.0
6-10 years	2	8.0
11-15 years	5	20.0
16-20 years	2	8.0
21-25 years	5	20.0
26-30 years	7	28.0
31+ years	1	4.0
Officer Duty Assignment ($n = 25$)		
Supervisor	15	60.0
Patrol Officer	9	36.0
Detail/Taskforce	1	4.0
Officer Shift Assignment ($n = 25$)		
Day	16	64.0
Afternoon/Swing	5	20.0
Night	4	16.0
Romantic Partner Student Status ($n = 25$)		
Yes	3	12.0
No	22	88.0
Romantic Partner Employment Status ($n = 25$)		
Home-Maker	3	12.0
Employed Full-Time	14	56.0
Employed Part-Time	8	32.0

Family History of LE		
Yes	11	42.3
No	8	30.8
Differ	7	26.9
Prior Counseling		
Yes	5	19.2
No	17	65.4
Differ	4	15.4
Media Impacting Officer Morale		
Yes	17	65.4
No	1	3.8
Differ	8	30.8
Media Impacting Relationship		
No	21	80.8
Differ	5	19.2

PRQC outcomes. In order to quantify PRQC outcomes among paired couples, the individual scores within each dyad were averaged ($n = 26$). This technique is consistent with the way that other law enforcement scholars have assessed for relational dynamics in small sample sizes (Roberts & Levenson, 2001). Paired couples' scores (total scores and scores on each of the six subscales) looked very similar to the broader sample population's ($N = 110$). Total scores ranged from 28.5-42 and averaged 36.34 ($SD = 4.01$). Table 13 details the PRQC subscale data of the paired couples in the study.

Table 13

PRQC Subscale Outcomes for Paired Couples ($n = 26$).

	Satisfaction	Commitment	Intimacy	Trust	Passion	Love
M	6.2	6.9	5.0	6.6	4.9	6.9
SD	0.8	0.3	1.5	0.6	1.2	0.3
Range	5-7	6-7	2-7	5-7	3-7	6-7

RDAS outcomes. Paired couples' RDAS score averaged 51.78 (*SD* = 6.64; range: 30.25-62.50). As with the other subsamples (all participants, officers, and romantic partners), scores were highest in the areas of *consensus* (*M* = 24.31, *SD* = 2.49) and *satisfaction* (*M* = 16.23, *SD* = 1.58). Over 90% of paired couples were non-distressed in these areas. Also aligned with the other subsamples, paired couples reported some of their lowest scores in the area of *cohesion* (*M* = 11.92; *SD* = 2.33). Still, over half of the paired couples were non-distressed in this area (*n* = 16; 61.5%). Table 14 summarizes the maximum score possible, distress cutoff, mean participant scores and standard deviations, range, and distress indication on the RDAS and its three subscales for paired couples.

Table 14

RDAS Outcomes for Paired Couples (N = 26)

	Highest Possible Score	Distress Cutoff	*M*	*SD*	Range	Non-Distressed *n*	Non-Distressed%
Total Score	69	48	51.8	6.6	30-63	22	84.6
Consensus	30	22	24.3	2.5	18-30	24	92.3
Satisfaction	20	14	16.2	1.6	13-19	25	96.2
Cohesion	19	11	11.9	2.3	8-17	16	61.5

KMSS outcomes. All of the four participants with questionable KMSS scores were part of separate matched pairs in the study, bringing the useable sample for this analysis to 22 (84.62%). Couples' scores averaged 18.66 (*SD* = 1.83; range: 15-21). In total, over three-quarters of couples scored as non-distressed on the KMSS (*n* = 19; 86.4%) after the erroneous scores were removed. Scores were closely aligned with the other population subsamples.

Between Groups Comparisons

To assess for continuity of scores on relationship outcomes between subsamples of participants (all participants, officers, romantic partners, and paired couples), a series of One-Way Analysis of Variance (One-way ANOVA) were conducted: first looking for mean differences between groups on PRQC scores and subscales, then on RDAS scores and subscales, and finally, on KMSS scores.

PRQC Outcomes

The one-way ANOVA for PRQC total scores was nonsignificant across subsamples. The ANOVAs for each of the six PRQC subscales were also nonsignificant across subsamples. The continuity of scores indicates that the three smaller subsamples of participants (officers, romantic partners, and paired couples) do not differ significantly from the larger sample of all participants ($N = 110$) with regard to their PRQC responses. This result indicated that officers' and their partners' perceptions of relationship quality were similar. Table 15 summarizes the average scores of the subsamples on the subscales of the PRQC. Figure 4 depicts a line graph of subsample scores across PRQC subscales.

Table 15

PRQC Subscale Mean Scores by Subsample

Subsample	Satisfaction	Commitment	Intimacy	Trust	Passion	Love
All Participants (*n*=108)	6.07	6.75	4.88	6.58	4.88	6.74
Officers (*n*=80)	5.96	6.69	4.78	6.56	4.79	6.68
Romantic Partners (*n*=28)	6.39	6.89	5.18	6.64	5.14	6.89
Paired Couples (*n*=26)	6.19	6.86	4.98	6.62	4.85	6.85
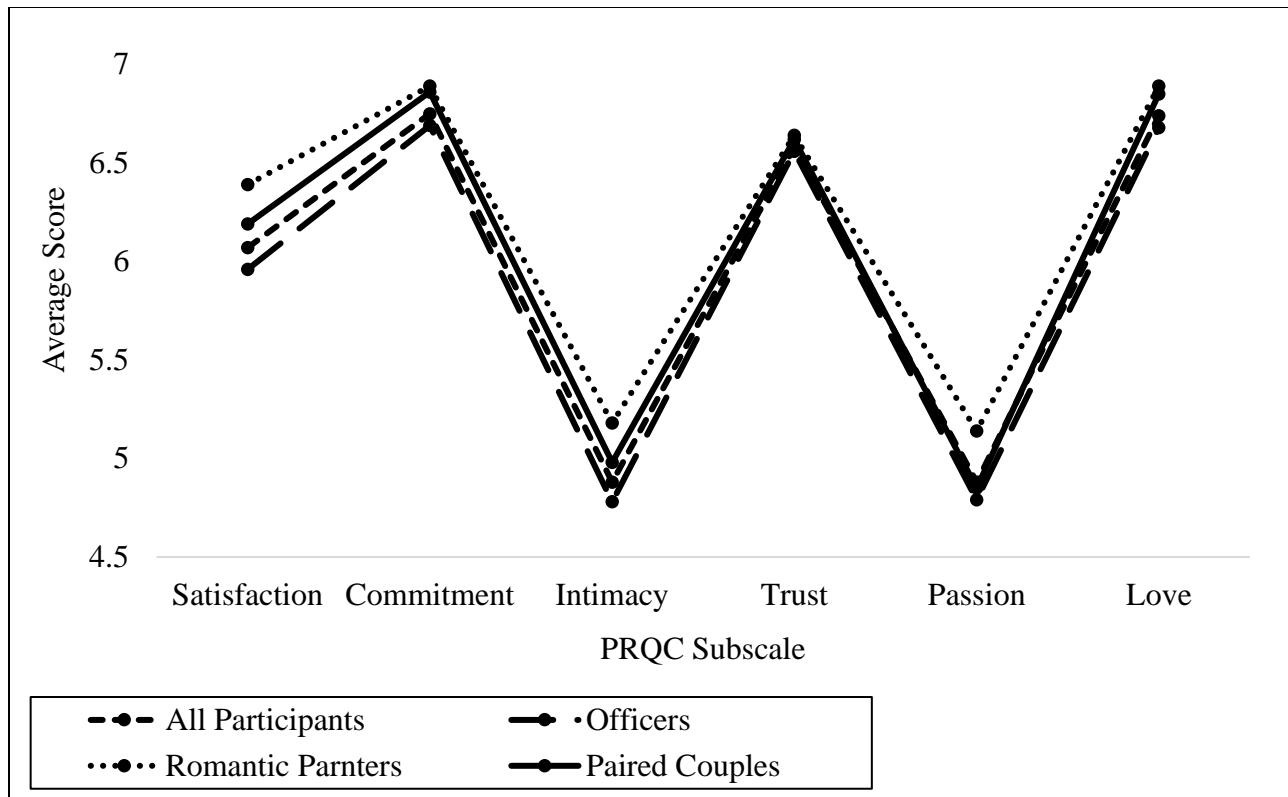
Figure 4. Variations in subsample scores across PRQC subscales. Note: the scale is enlarged to display differences between subsample scores.

RDAS Outcomes

The ANOVAs for RDAS total scores were also nonsignificant across subsamples. The ANOVAs for each of the RDAS sub-scales were also nonsignificant. Across subsamples, RDAS scores and subscale scores do not differ significantly. As with the PRQC, this result indicated that officers' and their partners' perceptions of relationship quality were similar. Table 16 summarizes the average scores of the subsamples on the subscales of the RDAS. Figure 5 depicts a line graph of subsample scores across the RDAS subscales.

Table 16

RDAS Subscale Mean Scores by Subsample

Subsample	Consensus	Satisfaction	Cohesion
All Participants (*n*=110)	23.62	15.89	11.79
Officers (*n*=82)	23.35	15.74	11.51
Romantic Partners (*n*=28)	24.39	16.32	12.61
Paired Couples (*n*=26)	24.31	16.23	11.92
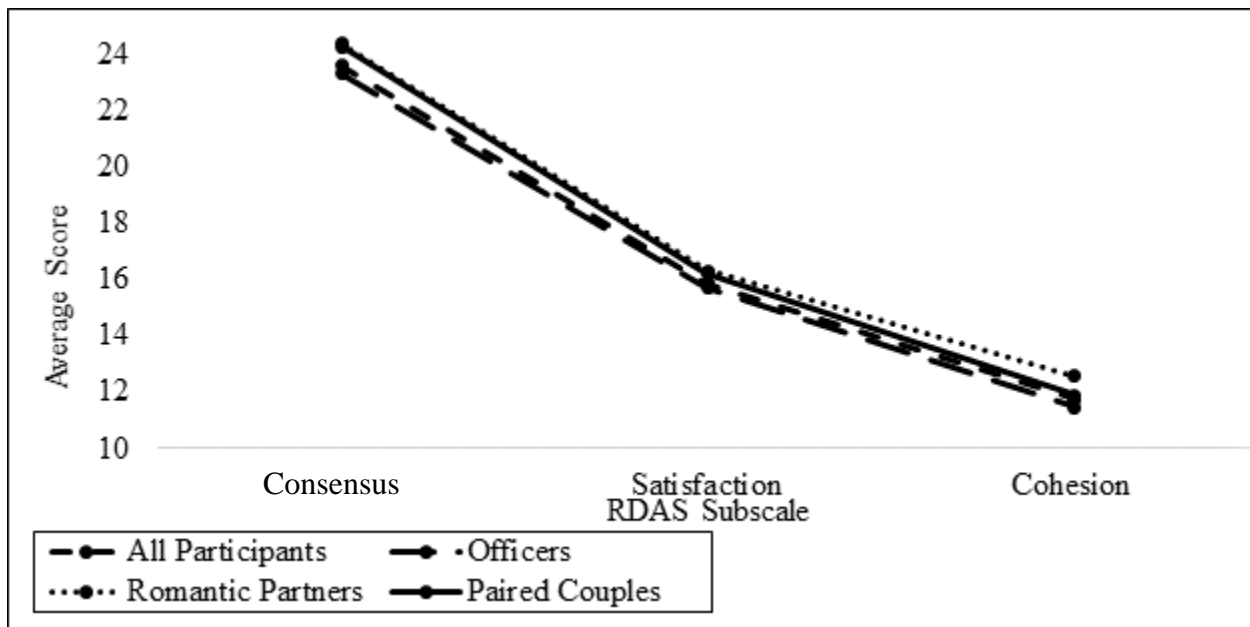
Figure 5. Variations in subsample scores across RDAS subscales.

KMSS Outcomes

The ANOVA for KMSS total scores was nonsignificant across subsamples as well. This result also suggested that officers' and their partners' perceptions of relationship quality were similar. Table 17 summarizes the average KMSS scores of the subsamples. Figure 6 depicts a bar graph of subsample scores on the KMSS.

Table 17

KMSS Mean Scores by Subsample

Subsample	KMSS Score
All Participants (*n=105*)	18.30
Officers (*n=79*)	18.06
Romantic Partners (*n=26*)	19.00
Paired Couples (*n=22*)	18.66
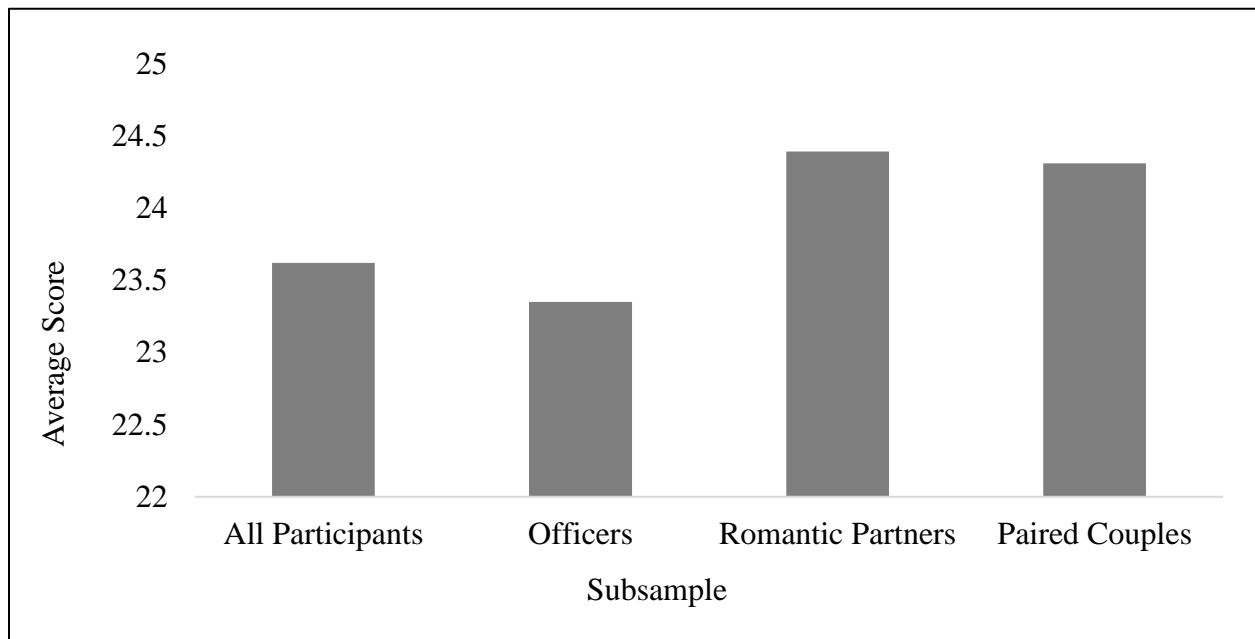
Figure 6. Variations in subsample scores on the KMSS.

Within Groups Comparisons

Out of curiosity as to whether or not officers and their paired romantic partners would differ in their assessments of their relationship, a series of paired samples t-tests were conducted on paired couples' data. Officers' mean scores were compared to their partners' mean scores on

each of the three relationship quality inventories. Results were insignificant across the board, indicating that officers' scores are comparable to their paired romantic partner's scores on the PRQC $t(25) = -.38$, p =.71, and its six subscales, the RDAS, $t(25) = -.64$, p = .53, and its three subscales, and the KMSS, $t(21) = -.92$, p = .10.

Preparation for Answering the Research Questions

Three relationship inventories were included in the survey to provide a broad assessment of participant experiences within their romantic relationships, but also to support the trustworthiness of the outcome variable: relationship quality. During the development of the study, relationship quality was intended to be analyzed as a dichotomous variable, using the established cutoff scores of the KMSS and RDAS and the affiliated distressed and non-distressed designations. However, during data clean-up it became evident that distress indications on the RDAS and KMSS differed for 29 individuals (26.4%), making a pure distress/non-distress designation difficult. The majority of the incongruent individuals scored as non-distressed on the KMSS and distressed on the RDAS ($n = 17$; 58.6%). This finding was not alarming because the RDAS is a more thorough evaluation than the KMSS in both the quantity and scope of questions.

Further complicating matters, nearly three quarters of the incongruent individuals were only one point away from the distress cut off on one or both of the inventories ($n = 21$; 72.4%): scoring between 16 and 18 on the KMSS (the established cutoff is 17) and between 47 and 49 on the RDAS (the established cutoff is 48). In total, over 40% of all 110 participants fell within these "grey areas" on one or both inventories ($n = 48$; 43.6%). In consideration of the ambivalent individuals and the unequal distribution of distress/non-distress designations across the entire sample, this researcher decided that the outcome variable, relationship quality, would

be best analyzed a continuous variable, using participants' total scores on either the RDAS or KMSS.

RDAS or KMSS

During the aforementioned analysis, four individuals' KMSS scores became suspect to error. Specifically, all four were observed to have alarmingly low KMSS scores contrasted by notably high RDAS scores. Additionally, these four individuals' PRQC scores leaned towards being "extremely" positive, and their qualitative responses reflected favorable relationship dynamics and a general fondness for their partner. It was hypothesized that these four participants may have misread the KMSS response options, which range from "extremely dissatisfied" to "extremely satisfied." Bivariate correlations that served to triangulate the measures affirmed the four scores as suspect (see below). To protect the reliability of the research findings, the four questionable responses were excluded from demographic and other analyses involving the KMSS.

Triangulation of the inventories. The RDAS and the KMSS both have well-established internal consistency and criterion-related validity as measures of relationship quality/satisfaction (Crane et al., 2000): correlations between them should be significant. To test the validity of the measures within the current study a series of bivariate correlation analysis were conducted; first on the entire population sample ($N = 110$), then on officers ($n = 82$), then on romantic partners ($n = 28$), and finally, on the paired couples ($n = 26$). To strengthen the assessment of the validity of the measures, PRQC scores were included as a correlate.

The bivariate Pearson correlations for all participants' ($N = 110$) and the correlations for officers' ($n = 82$) across the three measures were all significant, even with the potentially erroneous KMSS scores included (Table 18).

Table 18

Correlational Significance Among Relationship Quality Inventories for All Participants &
Officers

	RDAS	PRQC
All Participants (*N* = 110)		
KMSS	< .005*	< .005*
RDAS		< .005*
Officers (*n* = 82)		
KMSS	< .005*	< .005*
RDAS		< .005*

* Correlation is significant at the .005 level (2-tailed).

Among the romantic partners (*n* = 28) and paired couples (*n* = 26), significant

correlations were initially only indicated for RDAS and PRQC scores. In both subsamples,

KMSS totals were not significantly associated with either of the other two measures. However,

when the potentially erroneous KMSS scores were removed, the adjusted analysis (*n* = 22)

revealed significant correlations across all three relationship measures for the subsamples. Table

19 displays the p-scores of the correlations between relationship indicators for romantic partners

and paired couples, both before and after removal of the suspect KMSS data.

Table 19

Correlational Significance Among Relationship Quality Inventories for Romantic Partners and Paired Couples

	Including KMSS Errors		Excluding KMSS Errors	
	RDAS	PRQC	RDAS	PRQC
	Romantic Partners			
	(*n* = 28)		(*n* = 26)	
KMSS	.449	.090	.000*	.004*
RDAS		.000*		.000*
	Paired Couples			
	(*n* = 26)		(*n* = 22)	
KMSS	.449	.090	.000*	.004*
RDAS		.000*		.000*

* Correlation is significant at the .005 level (2-tailed).

The impact of the suspect KMSS scores on the overall validity of the measure appears to only be significant in the smaller population subsamples of romantic partners (*n* = 28) and paired couples (*n* = 26). Still, in an effort to avoid error as much as possible, and in order to maximize the use of participant data, for the purposes of this study, the more thorough RDAS was chosen to represent the outcome variable, relationship quality, unless otherwise noted.

Addressing the Research Questions

This study's primary research question revolved around the work- and home-based variables associated with relationship quality in couples where at least one partner is a municipal patrol officer. In total, 110 individuals participated in the study, including 82 officers and 28 romantic partners. Among participants, 26 couples were matched based on unique identifiers embedded within the survey. One of these couples both identified as law enforcement officers, limiting the use of some of their data in the quantitative analyses due to the inability to designate one member of the dyad as an officer and the other as a romantic partner. This couple's data

were omitted from quantitative analysis of paired couples' data on the research subquestions

related to work- and home-based variables (subquestions 1 and 2), but were included in the

subquestions related to relationship constructs and interpersonal areas (subquestions 3 and 4) and

in the analyses of officers' data and all participants' data.

For each of the research subquestions, subsamples were analyzed separately to support

exploration of the nuances contributing to relationship quality for each group. Qualitative

findings were used to support and enhance conclusions. Global themes were identified for all

participants as well as themes specific to officers and romantic partners. Differences between

the responses of distressed and non-distressed individuals were underscored (RDAS scores

provided the cutoff for qualitative distress designations).

Research Subquestion 1: Work-Based Variables and Relationship Quality

Seven work-related variables were included in the survey to address the first research

subquestion: "Is there a significant association between work-based variables and relationship

quality?" The seven work-based variables included in the study were: 1) officer tenure (reported

in number of years as a whole number), 2) shift assignment (reported as day, afternoon/swing, or

night), 3) shift length (reported as 8-hour, 10-hour, 12-hour, or other), 4) frequency of shift

rotation (reported as monthly, quarterly, 2x per year, annually, other, or we don't rotate shifts),

5) prior experience on a detail or special assignment (reported as yes/no), 6) participation in a

critical incident training program or seminar (reported as yes/no), and 7) current duty assignment

(reported as supervisory officer, patrol officer, or detail/task-force officer). All of the work-

based variables were analyzed as categorical variables, with the exception of two: "tenure" and

"shift length."

Among participating officers, tenure ranged from two years to 35 years ($M = 16.56$, $SD = 9.08$). Three variations of the tenure variable were included in analysis: the original participant reports of total years in law enforcement, and two additional variables that were created from the original data to support a thorough exploration of the association between tenure and relationship quality. The two new tenure variables were, 1) tenure grouped in five-year increments (0-4, 5-9, 10-14, 15-19, 20-24, 25-29, 30+) and 2) tenure grouped in 10-year increments (0-9, 10-19, 20+). Analysis took place on all three levels for this variable: as a continuous variable by total years, and as ordinal variables clustered in both five- and 10-year increments.

The variable, "shift length," was also assessed as an ordinal variable. Original data included eight-, ten-, and twelve-hour shifts, along with an "other" option. Fourteen (14) officers (17.1%) chose the "other" option, though most did not describe how their shift differed from the standard options. The few who did noted shifts of 8.5 hours, 8-to-10 hours, or 8-to-9 hours. Out of preference for keeping the variable ordinal (as opposed to categorical), the "other" data points were excluded from analysis.

Three population subsamples were examined for associations between officer work-based variables and relationship quality: officers ($n = 82$), paired romantic partners ($n = 25$), and paired couples ($n = 25$). RDAS total scores (average total scores for paired couples) served as the measure of relationship quality.

To begin the analysis, correlations and one-way ANOVAs were used to explore possible associations between work-based variables and relationship quality for each relevant subsample. Point-biserial correlations (r_{pb}) were computed for the dichotomous work-based variables, Pearson product-moment correlations (r) were computed for the continuous work-based variables, and Spearman rank correlations (r_s) were computed for the ordinal work-based

variables. One-way ANOVAs were conducted on categorical variables involving more than two categories. If significant associations were found, a bivariate regression analysis was conducted to clarify the predictive value of the work-based variable to relationship quality.

To conclude, two additional analyses were run on each subsample: 1) a standard multiple regression to determine how well all of the work-based variables predict relationship quality, and 2) a stepwise regression to evaluate which variable or combination of variables best predicts relationship quality, and to what extent, among each of the subsamples. Results follow.

Officers. No significant associations were found to exist between work-based variables and officer reports of relationship quality as measured by the RDAS. In total, six correlations and three one-way ANOVAs were run. First, point-biserial correlations were computed for the two dichotomous variables: prior detail/special assignment ($n = 31$) and critical incident training ($n = 82$). Next, Pearson correlations were computed for tenure, as measured in whole years ($n = 82$). Then, Spearman correlations were computed for the three ordinal variables: tenure grouped in five- and ten-year increments ($n = 82$) and shift length ($n = 68$). Finally, one-way ANOVAs were run on the three categorical variables: shift assignment ($n = 82$), frequency of shift rotation ($n = 78$), and duty assignment ($n = 82$). For each analysis, the results were nonsignificant. Results indicate that none of the work-based variables in the study were significantly associated with RQ for officers in the study.

Additional Analyses. In order to confirm the predictive nature (or lack of) between work-based variables and officer relationship quality, a standard multiple regression was conducted. In preparation for the analysis, dichotomous variables and categorical variables were recoded using dummy variables. Results indicated that there was not a significant relationship between officers' work-based variables and their RQ scores. In other words, officers'

relationship quality scores (as measured by total score on the RDAS) were not predicted by a combination of tenure, duty assignment, shift assignment, shift rotation, shift length, or CIT training history. A stepwise regression affirmed that none of the work-based variables directly assessed in the study were predictive of RQ among participating officers.

Romantic partners. Romantic partners did not answer work-based questions about their officer partner directly. Instead, officer work-based variables specific to romantic partners were pulled from paired couples' data ($n = 26$). The data provided insight into whether an officer's work-based characteristics were associated with his/her romantic partner's reports of relationship quality, as measured by the RDAS. The paired couple where both individuals identified as law enforcement officers were removed from analysis to avoid having to label one of them as a romantic partner, as opposed to a law enforcement officer. A series of correlational analyses and a one-way ANOVA were conducted. Regressions followed.

Officer shift rotation was omitted from analysis due to limited representation of romantic partners with officer companions falling in the "two times" and "annually" categories (three and two participants in each, respectively). Also, because only one paired officer identified as being on a special assignment or taskforce, duty assignment was analyzed as a dichotomous variable using supervisor and patrol officer designations.

In total, three separate point-biserial correlations were run. The correlation between romantic partners' RDAS total scores and officer prior detail/task-force/special-assignment ($n = 9$) was insignificant, along with the correlation between romantic partners' RDAS total scores and officer duty assignment ($n = 25$). However, a point-biserial correlation identified a significant negative relationship between romantic partners' RDAS total scores and officer critical incident training ($n = 25$), $r_{pb} (23) = .41$, p=.04.

To assess the predictive value of officer critical incident training on his/her partner's RQ, a dummy variable was created and a linear regression was conducted. Eighteen (18) romantic partners (72%) had officer partners who reported participation in critical incident training; seven did not (28%). The regression was significant, $F(1, 23) = 4.73$, p = .04). Figure 7 depicts a scatterplot of the results. All else being equal, officer critical incident training was shown to decrease his/her romantic partner's experience of relationship quality by approximately six points on the RDAS, ($\beta = -6.04$, p = .04).
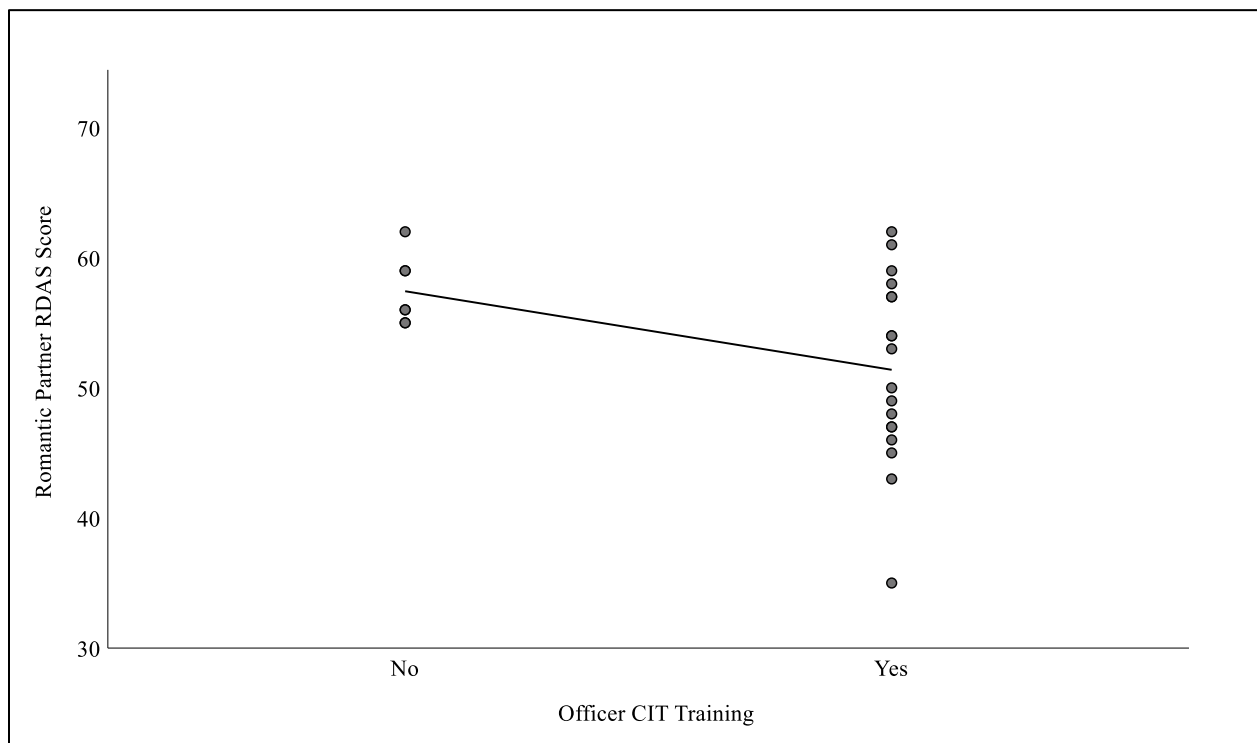
Figure 7. Romantic partners' RDAS scores by officer CIT training.

Next, a Pearson correlation yielded an insignificant association between officer tenure (*n* = 25) and his/her romantic partner's experience of relationship quality, as measured by RDAS total score. Similarly, Spearman correlations indicated insignificant associations between officer tenure (grouped by five and ten years) (*n* = 25), and officer shift length (*n* = 25). Finally, a one-

way ANOVA examining the association between officer shift assignment and romantic partner relationship quality was also insignificant.

Additional analyses. To assess for the ultimate predictive value of officer work-based variables on romantic partners' RDAS scores, a standard multiple regression was conducted. In preparation for the analyses, dichotomous variables and categorical variables were recoded using dummy variables. Due to the limited sample size ($n = 25$), officer assignment was coded to include only "patrol" and "other" categories, and officer status at start of career was coded to include only "joined LE prior to relationship" and "joined LE during relationship." The standard multiple regression was insignificant. However, a stepwise regression was significant ($R^2 = .17$, $F(1, 23) = 4.73$, p $= .04$), concluding that CIT training was the best and sole predictor of romantic partner's RQ ($\beta = -6.04$, p $= .04$). The regression indicated that CIT training accounted for nearly 17% of the variance in romantic partners' RDAS scores.

Paired couples. In order to explore the association between officers' work-based variables and a couple's overall relationship quality, the total RDAS scores of the two individuals in each couple were averaged to create a couple's total RDAS score. Seven correlations and one ANOVA were conducted. As with the romantic partners' data, officer shift rotation was omitted from analysis due to limited representation of participants in the "two times" and "annually" categories, and officer duty assignment (supervisor or patrol officer) was analyzed using a point-biserial correlation.

Point-biserial correlational analyses revealed no significant associations between relationship quality and officer prior detail/special assignment ($n = 9$), critical incident training ($n = 25$), or duty assignment ($n = 24$). Similarly, Pearson correlations revealed no significant associations between relationship quality and officer tenure ($n = 25$). Spearman correlations also

yielded insignificant associations: relationship quality is not associated with officer tenure in five- or ten-year groupings of ($n = 25$), nor officer shift length ($n = 22$). However, a one-way ANOVA revealed a significant difference in couples' mean RDAS scores based on officer shift assignment ($n = 24$), $F (2, 22) = 4.22$, p = .03. Figure 8 depicts means and ranges of couples' total RDAS scores based on officer shift assignment.
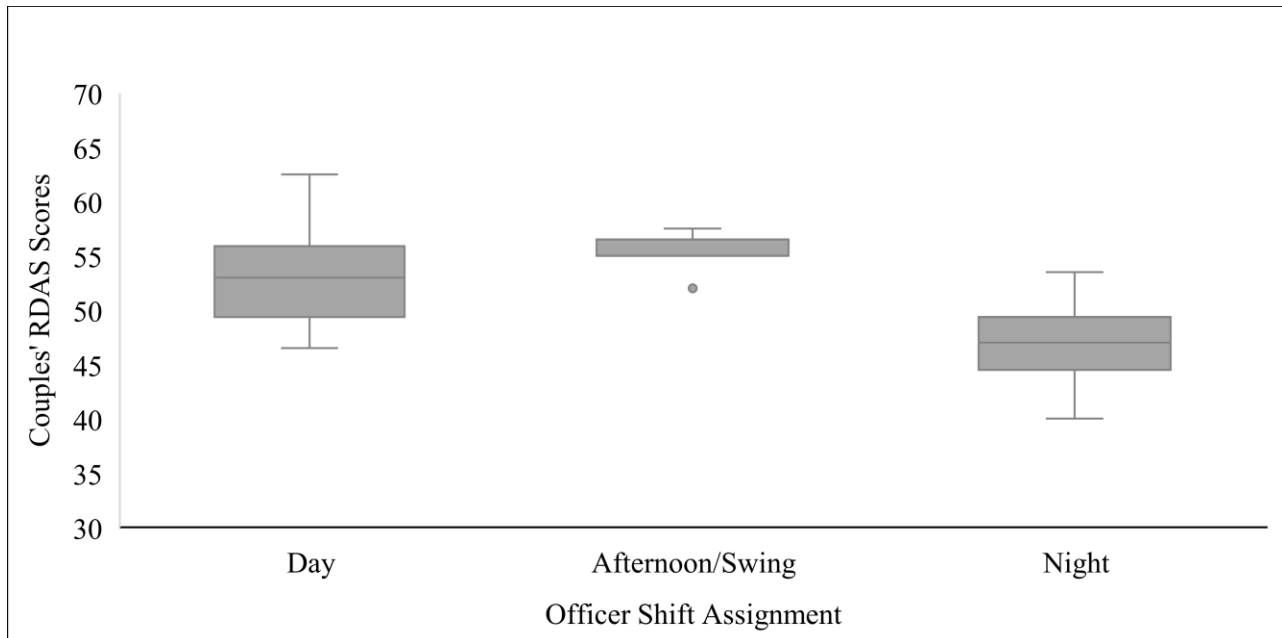
Figure 8. Couples' RDAS scores by officer shift assignment.

Post-hoc analysis using the Tukey HSD test indicates that a couples' mean relationship quality scores are significantly higher in couples where the officer is working a day shift ($M = 53.28$, $SD = 4.75$) or afternoon/swing shift ($M = 55.20$, $SD = 2.08$), as compared to couples where the officer is working a night shift ($M = 46.88$, $SD = 5.57$). Significant differences in mean relationship quality scores were not found between day and afternoon/swing shift couples.

Additional analyses: A standard multiple regression revealed that the work-based predictor variables included in the study do not collectively predict to a couple's relationship quality score; the results of the regression were nonsignificant ($n = 25$). However, a stepwise

regression indicated that night shift assignment and CIT training are the best predictors of couples' RQ scores. Together, these two variables account for about 38% of the variance in couples' average RDAS scores (R^2 = .38, F (2, 22) = 6.70, p = .005). Night shift alone accounted for about 25% of the variance in scores (R^2 = .26, F (1, 23) = 7.85, p = .01). The regression indicated that the relationship quality scores of couples in which the officer is working a night shift tended to be about seven points lower than the relationship quality scores of couples in which the officer is working a day or swing shift (β = -6.9, p = .01).

Qualitative findings on work-based themes. The strongest saturation of work-based themes emerged from the qualitative data with regard to the suggestions that officers and romantic partners had for a new officer and his/her romantic partner. Additional work-based content was evident in participant responses to qualitative questions about intimacy and passion; specifically, as explanations for why these components were lacking.

The most lengthy and robust responses to qualitative questions emerged in the area of recommendations for a new officer and his/her romantic partner. Similar themes emerged from relationally distressed and non-distressed participants. The majority (55-65%) included at least some reference to police work in their response, with many addressing it head-on.

Officers had recommendations for new officers and their romantic partners. They encouraged new officers to form an identity outside of law enforcement, including developing peer influences and hobbies that are not related to police work. They suggested "leaving work at work," and offered consistent reminders that "the job is not your life, but family is." They cautioned against "letting the job define you." At the same time, they encouraged romantic partners to be patient and understanding of the demands of the job. They emphasized

expectations of overtime and shift work: "if the officer is forced to work overtime, be supportive and know that it is not his fault."

Romantic partners offered advice primarily to other romantic partners. They suggested being patient with the officer and understanding of police work and the toll it will take on the officer and the family alike. They encouraged romantic partners to "be a cheerleader" for the officer and to "respect their role" as a police officer. As with the officers, romantic partners placed a lot of emphasis on anticipating and accepting shift work/other scheduling demands to result in the officer's absence from holidays or other special events. They cautioned romantic partners to be aware of these things before getting involved in a relationship with an officer. One stated, 'I would not encourage young couples to take on this challenge." Another said, "if you can't handle these things (shift work, etc.) in marriage, don't marry an officer."

Passion and intimacy were a struggle for relationally distressed and non-distressed participants alike. Among participants who offered explanations as to why they were struggling in these areas, many talked about the demands of child-rearing or the general business of their schedules as interfering in time together or in opportunities for physical connection. Surprisingly, only a handful directly named some aspect of police work as the sole or a major cause of lacking passion and intimacy. Of those who did, nearly 100% referenced conflicting work schedules as the primary explanation for challenge with intimacy and passion. Officers commented, "This comes and goes because of our busy schedules" and, "My hours are very sporadic, and we don't always go to bed or get up at the same time." Romantic partners commented, "With different work schedules, it is often hard to find time to be as intimate as I would like, the struggle is energy levels and time restrictions." Another stated, "Spouse works second shift and I am usually asleep when he gets home from work."

Conclusions. The first research subquestion asks: "Is there a significant association between work-based variables and relationship quality?" The answer is, not in any positive way. Work-based variables appear to have a generally negative impact on RQ, primarily by creating obstacles to intimacy and passion. Quantitative and qualitative data revealed that work-based variables were not predictive of relationship quality in any consistently positive way for the officers, romantic partners, or paired couples in the study. The most positive aspects of work-based variables on relationship quality were found only among the one or two romantic partners who referenced the ability to "understand each other's jobs and the obligations that go along with them" as a strength of their relationship.

Table 20 summarizes the relationship between significant work-based variables and RQ for the subsamples of participants in the study. Among officers, no significant associations or relationships emerged between work-based variables and RQ. For romantic partners, officer critical incident training was found to significantly and negatively predict RQ. For paired couples, CIT training was also a significant and negative predictor of RQ, but only when combined with officer night shift assignment. Alone, night shift accounts for 25% of the variance in couples' RQ scores; adding CIT training to the equation increased this percentage to 38.

In conclusion, work-based variables affect the relationship quality of officers, romantic partners, and couples to varying degrees, but never in a significantly positive way. While most work-based variables did little to affect RQ those that did were considerably problematic, accounting for 17-38% of the variance in RQ scores. Still, work-based variables are not responsible for the totality of a couple's overall relationship quality; other factors play a role.

Table 20

Relationship of Significant Work-Based Variables to RQ by Subsample.

Subsample	Significant Work-Based Findings	Description of Association/Relationship to RQ
All Participants	None	-
Officers	None	-
Romantic Partners	Critical Incident Training	↓ RDAS score by 6 pts (17% of var in RQ)
Paired Couples	Night Shift (+ CIT)	↓ RDAS score by 10pts (26% of var in RQ)

Research Subquestion 2: Home-Based Variables and Relationship Quality

Fifteen (15) home-based variables served to address the second research subquestion: "Is there a significant association between home/family-based variables and relationship quality?" The home-based variables included in the study were: 1) gender (reported as male/female), 2) age (reported in whole years), 3) ethnicity (reported as American Indian or Alaskan Native, Asian or Pacific Islander, Black, White-Hispanic, or White-non-Hispanic), 4) length of current romantic relationship (reported in whole years), 5) living arrangement (reported as married and living together, married and not living together, not married and living together, or not married and not living together), 6) family history of law enforcement (reported as yes/no), 7) officer relationship status at start of career (reported as joined law enforcement prior to dating, joined law enforcement while dating, or joined law enforcement after marriage), 8) romantic partner employment status (reported as working full-time in paid work, working part-time in paid work, not working in a paid position outside of the home), 9) romantic partner student status (reported as yes/no), 10) parenting status (reported as yes/no), 11) ages of children (reported as number of

children in each category: 0-2 years, 3-5 years, 6-12 years, 13-15 years, 16-18 years, or 19

years+), 12) total number of children (devised by adding number of children reported in each age

category), 13) prior marriage counseling (reported as yes/no), 14) perceptions of media

impacting officer morale (yes/no), and 15) perceptions of media impacting the relationship

(yes/no).

Data organization. Prior to the analysis, six of the home-based variables were recoded to

support reliable exploration of the data. First, "ethnicity" and "living arrangement" were

condensed to account for lack of participant representation across categories. Specifically,

89.1% of participants ($n = 98$) identified as White, non-Hispanic. Only 10 percent of participants

identified as White, Hispanic ($n = 11$), and one participant identified as Black. In an attempt to

reduce the severity of the imbalanced samples, the White-Hispanic participants and the Black

participant were grouped together in one category, labeled "ethnic minority" ($n = 12$). Similarly,

regarding the "living arrangement" variable, 90% of participants identified as married and living

together ($n = 99$). Only nine participants identified as "not married, living together," and two

participants identified as "not married, not living together". The living together variable was

recoded to account for individuals who are married ($n = 99$) and those who are not ($n = 11$).

Next, as was done with the "tenure" variable in the work-based subquestion, the home-

based variables of "age" ($M = 40.95$, $SD = 9.29$; range: 21-61), "length of relationship" ($M =$

15.72, $SD = 9.06$; range: 1-35), and "total number of children" ($M = 1.91$, $SD = 1.49$; rage: 0-6)

were recoded to represent larger groupings. First, "age" and "length of relationship" were

clustered into five- and ten-year increments (Age: 20-24 years, 25-29 years, 30-34 years…55+;

and 20s, 30s, 40s, and 50s. Length of relationship: 1-5 years, 6-10 years, 11-15 years…30+; and

1-9 years, 10-19 years, 20-29 years, 30+). Analysis took place on all three levels for both

variables: as a continuous variable by total years, and as ordinal variables in five- and ten-year increments. Next, the "total number of children" variable was grouped by twos (0 kids, 1-2 kids, 3-4 kids, and 5-6 kids). This variable was subsequently analyzed as a whole number continuous variable and as an ordinal variable when grouped by twos.

Finally, the variable "ages of children" was recoded to account for individuals and couples who were parenting "all kids" (children ages 0-12), "all teens" (children ages 13+), "mixed" (kids and teens), and "all over 18" (children all over the age of 18 years old). The recoded variable was named, "type of kids."

Analyses. Home-based variables were examined for associations with relationship quality across all four population subsamples: all participants ($n = 110$), officers ($n = 82$), paired romantic partners ($n = 25$), and paired couples ($n = 26$). Point-biserial correlations (r_{pb}) were computed for the dichotomous variables, Pearson correlations (r) were computed for the continuous variables, and Spearman correlations (r_s) were computed for the ordinal variables. One-way ANOVAs were conducted on categorical variables involving more than two categories. A bivariate regression analysis was used to clarify the predictive value of any home-based variables that were found to have a significant association with relationship quality, as measured by the RDAS.

To conclude the analysis on each subsample, a standard multiple regression was conducted to determine how well the home-based variables predicted relationship quality as a group. Then, a stepwise regression was used to evaluate which variable (or combination of variables) best predicted relationship quality, and to what extent, among the subsamples. Results follow.

All Participants. Among participants in the study, three significant associations emerged between home-based variables and relationship quality, as measured by RDAS total scores: 1) the number of kids an individual has ($N = 110$), 2) perception that the media's focus on law enforcement impacts the relationship ($n = 106$), and 3) perception that the media's focus on law enforcement impacts officer morale ($n = 106$).

In total, eight point-biserial correlations were run (gender, ethnicity, marital status, family history of law enforcement, parenting status, prior counseling, media impact on the relationship, and media impact on morale), three Pearson correlations (age in whole years, length of relationship in whole years, and number of children in whole years), four Spearman correlations (age grouped by 5- and 10-years; length of relationship grouped by 5- and 10- years), and a single one-way ANOVA (type of children: all kids, all teens, mix of kids and teens).

The point-biserial correlation between RDAS score and perceptions of media impact on the relationship was significant and negative, $r_{pb}(104) = -.21$, p = .04, along with the correlation between RDAS score and perceptions of media impact on officer morale $r_{pb}(104) = -.21$, p = .03.

These media-based variables were dummy coded to further explore their predictive value. Both variables were determined to be predictive of relationship quality for participants in the study: media on relationship ($r^2 = .04$, $F(1, 104) = 4.56$, p = .04); media on officer morale ($r^2 = .05$, $F(1, 104) = 4.93$, p = .03). The regressions indicated that relationship quality scores on the RDAS are about four points lower, on average, among individuals who believe that the media's focus on law enforcement impacts their relationship than for individuals who do not ($\beta = -4.02$, p = .04). Similarly, RQ scores are about 3.5 points lower among those who believe the media is impacting officer morale, compared to those who do not ($\beta = -3.53$, p = .03). Combined, media impact appears to account for about nine percent of the total variance in participant RDAS

scores. Figures 9 and 10 depict scatterplots of the regressions between participant RDAS scores and perceptions of media impact.
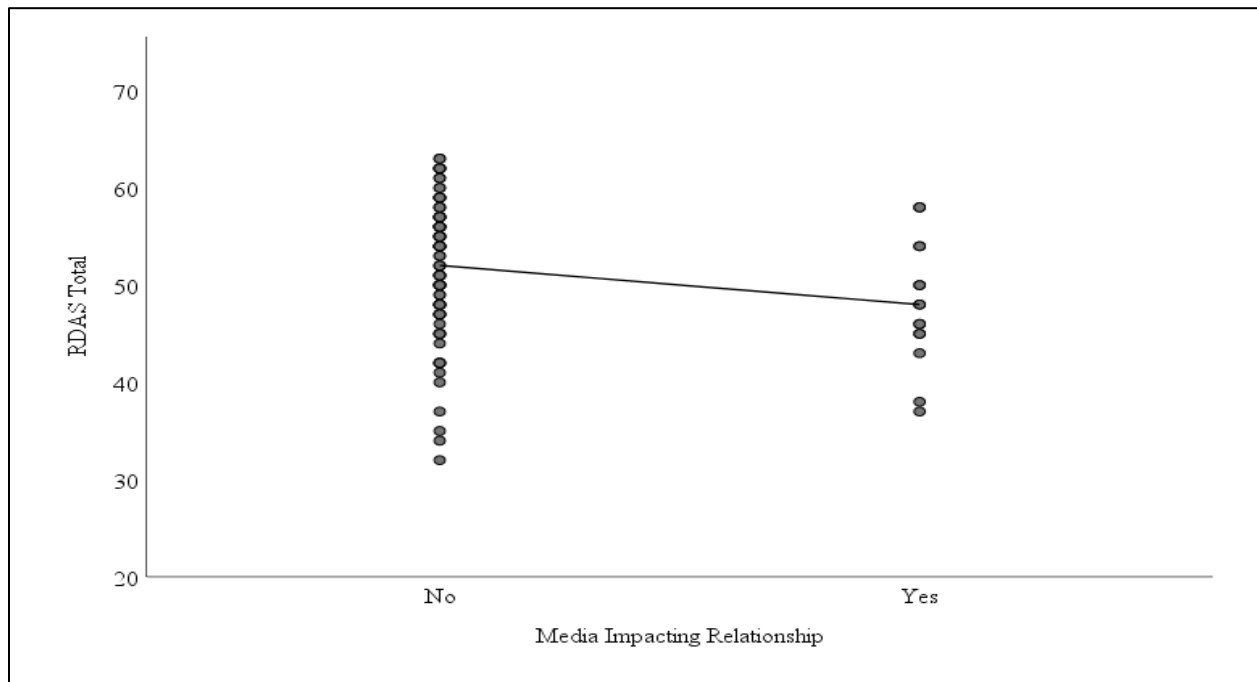
Figure 9. Relationship between media influence on relationship and RQ: All participants (n=106).
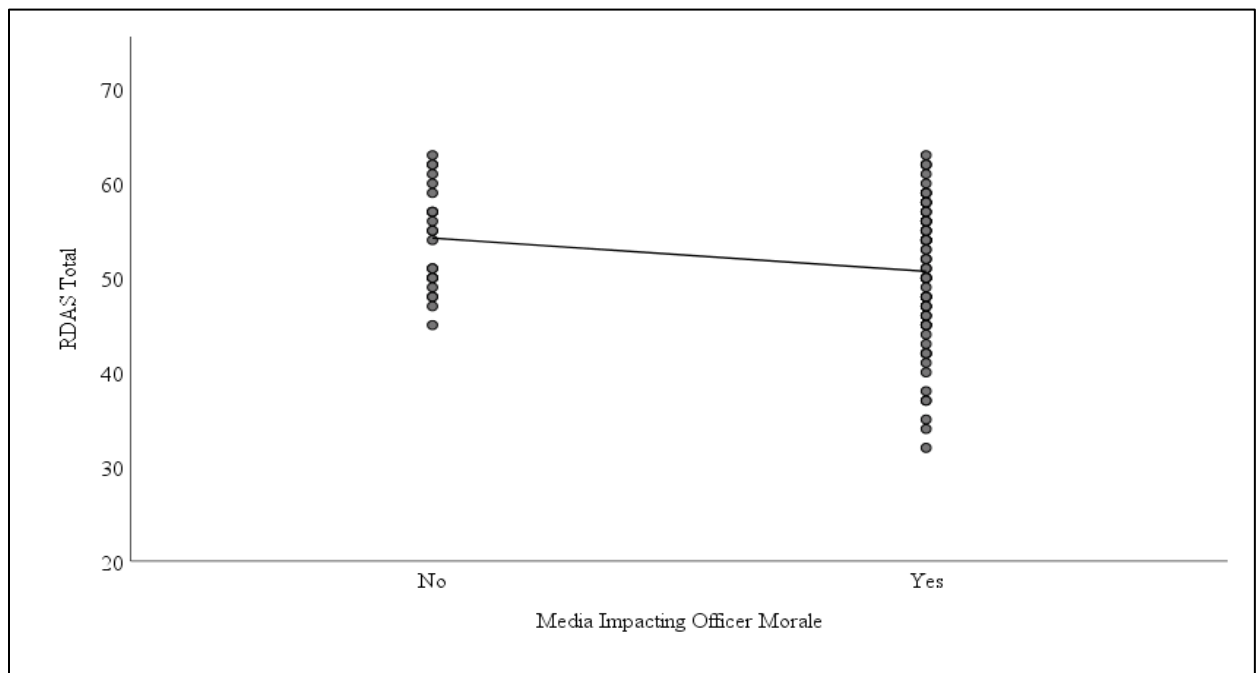
Figure 10. Relationship between media influence on officer morale and RQ: All participants (n=106).

The Pearson correlation for number of kids in the home and relationship quality, as measured by the RDAS, was positive and significant at a 95% confidence interval, $r(108) = .205$, $p = .032$. A linear regression analysis was conducted to determine the predictive ability of number of kids to relationship quality. The regression was significant, $r^2 = .04$, $F(1, 108) = 4.72$, $p = .03$. Figure 11 depicts a scatterplot of the findings. The gradient of the regression line indicates that for every additional child an individual has, his/her total score on the RDAS tends to increase by close to one point ($\beta = .95$, $p = .03$). In total, about four percent of the variance in total RDAS score appears to be accounted for by the number of children individuals in the study had.
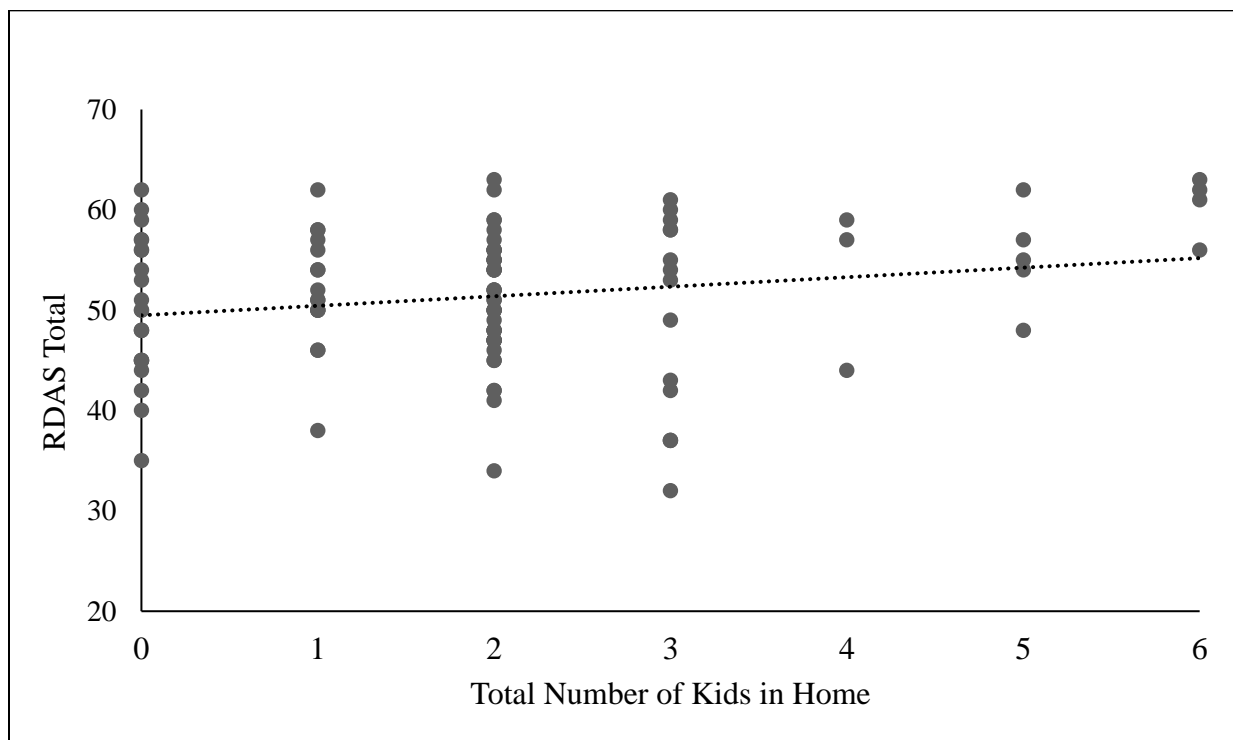
Figure 11. Relationship between RDAS score & number of children: All participants (N=110).

Additional analysis. In preparation for the final analysis of home-based variables and participant RQ scores, dichotomous variables and categorical variables were recoded using dummy variables. A standard multiple regression of all home-based variables and RDAS total

scores was not significant, indicating that as a group, the home-based variables were not predictive of relationship quality ($n = 106$). However, a stepwise regression indicated that among all home-based variables, the number of children an individual had was the best predictor of RQ, followed by perceptions of media impact on officer morale. Combined, these variables were estimated to account for close to 11% of the variance in participant RDAS scores ($r^2 = .11$, $F(1, 103) = 4.96$, p =.03).

Officers. To determine the associations between home-based variables and officer RQ, first, eight point-biserial correlations were computed for officer RDAS scores and the dichotomous home-based variables: gender, ethnicity, marital status, family history of law enforcement, parenting status, prior counseling, perceptions of media impact on the relationship, and perceptions of media impact on morale. Next, three Pearson correlations were computed for the continuous variables of age in whole years, length of relationship in whole years, and total number of kids. Then, five separate Spearman correlations were conducted on the ordinal/ranked variables of age grouped by five- and ten-years, length of relationship grouped by five- and ten-years, and number of kids grouped by two. Finally, two separate ANOVAs were run on the categorical variables of officer relationship status at the start of his/her career and type of kids.

The correlation between officer RQ and perceptions of media impact on morale was significant, $r_{pb}(76) = .30$, p = .01. A standard multiple regression with the variable dummy-coded indicated that officer perceptions of media impact on their own morale is predictive of relationship quality, as measured by total RDAS score ($r^2 = .10$, $F(1, 76) = 7.74$, p = .01). RQ scores were found to be about five points lower for officers who believed the media was

affecting their morale, than for those who didn't (β = -5.10, p = .01). Figure 12 depicts a

scatterplot of the regression data.
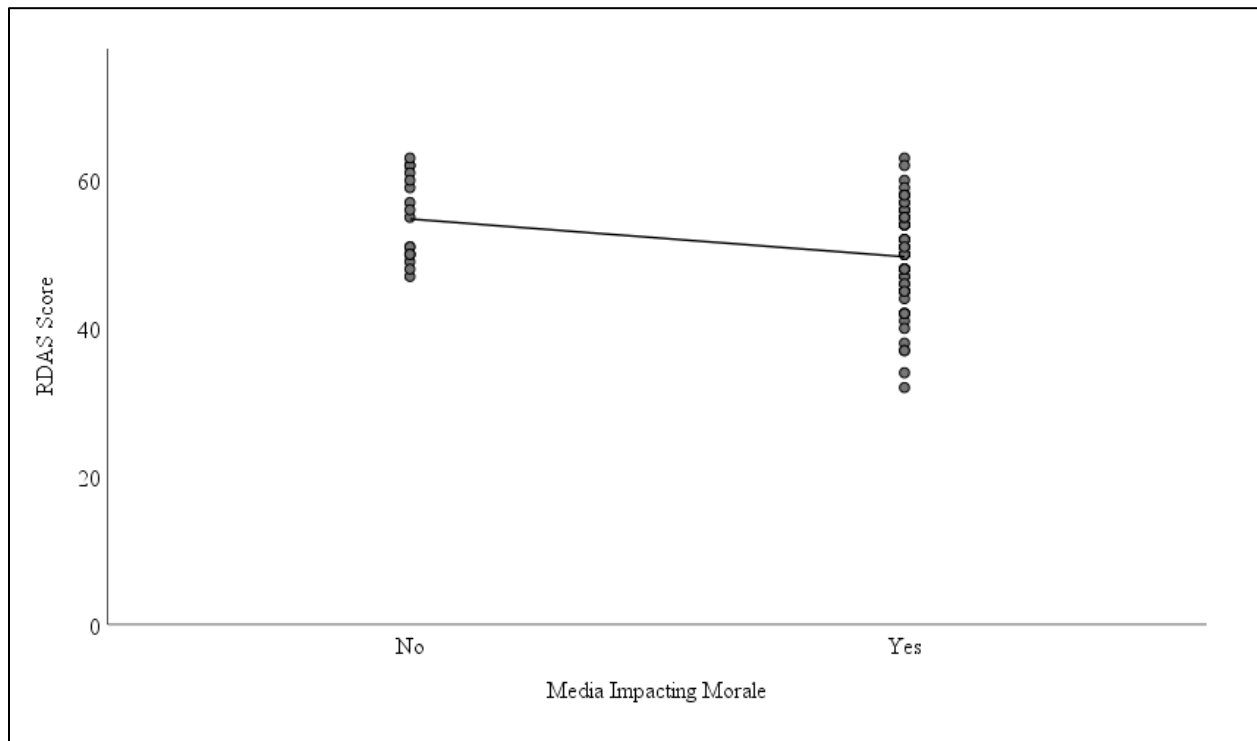
Figure 12. Relationship between media influence on officer morale and RQ: Officers (n=78).

Paired officers were also examined for associations between home-based variables

specific to their romantic partner (employment status and student status), and their own

indications of relationship quality, as measured by RDAS total score. Both point-biserial

correlations were non-significant.

Additional analysis. A standard multiple regression revealed that as a group, home-based

variables are not predictive of officer RQ. A stepwise regression affirmed that among all home-

based variables, officer perceptions of the media impacting their morale is the most significant

predictor of their RQ, as measured by RDAS total score (r^2 = .09). Still, this variable accounts

for only about 10% of the variation in officers' RDAS scores.

Romantic partners. Nearly 100% of romantic partners in the study ($n = 28$) identified as White, married females. For this reason, the variables of ethnicity, marital status, and gender were excluded from examination of the association between romantic partner's relationship quality and home-based variables. Additionally, only one romantic partner identified as being in a relationship lasting 31 years or more, and one identified as being over age 55. To strengthen the power of these variables for analysis, these data points were included in the next lowest groupings (relationship grouped by 5: 26+; age grouped by 5: 50+). Among the remaining variables, the correlations and one-way ANOVA yielded insignificant results across the board ($n = 28$).

Point-biserial correlations were insignificant for family history of law enforcement, employment status, student status, prior counseling, perceptions of media influence on partner's morale, and perception of media influence on the relationship. Pearson correlations were insignificant for age in whole years, length of relationship in whole years, and total number of children. Spearman correlations were insignificant for age (grouped by five- and ten-year increments), length of relationship (grouped by five- and ten-year increments), and total number of kids (grouped by twos). The ANOVA for type of kids was also negative.

Paired romantic partners were also examined for associations between the home-based variable of officer career status at the start of the relationship (joined law enforcement prior to dating, while dating, or after married) and their own indications of relationship quality. The ANOVA for this pairing was insignificant ($n = 25$). In total, none of the home-based variables directly assessed in the study were significantly associated with the relationship quality of officers' romantic partners, as indicated by RDAS total score.

Additional Analysis. A standard multiple regression confirmed that all together, home-based variables are not predictive of romantic partners' RQ, as measured by RDAS scores. A stepwise regression affirmed that none of the home-based variables included in the study were individually predictive of RQ for romantic partners.

Paired couples. Gender, age, ethnicity, and marital status were excluded from paired couples' analysis, as most of these variables lacked significant representation across characteristics. For example, nearly all of the paired couples were married and living together (*n* = 25; 96.15%), with the exception of one, who identified as not married and living together. Similarly, in all but two couples, both individuals identified as White non-Hispanic (*n* = 24; 92.3%), and all but two were male officer-female partner pairings (*n* = 24, 92.3%).

The variable examining beliefs about the influence of the media on officer morale was dichotomously coded to a "yes" category, and an "other" category that included couples whose responses differed, and the one couple who believed the media was *not* affecting their relationship. Perceptions of media impact on the relationship was also dichotomously coded as "no" and "differ" because none of the individuals in the participating dyads were in agreement that the media was affecting their relationship.

All correlations and ANOVAs yielded insignificant associations with the exception of the point-biserial correlation between media impact on the relationship and RQ ($r_{pb}(24) = .68$, p = <.001). The variable was dummy-coded for regression analysis. The regression indicated that a couple's shared views on whether or not the media is impacting their relationship was significantly and positively associated with their average relationship quality score ($r^2 = .44$, $F(1, 24) = 18.64$, p< .001). Specifically, couples who share in the perception that the media is not

171

impacting their relationship have an average RQ score 10 points higher than couples who do not

agree on the media's impact (β = 10.93, p = <.001). Figure 13 depicts a scatterplot of the results.
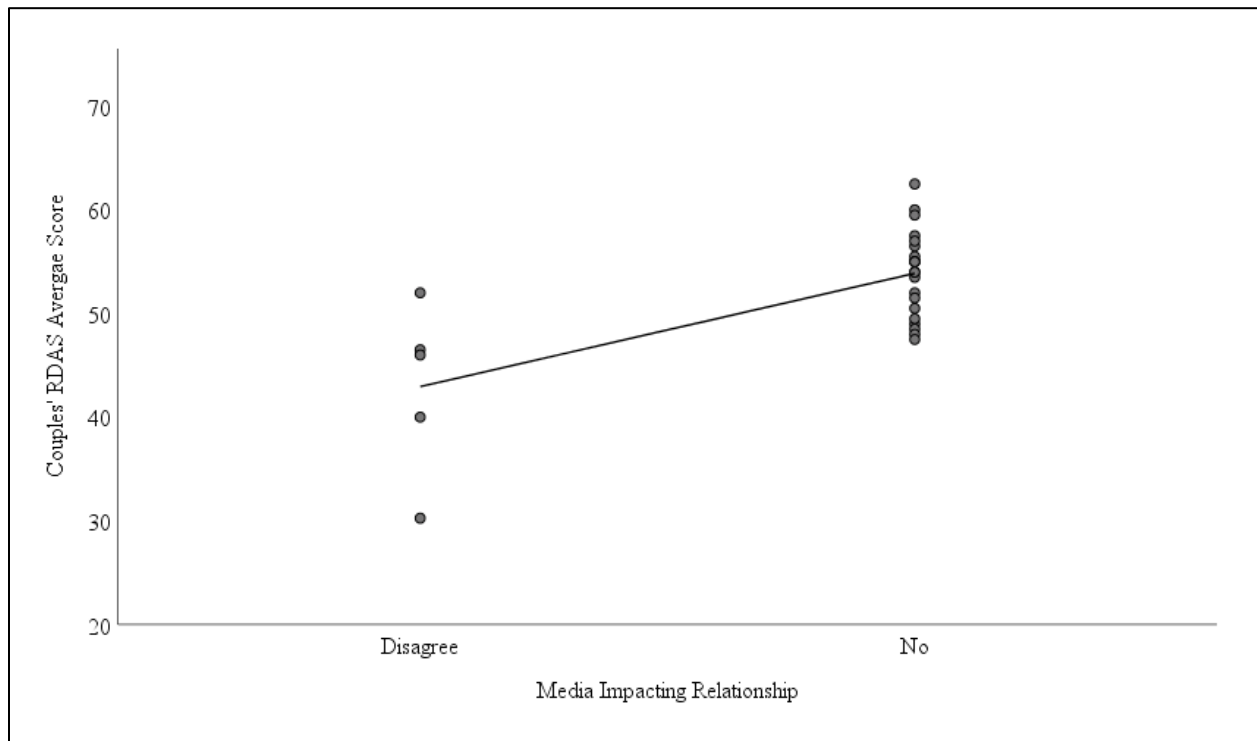
Figure 13. Relationship between media influence on relationship & paired couples' RQ (n=26).

Additional analysis. A standard multiple regression revealed that as a group, home-based

variables are not predictive of couples' RQ, as determined by the average of their RDAS scores.

A stepwise regression affirmed that among all home-based variables, perceptions of the media's

impact on the relationship had the most significant impact on couples' RQ, accounting for about

44% of the variance in averaged RDAS scores (r^2 = .44).

Qualitative Data. Home-based variables emerged in the qualitative data in a variety of

forms and across a variety of constructs. For example, individuals talked about shared values

and goals as motivating satisfaction in the relationship. They referenced the longevity of their

relationships and pride in their children and family as some of the most significant contributors

to the quality of their relationship, their love for each other, and their commitment to each other.

On the other hand, growing families and busy schedules were impeding quality time for others; often negatively impacting intimacy and passion. A number of individuals repeatedly referenced chronic physical illnesses and/or caring for ailing family members as challenges to RQ. Others found these same factors to be a catalyst for growth and a platform for mutual support.

Qualitative questions specific to media and morale and media and the relationship garnered the least amount of data from participants, despite emerging as two of the most predictive aspects of RQ for officers, paired couples, and the group as a whole. In general, relationally non-distressed romantic partners tended to affirm the media as a negative influence, but one that the couple is able to filter out or that drives them together in solidarity. For example, one spouse wrote, "…I find myself upping the things I do to support him physically and emotionally at home. Encouraging more. Hugging more. Praying more." Another responded, "We have healthy conversations about the subject."

Officers' responses to the questions about the media and their relationship was more divided. About half of the respondents voiced the belief that the media does not affect their relationship; the other half talked about a shared irritation with the media, conflict over the severity of its impact on officers/officer-community relationships, or concern over the way it worries their spouse/children. The relationally distressed officers who responded to the question about media and their relationship were overtly more irritated by it and voiced awareness that it negatively affects their mood, their spouse's mood, and the perceptions of their non-LE friends; these dynamics were perceived by them to negatively impact their relationship. One officer wrote, "The media's negative perception causes poor morale and moods in my household, and it also affects non-LE friends' perceptions." Another stated, "my partner has a hard time understanding my hesitation to tell people or advertise that fact that I am in law enforcement."

With regard to media and morale, relationally distressed and non-distressed romantic partners voice clear concerns for their officer partner's morale and how well he/she is handling the "constant scrutiny." Some of their responses clarified the way that the media's impact on officer morale can spill into relationship dynamics or the fears/feelings of individual romantic partners. For example, one participant stated, "It's hard to be positive and to go to work with all that's going on in the world, and then on top of it the media exacerbates situations without facts. I've never been more afraid of my husband not coming home than I have been in the last two years." Another spouse wrote, "I think he is equally disappointed in the actions of some police officers as he is in the unfair media treatment of officers."

Officers share similar sentiments to those of their romantic partners: voicing distrust in the media and a general frustration with perceptions that the media is biased or seeking sensational stories over factual ones. However, compared to the relationally distressed officers, non-distressed officers voiced recognition of support within their own communities and were more willing to acknowledge that some criticism is justified. A relationally distressed officer wrote, "I often think back to why did I sign up for this. My goal was to help people and catch bad guys, really that simple. Not to be hated, mistreated, stereotyped, etc." A non-distressed officer wrote, "There is good and bad. We need to see both to rid the ranks of the bad officers and reinforce the good in good officers." Another remarked, "Media regularly portrays LE in a negative light to fit an agenda. I don't regularly follow the news anymore. The constant stream of 'negative' stories were bringing down my morale. … I do think my profession and some media tend to focus on the bad out there because that's what we see day in and out. Most people do respect the police and most people recognize our job is tough."

Conclusions. Research subquestion 2 asks: "Is there a significant association between home/family-based variables and relationship quality?" The answer is yes, particularly with regard to parenting for the subsample of all participants, and with regard to a shared rejection of media influence by paired couples. Quantitatively and qualitatively parenting and the media were shown to have the potential to positively impact an individual's feelings about their relationship and/or to impact the dynamics of the couple. However, the media was also found to have a negative association with officer RQ when considering its impact on morale. Table 21 summarizes the relationship between significant home-based variables and RQ for the subsamples of participants in the study.

When taken as a whole, the number of children a couple had was found to positively impact relationship quality scores (increasing RDAS scores by about one point for each child, up to six children). On the other hand, individuals who reported believing the media's focus on law enforcement is impacting their relationship had a four-point lower RQ score on average than those who did not feel the media was impacting their relationship. Similar findings emerged with regard to the media and officer morale. Individuals who reported believing the media focus on law enforcement was impacting officer morale had an RQ score about 3.5 points lower than those who did not believe the media was impacting officer morale. A stepwise regression indicated that for all participants, the number of children a couple had and the belief that the media is impacting morale were the most predictive of relationship quality scores, accounting for 11% of the variance in participants' RDAS totals.

For officers in the study, perceptions of the media affecting morale was the only home-based variable found to significantly predict relationship quality. Officers who believed the media was affecting their morale had an RDAS score that averaged five points lower than those

who did not believe the media was affecting their morale. In total, perceptions of media impacting morale was responsible for 10% of the total variance in officers' RQ scores.

Quantitative analysis of home-based variables and the RQ scores of romantic partners in the study yielded insignificant results. A stepwise regression affirmed that for romantic partners the home-based variables directly assessed in the study were not predictive of RDAS scores. However, among paired couples in the study, shared perceptions that the media's focus on law enforcement was *not* impacting the relationship was positively predictive of RQ scores. Recall that none of the couples in the study shared in the belief that the media's focus on law enforcement *was* impacting their relationship. Twenty-one (21) couples (80.8%) agreed that it was, and five (19.2%) did not agree if it was or wasn't. The quantitative analysis indicated that 44% of the variance in couples' RDAS scores was accounted-for by their shared views of the media impacting their relationship. Couples who agreed that the media was not impacting their relationship had an average of 10 points higher RQ than the couples who did not agree.

Table 21

Relationship of Significant Home-Based Variables to RQ by Subsample.

Subsample	Significant Work-Based Findings	Description of Association/Relationship
All Participants	# of children Media & Relationship Media & Morale	↑ RQ by 1pt; 4% of var ↓ RQ by 4 pts; 4% of var ↓ RQ by 3.5 pts; 5% of var
Officers	Media & Morale	↓ RQ by 5 pts; 10% of var
Romantic Partners	None	-
Paired Couples	Media & Relationship	↑ RQ by 10 pts; 44% of var

Participants' descriptions of their relationship dynamics, beliefs, and attitudes support the quantitative finding that children and the media can have a significant impact on relationship quality. For some participants, children are sources of pride; they unite couples in shared values and goals. For others, children are time- and energy-suckers that hinder a couple's ability to connect, physically and emotionally. Feelings about and resulting from perceptions of the media's impact on officer morale and romantic relationships are similarly divided. Though most participants reported perceiving the media as one-sided ratings mongers, some were able to have stimulating conversations around the subject or were motivated towards sensitivity of their spouse's feelings or safety; others were irritated by it or conflicted about its relational and social impact. Across the board, officers and spouses reported a general belief that even if the media is not impacting romantic relationships, it certainly is affecting officer morale, even if only in the form of media avoidance.

In sum, only a few home-based variables were shown to significantly predict relationship quality for participates in the study. However, the positive or negative impact of these variables on relationship quality seems dependent upon other factors within the relationship or the individuals in the dyad, like communication and teamwork. Home-based factors alone will not predict relationship quality, though they certainly have the potential to help or hinder.

Research Subquestion 3: Satisfaction, Commitment, Intimacy, Trust, Passion, Love and Relationship Quality

The third research subquestion asks: "Which of the following relationship constructs are most significantly associated with relationship quality: satisfaction, commitment, intimacy, trust, passion, or love?" The six constructs in question are subscales of the PRQC. Each was

measured by a single question from the inventory: the "exemplar" of each construct (Fletcher et al., 2000).

The sections below will demonstrate that, as expected, correlations between each of the constructs and relationship quality, as measured by RDAS total score, are positive, and generally significant. The potential for collinearity was ruled out using a Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) of five. A VIF of 10 or above (five or above, as a more restrictive measure) is a widely accepted indicator of "serious multicollinearity" among variables (O'brien, 2007, p. 673). A standard multiple regression was used to identify the size of the relationship between the collective constructs and RQ. Then, a stepwise regression determined which of the constructs (or combination of constructs) were most powerful in predicting relationship quality. Separate regressions were run for each of the four subsamples in the study: all participants ($N = 110$), officers ($n = 82$), romantic partners ($n = 28$), and paired couples ($n = 26$). Qualitative data provided insight into how participants were thinking about the constructs. Conclusions complete the findings.

All Participants. Four officers did not complete the RDAS, bringing the sample total for this analysis to 108. The standard multiple regression for the six relationship constructs of the PRQC and participants' RDAS scores was significant ($R^2 = .60$, $F (6, 101) = 25.46$, p = <.001), and indicated that all together the six constructs account for about 60% of the variance in participants' relationship quality scores. Table 22 summarizes the correlational coefficients and VIFs for satisfaction, commitment, intimacy, trust, passion, and love, as they relate to participants' RDAS scores. All correlations were significant.

Table 22

Correlations and Collinearity of Relationship Constructs and RDAS Total:
All Participants (n = 108)

Relationship Construct	Correlational Coefficient	VIF
Satisfaction	.73*	3.51
Commitment	.48*	1.85
Intimacy	.62*	2.86
Trust	.50*	1.76
Passion	.64*	2.74
Love	.47*	1.91

*Correlation is significant at the .005 level (1-tailed).
Note: a VIF under 5 indicates rejection of collinearity.

A step-wise regression clarified that among participants who completed the PRQC portion of the survey ($n = 108$), the constructs of satisfaction, passion, and commitment, were the best predictors of relationship quality ($R^2 = .59$, $F (1, 104) = 5.21$, p = .02). Satisfaction alone accounted for 52.6% of the variance in relationship quality, as measured by RDAS total scores ($R^2 = .53$, $F (1, 106) = 117.63$, p = <.001). Passion accounted for another 5.5% ($R^2 = .57$, $F (2, 105) = 69.84$, p = <.001), and commitment added a final two percent ($R^2 = .59$, $F (3, 104) = 50.16$, p = <.001). The constructs of intimacy, trust, and love did not add to the fit of the model.

Officers. Eighty (80) officers completed the PRQC (97.6%). A standard multiple regression indicated and that together, the constructs of satisfaction, commitment, intimacy, trust, passion, and love, significantly predicted relationship quality for officers in the study ($R^2 = .60$, $F (6, 73) = 17.96$, p = <.001). Table 23 represents the affiliated correlational coefficients and VIFs. All correlations were significant.

Table 23

Correlations and Collinearity of Relationship Constructs and RDAS Total: Officers (n = 80)

Relationship Construct	Correlational Coefficient	VIF
Satisfaction	.72*	3.75
Commitment	.52*	1.95
Intimacy	.60*	3.08
Trust	.46*	1.77
Passion	.62*	2.78
Love	.48*	1.94

*Correlation is significant at the .005 level (1-tailed).
Note: a VIF under 5 indicates rejection of collinearity.

The step-wise regression for participating officers looked similar to that of all participants: satisfaction, passion, and commitment were the best predictors of relationship quality. Among officers, satisfaction alone accounted for 52.3% of the variance in relationship quality, as measured by RDAS total scores (R^2 = .52, F (1, 78) = 85.57, p = <.001). Passion accounted for about four percent more (R^2 = .56, F (1, 77) = 6.76, p =.01), and commitment brought the total to 58.6% (R^2 = .59, F (1, 76) = 4.44, p =.04). The qualitative findings below helped clarify how participants in the study were thinking about "satisfaction" in their relationships.

Romantic Partners. The standard multiple regression for the six relationship constructs and romantic partners' RDAS scores was significant (R^2 = 60, F (6, 21) = 5.16, p = <.005). Table 24 represents correlational coefficients and VIFs for satisfaction, commitment, intimacy, trust, passion, and love, as they relate to relationship quality for romantic partners in the study (*n* =28). Surprisingly, the correlations for commitment and love were not significant, even at a 95% confidence interval. For romantic partners, commitment and love were high, regardless of a wavering RDAS score.

Table 24

Correlations and Collinearity of Relationship Constructs and RDAS Total:
Romantic Partners (n = 28)

Relationship Construct	Correlational Coefficient	VIF
Satisfaction	.69*	2.93
Commitment	.22	1.35
Intimacy	.64*	2.63
Trust	.61*	2.78
Passion	.69*	4.03
Love	.33	1.64

*Correlation is significant at the .005 level (1-tailed).
Note: a VIF under 5 indicates rejection of collinearity.

Results of a stepwise regression indicated that for participating romantic partners, the relationship construct of satisfaction was the sole predictor of RDAS scores ($R^2 = .48$, F (1, 26) = 24.14, p = <.001), accounting for nearly 50% of the variance in scores. For every point increase in satisfaction, participants experienced a 5.32 increase in RQ (β = 5.32, p = <.001). The qualitative findings (below) help clarify how romantic partners are thinking about this construct, and how their thoughts on "satisfaction" compare to officers in the study. The qualitative data also provided insight into romantic partners' views on commitment and love, and why these constructs may not have correlated with their RDAS scores.

Paired Couples. A standard multiple regression indicated that paired couples' RQ was significantly predicted by their average scores on the six relationship constructs ($R^2 = .56$, F (6, 19) = 3.95, p = .01). Table 25 highlights the correlational coefficients and VIFs for satisfaction, commitment, intimacy, trust, passion, and love, as they relate to the RDAS average scores of paired couples in the study (*n* =26). The correlation for commitment was not significant at a 95% confidence interval (p = .06); correlations for all other constructs were significant at p = <

.005. As with the romantic partners, among paired couples, commitment scores were consistently

high, even when RDAS scores dipped.

Table 25

Correlations and Collinearity of Relationship Constructs and RDAS Total:
Paired Couples (n = 26)

Relationship Construct	Correlational Coefficient	VIF
Satisfaction	.67*	4.16
Commitment	.32	1.80
Intimacy	.65*	4.20
Trust	.66*	4.08
Passion	.69*	4.91
Love	.41*	1.88

*Correlation is significant at the .005 level (1-tailed).
Note: a VIF under 5 indicates rejection of collinearity.

Results of a stepwise regression indicated that for paired couples in the study, passion

was the only relationship construct predictive of RQ (R^2 = .48, F (1, 24) = 22.35, p = <.001). For

these couples, passion accounted for nearly 50% of the variance in average RDAS score; for

every point increase in passion, the couples experienced nearly a four-point increase in their

RDAS average score (β = 3.7, p = <.001).

Qualitative Findings. Participant descriptions of satisfaction, commitment, intimacy,

trust, passion, and love in their relationships shared some similar themes but also differed

between officers and romantic partners. Within these groups, some clear differences also

emerged between those who were deemed to be relationally distressed and those who were not.

Satisfaction. Participant reflections on the construct of satisfaction were generally

centered on relational/interpersonal strengths. Mutual respect, mutual support, and shared

values/goals drive these couples. Common themes among non-distressed individuals included

efforts by each to recognize the other person and to support them in their interests/job/social life and/or doing things to help them. Non-distressed couples are taking care of each other; each, in turn, feels taken care of.

Distressed officers voiced frustrations in the lack of communication and affection in their relationship. They complained about their partner's lack of understanding of their job. A few of the distressed officers did note positives in their relationship, like making time to connect, communication, and mutual respect. However, the overwhelming majority were not so optimistic. On the other hand, non-distressed officers highlighted shared interests and values (often focused on family and raising children) as meaningful to relationship satisfaction. Some referenced the longevity of their relationship and friendship with their partner. Many offered praise for their partner as a person and partner. These individuals were not free of relational distress, however; many commented on a lack of sexual intimacy/contact as a relational frustration. Still, non-distressed officers clearly voice an appreciation for and admiration of their partner that distressed officers do not. Non-distressed officers reflected on relationship satisfaction saying things such as, "I know my wife to be an amazing human being above all else. She is also the most impressive mother to our beautiful daughter. While our sex life is heavily lacking, we still manage to connect on an emotional level and our respect for each other is unwavering." Another stated, "She is my best friend who has stuck with me through good and bad. She is my everything." Distressed officers, on the other hand, responded to questions about satisfaction in their relationship with, "My wife is a good person," or "We don't engage in similar interests very often. Both busy and have our independent lives," and "I am happy in my relationship, I just wish he would be a better communicator or understand my opinions. He is

very judgmental and sometimes I feel that he questions me when I do things. I feel like he does not trust me and he has no reason not to trust me."

The relationally distressed and non-distressed romantic partners both voiced general satisfaction in their relationships, with a few exceptions. The non-distressed individuals offered praises of their spouses specific to communication and supporting their ideas and work. One spouse stated, "Excellent communication, respect for each other." Another: "My spouse and I have the same values and beliefs. We generally have the same viewpoint on major life issues. We are very similar."

Commitment. Across the board, participants used the word "commitment" to describe and define their commitment to each other. They talked about being unable to imagine life without their partner, or of having no intention to leave. About one-fourth of officers and one-third of partners remarked, "I would never leave," or "I have never thought about leaving", or "I have no reason to leave."

Distressed and non-distressed officers alike noted that marriage is forever; they took a vow and they will honor it. However, distressed officers used "I" language to talk about their feelings, as in, "I am committed and I always have been," or "I have no plans to leave or end our relationship. On the other hand, non-distressed officers used "we" language to describe commitment: "We are committed to each other and our family", and "We tag team on the kids' schedules" or "…We work together on things. We also understand the need to give each other space at times and allow for time apart to spend time with friends and/or other interests."

Among romantic partners, distressed individuals mostly remarked about the efforts that they are putting into working at the relationship. Non-distressed romantic partners referenced the longevity of their relationship as indication of their commitment, but they, too, are working at

it: "We have been together 28 years… I am fully invested in our marriage as he is," and "We work at our relationship every single day. We make sure that we vocalize our love for one another each day. We make sure we always kiss goodnight…cuddle up…."

Intimacy. Physical intimacy was lacking for nearly everyone in the study. Most cited lack of time together and the general business of life as the primary intimacy thieves: working, running kids around, etc. Surprisingly, shift work or law enforcement schedules were directly referenced only a handful of times ($n = 13$) by officers and spouses in both the distressed and non-distressed categories – typically in form of a complaint about "working opposite shifts." More often, general exhaustion, kids, or "busy schedules" were getting in the way ($n = 30$). Other participants noted a lack of intimacy due to differences in the frequency or preferred form of demonstrations of affection ($n = 28$).

Setting non-distressed individuals apart from distressed individuals is their focus on other forms of intimacy as meaningful, like talking or reunions at the start/end of the day. Non-distressed romantic partners mentioned strength in emotional intimacy through communication and physical intimacy via "cuddling," as making up for lacking sex. The primary difference between distressed and non-distressed officers was that non-distressed officers saw their lack of intimacy as another challenge to work-through, while distressed officers saw a lack of intimacy as another problem in their relationship. The intention to get through, acceptance of struggle, and acknowledgment of contributing factors set the non-distressed couples (officers in particular) apart.

Trust. For the most part, participants in the study reported trust in their spouses. In total, only 11 participants described a lack of trust in their spouse on some level (15.1%). For most

participants, trust is described as trust never having been broken. Like intimacy, it is quantifiable: how many times has there been cheating, lies, or unfulfilled promises, etc.?

One noticeable difference between distressed and non-distressed participants emerged in romantic partners' responses. Unlike most officers, who explained trust or lack of trust as, "no issues" or "I have no reason not to [trust him/her]," many romantic partners described traits that made their officer partner trustworthy: leadership, honesty, morals, openness, transparency, reliability, and loyalty.

Passion. Similar to intimacy, passion was lacking for the majority of participants. Three trends set relationally non-distressed individuals' responses apart from distressed: 1) acceptance that passion fades over time or with age, or waxes and wanes; 2) intentionally infusing passion into their relationships (officers in particular): scheduling date nights, "making time" to connect, etc.; and 3) sharing passion in non-physical forms: passion about family, shared hobbies, admiration for spouse as an expression of passion about them (romantic partners in particular).

As with intimacy, busy schedules and lack of time together were the most common explanations for lack of passion. Some participants talked about passion as a personality trait that they just don't have: "We are not overly passionate, but I would say we are pretty moderate in most things." One noted lots of passion in the relationship, but described it as "Not always expressed in a positive way."

Love. Participants openly expressed love for their partner. They wrote about friendship, named traits they appreciate, and stated that love grows over time. Only two respondents hinted at a lack of love for their spouse. As one participant wrote, "Lack of love is certainly not the issue" for low RQ. One notable difference between relationally distressed and relationally non-distressed individuals is that non-distressed individuals used Hallmark-type phrases to describe

their love: They "love" their partner with their "whole heart." They "adore" them, and they try to show them this. They value their partner for their roles as spouse, provider, teammate, and friend.

Only three relationally distressed romantic partners responded to the qualitative question about love; all three spoke positively of their partner and their love for him/her. On the other hand, relationally distressed officers seemed to describe *commitment* as an explanation of love. These officers are not feeling much love or giving much love, but are were committed to the relationship. For example, one wrote, "I am committed to the marriage." Another: "Loyal to a fault. Mother to my kids."

Conclusions. The third research subquestion asked: "Which of the following relationship constructs are most significantly associated with relationship quality: satisfaction, commitment, intimacy, trust, passion, or love?" The answer is that satisfaction and passion are the relationship constructs most significantly associated with RQ, followed by commitment. Satisfaction and passion are the two relational constructs that consistently and positively impacted relationship quality for participants in the study; commitment was also important but to a lesser extent. Specifically, among all participants and the officers subsample, satisfaction was most predictive of RQ (accounting for about just over 50% of the variance in both samples), followed by passion and commitment. Among romantic partners, satisfaction alone was the most significant predictor of RQ (accounting for 48% of the variance in RQ scores); and for paired couples, passion (also accounting for 48% of the variance in scores). The qualitative data explains how participants are measuring and thinking about these constructs.

Regarding descriptions of satisfaction, relationally distressed participants (officers in particular), were more likely than relationally non-distressed participants to voice frustration

with their partner/spouse, particularly in the areas of communication and understanding their job. Relationally non-distressed participants, on the other hand, talked about satisfaction in their relationship as mutual respect, mutual support, and shared values/goals. These individuals openly praised their partner for who they are as a person and for their contributions to the relationship. Among romantic partners, for whom satisfaction was the only predictor of RQ, feeling supported by their partner seemed to set the non-distressed apart.

Passion enhanced satisfaction for the entire group of participants and the officers subsample. In these groups, the relationally distressed individuals were frustrated with the lack of sexual contact, and that's where their passion seemed to end. On the other hand, the relationally non-distressed individuals tended to have a broader definition of passion to include passion about each other, about family, or about shared hobbies/interests; they acknowledge that passion fades over time and they accept passion as something that requires intentional effort, such as scheduling date nights. In the paired couples, passion was the only significant predictor of relationship quality, indicating that from a relational standpoint, energy and excitement about each other, the relationship, and/or the values and goals the couple shares, is more meaningful than a shared goal or appreciation of the other person on its own. Individuals in the study described passion as an enthusiasm for the relationship, one that can be sexual in nature, but doesn't have to be.

Commitment was a construct that was also meaningful to relationship quality for the whole group of participants and the officers subsample. For these groups, commitment matters, while for romantic partners and paired couples, commitment scores were strong and stable even when relationship quality scores were not. For the most part, all participants in the study spoke positively about their commitment to their partner. However, officers' data highlighted the

importance of "we" language in distinguishing relationally non-distressed individuals from the relationally distressed. Non-distressed individuals (officers in particular) saw commitment to the relationship as something that is shared by them and their partner; commitment is an esprit de corps. Relationally distressed individuals, on the other hand, seemed to feel that they are going it alone, yet they aren't willing to call it quits. Nearly all participants in the study voiced commitment to their relationship, but the non-distressed individuals believed they were receiving it in return and acknowledged a shared effort to work through challenges. For this group of participants, unity matters.

While participants' qualitative descriptions of the relationship constructs generally reflected their Likert-style score on the same topic (i.e. more positive qualitative descriptions tended to correlate with higher quantitative scores), strength or weakness in a particular construct is not necessarily indicative of relationship quality overall. For example, many of the participants who spoke poorly or with frustration of passion or intimacy in their relationship were relationally non-distressed, as a whole. Likewise, some relationally distressed participants voiced a strong commitment to their relationship/partner or high levels of trust or passion. Combined, the quantitative and qualitative results indicate that satisfaction, commitment, intimacy, trust, passion, and love as a group, or alone, are not the sole predictors of relationship quality; other constructs or factors are playing a role in relationship quality for officers and their romantic partners.

Research question 4: Consensus, satisfaction, cohesion and relationship quality

The fourth research subquestion asked: "Which of the following interpersonal areas are most significantly associated with relationship quality: consensus, satisfaction, or cohesion?" The three areas in question are subscales of the RDAS. Each was measured by a series of

questions imbedded within the inventory. As the predictors in question (consensus, satisfaction, and cohesion) are part of the relationship quality indicator utilized for this study (RDAS total score), correlations were expected to be positive and strong; the potential for collinearity was high. As a result, concluding regressions were run twice, once using the RDAS as a measure of RQ, and once using the PRQC.

Similarities and differences in findings between the two relationship measures, as they relate to the three interpersonal areas, will be presented. Collinearity was ruled out using a Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) of five. As with the previous research subquestions, qualitative data and conclusions complete analysis of the findings.

All participants. The standard multiple regression between consensus, satisfaction, commitment, and RQ, as measured by the PRQC was significant ($R^2 = .60$, F (3, 104) = 50.87, p = <.001). One-tailed correlations for the three predictors and both RQ measures were also significant, and VIF scores did not indicate collinearity as an issue. Table 26 provides a comparison of the correlational coefficients by the outcome measures.

Table 26

Correlational Comparisons of Interpersonal Areas by RQ Measure: All Participants

	Consensus	Cohesion	Satisfaction
RDAS ($n = 110$)	.87*	.79*	.78*
PRQC ($n = 108$)	.63*	.60*	.57*

*Correlation is significant at < .001 (1-tailed).

Stepwise regressions indicated that all three interpersonal areas were predictive of RQ, as measured by both the RDAS and the PRQC, however, the primary predictive area(s) differed for each. Specifically, consensus and cohesion accounted for the majority of variance in participants' RDAS scores ($R^2 = .95$, p = <.001), while satisfaction and cohesion were greatest in

the PRQC ($R^2 = .56$, p = <.001). Together, the three interpersonal areas only accounted for about 60% of the total variance in PRQC scores ($R^2 = .60$, p = <.005). Table 27 provides a comparison of the models between RQ measures.

Table 27

RQ Determination Coefficients by RDAS Construct: All Participants

	RDAS (*n* = 110)			PRQC (*n* = 108)		
	Interpersonal Area	R^2	p-value	Interpersonal Area	R^2	p-value
Model 1	Consensus	.75	.00	Satisfaction	.46	.00
Model 2	Consensus Cohesion	.95	.00	Satisfaction Cohesion	.56	.00
Model 3	Consensus Cohesion Satisfaction	1.00	-	Satisfaction Cohesion Consensus	.60	.00

Officers. The standard regression between the three interpersonal areas and RQ, as measured by the PRQC was significant ($R^2 = .60$, $F (3, 76) = 37.21$, p = <.001). As with all participants, for officers in the study, the one-tailed correlations for the three predictors and both RQ measures were also significant. VIF scores did not indicate collinearity concerns. Table 28 provides a comparison of the correlational coefficients by the outcome measures.

Table 28

Correlational Comparisons of Interpersonal Areas by RQ Measure: Officers

	Consensus	Cohesion	Satisfaction
RDAS (*n* = 82)	.86*	.78*	.78*
PRQC (*n* = 80)	.65*	.68*	.53*

*Correlation is significant at < .001 (1-tailed).

Stepwise regression outputs for officers mirrored all participants in that all three interpersonal areas were shown to be predictive of RQ in varying degrees and combinations. However, for officers, consensus and cohesion accounted for the majority of variance in RDAS scores (R^2 = .94, p = <.001), while satisfaction and consensus were greatest in the PRQC (R^2 = .56, p = <.001). As with all participants, for officers in the study, the three interpersonal areas together accounted for about 60% of the total variance in PRQC scores (R^2 = .60, p = .016). Table 29 provides a comparison of the models between RQ measures.

Table 29

RQ Determination Coefficients by Interpersonal Area: Officers

	RDAS (*n* = 82)			PRQC (*n* = 80)		
	Interpersonal Area	R^2	p-value	Interpersonal Area	R^2	p-value
Model 1	Consensus	.74	.00	Satisfaction	.47	.00
Model 2	Consensus Cohesion	.94	.00	Satisfaction Consensus	.56	.00
Model 3	Consensus Cohesion Satisfaction	1.00	-	Satisfaction Consensus Cohesion	.60	.02

Romantic Partners. The standard regression between the three interpersonal areas and RQ, as measured by the PRQC, was significant for romantic partners in the study (R^2 = .63, *F* (3, 24) = 13.85, p = <.001). One-tailed correlations were significant for each of the three predictors and both RQ measures; VIF scores did not indicate collinearity concerns. Table 30 provides a comparison of the correlational coefficients by the outcome measures for the romantic partners in the study.

Table 30

Correlational Comparisons of Interpersonal Area by RQ Measure: Romantic Partners (n = 28)

	Consensus	Cohesion	Satisfaction
RDAS	.88*	.81*	.77*
PRQC	.54*	.64*	.67*

*Correlation is significant at < .005 (1-tailed).

Stepwise regressions indicated that the predictability of the interpersonal areas varied significantly based on RQ measure. For example, consensus and cohesion accounted for the majority of variability in romantic partner RQ when RQ was determined by RDAS total score (R^2 = .97, p = <.001). However, when RQ was determined by PRQC total score, only cohesion and satisfaction contributed to fit (R^2 = .63, p = < .005); consensus did not add to the determination coefficient. Table 31 provides a comparison of the models between RQ measures.

Table 31

RQ Determination Coefficients by Interpersonal Area: Romantic Partners (n = 28)

	RDAS			PRQC		
	Interpersonal Area	R^2	p-value	Interpersonal Area	R^2	p-value
Model 1	Consensus	.77	.00	Cohesion	.45	.00
Model 2	Consensus Cohesion	.97	.00	Cohesion Satisfaction	.63	.00
Model 3	Consensus Cohesion Satisfaction	1.00	-	-	-	-

Paired Couples. Couples' data were analyzed using the average scores of the individuals in each dyad. Among the paired couples in the study (*n* = 26), the three interpersonal areas were shown to be significantly predictive of RQ, as measured by the PRQC (R^2 = .57, *F* (3,

22) = 9.68, p = <.001). One-tailed correlations were significant for each of the three predictors

and both RQ measures; VIF scores did not indicate collinearity concerns. Table 32 provides a

comparison of the correlational coefficients by the outcome measures for the paired couples in

the study.

Table 32

Correlational Comparisons of Interpersonal Area by RQ Measure: Paired Couples (n = 26)

	Consensus	Cohesion	Satisfaction
RDAS	.88*	.85*	.67*
PRQC	.62*	.61*	.56*

*Correlation is significant at < .001 (1-tailed).

Stepwise regressions indicated that the predictability of the three interpersonal areas varied

significantly based on RQ measure. Among paired couples, consensus and cohesion accounted

for the majority of variability in RQ, as measured by the RDAS (R^2 = .97, p = <.001). However,

only consensus and cohesion were significantly associated with RQ measured by the PRQC (R^2

= .55, p = < .007). For paired couples in the study, the interpersonal area of consensus was

significantly associated with PRQC total scores. Additionally, the determination coefficient (R^2

= .55) for consensus and cohesion was lowest in this group than in any other subsample, indicating

that for paired couples, nearly half of the variability in RQ scores (as measured by the PRQC) are

coming from some other variable(s) not accounted for by the RDAS subscales of consensus,

satisfaction, or cohesion. Table 33 provides a comparison of the determination coefficients for

the stepwise models based on the RDAS-specific interpersonal areas for paired couples in the

study.

Table 33

RQ Determination Coefficients by Interpersonal Area: Paired Couples (n = 26)

	RDAS			PRQC		
	Interpersonal Area	R^2	p-value	Interpersonal Area	R^2	p-value
Model 1	Consensus	.76	.00	Consensus	.39	.00
Model 2	Consensus Cohesion	.97	.00	Consensus Cohesion	.55	.01
Model 3	Consensus Cohesion Satisfaction	1.00	-	-	-	-

Qualitative Findings. Participants were not directly asked about the interpersonal areas of consensus, satisfaction, and cohesion. Instead, the RDAS provides its own archetypes of the constructs in question and participant experiences within were pulled from their qualitative responses to other survey questions.

Consensus. According to the RDAS, consensus involves the extent of a couple's agreement in six major areas: religious matters, demonstrations of affection, major decision-making, sex relations, conventionality, and career decisions. For participants in the study, similar themes were evident in explanations of intimacy, passion, love, greatest strengths, significant relational experiences, advice to other couples, and general relationship satisfaction. For example, spirituality/shared religious beliefs were directly mentioned by three participants as additional experiences they believed directly contributed to the quality of their relationship. Some participants included religious affiliations/spirituality as advice to a new law enforcement officer and his/her romantic partner; one stated, "…Focus on your faith. Find a church and make services a priority. No matter how messed up our jobs get, keep your family and faith as

something that is always there for you….” Participants talked about sex relations and demonstrations of affection in their reflections on intimacy and passion. These areas were important to relationship satisfaction as well. For example, one participant stated, “She does not like public affection – I do. She and I don’t always like the same things…so we often are not intimate. We do not compromise well in this area….” Decision-making and conventionality (correct or proper behaviors) emerged in responses to qualitative questions about commitment, greatest strengths, satisfaction, and significant relational experiences. One participant described the couple’s greatest strength as, “Shared ideals, humor and parenting priority.” Another wrote, “We have always worked well together whether it’s raising our children or making decisions. We come from a similar family background and have the same beliefs and values on life.”

Satisfaction. According to the RDAS, satisfaction encompasses the frequency with which couples, 1) have discussed or considered divorce or separation, 2) quarrel, 3) regret marriage or living together, and 4) get on each other’s nerves. Similar themes were evident in qualitative responses to questions about trust, commitment, greatest strengths, intimacy, passion, advice to other couples, and significant relationship experiences. Participants’ reflections on commitment included comments such as, “[I/We] have no desire to separate or divorce but we don’t always get along. We often argue loudly and say things we regret.” Another stated, “there was a time about 6 years ago when our marriage was basically over. We decided to go to counseling and work on the relationship. I’m the happiest I’ve been in 22 years.” One participant wrote that the couple’s greatest strength was being “Able to calmly discuss issues….” Another noted that bickering was getting in the way of intimacy: “My wife has a high sex drive but I am just not interested most of the time due to the constant fighting.”

Cohesion. On the RDAS, cohesion is indicative of the frequency with which couples engage in outside interests together, have a stimulating exchange of ideas, work together on a project, and calmly discuss something. Participants talked about these types of experiences in their responses to qualitative questions about their greatest strengths, general relationship satisfaction, advice to other couples, significant relationship experiences, and reflections on the media and the relationship. One officer suggested that couples new to LE should "Have a variety of hobbies that you enjoy doing together and do them often." Another explained the strongest aspect of his/her relationship as "Shared ideals, humor and parenting priority." A distressed spouse noted, "I love him immensely but feel like we cannot get on the same page."

Conclusions. The fourth and final research subquestion asked: "Which of the following interpersonal areas are most significantly associated with relationship quality: consensus, satisfaction, or cohesion?" The answer is that all are significant to relationship quality, but in varying degrees among subsamples. Consensus and satisfaction have the strongest cumulative predictive value to the relationship quality scores of the four subsamples, though conclusions here are not as clear cut as in the other three research subquestions.

The associations between consensus, satisfaction, cohesion, and relationship quality are consistently positive, though not always significant, depending on whether RQ was measured using the RDAS or the PRQC. The RDAS labels consensus as the extent to which couples agree on six domains: religious matters, demonstrations of affection, major decisions, sex relations, conventionality, and career decisions. Satisfaction is the frequency with which couples disagree or have considered divorce/separation/breaking up, quarrel, regret the relationship, or get on each other's nerves. Cohesion is the frequency with which couples engage in outside interests

together, have a stimulating exchange of ideas, work together on a project, or calmly discuss something.

The constructs of consensus, cohesion, and satisfaction are subscales of the RDAS, but a stepwise regression indicated that among participants in this study, they do not equally contribute to RQ, as measured by the inventory. Consensus was consistently the strongest indicator of RDAS total scores, accounting for between 74 and 77% of the variance in participant RDAS scores across all four subsamples (all participants, officers, romantic partners, and paired couples). Cohesion consistently added about 20% to the explanation of variability, and satisfaction three to five percent.

When the PRQC was used as the measure of relationship quality, outcomes were more varied. Among all participants and the officers subsample, all three constructs were predictive of RQ, accounting for nearly 60% of the variance in scores. In both subsamples, satisfaction alone accounted for about 50% of the variance. However, among all participants, cohesion was the second-best predictor of RQ (adding 10% to the explanation of variability), then consensus (adding another 4%). The second and third best predictors were reversed for officers: satisfaction (46%), then consensus (9%), followed by cohesion (4%). Among romantic partners, only cohesion (45%) and satisfaction (18%) were significant predictors of RQ, as measured by the PRQC. Among paired couples, consensus (39%) and cohesion (16%).

Qualitative data helps explain how officers and their romantic partners are thinking about consensus, satisfaction, and cohesion with regard to various aspects of their relationship and experiences. For example, how quarreling impacts intimacy, or how shared interests, goals, and values can serve as a relational strength. The analyses demonstrate that these broad concepts account for a significant amount of variance in individuals' or couples' experiences within their

relationship. However, relational interactions that are most impactful for the group differ from those that are most impactful for officers and romantic partners, and the relationship between them.

Conclusion

One hundred ten (110) individuals completed the online survey: 82 officers and 28 romantic partners; 26 couples were paired. The three relationship inventories included in the study as measures of relationship quality were significantly correlated, supporting their validity as outcome measures.

According to the PRQC, KMSS, and RDAS, the vast majority of participants and couples in the study had a generally positive relationship quality. Participants averaged a score of 35.9 on the PRQC ($SD = 4.68$, maximum possible score = 42), and well over half scored in the non-distressed category on the KMSS and RDAS, 80.2% and 72.7% respectively. More participants scored non-distressed on the KMSS than on the RDAS, but this was not a surprising finding, as the KMSS includes only three questions, all geared towards satisfaction, while the RDAS consists of fourteen questions encompassing three unique subscales.

All three relationship quality measures included a total score, indicative of overall relationship quality and/or relational distress/non-distress; the PRQC and the RDAS also included subscales specific to various aspects of relationship quality. Participants' total scores and subscale scores were not found to differ significantly across subsamples nor between individuals in the dyads of the paired couples. However, romantic partners tended to score slightly higher than the other three subsamples on all measures and across subscales; officers slightly lower than the others.

Despite minor variances, subscale scores on the PRQC and RDAS were generally high for all participants. Love and commitment were the most consistently positive subscales on the PRQC, followed by trust. Satisfaction (evaluated by frequency of considering divorce/separation, quarreling, regretting the relationship, and getting on each other's nerves) was the most consistently positive subscale on the RDAS. On the other hand, passion and intimacy were the greatest area of struggle for participants, as indicated by lower scores in these areas of the PRQC. Cohesion (engaging in outside interests together, having a stimulating exchange of ideas, working together on a project, and calmly discussing something) was the area of greatest weakness for participants on the RDAS.

Home- and work-based variables proved to be significant predictors of relationship quality in both helpful and harmful ways. The nature and magnitude of the influence varied by subsample group. For example, parenting (# of children) and perceptions of media influences were significantly predictive of relationship quality scores for all participants as a group, but no other directly-measured work- or home-based variables were. Among officers, the only variable significantly associated with relationship quality was "perceptions of media impacting morale;" the relationship was negative. Among paired couples, significant differences in relationship quality were negatively predicted by a combination of officer night shift assignment and officer CIT training. However, CIT training alone was not associated with RQ for paired couples. Couples' perceptions of the media influence on their relationship was also significantly associated with RQ. This relationship was a positive one and only applied to couples who both agreed that the media was not affecting their relationship.

Inventory subscale constructs also differed in magnitude and relationship to RQ. The PRQC interpersonal areas of satisfaction, passion, and commitment best predicted RQ scores on

the RDAS for all participants together and the officers subsample. Satisfaction alone was most predictive of RQ for romantic partners; Passion for paired couples.

The three interpersonal areas of the RDAS were examined using both the RDAS and the PRQC as measures of RQ. The intention was to cross-check significant relationships and the predictive nature of the three interpersonal areas to RQ. Outcomes were not consistent. For example, in general, for all participants and officers, RDAS questions associated with the frequency of considering separation/divorce or regretting the relationship (subscale: satisfaction) were most predictive of RQ as measured by the PRQC. In both groups, this measure of satisfaction accounted for nearly 50% of the variance in participants' scores, cohesion and consensus followed, but were flip-flopped between groups. In both groups, if the RDAS was used as the measure of RQ, consensus (frequency of agreement on six major life areas) was the most significant factor, accounting for close to 75% of the variance in participants' scores. Cohesion added another 20%, followed by satisfaction, appropriately bringing the coefficient of determination to 1.0 for each group.

Table 34 summarizes the significant findings of the stepwise regressions that concluded each subsection above. Findings are distinguished by the four subsamples of the study. Positive or negative relationships are indicated for the work- and home-based variables. The R-squared (percentage of variance) value is indicated for each of the relationship constructs and interpersonal areas (measured by PRQC and RDAS subscales).

Table 34

Stepwise Regressions: Significant Findings by Subsample

	Work & Home Variables	Relationship Constructs	Interpersonal Areas	
			RDAS	PRQC
All Participants	# of Children (+) Media & Morale (-) Media & Relationship (-)	Satisfaction 53% Passion 6% Commitment 2%	Consensus 75% Cohesion 20% Satisfaction 5%	Satisfaction 46% Cohesion 10% Consensus 4%
Officers	Media & Morale (-)	Satisfaction 52% Passion 4% Commitment 4%	Consensus 74% Cohesion 20% Satisfaction 6%	Satisfaction 47% Consensus 9% Cohesion 4%
Romantic Partners	CIT Training (-)	Satisfaction 48%	Consensus 77% Cohesion 20% Satisfaction 4%	Cohesion 45% Satisfaction 18%
Paired Couples	Night Shift & CIT Training (-) Media & Relationship (+)	Passion 48%	Consensus 76% Cohesion 21% Satisfaction 3%	Consensus 39% Cohesion 16%

+/-: indicates a positive or negative relationship
%: indicates% of variance of RQ total score explained by the construct

Qualitative findings suggest that regardless of the challenges placed on an

individual/couple by their environment, attitude and teamwork set the tone for relationship

quality. Qualitative themes did not differ much between distressed and non-distressed

individuals in the study. Passion and intimacy were a struggle for nearly everyone.

Commitment and love were consistently high. However, the non-distressed individuals reflected

on challenges as opportunities for growth; they voiced praise and admiration for their partner;

they saw inconveniences as temporary, and they shared values and a vision of life together with their partner that powered their intentions and interactions in a positive way.

Discussion

This study asked, "What interpersonal characteristics and work- and home-based contextual factors are associated with relationship quality for law enforcement officers and their romantic partners?" The answer is that the impact of work- and home-based contexts vary for officers and their romantic partners; but teamwork, friendship, and an enthusiastic approach to each other, the relationship, and shared values make all the difference.

Findings from this study contribute to the small pocket of information available to scholars, professionals, and the law enforcement community specific to the work-family interface of police officers. Conclusions add to existing literature on law enforcement relationships, but with an ecological emphasis. Most other studies have focused inquiry on occupational stressors and/or individuals' attempts to cope with or manage them. The emphasis of this study remains on the smallest unit of ecological analysis, the microsystem (police officers, their romantic partners, and the dynamics of their romantic partnerships). However, it also pulls back the lens to better view the relationships between variables and across the layers of the ecosystem as a whole.

Participants

Officers in the study were fairly aligned with national police demographic trends and samples from other studies on officers' romantic relationships. In general, little is known about the personal lives of U.S. police officers beyond the basic demographics summarized in the handful of previous studies on the topic, or intermittent publications by national occupational or other data collection centers. The Department of Justice reports that the typical U.S. police

officer is around 37 years old, with about 12 years of tenure. Roughly 27% are racial or ethnic

minorities, and less than 15% are women (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2015). Relationship and

family specifics are rarely disclosed. Table 35 highlights similarities and differences in work-

and home-based demographics between this study and related studies of the past 35 years.

Table 35

Demographic Comparisons to Other Relational Studies of Officers and Partners

	Jackson & Maslach (1982)	Maynard & Maynard (1982)	Beehr & Johnson (1995)	Roberts & Levenson ('01; '13)	Karaffa et al. (2015)	Telisak (2019)
Participants						
Officers (*n*)	142	42	177	19; 17	82	82
Partners (*n*)	142	42	177	19; 17	89	28
Officers						
Age (*M*)	34	-	32	37; 36	39	41
Tenure (*M*)	12 years	7 years	8 years	9 years	13 years	17 years
Ethnic Minority	6%	-	6%	18%; 41%	11%	13.%
Female	-	-	9%	-	5%	11%
Married	97%	100%	100%	100%		99%
Parenting	90%	81%	-	74%; 77%		78%
Spouse/Partner						
Full-time Work	-	-	-	37%; 29%		53%
Home/Student	42	-	-	37%; 35%		11%
Part-Time Work	-	-	-	26%; 35%		36%
Research Topic	Family Life Quality	Identifying Stressors	Stress & Coping	Stress & Coping	Marital Distress	Relational Quality & Strengths
Instruments						
Validated	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	Yes
Name	Maslach Burnout Inventory	-	-	Locke-Wallace	-	PRQC RDAS KMSS

Findings Relative to Theory: Human Ecology & The Work-Family-Interface

Human ecology is a framework useful for understanding the relationship between

humans and their environment. An ecological perspective situates the interactions between

individual traits and the dynamics of a romantic dyad within nature, culture, employment settings, and community (Bubolz & Sontag, 2009; Huston, 2000). For the purposes of this study, the framework was narrowed to focus on law enforcement officers and their romantic partners, but without losing sight of the broader contextual factors that fuel their individual experiences and relational undercurrents.

An ecosystem is comprised of four interconnected environments; from the least tangible to the most palpable: the macrosystem (the natural world), the exosystem (socio-political influences), the mesosystem (human-built structures and boundaries), and the microsystem (a couple or individual). For most working adults, the work-family interface exists primarily within the smallest two spheres: the mesosystem and microsystem. However, for police officers, other first responders, and anyone operating within a social or political profile, the work-family interface extends out, dancing within and between all four domains.

The quality of an individual's romantic relationship is highly dependent upon his/her ability to balance work responsibilities and family roles to achieve a healthy balance, or fit between them (Rantanen et al., 2011; Voydanoff, 1993). Personal and interpersonal mental health, self-esteem, and satisfaction have been associated with the ability to do so (Rantanen et al., 2011). For municipal police officers and their romantic partners, the relationship between occupational demands and home-based experiences is well documented, typically as an area of negative spillover from work-to-family. The purpose of the current study was to take a closer look at individuals and couples who are navigating this territory effectively; to siphon out non-distressed officers and their romantic partners from distressed ones; and to uncover those aspects of work, home, and relationship, that are making a positive difference in relational experiences.

Work-Based Strengths

Researchers Grzywacz & Marks (2000) determined that for the average American worker, workplace characteristics have the greatest influence on work-to-family spillover, though typically in a negative way. They found that low levels of decision-latitude, low levels of perceived support, and high levels of workplace pressure (high general busyness and facing many demands) tended to negatively impact family life. While the current study did not directly assess these same variables, many of them emerge in participant responses to qualitative questions. Other specific work-based variables were examined in the current study, but none were found to positively impact relationship quality.

Seven work-based variables were directly examined in the current study: 1) officer tenure, 2) shift assignment, 3) shift length, 4) frequency of shift rotation, 5) prior experience on detail or special assignment, 6) participation in a critical incident training and, 7) duty assignment. Only two were found to significantly predict RQ, but neither in a positive way. Frist, officer critical incident training was found to have a significant negative relationship with RQ for romantic partners. This was also the case for paired couples, but only when combined with officer night shift assignment. None of the work-based variables were associated with or predictive of officers' RQ scores in any significant way.

Night shift. It was not surprising that shift work surfaced as a significant factor in romantic partners' experiences of relationship quality. Prior studies have found the same; shift work is a known relational stressor across a variety of occupations (Grosswald, 2004; Presser, 2000; Vogel et al., 2012; White & Keith, 1990). A 1980s telephone survey of over 15,000 American workers found that (more-so than gender, race, age, education, income, spouse's employment, and years married) shift work led to lower marital happiness and higher sexual

problems including a 36% increase in the likelihood that a couple will divorce (White & Keith, 1990). Participants in the current study voiced similar complaints in their qualitative responses to questions about intimacy, passion, and significant relational experiences. For couples in this study, night shift alone accounted for about 25% of the variance in RQ scores. A regression indicated that the relationship quality scores of couples in which the officer is working a night shift tended to be about seven points lower than the relationship quality scores of couples in which the officer is working a day or swing shift. Shift work conclusions here mirror those from other studies: shift work, night shift, in particular, is not generally helpful to romantic relationships.

The impact of shift assignment on RQ was anticipated, though not in a strictly negative way. An unexpected finding was the negative relationship between officer critical incident training and relationship quality for romantic partners and paired couples in the study. Assumptions were that CIT training might bolster more sensitive communication and improve compassion. The findings did not support this outcome.

Critical incident training. In law enforcement, critical incident training programs are not uniform and should be differentiated from crisis intervention teams/trainings. Critical incident training focuses on officer preparation for and response to a critical incident (like a mass shooting). Crisis intervention training/teams are specialized units of a police force or public servant group that are specially trained to handle mental health crises (Crisis Response Care, 2019). Both specialties can involve education related to de-escalation, communication, mental health, and emergency intervention, but their scope and emphasis can also differ based on the needs/intention of the department pursuing training.

Without knowing the particular CIT training(s) that officers in the surveyed communities participated in, it is difficult to draw reliable conclusions about why it impacted romantic partners' and couples' relationship quality scores so negatively; reducing romantic partners' RQ scores by six points, on average, and aligning with night shift to be the strongest predictors of RQ in a negative way. One theory is that if the CIT trainings specific to the officers in the study were focused on use of force or command-driven de-escalation tactics, the training may have inadvertently bolstered aggressive and domineering communication tendencies that are already common among some law enforcement officers and harmful to romantic relationships (Borum & Philpot, 1993; Kirschman et al., 2013; Miller, 2007). For example, CIT training may include efficiency and assertiveness tools (Kane, 2004) that do not translate well to a home/family setting or a romantic relationship.

Another possibility is that the communities that engaged in the CIT trainings are more prone to crises, disasters, or violence to begin with. An ecological perspective affirms the existence of a trickle-down effect from stressors in distant environments (macrosystem, exosystem, and mesosystem) to the individual and the relationship (microsystem). As such, the negative impact on romantic partner RQ may have more to do with officer stress and role strain than with his/her communication style or personality.

Job satisfaction. Regarding the nonsignificant associations between work-based variables and officer RQ, this researcher speculates that 1) officers simply like their jobs, and 2) they knew what they were getting into when they joined. Unlike their romantic partners, they likely considered the shift work, overtime, and holiday hours prior to applying for the job; they accept these inconveniences as part of their service. Furthermore, as most crimes tend to happen in the evening hours and over some holidays (Cohn, 1996), and as individuals who sign up to be

police officers are speculated to have a propensity towards thrill-seeking and excitement to begin with (Carlson & Lester, 1980; Perrin et al, 2007; Webster, 2014), it makes sense that officers might even particularly enjoy working these odd hours and shifts because they see the most action during these times. If so, it makes further sense that they would not be particularly bothered by night shift obligations in the same way that their partners are.

Home-Based Strengths

Prior research has identified gender, race, age, and parenting variables as contributing generally positively to work-to-family spillover for the average American worker (Grzywacz et al., 2002). Many of these same variables were evaluated as part of the current study, along with a few additional considerations specific to law-enforcement. Variables included: 1) gender, 2) age, 3) ethnicity, 4) length of current romantic relationship, 5) living arrangement, 6) family history of law enforcement, 7) officer relationship status at start of career, 8) romantic partner employment status, 9) romantic partner student status,10) parenting status, 11) ages of children, 12) total number of children, 13) prior marriage counseling, 14) media impact on relationship, and 15) media impact on morale. Six relationship constructs and three interpersonal areas were also evaluated: the relationship constructs were specific to the PRQC (satisfaction, commitment, intimacy, trust, passion, and love), and the interpersonal areas were specific to the RDAS (consensus, satisfaction, and cohesion).

Unlike Grzywacz et al. (2002), gender, race, and age were not determined to be significantly associated with home-based/relational dynamics for police officers and/or their romantic partners. However, parenting was, along with perceptions of media influence on officer morale and his/her romantic relationship. Like Grazywacz et al. (2002), the current study found that home-based variables tend to serve as resources, resulting in a generally positive

spillover effect. The one exception seems to be with regard to the media, where short of a couple's shared belief that the media is *not* impacting their relationship, the media's influence on officers, including their morale, relationships, and family/peer dynamics, is decidedly negative.

Parenting. In the current study, the number of children an individual had positively predicted relationship quality for the totality of the sample, but not for the officers, romantic partners, or paired couples subsamples. Participants' RDAS scores increased by one point on average for every child they had, up to six. Qualitative data affirms that for the most part, children served as a source of pride for individuals in the study. They drove couples together in shared goals and values and created opportunities for teamwork and communication. Participants in the study noted children as the primary contributor to a lack of physical passion and intimacy; however, the non-distressed individuals were able to recognize difficult seasons of life as temporary, and perhaps more importantly, made conscious efforts to connect emotionally as opposed to strictly physically. They talked about passion as an energy, as well as an action. In this way, they found passion in each other and in shared interests/hobbies, even when physical passion was lacking.

Media attention. The history of policing in America is fraught with corruption and inconsistently successful reform attempts. In the past seven years, a series of ostensible infractions, primarily involving claims of racism and abuse of force, has placed the country's municipal police force in headlines across media outlets. Officers in the current study generally expressed distaste for the media as "putting a spin on issues they have no ideas about," or telling "one-sided" stories. Still, some officers held tight to the belief that the "vast majority of citizens in all communities support the police." Many reported feeling respected and appreciated in their own communities. They acknowledge that "bad officers" have created a media frenzy that

leaves them feeling vulnerable and attacked, and despite sweeping attempts by officers and their romantic partners to avoid or ignore the negativity, morale and relationships have been affected.

The news media's attention to law enforcement was negatively associated with relationship quality for all participants in the study, and among participating officers. In both groups, individuals who reported believing the media focus on law enforcement was impacting officer morale had an RQ score between 3.5 and five points lower, respectively, than those who did not feel the media was impacting officer morale. Similar findings were realized for participants who believed the media's focus on law enforcement was impacting their relationship. Among all participants in the study, individuals who reported believing the media's focus on law enforcement is impacting their relationship had a four-point lower RQ score, on average, than those who did not.

Only two positive associations were found between the media and relationship quality. The first was among paired couples. Those who shared in the perception that the media's focus on law enforcement was *not* impacting their relationship had an average 10 points higher RQ score than couples where at least one partner believed that it was. The second area where media was positively impacting RQ emerged from the qualitative data. Some individuals viewed the media as a shared source of frustration that united them and their partner in a denunciation of the news. One particular romantic partner described how the news' negativity towards law enforcement prompted her to be more sensitive and affectionate to her officer partner. Most just made active efforts to avoid or ignore it.

Interpersonal Strengths

Interpersonal strengths were not directly examined in this study via any formal inventory or assessment. Instead, they were allowed to surface organically through participant reactions to

qualitative questions that followed quantitative assessment of home- and work-based variables.

The intention was to clarify experiences, as the quantitative constructs were highly subjective.

Relationally non-distressed individuals were distinguished from relationally distressed

individuals by their RDAS total score and the affiliated distressed/non-distressed cutoff. Themes

were extracted, narrowed, and summarized to create a clear picture of attitudes and interactions

that contribute to relationship quality for officers and their romantic partners. Emergent themes

centered on boundaries, support, and a combination of shared goals, shared values, shared

respect, and shared enthusiasm for each other and the relationship that can be summed up as an

esprit de corps.

Boundaries. Participants in the study suggested that boundaries are an important aspect

of relationship quality for officers and romantic partners. They placed the responsibility to set

boundaries on officers in the form of work-life balance. Distressed and non-distressed

participants flooded the question of advice to a new officer and his/her spouse with suggestions

to "separate work from home" and "have an identity outside of law enforcement." Participants'

responses acknowledged that many aspects of a career in law enforcement will infiltrate the

relationship if it is allowed to. Themes mirrored existing literature on the many stressors that

police officers face from the macro-, exo-, and meso-system associated with their careers.

However, an important aspect of setting boundaries is knowing how rigid or diffuse to make

them. Officers and romantic partners spoke of the importance of communication in their

relationship. They cautioned officers against shutting down and romantic partners against

pushing too hard.

In a heartfelt explanation of additional experiences that contribute to relationship quality,

one officer explained:

> Being a police officer generally requires us to always be in control, never show weakness, and always win… We need to make sure to separate the requirements of the job from the requirements of being a good father and husband. I believed for years I had a great marriage and separated the job from family. I never brought work home, never shared work with home, and lived the belief that work was not my life but the means to sustain my life. What I ended up doing was letting work cloud my judgment and interfere with being a good father/husband. I should have shared the bad things I encountered at work but minus the gory details so that family understood why my mood was what it was… Communication is paramount for a strong relationship and it needs to be from all involved…

Esprit de corps. One of the most salient aspects of relationship quality originates from within the microsystem. It involves the attitudes and interaction patterns that couples display as they navigate the roles and responsibilities of their lives. Cohesion and consensus were important to participants, but relationally non-distressed individuals' explanations of satisfaction, intimacy, trust, passion, love, and greatest strengths in their relationships shared one important feature: they talked about their partner and their relationship with devotion and enthusiasm. These couples are not always happy or free from stress/struggle, but they look back on challenges as meaningful to their personal/interpersonal development and they look forward to the years ahead.

The attitudes of the non-distressed individuals in the study align with John Gottman's theory of marriage and his "sound marital house" model (Gottman, 1999). Gottman highlights the importance of couples knowing and honoring each other's life dreams. He emphasizes shared meaning and the importance of traditions. He encourages couples to openly share their fondness and admiration for each other. The non-distressed individuals in this study demonstrated these characteristics in their responses to qualitative questions about their relationship. Relationally non-distressed officers reflected on their spouses and relationships in the following ways: one wrote,

> My wife is an amazing person. She gives fully of herself and is without compare at motherhood. I have seen her tackle some major challenges in life, namely nursing

school, and develop into an amazing RN. She can be the biggest pain in my ass, but it's usually because I am failing in my duties of getting our home renovated in a more timely fashion. In hindsight, I usually find that our arguments are her trying to motivate me to do a better job of meeting goals and expectations. She is my soul mate.

Others responded, "He is the total package – hard working, handsome, strong, talented, kind and loving. I am very blessed;" and "we listen to each other's needs and make sure we are supporting each other;" or "We have grown closer over the past 2-3 years. Some life experiences (children's births, family deaths, and our faith journey) have drawn us closer." These individuals talk about the ability to maintain a friendship in their marriage. They share commonalities; they are a team.

Conclusions

The results of this study affirmed what other scholars discovered about law enforcement relationships: the stressors are many, they can be powerful, and they come from multiple spheres of life. However, participants in this study shared examples of interactions that helped shed light on how they are tackling and overcoming these challenges to develop and maintain a strong and satisfying romantic relationship.

For participants in this study, work-based variables typically didn't have a significant impact on relationship quality, however, when they did, their effect was negative. Home-based variables also didn't have a consistently significant impact on participant RQ scores, however, they tended to boost relationship quality when they did. The results of this study indicated that the key to a strong and happy relationship for law enforcement officers and their romantic partners seems to be the positive attitude and energy they bring to the table. Couples with high relationship quality scores have shared goals and values that are often focused on career and family. They support each other's growth. They see the big picture, recognizing stress at its source (work, illness, grief). They see obstacles as hurdles to overcome and problems as

temporary and solvable or requiring patience. Ultimately, they take pride in their roles as friends, professionals, and parents, and they communicate openly about where they've been, where they are, and where they want to go.

Chapter V

SUMMARY, IMPLICATIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

The pressures, responsibilities, and culture associated with police work often impinge on the romantic relationships of law enforcement officers, creating challenges to communication, connection, and intimacy (Borum & Philpot, 1993; Howard et al., 2004; Karaffa et al., 2015; Miller, 2007). Police work can spill into officers' romantic relationships in multiple places. Stressors span ecological niches. For example, unanticipated or particularly lengthy calls for service place demands on officers' time. They are generally tasked with multiple and often contradictory roles. Their individual personalities and values are shaped by the training and culture of their profession in ways that do not always align with the culture of their homes and families. They are required to assert power to maintain control of others while at work but are expected to be nurturing and gentle with the people they love. They are often the first eyes on some very tragic scenes. Their profession has long been entwined in political controversy and civil unrest. They serve as protectors, mediators, and sometimes social workers. They are reporters. They are first responders. They are also someone's son or daughter. They may be a mother or father. They are likely a spouse or a partner of someone who is waiting for them to come home.

Most existing studies on law enforcement romantic relationships have focused on clarifying relational stressors or tools that officers and their spouses use to cope. Building on stress research but with a strengths-based twist, this study asked, "What interpersonal characteristics and work- and home-based contextual factors are associated with relationship quality for law enforcement officers and their romantic partners?"

The primary research question was examined quantitatively and qualitatively via four subquestions and across multiple subsamples of the population of interest. The intention was to

support exploration of the nuances contributing to relationship quality for police officers and their romantic partners. Subquestions were:

1. "Is there a significant association between work-based variables and relationship quality?"

2. "Is there a significant association between home/family-based variables and relationship quality?"

3. "Which of the following relationship constructs are most significantly associated with relationship quality: satisfaction, commitment, intimacy, trust, passion, or love?"

4. "Which of the following interpersonal areas are most significantly associated with relationship quality: consensus, satisfaction, or cohesion?"

Participants were recruited from four Midwestern communities of similar size and demographic composition. Police officers and their romantic partners (spouses or significant others) were asked to complete an anonymous online survey. The survey included quantitative demographic questions related to age, gender and race. Officers were asked about tenure, duty assignment, and shift assignment, among other work-based variables. Romantic partners were asked about their employment status. All participants were asked about the composition of their immediate family (number and ages of children, etc.), their prior counseling experience, their family history as it pertains to a career in law enforcement, and their perceptions of the media's influence on their romantic relationship and officer morale.

Three relationship quality inventories were included in the survey: The Revised Dyadic Adjustment Scale (RDAS), the Kansas Marital Satisfaction Scale (KMSS), and the Perceived Relationship Quality Components Inventory (PRQC). All three inventories have well-established reliability and validity (Crane et al., 2000; Fletcher et al., 2000; Schumm et al.,

1986). Two include a relationship distress indication based on total score. These inventories were used to determine the relationship quality of participants and couples in the study. Qualitative follow-up questions offered insight into how participants were defining relationship constructs with regard to their own marriage/partnership and served to triangulate and enhance quantitative findings. Participants were asked to describe the six relationship constructs of the PRQC: satisfaction, commitment, intimacy, trust, passion, and love. They were also asked about, 1) the greatest strength of their relationship, 2) significant experiences that have contributed to the quality of their relationship over the past year, 3) advice they would give to a new law enforcement officer and his/her spouse, 4) the media's impact on their relationship and officer morale, and 5) how the officer's employing police department can better support their family/relationship.

One hundred ten (110) individuals completed the survey: 82 officers and 28 romantic partners, 26 of which were couples. The couples were matched based on unique identifiers that were embedded within the survey (first and middle initials, number of pets, employing police department). Anonymity was not compromised.

Results of the study indicate that for police officers and their romantic partners, more so than work- or home-based variables, individual attitudes and interpersonal characteristics may set the tone for the quality of a couple's relationship. Results affirm that work-based factors tend to serve as demands that negatively impact relationship quality, while home-based factors are more likely to serve as resources that support RQ or at least buffer against negative work-to-home spillover. These findings align with previous studies on the demands and resources that influence the work-family interface of the average American worker (Grzywacz & Marks, 2000; Grzywacz et al., 2002).

Relationship Quality Outcomes

The majority of participants and couples in the study had a generally positive relationship quality. Well over half scored in the non-distressed category on the KMSS (80.2%) and the RDAS (72.7%). Participants' scores did not differ significantly across subsamples, nor between individuals in the dyads of the paired couples. However, romantic partners tended to score slightly higher than all participants combined, officers, or romantic partners. Officers scored slightly lower than the others.

Scores on the subscales of the PRQC (satisfaction, commitment, intimacy, trust, passion, and love) were generally high. Love and commitment were consistently evaluated as the strongest aspects of participants' relationships; passion and intimacy the weakest.

Scores on the subscales of the RDAS (consensus, satisfaction, and cohesion) were all generally high. Satisfaction, evaluated by frequency of considering divorce/separation, quarreling, regretting the relationship, and getting on each other's nerves, was the most consistently positive interpersonal area among participants in the study; Cohesion (engaging in outside interests together, having a stimulating exchange of ideas, working together on a project, and calmly discussing something) was the area of greatest struggle.

Significant Predictors of Relationship Quality

Both home- and work-based variables proved to be significant predictors of relationship quality, but generally in more negative than positive ways. On the other hand, certain relationship constructs (specifically, satisfaction, commitment, and passion) and interpersonal areas (consensus, satisfaction, and cohesion, probably in that order) are more consistently and positively predictive of RQ. Significance varied by subsample group, but qualitative data helped support some general conclusions. This summary of results is organized by variables that

contributed negatively to RQ (night shift, CIT training, and the media), and variables that contributed positively (parenting, satisfaction, consensus, cohesion, and passion).

Night shift, CIT training, and the media. The variables with the most significant *negative* impact on relationship quality were officer night shift assignment, officer CIT training, and perceptions of the media's focus on law enforcement as influencing officer morale. Results of the study unintentionally affirmed that a career in law enforcement negatively impinges upon romantic relationships, particularly with regard to night shift and the impact of the news media's focus on law enforcement. Shift work as a relational strain has been well documented by previous scholars (Grosswald, 2004; Presser, 2000; Vogel et al., 2012; White & Keith, 1990). However, to date, no other studies could be found that have examined the impact of the news media on law enforcement, particularly since police misconduct allegations were reignited in 2012.

Night shift. Night shift alone accounted for 25% of the variance in paired couples' RQ scores. The couples' RQ score for paired officers who were assigned to a night shift was seven points lower, on average than the couples' RQ score for paired officers who were working a day or afternoon/swing shift. Night shift was the work-based variable most commonly referenced as causing problems for participants in the study. Shift work, or night shift, was directly referenced by participants 28 times in their qualitative responses; 100% of these references were blatantly negative or described at least some frustration associated with night shift. One particularly distressed officer wrote, "Working night shift is destroying our relationship."

CIT training. Romantic partners in relationships with officers who reported having participated in a critical incident training program scored an average of six points lower on the RDAS than romantic partners in relationships with officers who had not been CIT-trained. This

researcher speculates that 1) either content in certain CIT training programs unintentionally boosts officers' tendencies towards controlling, authoritative, or domineering communication styles, or 2) the need for a CIT training program indicates that officers are working near or in communities where critical incidents are common or more likely to occur. Perhaps these officers are under more stress than officers in non-CIT-trained departments to begin with, resulting in a higher level of work-to-family spillover, regardless of the training. If this is the case, romantic partners' RQ scores might have less to do with CIT training and more to do with the community where they live/work.

Additional research in the area of CIT training is warranted, particularly as it relates to officers' general attitudes and communication styles and/or their relationship quality. Furthermore, CIT training closely aligns with crisis response team/intervention trainings, though some theoretical and practical differences exist, particularly with regard to mental health awareness and de-escalation practices/tools (Kane, 2004; Crisis Response Care, 2019). A study comparing and contrasting the attitudes and experiences of officers and their romantic partners as they relate to critical incidents or crisis intervention training would be valuable.

Perceptions of media influence. Within the past decade, a number of nationally publicized controversies involving police officers and unarmed Black citizens have placed law enforcement in headlines and under a microscope. Participants were asked about perceptions about whether this increased attention has affected officer morale or their romantic relationships. Quantitatively and qualitatively, the media's focus on law enforcement was a significant source of negativity for participants in the study, officers in particular. The majority of officers affirmed that the attention is affecting their morale ($n = 61$; 74.4%), almost 79% ($n = 22$; 78.6%) of participating romantic partners agreed. Most participants reported active efforts to avoid the

news. Some acknowledged a need to clean "bad" officers out of the force. Others chose to focus on the positive relationships they feel with citizens in their own communities, as opposed to getting caught up in national narratives.

In short, officers who believed the media was affecting their morale had an RDAS score that averaged five points lower than those who did not believe so. Perceptions of media impacting morale accounted for 10% of the variance in officers' RQ scores. Similar outcomes surfaced when all participants in the study were examined as a group. Individuals who reported believing the media focus on law enforcement was impacting officer morale had an RQ score 3.5 points lower than those who did not feel the media was impacting officer morale.

Nearly 83% of all respondents ($n = 91$; 82.7%) reported that the media attention on law enforcement does not affect their relationship; 13.6% ($n = 15$) stated it does. Ultimately, perceptions of the media's influence on the relationship was predictive of RQ, as measured by the RDAS. Among all participants in the study, individuals who reported believing the media's focus on law enforcement was impacting their relationship had a four-point lower RQ score, on average, than those who did not.

Parenting, satisfaction, consensus, cohesion, and passion. The variables with the most significant *positive* impact on relationship quality were associated with parenting, satisfaction, consensus, cohesion, and passion. Qualitative data focused the subjectivity of the constructs and underscored the associations between interpersonal areas and relationship quality.

Parenting. Eighty-seven (87) (or 79.1%) of the participants in the study were parents. The number of children in these families ranged from one to six, with most, ($n = 44$; 40%) having two children. The number of children an individual had positively predicted relationship quality for participants in the total sample (this finding did not translate to subsample groups).

RDAS scores increased by one point for every child an individual reported having. Qualitative data supports children as a strength. Even though participants frequently blamed parenting or the resulting exhaustion on their lack of a sex life, children were also consistently referenced by participants as sources of pride and a shared value/goal. Children were even strengths for relationally distressed individuals; one commented on satisfaction stating, "we have wonderful children. They do well in and out of school. We have similar thoughts on how to raise our children…"

Satisfaction. Satisfaction was a subscale of the PRQC and the RDAS. On the PRQC it was a subjective construct. On the RDAS it was evaluated by the frequency with which participants 1) discuss or have considered divorce/separation/breaking up, 2) quarrel, 3) regret marrying or living together, and 4) get on each other's nerves.

As a PRQC subscale, satisfaction was the most significant predictor of relationship quality for the majority of participants: the subsamples of all participants (accounting for 52.6% of the variance in RQ scores), officers (52.3% of RQ variance), and romantic partners (48% of the variance in RQ). Qualitatively, participants described satisfaction as mutual respect, mutual support, and shared values/goals. Common themes among non-distressed individuals included efforts to support each other in their interests, job, and social life. Non-distressed individuals are satisfied in their relationships because they feel known and cared for.

As an RDAS subscale, satisfaction was least associated with RDAS total scores for participants in the study. Satisfaction accounted for only three to six percent of the variance in RDAS total scores. However, when this interpersonal area was evaluated as a predictor of RQ, as measured by a different relationship quality inventory, it re-emerged as a significant predictor for a few of the subsamples. Specifically, for all participants as a group and the officers

subsample the RDAS interpersonal area, satisfaction, was the best predictor of PRQC scores, accounting for 46% and 47% of the variance in total scores, respectively. However, for romantic partners and paired couples, satisfaction was not part of any significant model. This finding makes more sense when police culture and values are taken into consideration.

Loyalty is a recognized aspect of police culture and values (Paoline, 2003). Professionally, loyalty aligns with safety, honor, and service; personally, it underscores trust, integrity, and commitment. In their qualitative responses to questions about their romantic relationships, "loyalty" was directly referenced by officers as a strength or value seven times; "commitment" 17 times; "trust" 61 times. The RDAS subscale, satisfaction, encompasses an individual's frustration with their spouse or desire to leave the relationship. Given how trust, commitment, and loyalty are at odds with the idea of divorce/separation it makes sense that the interpersonal area of satisfaction is strongly predictive of RQ for officers in particular. Clearly the participants in this study were not intent on ending their relationships (the intention to separate actually excluded some individuals from participation in the study), however, for officers, the interpersonal area of satisfaction seems to be particularly meaningful, as the concepts of commitment and loyalty are strongly embedded within the core of their profession.

Consensus. Consensus is examined in the RDAS through questions associated with the frequency in which couples agree or disagree on six major areas of life: religious matters, demonstrations of affection, making major decisions, sex relations, correct or proper behaviors, and career decisions. For all participants and all subsamples of participants in the study, consensus was the strongest predictor of RDAS total scores, accounting for nearly three-fourths of the variance in scores. When the PRQC was used as the relationship quality indicator, consensus was most significant for paired couples. Consensus alone accounted for 39% of the

variance in paired couples' average PRQC scores. This finding makes sense from a relational

standpoint. Consensus is arguably the most relational interpersonal area of all three RDAS

constructs. Satisfaction is about not wanting to break up. Cohesion is about working together.

Consensus encapsulates getting along; agreeing on the major areas of life. Participants'

qualitative responses affirmed that shared values were important: ten participants mentioned

"shared values" in their explanations of relational strengths.

    Cohesion. Cohesion is an RDAS construct measured by four questions related to the

frequency with which couples work, play, or talk together. Across the board, cohesion accounts

for about 20% of the variance in participants' scores on the RDAS. It is nowhere near as

powerful a predictor of RDAS scores as consensus, but it is much stronger than satisfaction. If

RQ is measured by PRQC total score, cohesion becomes the most significant predictor of RQ for

romantic partners, accounting for 45% of the variance in scores. Clearly, for romantic partners,

quality time is a strong value.

    "Quality time" is one of author/Pastor Gary Chapman's highly regarded "5 Love

Languages" (1992). He theorizes five primary ways that individuals prefer to show and/or

receive love: quality time, gifts, praise/affirmation, physical touch, and acts of service. One

scholar examined Chapman's five-factor model against other unidimensional, three-, and four-

factor models of relationship maintenance. A factor analysis showed Chapman's model as

superior to the others (Egbert & Polk, 2006), offering some validity to his premise. Although no

scholarly articles could be found that examine gender-based preferences for any of the five love

languages, this researcher speculates (based on 15 years of clinical mental health counseling with

couples) that "quality time" is a love language of great importance to women (as physical touch

seems to be for most men). If this is the case, it seems plausible that cohesion is not just an

important interpersonal area for the romantic partners of law enforcement officers (93% of whom identified as female in the current study), but could be for women in general.

Regardless of the influence of gender, cohesion was a significant area of relationship quality for participants in this study. Cohesion accounted for 10% of the variance in PRQC scores among the whole group of participants and 16% in paired couples. Cohesion was least meaningful as an RDAS construct to officers when RQ was measured by the PRQC, accounting for only four percent of the variance. Still, it was a meaningful enough construct to fit into a regression model.

Passion. As a PRQC construct, passion was most significant for paired couples, though it was also included in significant regression models for officers ($R^2 = .04$) and all participants, $R^2 = .06$). Among paired couples, passion was the only PRQC construct that significantly predicted RQ, as measured by the RDAS. Qualitative data sheds light on this finding.

Among the subsamples in the study, passion volleyed with intimacy as the weakest aspect of participants' relationships when compared to the other PRQC subscales. Only a handful ($n = 10$) of participants spoke decidedly positively about the level of passion in their relationship, the rest stated that passion was inconsistent, lacking, or nonexistent. Most of these seemed to be referencing physical passion. However, even among those for whom passion was lacking, the relationally non-distressed individuals seemed to take ownership of the need to "work at it," or explained that they were already taking steps to do so (i.e. "making time" to connect, scheduling "date nights, etc.).

Passion in the physical form was not strong for participants. However, passion emerged through different language in participants' descriptions of strengths, satisfaction, and love. Specifically, passion was evident in the praises that participants offered of their partners, and in

their general enthusiasm for the relationship and their shared goals and values. This researcher sums up participants' expressions of passion, and the importance of it in the relationship, as an "esprit de corps." Non-distressed individuals are proud of their partner, their relationship, and the life that they share. Shared loyalty and a sense of teamwork seems to underpin all of the strengths that participants talked about in their qualitative responses, and can be seen flowing through significant quantitative findings as well.

Implications

Training, occupational culture, and the demands and responsibilities of the work quickly turn a job into an identity for many law enforcement officers. Police scholars have indicated that the occupation prescription to observe, anticipate, and act influences officers' personalities, attitudes, and actions off the job. The potential for police work to interfere in romantic relationships by means of scheduling demands, mental fatigue, or through the adoption of rigid belief systems (black and white thinking, for example), is real and prevalent. Work-life balance/fit is difficult for the average worker to achieve (Rantanen, et al., 2011). As such, the work-family interface has constituted a considerable portion of family social sciences research since the early emergence of the field in the 1930s (Broderick & Schrader, 1991; Perry-Jenkins & Wadsworth, 2017).

Police scholars have long focused their relational research on clarifying the work-based demands that result in home-based stress for officers and their romantic partners. These studies have traditionally included married partners only, rarely utilized a validated marriage quality-type assessment, and are, quite frankly, depressing. They do an excellent job of highlighting the many pressures that police officers face and sometimes carry home. They validate the experiences of law enforcement spouses, who are often left feeling like single parents, or

confused about their partner's irritability and the general suspiciousness with which they tend to approach the world. However, these studies generally offer little by means of solutions or practical applications of the data, beyond encouraging police departments to be more aware of mental health and family considerations for their officers.

Nationwide, police departments seem to have gotten the message. Many include family onboarding programs to help educate officers' family members on police work and police life (Maynard & Maynard, 1982; Torres et al., 2003). Some have mental health and other support programs in place for officers and/or their family members (Torres et al., 2003). As a nation, we have improved awareness of the potential for PTSD in first responders (Benedek, Fullerton & Ursano, 2007; Castellano, 2013; Cohen, 2002). Peer support, employee assistance programs (EAP) and counseling services are increasingly utilized by struggling officers and their families, but some are still reluctant to seek support (Goldstein, 2006; Waters & Ussery, 2007; Wester & Lyubelsky, 2005). The intention of this study was to add to the research already completed by dedicated scholars in support of our country's law enforcement officers and their families.

This study aimed to address gaps left by previous scholars and to make a difference for law enforcement officers and their romantic partners. This study achieved that goal in five ways. First, the use of three highly-regarded relationship quality inventories served to re-evaluate the long-held belief that law enforcement officers have higher divorce rates and lower general relationship satisfaction than other professionals (Jurkanin & Hillard, 2006; Kappeler & Potter, 2000; Roufa, 2017; Territo and Sewell, 2007; Wasilewski & Olson, 2015; Wells and Alt, 2005). It also established some early relational norms for law enforcement officers and their romantic partners who are living and working in medium-sized Midwestern communities; at least related to the RDAS, PRQC, and KMSS.

Second, the inclusion of non-married couples gave voice to both of the individuals in a given relationship and acknowledged the diverse structures of modern American families (Brubaker & Kimberly, 1993; Cantle, 2013).

Third, the positive focus of the study provided insight into the work, home, and interpersonal dynamics that contribute to high levels of relationship quality for police officers and their romantic partners. These findings will help direct mental health and other support professionals who work with law enforcement officers and will provide relationship-strengthening tools for couples to incorporate into their day-to-day interactions with each other.

Fourth, this study aimed to elevate work-family research and ideas in general clinical practice. Prior studies have shown that despite growing awareness of the interconnectedness of work and home, a large number of family therapists report feeling insufficiently prepared to tackle related issues in therapy (Haddock & Bowling, 2001). This study added to existing literature on the work-family interface, and for a highly private population. This leads to the fifth intention: getting a rare glimpse into the personal lives of on a notoriously guarded group (Kirschman, 2007; Waddington, 2002).

Skepticism is a tool of the policing profession, but it often extends into officers' personal lives and can be exhibited as reluctance to attend therapy (Waters & Ussery, 2007; Wester & Lyubelsky, 2005). For law enforcement officers, respect is an important aspect of building rapport. This study provided mental health professionals with a foundation for showing respect and building rapport: an introduction to the pressures and values that drive law enforcement officers, and a systemic conceptualization of the complexities of their work-family interface.

Interventions

The results of the study can be packaged into three interventions, all of which take the ecology of police work into consideration. The first intervention tackles the most intrusive and least controllable aspects of police work, occupational culture, responsibilities, and inconveniences. For officers, this means setting boundaries between work and home. For romantic partners, this means understanding the multitude and magnitude of demands placed on the officer by his/her career and not misinterpreting their emotional or physical absence as a lack of love. The second intervention focuses on two areas of consistently positive influence among participants in the study: building consensus and cohesion. The third intervention aims to shift attitudes in struggling couples away from complaints and criticisms and towards a shared spirit of teamwork, friendship, and pride. Figure 14 depicts a summary of these interventions taken as a whole.

Boundaries & understanding. A career in law enforcement spills into romantic relationships through shift work and other demands on time, role strain and role conflict, general work-based stress, community/peer relationships, and through the impact that police culture and training practices have on officers' worldview, values, communication, and coping styles. Officers often get sucked into police work as an identity. They also sometimes forget, or at least sometimes fail to acknowledge, that their romantic partner is frequency left to manage the home and children on his/her own during traditionally meaningful family times, such as evenings, on weekends, or over holidays. On the other hand, romantic partners often see the officer's commitment to his/her job as indicating a lack of commitment to the family, or a skewed priority in favor of their work. They may take the officer's absence or late home-coming personally.

One useful intervention for struggling couples would begin with education on the ecology of police work. A clear picture of where work-based demands originate and how they can infiltrate a romantic relationship is essential for 1) validating experiences and, 2) affirming the clinician's understanding of the profession and the relational stressors the couples is likely facing. From there, the intervention splits into suggestions for officers and suggestions for romantic partners; there are two suggestions for each.

Recommendations for officers: 1) Set fairly rigid boundaries with work and more diffuse boundaries with your community when you can. This might include exercising caution about volunteering for extra shifts or working late, planning ahead for special family events as much as possible, and modifying some of your professional assertiveness when you are at home. This also likely includes turning towards your local community: be a model of integrity, trust that most of them respect and appreciate you, and get involved with them. Your community can be a source of support and will be the foundation for your life outside of LE. Try associating regularly with at least one non-LE peer and engaging in non-LE related hobbies and community events. 2) Praise and affirm your partner for how well he/she manages the demands of your job. Your romantic partner is likely working around your schedule with regard to basic activities (mealtime, bedtime, socializing, etc) and special events (children's activities, holidays, etc). Recognize that your family's values and aspects of their identity are likely shaped by your profession (i.e., backing the badge and accepting a "police wife life"). They are also putting up with and/or accommodating personality "quirks" or traits that you may have developed as a result of working in law enforcement, like suspiciousness, rigid thinking, hypervigilance, etc.

Recommendations for romantic partners: 1) Don't take it personally. The job will demand of an officer's time and you will have to be the flexible one. Do not mistake his/her

commitment to the profession as a lack of commitment to you or an indication of priorities.

Work will often win, but you are most valued. 2) Establish a support system. Make friends with

other LE spouses. Host or attend holidays and other special events with other people whose

spouses are also working. Connect with your community and develop your own interests and

hobbies.

Uncover similarities. Results of the study indicate that consensus and cohesion were

important interpersonal areas for law enforcement officers and their romantic partners, consensus

in particular. As per the PRQC, consensus in a relationship has to do with the frequency with

which couples agree on religious matters, demonstrations of affection, making major decisions,

sex relations, conventionality, and career decisions. Cohesion has to do with the frequency with

which couples engage in outside interests together, have a stimulating exchange of ideas, work

together on a project, and calmly discuss something.

A second useful intervention for struggling couples would inspire respectful and curious

dialogue on individual values, goals, and dreams. John Gottman's (1999) suggestions for

"enhancing the marital friendship," "living with the inevitable," and cultivating "life dreams and

shared meanings" would be useful, structured tools for clinicians and individuals practicing

"self-help". This intervention could involve rehearsing basic friendship skills, such as offering

encouragement, listening, asking questions. Similarities can be elevated. Shared hobbies or

interests can be cultivated.

Cultivate an esprit de corps. The heart of the findings of this study was the importance

of loyalty, pride, positivity, and enthusiasm as an undercurrent of relationship quality. The

relationally non-distressed individuals in this study were proud of their romantic partner. They

perceived their relationship and individual successes to be a team effort. They found growth in

overcoming challenges. They accepted hardship as temporary and focused their sights on long-term shared goals and values. They were not without struggle, but they did not get bogged down by them either.

The third and final intervention for struggling couples encourages them to engage in their relationship as an enthusiastic and committed team. Officers and their romantic partners would probably find benefit in using "we" language and speaking proudly of who they are as individuals and about the life that they have created together. It is imperative for them to be each other's biggest cheerleader. They should be intentional about infusing joy and intimacy into shared activities. For example, rather than seeing their child's three-hour-long middle school band concert as an ear-piercing waste of a Friday night, they could share pride in the beautiful little flutist that they created, talk about their hopes and dreams for him/her, share some of their own middle school memories, or take the opportunity to hold hands and just be near each other. Most importantly, they should look for strengths within struggles, see challenges as opportunities for growth, and share a hopeful vision of the future.
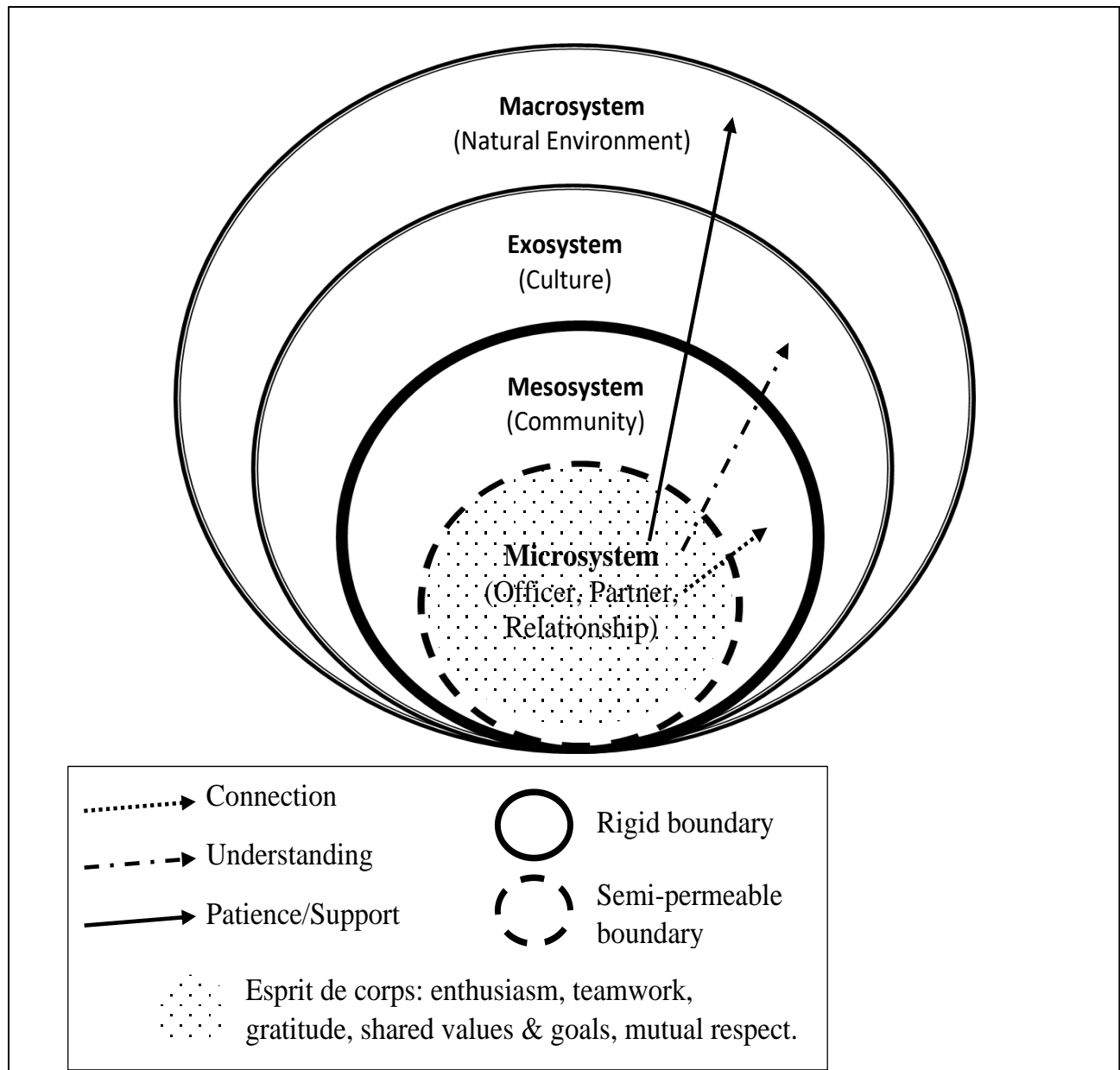
Figure 14. A clinical intervention for law enforcement officers and their romantic partners. Officers: set fairly rigid boundaries with work and more diffuse boundaries with community; Praise and affirm your partner for how well he/she manages the demands police work with regard to family life and interpersonal dynamics. Romantic Partners: Seek to understand the myriad of forces affecting officers' responsibilities and morale at work. Don't take overtime or shift work personally. Establish a support system. The couple: Cultivate an esprit de corps. Talk often and intimately about shared goals and values. Find a hobby or other mutual interest and infuse passion into your time together and your image of each other.

Recommendations

This study paves the way for future strengths-based research on law enforcement officers and their romantic partners. It provides useful information for family therapists who are working with police officers and/or their romantic partners in a clinical setting. Participants in the study also had suggestions for how local police departments/commissioners/chiefs might better support their officers' romantic relationships and families.

Future research. Scholars interested in studying police officers and/or their romantic relationships should do so with great sensitivity to the systemic nature of their work-family interface. Just as this researcher attempted to fill some of the gaps left by previous law enforcement and relational scholars, future scholars should take this study's limitations into consideration and work to fill the remaining gaps in understanding. Although steps were taken to develop a robust and informative study of the variables influencing relationship quality for law enforcement officers and their romantic partners, it is by no means without shortcomings. The potential for confounds is ubiquitous. A larger and more diverse sample would have been preferable. And additional time and resources, including an incentive for participating, may have supported the use of a more robust survey, to include additional measures of relationship quality and/or personality factors.

Limit confounds. The potential for confounding variables was one of the primary limitations of this study. Confounds had the potential to arise primarily out of the exploratory nature of the study. Prior studies have focused solely on relationship problems associated with a career in law enforcement. This study appears to be one of the first to look at quantifiable associations between relationship satisfaction and the interpersonal, work-, and family-based characteristics of police officers and their romantic partners. As a result, there was an abundance

of variables that could have been included. The chosen inventories and constructs served as a starting point for future research.

Findings suggest that critical incident training is an area worthy of additional exploration, particularly as it relates to officer stress and/or officer personality/communication/coping characteristics. Following suit, exploration of the similarities and differences between critical incident training and crisis intervention training in their effects on officers and their romantic relationships seems warranted. Other variables of interest might include the influence of military training or military family background on relationship quality, as military values and culture tend to closely align with those of law enforcement (Crank, 2014; Soeters, Winslow & Weibull, 2006). Paired couples' qualitative data was not given special attention in this study, nor was the potential for differences in qualitative responses based on officer duty assignment. Additionally, each subsection of the RDAS (consensus, satisfaction, cohesion) encompassed a series of questions contributing to total scores. The strength of the association between these individual questions (agreement on sex relations vs. religious matters, for example) and subscores or total scores was not examined in this study. These would all be worthy areas to examine.

Expand sampling. The decision to use convenience sampling was an additional potential limitation of the study. Convenience sampling was selected as the recruitment tool due to the insular nature of most law enforcement agencies and officers (Borum & Philpot, 1993; Finn & Tomz, 1997; Miller, 2007). Achieving a fully representational sample did not seem feasible given the limited resources and lack of affiliation with reputable law enforcement scholars. To counter the limitation of the non-probability sampling method, attempts were made to ensure that participating recruitment communities were similar in terms of citizen and departmental demographics.

Replication studies would be useful with a variety of other samples. Future studies could focus on police in larger municipalities or smaller rural areas, officers from federal agencies, dual-officer couples, and/or homosexual couples. Additionally, a larger representation of ethnic minority and female officers would have been preferable for this study and could be a focal point for the future.

Validated inventories. This study included three highly regarded measures of relationship quality/satisfaction. The intent was to minimize the conceptual ambiguity associated with evaluations of relationship quality (Heyman et al., 1994). Inventories were chosen for this study based on their diversity of focus with regard to their length; this researcher was highly sensitive to the time commitment being asked of participants. Certainly, there are other more comprehensive inventories that could have been included in the study. This would be a meaningful consideration in future studies. Finally, formal measures of personality and/or worldview were not included in this study but would have been useful in the analysis and discussion. Researchers wishing to build upon this research might consider incorporating the use of the Benevolent World Scale (Chaves, Vázquez & Hervás, 2016), the Assertiveness Measure (Mussweiler, 2001) or the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) (Briggs, 1987) to strengthen understanding of the association worldview, personality traits and relationship quality.

Clinical interventions. Mental health clinicians were an intentional audience for this study. Family therapists have acknowledged feeling ill-prepared to address work-family issues in therapy (Haddock & Bowling, 2001), and special populations can affect the nuances of effective intervention (Larson, 1982). The results of this study generate a useful starting point for therapists working with law enforcement officers and/or their romantic partners in a clinical setting. A comprehensive understanding of the history, traditions, culture, and values of the

United States municipal police force (the ecology of policing) is vital for establishing rapport and effectively supporting the client(s).

To begin, occupation is a strong indicator of an individual's identity and values (Jurich & Russell, 1993). As such, the work-family interface (spillover and roles, in particular) is an increasingly salient topic of discussion for individuals and couples in therapy. The human ecology model of family therapy is a useful, systemically-oriented tool for therapeutic exploration and processing. This study offered a career-oriented conceptualization of human ecology. The discussion was specific to law enforcement but could be modified to address any occupation.

Furthermore, this study has demonstrated that for many law enforcement officers and their romantic partners, and perhaps for many couples in general, relationship quality often falls right on the cusp of distress and non-distress, suggesting that minor tweaks in one or more areas of relating could nudge these couples into a more satisfying relational place. Likewise, complacency could easily result in distress. Effective interventions and attention to key areas of relational functioning has the potential to make a real difference for the romantic relationships of this population.

Institutional interventions. Participants in the study were asked how their department could better support their relationship/family. A handful of participants blatantly stated that they did not believe the department had any obligation to their relationship. One officer specifically requested the department to "stay out of" his/her relationship. Some participants reported already feeling cared-for by their department, but the remainder of participant responses were divided between suggestions for internal support and suggestions for external support.

Internal Support. Participants complained of inadequate staffing and inadequate equipment, like body armor. They requested that departments prioritize allocating funds to provide items necessary for them to do their jobs and stay safe. They also suggested departments could pay better attention to officer wellness after particularly tough or traumatic calls. A few requested more opportunities to advance within their careers.

External Support. A number of participants made specific requests for counseling or other wellness/mental health programs to be offered to or mandated of officers. Others thought that more family-oriented social activities would be helpful to promote and strengthen peer relationships. One participant mentioned frustration with the prominence of "in- and out-groups" in his/her department. Participants requested department-wide relationship trainings or educational seminars for officers and their romantic partners. Two suggested that childcare be offered specific education to support shift work assignments and dual-earner households.

Conclusions

Contrary to long-held beliefs about the romantic relationships of law enforcement officers, the majority of participants in this study were determined to be relatively, if not highly, satisfied in their romantic relationships. However, the preponderance of individuals who were ambiguous with regard to a clear relational distress/non-distress designation suggests that intervention is critical for 1) supporting distressed couples in building up those aspects of their relationship that have been shown to significantly and positively impact relationship quality, and 2) ensuring that ambiguous couples do not slip into a state of distress. Key in doing so would be to first bolster understanding of the complexities of the work-family interface of police officers as a form of validating experiences/feelings. Second, encourage officers to set fairly rigid boundaries with work and more diffuse boundaries with their community, and to praise and

affirm their spouses for the strength and independence it takes to be in a committed romantic relationship with a police officer. Third, encourage romantic partners to practice empathy towards their law enforcement partner associated with the myriad of forces affecting his/her work responsibilities and morale; also, to establish a support system of their own and reject the inclination to take overtime requirements or the inconveniences associated with shift work personally. Fourth, couples looking to strengthen their romantic relationship should cultivate an esprit de corps: talk often and intimately about shared goals and values, find a hobby or other mutual interest and infuse passion into time together and their image of each other. This study demonstrated that attitude matters more than work- or home-based variables in the romantic relationships of police officers. Gratitude, optimism, and open communication are fundamental to relationship quality.

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POLICE COUPLES: RELATIONSHIP STRENGHTS
RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS NEEDED

WHY

Research on Law Enforcement romantic relationships is focused on identifying stressors. This study aims to identify factors contributing to satisfying and successful relationships for officers and their significant others.

WHAT

A 10-minute on-line survey:

- age, gender, employment info.
- 25 relationship-specific questions.

Participation is VOLUNTARY & ANONYMOUS

Go to: https://bit.ly/2mXwdd2 on your computer, tablet, or phone before December 14, 2018.

WHO SHOULD PARTICIPATE

Law Enforcement Officers and their significant others.

Must be in a committed romantic relationship. This includes couples who are:

- married
- living together and romantically involved, or
- not living together but exclusively dating with no intention to break up.

Lead Researcher:
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The IRB has approved the study, Telisak, (Tubbs, Faculty sponsor) Law Enforcement Officers' Romantic Relationships Strengths: A Mixed Methods Analysis. If research participants have any questions about their rights as a research subject or concerns about this research study please contact the Chair, Institutional Review Board, St. Mary's University at 210-436-3736 or email at IRBCommitteeChair@stmarytx.edu.

Dan Ratliff, Ph.D.
IRB Chair
St. Mary's University

Q73 **Study Title:** Law Enforcement Officers' Romantic Relationships Strengths: A Mixed Methods Analysis.

Principal Investigator:
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Invitation: You are invited to participate in a study that will investigate the contextual and behavioral factors associated with satisfying romantic relationships for law enforcement officers and their romantic partners. You have been asked to participate because you are either a law enforcement officer or the significant other of a law enforcement officer.

To decide whether or not you want to be a part of this study, you should know enough about it to make an informed decision. This consent form gives you detailed information about the research study: its purpose, the procedures, any risks associated with participation, and possible benefits. Once you understand the study, you will be asked if you wish to participate; if so, you will be asked to click the button below that says, "Yes, I consent to the terms of this study and agree to participate" and will then be directed to the first page of the survey.

Purpose: The purpose of this study is to explore the interpersonal characteristics and work- and home-based contextual factors that are associated with relationship quality among law

enforcement officers and their romantic partners.

Procedures: If you chose to participate in this voluntary study, you will be directed to an online survey. You will be asked to answer a few demographic questions related to your age, gender, and occupation. You will also be asked about the status and length of your current relationship, as well as information about the ages your children, if you have them. A 23-question relationship satisfaction inventory follows. You will be asked to rate various aspects of your current relationship along 5- or 7-point scales and will be given an opportunity to elaborate on a few of those responses. You will also be asked about the impact of television and news media on your relationship and morale. Finally, you will be given an opportunity to share some recommendations on ways that your departmental leadership can better support your family/relationship.

Risks and Inconveniences: This survey is expected to take no more than 10-15 minutes of your time. Risks are minimal and include only the possibility of recognizing that your relationship is less satisfactory than you might have anticipated. Though a serious negative reaction is not expected, you may exit the survey at any time if you feel uncomfortable. Additionally, you and your partner should take this survey separately to avoid the potential for conflict resulting from viewing each other's relationship satisfaction scores. In the event that a serious negative emotional response or if relationship conflict occurs as a result of participation in this study, please contact the researcher, Mary Telisak at (830) 352-6230.

Benefits: This study is designed to help relationship professionals learn about behavioral and occupational factors that buffer against distress for law enforcement officers and their significant others. Though you will receive few direct benefits from participating in this study, you may gain satisfaction of knowing that the results of this study will support therapists and the law enforcement community by providing some insight into behaviors and other contextual factors that support relationship satisfaction for law enforcement officers and their long-term romantic partners. You will also have an opportunity to identify any ways that your department can better support you and your family, and to provide suggestions as to how new couples might successfully navigate romantic relationships within the law enforcement profession.

Confidentiality: Your participation in this study is completely anonymous. At no time during the study will you be asked to provide your name or other easily identifiable information. You will, however, be asked to create a unique identifier in the form of a six-letter code based on your first and middle initials, the first and middle initials of your significant other, the number of pets that you have, and the first letter of your department/city. This code will be used only to match your responses with your partner's for the purpose of data analysis, and will help the researcher provide participating departments with specific recommendations on officer support. At no time will your departmental leadership be given access to raw data or other information that could

indicate your participation.

The data from this study and related survey results will be kept by the lead researcher for a mandatory 5 years, at which time they will be destroyed.

Voluntary Participation: You are free to decide whether or not you want to participate in this study. If you decide not to participate, you will not be penalized in any way; there will be no repercussions. After you answer initial questions about yourself and your relationship, you have the option to indicate your preference <u>not to answer</u> one or more of the survey question(s) for any reason. If you decide to participate, and then change your mind, you can withdraw from the study at any time by closing the survey. Also, if you complete the survey and decide that you would like your data omitted from the study, please contact the researchers within 48 hours to do so

Study Findings: Findings will be used towards completion of the lead researcher's doctoral degree in marriage and family therapy. A summary of the findings from this study will be made available to participating police departments. If you would like a copy of the findings, please make a request through email to the principal investigator, Mary Telisak, at mtelisak@mail.stmarytx.edu.

 Authorization: Having read this form, if you are a law enforcement officer, or if you are dating or married to a law enforcement officer, and if you voluntarily give your consent to participate in this study, please click the answer choice below that says, "Yes, I consent to the terms of this study and agree to participate". You can then click the arrow at the bottom of the page to continue to the survey. You may print a copy of this form for your records. If you do NOT care to participate in the study, or if you are not a law enforcement officer or the romantic partner of an officer, please click the answer choice below that says, "No, I do not consent to the terms of this study and do not agree to participate", or you may click out of the webpage at this time.

 If you have further questions about this research project, including questions about your rights as a research participant, please contact the St. Mary's University Institutional Research Board at 210-436-3736.

○ Yes, I consent to the terms of this study and agree to participate (1)

○ No, I do not consent to the terms of this study and do not agree to participate (2)

Skip To: End of Survey If Study Title: Law Enforcement Officers' Romantic Relationships Strengths: A Mixed Methods Analys... = No, I do not consent to the terms of this study and do not agree to participate

End of Block: Consent to participate

Start of Block: LEO vs. Sig. Other Identity

Q1 Please indicate your relationship to Law Enforcement.

○ I am a law enforcement officer (1)

○ I am in a relationship with a law enforcement officer (2)

○ I am none of the above (3)

Skip To: End of Survey If Please indicate your relationship to Law Enforcement. = I am none of the above

End of Block: LEO vs. Sig. Other Identity

Start of Block: Law Enforcement Clarification

Display This Question:

   If Please indicate your relationship to Law Enforcement. = I am a law enforcement officer

Q59
Initial Questions About You and Your Relationship

 The following questions will help me develop a rough sense of groups of officers taking this survey.

Display This Question:

   If Please indicate your relationship to Law Enforcement. = I am a law enforcement officer

Q2 Please indicate your current assignment/duties.

○ I am an officer assigned to regular patrol duties. (1)

○ I am an officer serving on a detail or other special assignment (2)

○ I am a supervisory officer (3)

End of Block: Law Enforcement Clarification

Start of Block: Relationship Status

Q7 Are you currently in a romantic relationship?

○ Yes (1)

○ No (2)

Q58 My romantic partner and I are...

○ married and living together (1)

○ married but do not live together (2)

○ not married, but live together and are in a monogamous relationship with no intention of breaking up. (3)

○ not married and do not live together, but are in a monogamous relationship with no intention of breaking up. (4)

*

Q6 Please indicate the number of years that you have been in a relationship with your current partner.
(If you are married, combine the total number of years dating and married).

_____

Page Break ————————————————————————————————————

Q12 When did you become a law enforcement officer with respect to your current relationship/marriage?

○ I joined law enforcement prior to dating my spouse. (1)

○ I joined law enforcement while my spouse and I were dating. (2)

○ I joined law enforcement after my spouse and I were married. (3)

End of Block: Relationship Status

Start of Block: Unique Identifier

Page Break ───

Q81
An important aspect of this study is the researcher's ability to match responses among couples.
 Your responses to the following 3 questions will be used to pair your responses with your significant other's, while maintaining your anonymity.
 To begin, in the space below, please indicate the first and middle initial for each of you.
 (If both you and your partner are law enforcement officers, please input the oldest individual's information first.)

	First Letter of First Name (1)	Middle Initial (2)
Law Enforcement Officer (1)		
Partner/Spouse of Law Enforcement Officer. (2)		

✳

Q82 How many pets do you and your partner have in total? (include fish, dogs, cats, etc).

_____

✳

Q83 Please write the first letter of the city where your/your spouse's employing police department is located.
(ex: Milwaukee = M).

_____

End of Block: Unique Identifier

Start of Block: Demographics

*

Q8 Please indicate your age in years.

_____

Page Break   ——————————————————————————————————

Q9 Please indicate your gender

○ Male (1)

○ Female (2)

○ Prefer not to answer (3)

Page Break

Q10 Please indicate your ethnicity

○ American Indian or Alaskan Native (11)

○ Asian or Pacific Islander (12)

○ Black (13)

○ White, Hispanic (14)

○ White, non-Hispanic (15)

○ Prefer not to answer (16)

Page Break ————————————————————————————————————

279

Q102 That you are aware, has anyone in your immediate or extended family, besides you or your spouse, served in federal, state, or local law enforcement?

○ Yes (7)

○ No (8)

○ Prefer not to answer (9)

Page Break

✳

Q19 How many years have you been employed in law enforcement?

_____

Q21 Please indicate your current shift assignment

○ Day shift (1)

○ Afternoon or Swing shift (2)

○ Night shift. (3)

Q23 How long is your scheduled shift?

○ 8 hours (26)

○ 10 hours (27)

○ 12 hours (28)

○ Other (29) _____

Q24 How often does your department rotate shifts?

○ We don't rotate shifts (1)

○ Monthly (2)

○ Quarterly (3)

○ 2 times per year (4)

○ Annually (5)

○ Other (6)

Q59 Please explain how often your department rotates shifts.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Page Break

Q18 Have you ever served on a detail, task-force unit, or other special assignment?

○ Yes (5)

○ No (6)

○ Prefer not to answer (7)

Q103 Have you participated in a Critical Incident Training program?

○ Yes (6)

○ No (7)

○ Prefer not to answer (8)

Q14 Are you a student?

○ Yes (5)

○ No (6)

○ Prefer not to answer (7)

Q13 Please indicate your employment status

○ Home-maker: not currently working in paid employment outside the home. (11)

○ Employed part-time. (12)

○ Employed full-time. (13)

○ Prefer not to answer. (14)

Page Break

Q15 Are there children of any age living in your household at any time during the year? (including biological children, step-children, foster children, etc)

○ Yes (10)

○ No (11)

Q16 Please indicate the number of children you have in each of the following age categories: (if 0, leave blank).

	Number of children
0-2 years old (1)	▼ 1 (1 ... 6+ (6)
3-5 years old (2)	▼ 1 (1 ... 6+ (6)
6-12 years old (3)	▼ 1 (1 ... 6+ (6)
13-15 years old (4)	▼ 1 (1 ... 6+ (6)
16-18 years old (5)	▼ 1 (1 ... 6+ (6)
age 19 or older (6)	▼ 1 (1 ... 6+ (6)

Page Break ─────────────────────────────

Q25 Have you ever participated in marriage or relationship counseling?
(including by yourself or with a partner)

○ Yes (5)

○ No (6)

○ Prefer not to answer (7)

End of Block: Demographics

Start of Block: Intro to KMSS & RDAS

Q76
The following sections consist of 17 questions about your current marriage/romantic relationship.

End of Block: Intro to KMSS & RDAS

Start of Block: KMSS

Q61 Please rate your responses in accordance with the scale provided.

	Extremely Dissatisfied (1)	Very Dissatisfied (2)	Somewhat Dissatisfied (3)	Mixed or Uncertain (4)	Somewhat Satisfied (5)	Very Satisfied (6)	Extremely Satisfied (7)
How satisfied are you with your marriage/relationship? (1)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
How satisfied are you with your relationship with your husband/wife/partner? (2)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
How satisfied are you with your husband/wife/partner as a spouse/partner? (3)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

End of Block: KMSS

Start of Block: RDAS Consensus

Q86 Most people have disagreements in their relationships. Please indicate below the extent of agreement or
disagreement between you and your partner for each item.

	Always Agree (1)	Almost Always Agree (2)	Occasionally Agree (3)	Frequently Disagree (4)	Almost Always Disagree (5)	Always Disagree (8)
Religious matters (1)	○	○	○	○	○	○
Demonstrations of affection (2)	○	○	○	○	○	○
Making major decisions (3)	○	○	○	○	○	○
Sex relations (4)	○	○	○	○	○	○
Conventionality (correct or proper behaviors) (5)	○	○	○	○	○	○
Career decisions (6)	○	○	○	○	○	○

End of Block: RDAS Consensus

Start of Block: RDAS Satisfaction

Q95 Please answer each question below using the scale provided.

	All of the time (1)	Most of the time (2)	More often than not (3)	Occasionally (4)	Rarely (5)	Never (6)
How often do you discuss or have you considered divorce, separation, or terminating your relationship? (17)	○	○	○	○	○	○
How often do you and your partner quarrel? (23)	○	○	○	○	○	○
Do you ever regret that you married (or began dating). (24)	○	○	○	○	○	○
How often do you and your mate "get on each other's nerves?" (25)	○	○	○	○	○	○

End of Block: RDAS Satisfaction

Start of Block: RDAS Cohesion

Q100 Please answer each question below using the scale provided

	Every day (1)	Almost every day (4)	Occasionally (5)	Rarely (6)	Never (7)
Do you and your mate engage in outside interests together? (1)	○	○	○	○	○

Q101 How often would you say the following events occur between you and your mate?

	Never (1)	Less than once a month (3)	Once or twice a month (4)	Once or twice a week (5)	Once a day (6)	More often (7)
Have a stimulating exchange of ideas (1)	○	○	○	○	○	○
Work together on a project (2)	○	○	○	○	○	○
Calmly discuss something (3)	○	○	○	○	○	○

End of Block: RDAS Cohesion

Start of Block: Intro to PRQC

Q80
In the following sections you will be asked to evaluate six areas of your current relationship. You will also be prompted to provide an example of specific behaviors or experiences that influenced your responses.

Rated responses will take place along a 7-pt scale where 1 = not at all and 7 = extremely.

The examples/explanations you provide for these ratings can be as brief or elaborate as you choose.

End of Block: Intro to PRQC

Start of Block: PRQC - Satisfaction

Q29 Please answer each question below using the scale provided (1=not at all; 7=extremely).

	(Not at all) 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	(Moderately) 4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	(Extremely) 7 (7)
How satisfied are you with your relationship? (1)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Q36 Please briefly explain: In the text box below, provide specific examples of experiences and/or interactions with your partner that influenced your response to this question.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

End of Block: PRQC - Satisfaction

Start of Block: PRQC - Commitment

Q37 Please answer each question below using the scale provided (1=not at all; 7=extremely).

	(Not at all) 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	(Moderately) 4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	(Extremely) 7 (7)
How committed are you to your relationship? (4)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Q40 Please briefly explain: In the text box below, provide specific examples of experiences and/or interactions with your partner that influenced your response to this question.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

End of Block: PRQC - Commitment

Start of Block: PRQC - Intimacy

Q41 Please answer each question below using the scale provided (1=not at all; 7=extremely).

	(Not at all) 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	(Moderately) 4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	(Extremely) 7 (7)
How intimate is your relationship? (1)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Q44 Please briefly explain: In the text box below, provide specific examples of experiences and/or interactions with your partner that influenced your response to this question.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

End of Block: PRQC - Intimacy

Start of Block: PRQC - Trust

Q45 Please answer each question below using the scale provided (1=not at all; 7=extremely).

	(Not at all) 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	(Moderately) 4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	(Extremely) 7 (7)
How much do you trust your partner? (1)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Q48 Please briefly explain: In the text box below, provide specific examples of experiences and/or interactions with your partner that influenced your response to this question.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

End of Block: PRQC - Trust

Start of Block: PRQC - Passion

Q49 Please answer each question below using the scale provided (1=not at all; 7=extremely).

	(Not at all) 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	(Moderately) 4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	(Extremely) 7 (7)
How passionate is your relationship? (1)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Q52 Please briefly explain: In the text box below, provide specific examples of experiences and/or interactions with your partner that influenced your response to this question.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

End of Block: PRQC - Passion

Start of Block: PRQC - Love

Q53 Please answer each question below using the scale provided (1=not at all; 7=extremely).

	(Not at all) 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	(Moderately) 4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	(Extremely) 7 (7)
How much do you love your partner? (1)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Q56 Please briefly explain: In the text box below, provide specific examples of experiences and/or interactions with your partner that influenced your response to this question.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

End of Block: PRQC - Love

Start of Block: Additional Experiences

Q79 Please describe any additional interactions or experiences of the past few years that you believe have contributed significantly to the quality of your relationship.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

End of Block: Additional Experiences

Start of Block: Departmental Support

Q61 Please describe any ways the department (i.e. your local precinct or local department leadership) can better support your family/relationship?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

End of Block: Departmental Support

Start of Block: Media & Morale (LEO Partner)

Q62 Does the media's attention to law enforcement (i.e. television and news reports) affect your partner's morale?

○ Yes (1)

○ No (2)

Q63 If yes, please briefly explain how you believe your partner's morale has been affected by the media.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Page Break

End of Block: Media & Morale (LEO Partner)

Start of Block: Media & Morale (LEO)

Q65 Does the media's attention to law enforcement (i.e. television and news reports) affect your morale?

○ Yes (1)

○ No (2)

Q66 If yes, please briefly explain how your morale has been affected by the media.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

End of Block: Media & Morale (LEO)

Start of Block: Media & Relationship

Q69 Does the media's attention to law enforcement (i.e. television and news reports) affect your romantic relationship?

○ Yes (1)

○ No (2)

Q71 If yes, please briefly explain how your relationship has been affected by the media.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

End of Block: Media & Relationship

Start of Block: Relationship Strengths

Q104 What do you feel is the greatest strength of your relationship?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

End of Block: Relationship Strengths

Start of Block: Advice for other

Q105 What relationship advice would you give to a new officer and his/her spouse/partner?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

End of Block: Advice for other

Start of Block: Thank you & Goodbye

Q75
End of Survey.
 Thank you for your participation.

End of Block: Thank you & Goodbye

Appendix D

Kansas Marital Satisfaction Scale

KMSS

1. How satisfied are you with your marriage?
2. How satisfied with your husband/wife as a spouse?
3. How satisfied are you with your relationship with your husband/wife?

**Rated on a 7-point Likert-scale from 1(extremely dissatisfied) to 7 (satisfied)

Crane, D. R., Middleton, K. C., & Bean, R. A. (2000). Establishing criterion scores for the Kansas marital satisfaction scale and the revised dyadic adjustment scale. *American Journal of Family Therapy*, *28*(1), 53-60.

RDAS-Revised Dyadic Adjustment Scale

Name_____   Date_____   Session #_____

Most people have disagreements in their relationships. Please indicate below the extent of agreement or disagreement between you and your partner for each item.

	Always Agree (5)	Almost Always Agree (4)	Occasionally Agree (3)	Frequently Disagree (2)	Almost Always Disagree (1)	Always Disagree (0)
1. Religious matters						
2. Demonstrations of affection						
3. Making major decisions						
4. Sex relations						
5. Conventionality (correct or proper behavior)						
6. Career decisions						

	All the Time (0)	Most of the time (1)	More often than not (2)	Occasionally (3)	Rarely (4)	Never (5)
7. How often do you discuss or have you considered divorce, separation, or terminating your relationship?						
8. How often do you and your partner quarrel?						
9. Do you ever regret that you married (or lived together)?						
10. How often do you and your mate "get on each other's nerves"?						

	Every Day (4)	Almost Every Day (3)	Occasionally (2)	Rarely (1)	Never (0)
11. Do you and your mate engage in outside interests together?					

How often would you say the following events occur between you and your mate?

	Never (0)	Less than once a month (1)	Once or twice a month (2)	Once or twice a week (3)	Once a day (4)	More often (5)
12. Have a stimulating exchange of ideas						
13. Work together on a project						
14. Calmly discuss something						

For office use only	CON	SAT	COH	TOT

Consensus (1-6): 22; *Satisfaction (7-10)*: 14; *Cohesion (11-14)*: 11; *Total:* 48

Crane, D. R., Bean, R.A., & Middleton, K. C. (2000). Establishing criterion scores for the Kansas Marital Satisfaction Scale (KMSS) and the Revised Dyadic Adjustment Scale (RDAS). The American Journal of Family Therapy, 28 (1), 53-60.

RDAS Scoring Sheet

	Always Agree	Almost Always Agree	Occasionally Agree	Frequently Disagree	Almost Always Disagree	Always Disagree
1. Religious matters	5	4	3	2	1	0
2. Demonstrations of affection	5	4	3	2	1	0
3. Making major decisions	5	4	3	2	1	0
4. Sex relations	5	4	3	2	1	0
5. Conventionality (correct or proper behavior)	5	4	3	2	1	0
6. Career decisions	5	4	3	2	1	0

	All the Time	Most of the time	More often than not	Occasionally	Rarely	Never
7. How often do you discuss or have you considered divorce, separation, or terminating your relationship?	0	1	2	3	4	5
8. How often do you and your partner quarrel?	0	1	2	3	4	5
9. Do you ever regret that you married (or lived together)?	0	1	2	3	4	5
10. How often do you and your mate "get on each other's nerves"?	0	1	2	3	4	5

	Every Day	Almost Every Day	Occasionally	Rarely	Never
11. Do you and your mate engage in outside interests together?	4	3	2	1	0

How often would you say the following events occur between you and your mate?

	Never	Less than once a month	Once or twice a month	Once or twice a week	Once a day	More often
12. Have a stimulating exchange of ideas	0	1	2	3	4	5
13. Work together on a project	0	1	2	3	4	5
14. Calmly discuss something	0	1	2	3	4	5

a) For each spouse, score their RDAS according to the values given above (lower = more distressed).
b) Add items 1-6: _____   (*Consensus*: 22 = the cutoff score to discriminate between distress/nondistress)
c) Add items 7-10:_____   (*Satisfaction*: 14 = the cutoff score)
d) Add items 11-14:____   (*Cohesion*: 11 = the cutoff score)
e) Add all items: _____   (*Total*: 48 = the cutoff score)
f) List scores in appropriate box on each partner's copy.

For additional information on each of the scales/subscales, the questions related to each are listed below:
Consensus: Items 3 & 6 = decision making, 1 & 5 = values, 2 & 4 = affection
Satisfaction: Items 7 & 9 = stability, 8 & 10 = conflict
Cohesion: Items 11 & 13 = activities, 12 & 14 = discussion

Appendix F

Perceived Relationship Quality Components Inventory

PRQC

Relationship Satisfaction
1. How satisfied are you with your relationship?
2. How content are you with your relationship?
3. How happy are you with your relationship?

Commitment
4. How committed are you to your relationship?
5. How dedicated are you to your relationship?
6. How devoted are you to your relationship?

Intimacy
7. How intimate is your relationship?
8. How close is your relationship?
9. How connected are you to your partner?

Trust
10. How much do you trust your partner?
11. How much can you count on your partner?
12. How dependable is your partner?

Passion
13. How passionate is your relationship?
14. How lustful is your relationship?
15. How sexually intense is your relationship?

Love
16. How much do you love your partner?
17. How much do you adore your partner?
18. How much do you cherish your partner?

Note. Each statement is answered on a 7-point Likert-type scale (ranging from 1 = *not at all* to 7 = *extremely*).

Fletcher, G. J. O., Simpson, J. A., & Thomas, G. (2000). Perceived Relationship Quality Components Inventory [Database record]. Retrieved from PsycTESTS. doi: http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/t03598-000

Appendix G

Conventional Content Analysis of Qualitative Questions

Law Enforcement Officers

Question 1. Satisfaction: Law Enforcement Officers
Conventional Content Analysis of qualitative question 1:
Experiences/interactions influencing *satisfaction* scores.

Distressed Text Responses	Themes	Categories

Initial Reactions:

Non-Distressed Text Responses	Themes	Categories

Initial Reactions:

Question 2. Commitment: Law Enforcement Officers
Conventional Content Analysis of qualitative question 2:
Experiences/interactions influencing *commitment* scores.

Distressed Text Responses	Themes	Categories

Initial Reactions:

Non-Distressed Text Responses	Themes	Categories

Initial Reactions:

305

Conventional Content Analysis of qualitative question 3:

Experiences/interactions influencing *intimacy* scores.

Distressed Text Responses	Themes	Categories

Initial Reactions:

Non-Distressed Text Responses	Themes	Categories

Initial Reactions:

Question 4. Trust: Law Enforcement Officers
Conventional Content Analysis of qualitative question 4:
Experiences/interactions influencing *trust* scores.

Distressed Text Responses	Themes	Categories

Initial Reactions:

Non-Distressed Text Responses	Themes	Categories

Initial Reactions:

Question 5. Passion: Law Enforcement Officers
Conventional Content Analysis of qualitative question 5:
Experiences/interactions influencing *passion* scores.

Distressed Text Responses	Themes	Categories

Initial Reactions:

Non-Distressed Text Responses	Themes	Categories

Initial Reactions:

Question 6. Love: Law Enforcement Officers
Conventional Content Analysis of qualitative question 6:
Experiences/interactions influencing *love* scores.

Distressed Text Responses	Themes	Categories

Initial Reactions:

Non-Distressed Text Responses	Themes	Categories

Initial Reactions:

Question 7. Additional Experiences: Law Enforcement Officers
Conventional Content Analysis of qualitative question 7:
Additional interactions or experiences that have contributed significantly to relationship quality.

Distressed Text Responses	Themes	Categories

Initial Reactions:

Non-Distressed Text Responses	Themes	Categories

Initial Reactions:

Question 8. Departmental Support: Law Enforcement Officers
Conventional Content Analysis of qualitative question 8:
How the department can better support family/relationship.

Distressed Text Responses	Themes	Categories

Initial Reactions:

Non-Distressed Text Responses	Themes	Categories

Initial Reactions:

Question 9. Media & Morale: Law Enforcement Officers
Conventional Content Analysis of qualitative question 9:
How the media focus on law enforcement has affected officer morale.

Distressed Text Responses	Themes	Categories

Initial Reactions:

Non-Distressed Text Responses	Themes	Categories

Initial Reactions:

Question 10. Media & Relationship: Law Enforcement Officers
Conventional Content Analysis of qualitative question 10:
How the media focus on law enforcement has affected the relationship.

Distressed Text Responses	Themes	Categories

Initial Reactions:

Non-Distressed Text Responses	Themes	Categories

Initial Reactions:

Question 11. Greatest Strength: Law Enforcement Officers
Conventional Content Analysis of qualitative question 11:
Greatest strength of romantic relationship.

Distressed Text Responses	Themes	Categories

Initial Reactions:

Non-Distressed Text Responses	Themes	Categories

Initial Reactions:

Question 12. Advice: Law Enforcement Officers
Conventional Content Analysis of qualitative question 12:
Advice for new officer and partner.

Distressed Text Responses	Themes	Categories

Initial Reactions:

Non-Distressed Text Responses	Themes	Categories

Initial Reactions:

Appendix H

Conventional Content Analysis of Qualitative Questions

Romantic Partners

Question 1. Satisfaction: Romantic Partners
Conventional Content Analysis of qualitative question 1:
Experiences/interactions influencing *satisfaction* scores.

Distressed Text Responses	Themes	Categories

Initial Reactions:

Non-Distressed Text Responses	Themes	Categories

Initial Reactions:

Question 2. Commitment: Romantic Partners
Conventional Content Analysis of qualitative question 2:
Experiences/interactions influencing *commitment* scores.

Distressed Text Responses	Themes	Categories

Initial Reactions:

Non-Distressed Text Responses	Themes	Categories

Initial Reactions:

Question 3. Intimacy: Romantic Partners
Conventional Content Analysis of qualitative question 3:
Experiences/interactions influencing *intimacy* scores.

Distressed Text Responses	Themes	Categories

Initial Reactions:

Non-Distressed Text Responses	Themes	Categories

Initial Reactions:

Question 4. Trust: Romantic Partners
Conventional Content Analysis of qualitative question 4:
Experiences/interactions influencing *trust* scores.

Distressed Text Responses	Themes	Categories

Initial Reactions:

Non-Distressed Text Responses	Themes	Categories

Initial Reactions:

Question 5. Passion: Romantic Partners
Conventional Content Analysis of qualitative question 5:
Experiences/interactions influencing *passion* scores.

Distressed Text Responses	Themes	Categories

Initial Reactions:

Non-Distressed Text Responses	Themes	Categories

Initial Reactions:

Question 6. Love: Romantic Partners
Conventional Content Analysis of qualitative question 6:
Experiences/interactions influencing *love* scores.

Distressed Text Responses	Themes	Categories

Initial Reactions:

Non-Distressed Text Responses	Themes	Categories

Initial Reactions:

Question 7. Additional Experiences: Romantic Partners
Conventional Content Analysis of qualitative question 7:
Additional interactions or experiences that have contributed significantly to relationship quality.

Distressed Text Responses	Themes	Categories

Initial Reactions:

Non-Distressed Text Responses	Themes	Categories

Initial Reactions:

Question 8. Departmental Support: Romantic Partners
Conventional Content Analysis of qualitative question 8:
How the department can better support family/relationship.

Distressed Text Responses	Themes	Categories

Initial Reactions:

Non-Distressed Text Responses	Themes	Categories

Initial Reactions:

Question 9. Media & Morale: Romantic Partners
Conventional Content Analysis of qualitative question 9:
How the media focus on law enforcement has affected officer morale.

Distressed Text Responses	Themes	Categories

Initial Reactions:

Non-Distressed Text Responses	Themes	Categories

Initial Reactions:

Question 10. Media & Relationship: Romantic Partners
Conventional Content Analysis of qualitative question 10:
How the media focus on law enforcement has affected the relationship.

Distressed Text Responses	Themes	Categories

Initial Reactions:

Non-Distressed Text Responses	Themes	Categories

Initial Reactions:

Question 11. Greatest Strength: Romantic Partners
Conventional Content Analysis of qualitative question 11:
Greatest strength of romantic relationship.

Distressed Text Responses	Themes	Categories

Initial Reactions:

Non-Distressed Text Responses	Themes	Categories

Initial Reactions:

Question 12. Advice: Romantic Partners
Conventional Content Analysis of qualitative question 12:
Advice for new officer and partner.

Distressed Text Responses	Themes	Categories

Initial Reactions:

Non-Distressed Text Responses	Themes	Categories

Initial Reactions: