Police Stress and Intimate Partner Violence

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Abstract

The purpose of this thesis is to explore police stress and intimate partner violence. This thesis tests whether spouses with the same occupation, specifically law enforcement, are less likely to engage in physical abuse towards one another than police without a spouse in law enforcement. The data used for this thesis come from Police Stress and Domestic Violence in Police Families in Baltimore, Maryland, 1997-1999 (N=874) to examine the effects of being a police officer, exercise, rank, feeling burned out, and interparental violence have on intimate partner violence. Of the five hypotheses, three were supported by the data. Exercise as a coping mechanism was found to be important in this study; therefore, future research is recommended on continuing to investigate various strategies police officers use to deal with police stress.
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Chapter 1

Introduction

According to Black et al. (2011), 20 people per minute of every day are victims of intimate partner violence; that is more than 10 million women and men in a year (http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/nisvs/). More than 1 in 4 men and more than 1 in 3 women in their lifetime have experienced stalking, rape, and/or physical violence by an intimate partner in the United States of America (Black et al., 2011). The actual numbers are likely higher due to the number of people who are too afraid to come forward saying that they are victims of intimate partner violence. They are afraid of the retaliation from their domestic partner, they are afraid that the violence will escalate even further the next time an incident occurs, and the potential of the perpetrator hurting the victims loved ones for going to the police for help. Violence is a topic that is heavily covered in the media. Violent shooting tragedies are happening more frequently around the world. Violence today sells. Violence in the United States of America and around the world is what seems to be the most talked about topic.

Intuitively, victims of domestic violence would quickly report incident to law enforcement. Some are too afraid to do so. What about police officers themselves who are victims of intimate partner violence? Who do they go to if it happens to them? There is the thought that if a police officer is dealing with intimate partner violence then they must not be able to handle their job as an officer because they are supposed to be the toughest, strongest people in the world. Police officers are often dealing with shocking, graphic, eventful events every shift. Police officers often encounter spontaneous events which can be life threatening. Within the last year, there have been multiple shooting
attacks on law enforcement (police officers). Some recent cases of violence in America on law enforcement are the shootings and deaths of police officers in Dallas (Texas), Baton Rouge (Louisiana), and New York City (NYPD). The Dallas, Baton Rouge, and NYPD police officers were shot ambushed style which resulted in their death. Five police officers died in the line of duty during the Dallas shooting; three police officers were killed in the line of duty during the Baton Rouge shooting; and two police officers were killed in the line of duty during the New York City shooting.

Police officers are taught to be violent when dealing with situations-going on calls that could potentially end their lives. That violent behavior has the potential to transfer into the officer’s home life and their spouse could suffer the consequences. Violence is never the answer. The topic of intimate partner violence and police officers needs to be discussed and researched due to the seriousness of the issue. By researching this topic, mental health professionals, police departments, etc. would benefit from this research by getting resources they need to help police officers/law enforcement in need of being victims to intimate partner violence or those who are the perpetrators of intimate partner violence.

Police work is considered highly stressful and a tough occupation. Therefore, police officers suffer from stress; which affects their job performance. Chiorri et al. (2015), state that stress occurs in situations that are uncontrollable and unpredictable. Every call a police officer responds to is potentially a life or death situation; it is always going to be unpredictable. It can be tremendously stressful as an officer to have the mindset of not knowing what is going to happen from the initial call, being on scene, to finishing the paperwork.
A police officer possesses a great amount of discretion to make difficult decisions while doing their job every day; such as using deadly force or whether or not to arrest an individual. Based off of the difficult decisions police officers make due to their job, they end up feeling stressed and experience burnout from the job. Males and females have different sources of stress (McCarty, Zhao & Garland, 2007). Stress can then lead to negative outcomes such as health issues, experiencing a burnout, and/or affecting your job and personal life (McCarty, Zhao & Garland, 2007; He, Zhao & Archbold, 2002; Gershon, R.R.M. et al., 2009).

But when a police officer gets to go home when he or she is done with their shift, how is that individual handling his or her stress from the job? Police officer related violence and work-related stress can contribute to domestic violence (Kurtz, Zavala & Melander, 2015).

Alvarez & Bachman define intimate partner violence as:

Intentional use of physical force with the potential for causing death, disability, injury, or harm. Physical violence includes, but is not limited to, scratching; pushing; shoving; throwing; grabbing; biting; choking; shaking; slapping; punching; burning; use of a weapon; and use of restraints or one's body, size, or strength against another person (p.110).

An intimate partner may be a former or current life partner, same-sex partner, girlfriend, or boyfriend (Anderson & Lo, 2011). Eckstein (2010) states that intimate partner violence may be sexual, such as rape; psychological, such as name calling; degradation; silent treatment; contingent affection; threats of destruction and/or death; social isolation; relational obsessiveness or possessiveness (p. 62). In Eckstein's (2010) study, she defined
the most extreme type of intimate partner violence, intimate terrorism. Victims of intimate terrorism are subject to coercive control; distrust is cultivated, and humiliation is enforced through identity attacks (p. 63).

The cycle of violence is another important factor in this thesis. Intergenerational transmission (IGT) of Violence theory is the association of intimate partner violence and interparental aggression (Black, Sussman & Unger, 2010). The concept of IGT is that it is socially learned behavior (Black, Sussman & Unger, 2010). The cycle of violence is a learned and taught behavior. If a person is to learn and experience violence and abuse as a child, they are more than likely to repeat the behavior they learned; thinking it is acceptable behavior.

General Strain Theory is the theory that those who experience anger, stress, frustration, or strain are factors that contribute to criminal behavior (Agnew, 2006; Zavala & Spohn, 2013). General Strain Theory was developed by Robert Agnew; it is a sociological theory. Experienced, vicarious, and anticipated strains are the type of strains that have been found to cause criminal behavior (Agnew, 2002). Agnew (2006) states, "a strain is disliked conditions and events" (p. 4). An experienced strain is an individual’s personal experience. A vicarious strain is a strain experienced by someone who is close to you such as a friend or family member (Agnew, 2006). An anticipated strain is a person’s assumption that their current condition (strain) will continue in the future or that new events (strains) will occur (Agnew, 2006).

The problem of police stress and intimate partner violence is worthy of study because this is a topic that is not commonly reported. There is going to be numerous people who do not feel comfortable coming forward saying that they are victims of
intimate partner violence/domestic violence. Especially if married to a cop, victims may not feel safe reporting it because they may feel that the police officer making the report and the courts are not going to believe them and believe the officer instead.

The numbers of those who are victims and/or perpetrators of intimate partner violence are much higher than what has been published. This is an important topic because humans should not be afraid to come forward and report violent encounters that have happened to them. Therefore, some victims are too afraid to come forward because they are afraid no one will believe them, especially the police.

Some people who chose to have careers in law enforcement do not know how to leave the problems and stress of work at work and it affects their personal life. Anyone in this world can have their work life affect their personal life; but in law enforcement it is critically important to keep the two separate. A police officer's duties are to use defensive tactics if someone attacks them, they are told to use loud commands to get someone to listen to them, they are taught to use aggressive tactics to apprehend offenders. Therefore, a police officer may end up using those police tactics at home when things do not go their way and could potentially hurt their spouse, child/ren, pets, and/or family members. It is important to look at the data to see how police officers, who are committing intimate partner violence, are hurting their spouse.

It will be critical in this study to research the Intergenerational Transmission of Violence theory to see if male or female police officers (from the dataset) are the victims of violence and abuse in their childhood. It will be interesting to find when the violence started in their lives and if and when it ever ended. Anderson & Lo's (2011) study found that female police officers have a less aggressive, softer policing style.
It is also important in this study to see how many police officers come forward in the data saying that they are victims of intimate partner violence (domestic violence). Some police officers may be too embarrassed, humiliated, and/or viewed as weak if they were to file charges against their spouse or have been previous victims to intimate partner violence (domestic violence). This study could benefit from previous research on intimate partner violence (domestic violence) and police stress and could find out why exactly police officers are too afraid to come forward and the reasoning behind it.

In this study, it will be important to look at both positive and negative coping mechanisms police officers are using. Positive coping mechanisms are exercise, finding an extracurricular activity to participate in, or getting profession help such as speaking to a therapist or psychologist. Negative coping mechanisms are smoking, drinking alcohol, gambling, using drugs, for example.

This paper is going to review the literature on General Strain Theory, police stress, and intimate partner violence. The primary hypothesis for this thesis is to compare police officers & non-police officer relationships and how they deal with stress. This thesis will also look at coping mechanisms police officers use to reduce stress from their work life and personal life; control issues police officers may have which leads to intimate partner violence (domestic violence); how stress affects the lives of police officers and their spouse; and how the cycle of violence affects police officers.

In summary, this first chapter covered statistics about how many people are victims to intimate partner violence every day. Some of the reasons why victims are too afraid to come forward—fear of retaliation, violence escalation, and deadly consequences for the victims family and friends. Also, why violence is a highly covered topic currently
is presented. This chapter also covered how hard, tough, and stressful police work truly is. Police work is unpredictable each and every single day of a police officer's career. Therefore, based on how stressful it truly is, police officers may not know how to keep the stress from their job and personal life separate and may result in committing intimate partner violence (domestic violence) against their spouse. Police officers are taught violent behavior and tactics to keep themselves and the public safe. For their (police officers) sanity and health, it is important to have a healthy lifestyle and having positive coping mechanisms. This chapter also covered the definitions that are of importance in this paper; such as what is an intimate partner, General Strain Theory, and the different types of strains of General Strain Theory. Lastly, this chapter covered the importance of why the topic of police stress and intimate partner violence is important, needs to be studied further, and the benefits of this research.

The information that will be presented in Chapter 2 will be the Literature Review. Chapter 2 will look at previous research that has been done on police stress, health issues police officers experience, coping mechanisms, Intergenerational Transmission of Violence Theory, previous research on intimate partner violence, General Strain Theory, and the hypotheses that will be tested in this study.
Chapter 2

Literature Review

Police Stress

Stress is a daily part of police officers' lives. According to Patterson, Chung & Swan (2014), the five categories of law enforcement stress are "(1) intra-organizational practices and characteristics, (2) inter-organizational practices and characteristics, (3) criminal justice system practices and characteristics, (4) public practices and characteristics, and (5) police work in general" (p. 490). When it comes to work-related and burnout levels of stress reported by female police officers, there is hardly any significant difference compared to male police officers (McCarty, Zhao & Garland, 2007). There is also no difference between male police officers and female officers in regards to type of work-related stress and intensity of stress from critical incidents (Kurtz, 2012). Stressors that affect police officers are: working long hours, exposure to death and horrific injuries, harassment, discrimination, shift work, commuting, inadequate equipment, poor leadership, co-worker incompetence or uncooperativeness, lack of support from others, lack of decision-making power, limited opportunities for advancement, repetitiveness, monotony, having to be violent, and use of weapons (Garbarino, Chiorri, & Magnavita, 2013; Hakan Can & Hendy, 2014).

Stress can be greater for female police officers if they are married and have at least one child (Kurtz, 2012). Female police officers are more likely to have higher levels of depression and somatization compared to male police officers; however, both female and male police officers do not differ in their coping of anxiety (He, Zhao & Archbold, 2002; Zhao et al., 2003). Police officers who have high emotional stability have greater
control over their work; and experience the physical and mental demand of law enforcement at a remarkably lower rate than a police officer with low emotional stability (Garbarino, Chiorri, & Magnavita, 2013).

Female police officers experience greater stress than male police officers resulting from negative workplace experiences (Hassell, Archbold & Stichman, 2011). The most common negative problem female police officers experience is sexual harassment (Hassell, Archbold & Stichman, 2011). In a male-dominated field, the ratio of male police officers to female police officers is drastically different. In most research studies done on police officers there is typically less than 25 female officers being surveyed; at most. In a study done by Hassell, Archbold & Stichman (2011), they surveyed a Midwestern municipal police department; they had 70 male respondents and 17 female respondents. They had five research questions in their study; these questions asked if female officers experience greater workplace problems compared to male police officers, whether female police officers experience more workplace stress and have lower job satisfaction than male police officers, and whether the workplace influences stress, job satisfaction, and consideration of changing careers. They found that there was no statistically significant difference between the male and female police officers based on stress, workplace problems, consideration of changing careers or job satisfaction.

Health & Police Officers

It is important for all police officers to find a balance between their work and home life. If an officer can find the balance, than that officer reduces the risk of becoming burnt out (Gächter, Savage & Torgler, 2010). McCarty, Zhao & Garland found that African-American female police officers are more likely to experience burnout than
white female police officers (2007). Ethnicity was the only variable to foresee a burnout among female police officers (McCarty, Zhao & Garland, 2007). However, female employees are less likely to report burnout symptoms (Gächter, Savage & Torgler, 2010). Police officers with high levels of energy take on more work than their colleagues which creates a greater demand of work for them to complete (Garbarino, Chiorri, & Magnavita, 2013).

Organizational/work-related stressors, work-family conflict and negative coping all have a role in why police officers get stressed and experience a burnout (McCarty, Zhao & Garland, 2007; He, Zhao & Archbold, 2002; Gershon, R.R.M. et al., 2009). Gächter, Savage & Torgler (2010), found that higher rank and a higher level of education significantly reduces the risk of burnout. Gershon et al. (2009) found that there was a link between police stress and increased use of alcohol, spousal abuse, and aggression. The most common stressful incidents and experiences for a police officer are the death and attending the funeral of a fallen officer, the injury of a fellow police officer, being involved in a hostage crisis, being investigated by internal affairs, and having to arrest a violent offender (Gershon, Lin & Li, 2002).

There are a number of health risks and diseases police officers are at high risk of developing over time from the stress they experience. Stress related health problems and diseases consist of depression, cardiovascular disease, Metabolic syndrome (MetS): dyslipidemia, abdominal adiposity, reduced glucose tolerance and hypertension, coronary heart diseases, blood lipids, hypertriglyceridemia, high glucose, and low HDL-cholesterol (Lucas, Weidner & Janisse, 2012; Garbarino & Magnavita, 2015). According to Garbarino & Magnavita's (2015) study, lack of physical activity, atypical work hours,
dietary factors, reduced sleep duration, or a combination of all of these can cause MetS in police officers.

In a study done by Gächter, Savage & Torgler (2010), they found that if police officers can find a way to keep a balanced work and home life; meaning having enough time for friends and family time then it will improve health outcomes. They also found in their study that female police officers reported higher levels of negative health problems.

Police officers who have years of experience in the field would more likely have positive coping mechanisms, great communication skills, know the more universally accepted techniques of having to deal with the same offenders, and having a well thought out plan of action every time they go out on a call. Previous research has shown that when a police officer is in a high stress situation, he or she will make a plan of action and try to follow through with it as best as possible (Gershon, Lin & Li, 2002). Common negative coping mechanisms for police officers are smoking cigarettes and drinking alcohol (Gershon, Lin & Li, 2002). Therefore, heart disease and alcoholism are the most prevalent diseases for police officers (Gershon, Lin & Li, 2002). However, in a study done by Gächter, Savage & Torgler (2010), they found that aging police officers are able to handle stress on the job better than those younger and it does not affect their risk for burnout or short-term health problems.

In a study done by Gershon, Lin & Li (2002), they surveyed thirteen different police departments looking to see how police stress affects aging police officers. There were a total of 1,106 officers who took the survey. They collected data from a subset of 105 police officers aged 50 and older. (The following statistics are the results of the survey) The most common stressors in this study were inequities at work and poor
organizational structure. The most common positive coping mechanism was talking to a
family member or a professional when they felt stressed out. Other positive coping
mechanisms were praying, relying on their faith in God, making a plan of action and
following through with it, and lastly, drawing on past experiences. The most common
negative coping mechanism was yelling at a family member. Other negative coping
mechanisms were gambling, smoking more than usual, hanging out with other police
officers at a bar, acting as if nothing was bothering them. The most common
psychological problem was experiencing depression; the other two were anxiety and
somatization (p. 163). The symptoms the police officers experienced were feeling blue,
low energy levels, headaches, no interest in things, pain in their chest, stomach pains,
self-blame, and loss of sexual interest. Seven percent of the officers in this study thought
at one point in their life about committing suicide. The most common reported physical
symptom was lower back pain. The other physical symptoms were foot problems, heart
disease, migraines, chronic insomnia, and high blood pressure; which came in a close
second. 68% of the police officers in this study smoke tobacco products, 38% reported
that they drank more (alcohol) than they should have, and 13% worried or felt guilty
about their alcohol consumption. 17% of police officers reported that they smashed
things to relieve their stress. Police officers also responded to questions about getting
physical by shoving, hitting, grabbing, or pushing. Shockingly, the most common person
that officers got physical with were their pets (10%), next was their fellow officers and
children which tied at 6%, and lastly was hitting their spouse or significant other (5%)
(Gershon, Lin & Li, 2002).
The job of a police officer can affect his or her relationship with their spouse/significant other. Marriage can be both a stressor and a stress reducer (Zhao et al., 2003). The spouse of a police officer has stress due to the result of their partner's choice of career, worrying about their safety, and most importantly if they are going to come home every night after their shift. There are police officers who choose not to tell their partner about what happened during their shift, for example seeing horrific scenes such as crime scenes; which can result in tension between couples. Police officers choose not to tell their partners everything that happened to them at work in order to protect them and not have them worry. Therefore, this creates tension and strain in the relationship (Horan, Bochantin & Booth-Butterfield, 2012). Spouses/significant others of police officers believe that their spouse spends too much time at work and too little time with their families and not focusing on their significant other's needs (Zhao et al., 2003). It is important in a police officer's relationship to have their significant other's support for whatever problems they may face in life.

In a study done by Zhao et al. (2003), they examined marital status on police stress and broke down the data by looking at police couples (an officer whose spouse is also a police officer), non-police couple (involving an officer whose spouse is not a police officer), and other (an officer who is single, windowed, divorced/separated but not involved in a relationship at the time). They found that police couples reported less anxiety, while non-police couples reported less depression. They also found that officers with years of experience had higher levels of depression; this was also found in multiple articles cited in this study. Additionally, they found that police couples are able to communicate about their problems and have better coping mechanisms when dealing
with stressful situations. Destructive coping mechanisms with police stress contributes to long-term physical and psychological illnesses (Zhao et al., 2003).

When you don't have resources to deal with stress, divorce is a possible outcome. In a study done by Horan, Bochantin & Booth-Butterfield (2012), they found that police officers are more likely to engage in frequent arguments, extramarital affairs, domestic abuse with their spouse. It is mere public perception that most police officers marriage will end in divorce. Kirschman (2004), found that 75% of police marriages ended in divorce; and out of those 75%, half of those divorced were caused by alcohol abuse, infidelity, or domestic violence.

**Coping Mechanisms**

In this study, it will be important to look at both positive and negative coping mechanisms police officers are using. The health of a police officer is a critical factor in police stress. It is important for a police officer to have positive coping mechanisms for dealing with the stress of their job and personal life. Positive coping mechanisms are exercising, getting enough rest/sleep, a healthy diet of nutrient-rich food, having the support of family and friends, intervention, religious or spiritual support, open experience sharing, seeking psychological help/speaking with a therapist (if necessary) (Hakan Can & Hendy, 2014; Zhao et al., 2003).

Police officers use humor in their communication as a coping mechanism (Horan, Bochantin & Booth-Butterfield, 2012). In a study done by Horan, Bochantin & Booth-Butterfield (2012), they found that humor is extremely important for police officers relationships. They also found that humor is an acceptable method way of communicating.
In a study done by Halbesleben (2010), married co-workers who engaged in spousal support and coping correlated; and negativity correlated with avoidant coping. He also found that the participants in the study who did not share an occupation or workplace, the relationship was positive. It is important to have good resources to help engage in positive coping.

Negative coping mechanisms are smoking cigarettes, drinking alcohol, gambling, eating high-fat and/or high-sugar foods, drinking caffeinated beverages, trying to bottle up emotions and repress anger/emotions and then having angry outbursts, and isolation (Hakan Can & Hendy, 2014; Zhao et al., 2003).

**Intergenerational Transmission of Violence Theory**

The Intergenerational Transmission of Violence theory is when a child experiences or witnesses violence at home, they will then think it is acceptable behavior (Franklin, 2010). Therefore, when these children are adults who then get married and/or have their own children they may repeat the physical abuse and/or violent behavior they were victim to and/or witnessed (Franklin, 2010). Franklin (2010) argues that the experiences children went through being victim to physical abuse will determine their violent behavior in life. In Franklin's (2010) study, she found through previous research that children who grew up in abusive households have a greater chance of being perpetrators of intimate partner violence compared to those who were not abused as children (Stith et al., 2004). Franklin (2010) also found through previous research that females who come from a violent home and have experienced child abuse are more likely to experience intimate partner violence compared to males (Stith et al., 2000).
The Intergenerational Transmission of Violence Theory guides this thesis by being a strong foundation as to why intimate partner violence exists with law enforcement spouses; as well as spouses in general. This theory explains how being a victim or witnessing violent behavior as a child, guides whether or not they will be violent as they age. The intergenerational transmission of violence theory describes violence as a taught behavior. If the cycle is not broken, it will continue from generation to generation. The cycle of violence is extremely important in law enforcement. For a police officer who has witnessed or experienced abuse as a child, they are more likely to engage in abuse as an adult. Additionally, General Strain Theory proposes that because police officers are stressed and see violence, it adds up to greater likelihood for police officers to abuse their spouse. The job deals with violent offenders and violent crimes; therefore, police officers may have to be violent/aggressive against offenders to protect themselves. Police officers may take their anger and frustrations out on their spouses because they may have witnessed it as a child.

**Intimate Partner Violence**

Any relationship is at risk for intimate partner violence to occur. You never know when violence is going to happen, and if so, how high it is going to escalate. Even though there are multiple studies done on intimate partner violence, the exact number of how many people who have been victim to it will never be found because there are many cases that are not reported to the police (Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000). Intimate partner violence occurs within all couples: straight, gay, lesbian, married couples, live-in partners, even boyfriend/girlfriend relationships. A male or a female can be a perpetrator and a victim of intimate partner violence.
Tjaden & Thoennes (2000), found in their study from the *Findings From the National Violence Against Women Survey*, that gay male couples who live together experience intimate partner violence more than heterosexual couples who live together. They also found that women are more likely to report that they have been victims of intimate partner violence; additionally women who are divorced or separated from their spouse/significant other reported experiencing intimate partner violence more than married women.

Gender roles often play an important part in the law enforcement profession. Policing has been associated with a male dominated workplace culture. In a study done by Reidy et al., they looked at the effect of masculine discrepancy stress of psychological, physical, and sexual intimate partner violence. Reidy et al. (2014) define masculine discrepancy stress as a form of distress arising from perceived failure to conform to socially-prescribed masculine gender norms. The researchers found that gender role conformity is associated with intimate partner violence. They also found that discrepancy stress predicted psychological, physical, and sexual intimate partner violence. Reidy et al. (2014) found that men who perceive threats to their masculinity, they are more likely to be violent in intimate relationships.

Próspero hypothesized in his study that high masculinity, increased intimate partner violence victimization, increased controlling behaviors, and attitudes toward the acceptance of violence would significantly contribute to the increase of physical, psychological, and sexual perpetrator intimate partner violence. The findings support the study's hypothesis. Próspero (2008) found that masculinity was a significant predictor of psychological intimate partner violence; violent attitudes was a significant predictor of
physical intimate partner violence; and sex was a significant predictor of both psychological and sexual intimate partner violence perpetration (Próspero, 2008).

In a study done by Peralta and Tuttle, they interviewed males convicted of intimate partner violence. The authors found that economic stressors such as unemployment, bills, debt, insufficient income were factors of past intimate partner violence. The men who participated in the study stated that by not being able to provide for their family, such as their income not providing enough to the household, had an effect on their masculinity and resulted in intimate partner violence. It made them feel like they were not a "real man". Power, anger, and control were all factors that contributed to intimate partner violence and had an effect on masculinity by the men who participated in the study. Cultural norms were also associated with masculinity and intimate partner violence (Peralta & Tuttle, 2013).

Anderson & Lo (2011), found in their study that reported domestic violence and negative emotions are associated with intimate partner violence. They also found that whites compared to non-whites were less likely to report engaging in domestic violence/intimate partner violence. In the data set they used (Police Stress and Domestic Violence in Police Families in Baltimore, Maryland: 1997-1999), the authors found that female police officers admitted to being the perpetrator of intimate partner violence more than male police officers. Additionally, they found that white officers compared to African American officers were less likely to be physically aggressive. Lastly, they found that African American female officers were more aggressive than African American males (Anderson & Lo, 2011).
In a study done by Zavala, Melander & Kurtz (2015), negative emotions (depression, strain, anger) was linked to intimate partner violence perpetration; they also found that only 9% of the police officers in their data set (Police Stress and Domestic Violence in Police Families in Baltimore, Maryland: 1997-1999) had reported committing domestic violence against their significant other/spouse. Even the authors agree that this is a low number. There are a number of explanations as to why this number was so low. There are going to be both women and men who are going to be too afraid to come forward admitting they are victims of domestic violence, there are police officers who are not going to admit they have hurt their partner because they will potentially lose their job, will never find work in law enforcement again, never be able to carry a firearm again, and there are going to be people in general who do not want to talk about being victims of domestic violence and want to keep that information to themselves. Zavala, Melander & Kurtz (2015), also found that those who have previously witnessed violent behavior, social learning, rather than work related stress, is the reason why intimate partner violence occurs in police families (Zavala & Spohn, 2013).

Kay & Jeffries conducted interviews in their study with four gay community support services about gay couple intimate partner violence and services for the victims in Queensland, Australia. Kay & Jeffries found that male same sex intimate partner violence occurs similar or slightly higher than heterosexual intimate partner violence. Intimate partner violence occurred because of psychological ill health and substance abuse. Kay & Jeffries (2010) state that there is a correlation between hegemonic masculine ideas and male same sex intimate partner violence. The process of trying to achieve hegemonic masculinity incorporates elements of a power struggle that can trigger
male same sex intimate partner violence. The struggle for power can incorporate the
denial of economic resources (Kay & Jeffries, 2010).

Comparing heterosexual intimate partner violence and same sex intimate partner
violence there are similarities, they are the need for power, control, money/being a
provider, masculinity, and that men in these studies were taught you have to show your
masculine behaviors.

Eckstein (2010) interviewed men who had been sexually, psychologically, and/or
physically victimized by female romantic partners and to look at male intimate partner
violence victims' gender identities. Eckstein found that all of the men in the study had
mentioned feeling loss or a diminishing sense of identity from the abuse. Many men in
the study blamed themselves and others and refused to identify themselves as victims of
female perpetrators of intimate partner violence (Eckstein, 2010).

**Gender & Intimate Partner Violence**

In a study done by Pulerwitz et al. (2015), they wanted to assess the effects of
intervention using standardized measures of violence and gender norms (p. 132). There
were two main components to the intervention. The first reflection was regarding
common gender norms that might increase the risk of violence. Through this reflection,
the participants in this study were able to see the negative outcomes of enacting these
norms and potential positive aspects of gender equitable behavior. The second component
was group education activities.

There were three intervention groups in this study. The first group were the ones
who participated in community engagement only (first reflection). The second group
were those who participated in community engagement and group education (first and
second reflection). The third group was a comparison group. The findings are that during the beginning of study, participants in all three groups expressed support for inequitable norms; such as a woman should tolerate violence to keep her family together. It was found that there should be male dominance in the household; such as decision making. In the beginning of the study, 62% of the participants had engaged in some sort of violence with their partner. At the end of this study, it was found that this number had significantly decreased in the groups except for the comparison group; there was no change. This study proved that male norms influence attitudes towards intimate partner violence and gender norms.

**General Strain Theory**

The theory that best explains police officer stress and intimate partner relationships is General Strain Theory. General Strain Theory states that those who experience anger, stress, frustration, or strain are factors which contribute to criminal behavior (Agnew, 2006; Zavala & Spohn, 2013). General Strain Theory was developed by Robert Agnew. It is a social-psychological theory; therefore, the theory focuses on how a person reacts to their immediate surroundings (Agnew, 1992). Agnew (1992) states, "it is the only theory to focus on negative relationships" (p.225). When General Strain Theory was written, the original sample tested/surveyed adolescents.

General Strain Theory focuses on negative relationships individuals have and the aspirations and goals they fail to achieve (Agnew, 1992). General Strain Theory alleges that adolescents are pushed to commit delinquency by their negative emotions, specifically anger, that results from the presence of negative relationships (Agnew, 1992).
Agnew (1992) emphasizes that pressure is the main reason in General Strain Theory that contributes to negative behavior.

There are multiple sources of strain. The first is "Strain as the Disjunction between Aspirations and Expectations/Actual Achievements" (Agnew, 1992, p. 225). In order for an adolescent to achieve their immediate goals, it will depend on if they have strong athletic abilities, physically attractive, intelligent, and if they have a good personality (Agnew, 2002). Therefore if an adolescent lacks one of these factors, then they will not be able to achieve their goals (Agnew, 2002). If an individual compares themselves to others who are like the individual or think of past experiences that justify their expectations in life then it will lead to negative emotions: resentment, unhappiness, disappointment, rage, anger, and dissatisfaction (Agnew, 2002). The way in which the person copes with their perceived failure in this regard is critical for future behavior.

The second source is "Strain as the Disjunction between Just/Fair Outcomes and Actual Outcomes" (Agnew, 1992, p. 226). This type of strain is based on an individual's personal goals that focus on their achievement of specific results (Agnew, 2002). An individual's personal goal could be to obtain a certain grade on a test or getting money; rewards readily attainable (Agnew, 2002). Agnew (2002) states "individuals enter interactions expecting that certain distributive justice rules will be followed, rules specifying how resources should be allocated" (p. 226).

The third source of strain is "Strain as the Removal of Positively Valued Stimuli from the Individual (Agnew, 1992, p. 227). Agnew (2002) states "this type of strain involves the actual or anticipated loss of positively valued stimuli from the individual" (p. 227).
The last source of strain is "Strain as the Presentation of Negative Stimuli" (Agnew, 1992, p. 227). This type of strain results from negative interactions at school or home (Agnew, 1992).

There is a link between delinquency and strains. For every strain an individual experiences, the more likely they will feel multiple negative emotions (Agnew, 1992). Agnew (2002) argues that anger is the key negative emotion because it could lead to an individual to think their aggression is justified.

There are three different coping strategies for strain. The first coping strategy is cognitive coping strategies. Agnew (2002) argues with this coping strategy an individual maximizes positive outcomes/minimizes negative outcomes, ignore/minimize the importance of adversity, and that an individual accepts responsibility for adversity. The second coping strategy is behavioral coping strategies; which is when an individual has a desire to seek revenge (Agnew, 2002). Last, is emotional coping strategies. This is when an individual could use anti-depressants and stimulants to make themselves feel better, exercise, do deep-breathing exercises, meditation; ways that are going to make an individual's pain less severe.

General Strain Theory supports this thesis by explaining when people are experiencing negative relationships in their life, it can be resulted in a positive way or negative way. This theory tied in when police officers are experiencing a negative relationship in their life with a spouse, fellow officer, parent, whoever; they are going to feel multiple negative emotions and can deal with it in a positive or negative way. Therefore, it is important for police officers to use positive coping mechanisms when
dealing with negative relationships in their life so it does not affect their job or personal life more than it should.

In a study conducted by Zavala & Spohn (2013), they hypothesized that "greater vicarious strain would increase the odds of both victimization and offending", they found this is to be true. Additionally, they hypothesized that "anticipated strain would increase the likelihood of both victimization and offending", they only found that data support for victimization only (Zavala & Spohn, 2013). Agnew (2001) found that criminal victimization (physical victimization) is a type of strain that is linked to criminal behavior.

**Hypotheses**

Based on the literature review, it is important to explore the relationship between domestic partners who are in law enforcement, the influence of strain, and intimate partner violence and test the following hypotheses: Spouses with identical occupations have better coping mechanisms and are more empathetic to their partner resulting in less physical abuse. Therefore, (Hypothesis 1) police officers are less likely to abuse their spouse if their spouse is a cop than if their spouse is not a police officer. Police officers deal with a great amount of stress in their work and personal life; therefore, it is important for police officers to have positive coping mechanisms to deal with the stress. Therefore, (Hypothesis 2) police officers who exercise regularly to reduce stress are less likely to engage in physical abuse (intimate partner violence) compared to police officers who do not exercise regularly. (Hypothesis 3) Police officers that have higher ranking are more likely to engage in physical abuse (intimate partner violence) because of their added administrative responsibilities and demands. Due to the stress of the job, police
officers are bound to feel burned out more quickly than other professions. Therefore, 
(Hypothesis 4) police officers who feel burned out from the job are more likely to 
engage in physical abuse (intimate partner violence). Police officers who have witnessed 
and/or been abused as a child are likely to repeat the cycle of violence. Therefore, 
(Hypothesis 5) police officers, whose parents have been physical with them when they 
were a child, are more likely to engage in physical abuse (intimate partner violence).

In summary, the second chapter covered a variety of studies that has been done on 
police stress, health issues in police officers, how aging police officers deal with the 
stress of being on the job, intimate partner violence, intimate partner violence within 
police families, and General Strain Theory.

The information that will be presented in Chapter 3 will be the Methodology. 
Chapter 3 will look at the hypotheses being tested in this thesis. It will explain the design 
used to obtain this data and why the dataset was chosen. Lastly, this chapter will explain 
who the population/sample is, the measures used, and the types of analysis used.
Chapter 3

Methodology

Data History & Collection

The design used to conduct this research is a secondary data analysis on Police Stress and Domestic Violence in Police Families in Baltimore, Maryland, 1997-1999, a self-report survey. The data were available for public use. The Police Stress and Domestic Violence in Police Families in Baltimore, Maryland, 1997-1999 is funded by the National Institute of Justice, which is an agency in the United States Department of Justice. The secondary data used in this study come from the study, *Police Stress and Domestic Violence in Police Families in Baltimore, Maryland, 1997-1999*. It is available through the Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR). The survey was a five-page, 132-item questionnaire which covered questions that assessed a number of variables relevant to this study, including demographic characteristics, questions about a police officer’s marriage or relationship with their significant other, and behaviors related to stress. There were 1,100 surveys distributed to the Baltimore Police Department police officers who volunteered to participate in the survey, there was a 68% response rate. Egbert Zavala & Don L. Kurtz are authors who have previously used the secondary data analysis *Police Stress and Domestic Violence in Police Families in Baltimore, Maryland, 1997-1999*. The data have been tested in a variety of scholarly articles studying police stress and domestic violence. There have been scholarly publications since 2016 utilizing this dataset.

Hypotheses

The hypotheses that are being tested in this thesis are:
**Hypothesis 1:** Police officers are less likely to abuse their spouse if their spouse is a cop then if their spouse is not a police officer.

**Hypothesis 2:** Police officers who exercise regularly to reduce stress are less likely to engage in physical abuse (intimate partner violence) compared to police officers who do not exercise regularly.

**Hypothesis 3:** Police officers that have higher ranking are more likely to engage in physical abuse (intimate partner violence).

**Hypothesis 4:** Police officers who feel burned out from the job are more likely to engage in physical abuse (intimate partner violence).

**Hypothesis 5:** Police officers, whose parents have been physical with them when they were a child, are more likely to engage in physical abuse (intimate partner violence).

Spouses with identical occupations in law enforcement are bound to have double the stress compared to spouses whose occupations are non-law enforcement, therefore Hypothesis 1 was formulated. Positive coping mechanisms are more likely to reduce stress, as discussed in the literature review, exercise is one such coping mechanism; therefore, Hypothesis 2 was formulated. A higher ranked police officer deals with the same problems and issues as a regular officer; due to having higher rank equals more responsibility and stress. Therefore, Hypothesis 3 was formulated. Law enforcement is one of the most stressful occupations. As stated in the literature review, due to all of the stress police officers deal with, police officers are at a high risk for health issues. Therefore, Hypothesis 4 was formulated. As previously noted in the literature review on the cycle of violence, often times violence is a learned behavior and has been passed on
from generation to generation. Therefore, Hypothesis 5 was formulated; thus, perpetuating the cycle of violence.

**Measures**

For the purpose of this thesis, there will be different sets of variables that will be looked at; including, demographic characteristics, control variables, and looking at stress, behavior, and health factors. There will be five different hypotheses being tested in this thesis as previously stated in the literature review. The types of statistical analyses being conducted in this study for each hypothesis are frequency distribution, Pearson's r correlation matrix, and binary logistic regression. The following variables were dichotomized to do the correlation matrix: ever got physical with your spouse, is he/she (spouse) a police officer, current rank, burned out from job, and exercise regularly to reduce tension.

**Dependent Variables**

*Have you ever gotten out of control and been physical (e.g. pushing, shoving, grabbing) with: Your spouse/significant other?* This is a dichotomized variable with a no (0) or yes (1) rating.

**Independent Variable**

*If your spouse or significant other has a job, is he/she a police officer?* This is a dichotomized variable with a no (0) or yes (1) rating.

**Control Variables**

The control variables used in this study are age, sex, ethnicity, marital status, married before joining the force, level of education, number of years of service, current
rank, feeling burned out from the job, exercise regularly to reduce tension and if your parents (when you were a child) ever gotten physical with you.

**Sample**

One thousand two hundred questionnaires were distributed. There were originally 1,104 respondents of the survey. After omitting single police officers and widowed police officers from the dataset, there were a total of 874 respondents who completed the survey used in the analysis. The survey data were not gathered at random and are not representative, therefore any conclusions are not generalizable.

In summary, the third chapter covered the research question and hypotheses that are being tested in this thesis. The hypotheses being tested cover the topics of intimate partner violence within police couples, police officers who exercise regularly to reduce stress, how police officers with higher rank engage in intimate partner violence, police officers experiencing burnout, and if police officers ever experienced being physically abused by their parents as a child. The survey was a five-page questionnaire. There were 874 respondents after "single police officers" and "widowed police officers" were omitted from the data. There are numerous variables that will be used in this thesis. The types of statistical analyses being conducted in this study are frequency distributions, Pearson's r correlation coefficients, and binary logistic regression.

The information that will be presented in Chapter 4 will be the results and findings. Chapter 4 will look at results of the hypotheses that are being tested in this thesis.
Chapter 4

Results and Findings

This chapter covers the results and findings of this thesis. There were five hypotheses being tested. Three out of the five hypotheses were supported by the data; two hypotheses were not supported by the data. The hypotheses that were supported by the data were: (Hypothesis 2) Police officers who exercise regularly to reduce stress are less likely to engage in physical abuse (intimate partner violence) compared to police officers who do not exercise regularly; (Hypothesis 4) Police officers who feel burned out from the job are more likely to engage in physical abuse (intimate partner violence); and (Hypothesis 5) Police officers, whose parents have been physical with them when they were a child, are more likely to engage in physical abuse (intimate partner violence). The hypotheses that the data did not support are: (Hypothesis 1) Police officers are less likely to abuse their spouse if their spouse is a cop than if their spouse is not a police officer; and (Hypothesis 3) Police officers that have higher ranking are more likely to engage in physical abuse (intimate partner violence). The rest of the chapter will go into detail of how these hypotheses were tested.

Table 1

Table 1 reports the frequency distribution of the survey respondents. There were 761 (87%) males and 111 (13%) females who took the survey. The survey asked what ethnicity police officers are. 576 (66%) are Caucasian and 292 (34%) are minorities (African-American, Hispanic or other). The survey asked what was the police officer's marital status. 582 (67%) are married, 79 (9%) have a live-in partner, and 98 (11%) are divorced/separated. The survey asked if police officer's were married before joining the
force. 199 (23%) are married to their current spouse, 142 (16%) were married but to a former spouse, and 525 (60%) were not married. The survey asked police officers what the highest level of education they had completed. 613 (70%) had completed high school or some college. 258 (30%) had completed college or graduate school. The survey asked the police officers what their current rank is. 572 (65%) are an officer trainee, an officer, or an agent. 301 (34%) are either a detective, or sergeant, or a lieutenant and above. The average age of a Baltimore Police Officer is 35, the minimum is 19, and the maximum is 65. The average number of years an officer has been with the Baltimore Police Department is 12, the minimum is 0, and the maximum is 44.

The survey asked if police officers feel burned out from the job. 590 (68%) either strongly disagreed, disagreed, or neither agreed/disagreed. 278 (32%) either agreed or strongly agreed. The survey asked police officers if they exercise regularly to reduce tension (stress). 554 (64%) never do or sometimes exercise. 312 (36%) frequently or always exercise. The survey asked police officers if their parents (when they were a child) ever gotten physical with them. 567 (65%) responded no. 305 (35%) responded yes. The survey asked police officers if their spouse was a police officer. 670 (78%) responded no. 89 (10%) responded yes. The survey asked police officers if they have ever been physical with their spouse. 797 (91%) responded no. 77 (9%) responded yes.

Table 2

Table 2 shows the results of the correlation matrix of the survey respondents. In the correlation between the variable "if yes, is he/she a police officer" and the variable "have you ever got physical with your spouse"; there were 858 respondents. The magnitude is .116**. The magnitude represents the strength. The magnitude maxes out at
+1 or -1 and is smallest at zero. The relationship is weak. It is significant at the .05 level. Meaning, there is only 5% chance that this finding is a fluke. The direction is positive. As the variable "your spouse/significant other is a police officer" increases, "ever got physical with your spouse" increases. Therefore, if your spouse is a police officer, the more likely a police officer will get physical with their spouse. In the correlation between the variable "exercise (exercise regularly to reduce tension" and the variable "have you ever got physical with your spouse" there were 866 respondents. The magnitude is - .141**. The relationship is weak. It is significant at the .05 level. The direction is negative. As the variable "ever got physical with your spouse" decreases, the variable exercise regularly to reduce tension increases. Therefore, the more a police officer exercises, the less likely the police officer will get physical with their spouse. In the correlation between the variable "current rank" and the variable "ever got physical with your spouse" there were 873 respondents. The magnitude is .038. The relationship is weak. It is not significant at the .05 level. The direction is positive. As the variable "current rank" increases, the variable "ever got physical with your spouse" increases. Therefore, the higher rank a police officer has, the more likely a police officer will get physical with their spouse. However, because the significance level is greater than .10 the finding is not significant/real. In the correlation between the variable "burned out" and the variable "ever got physical with your spouse" there were 868 respondents. The magnitude is .125**. The relationship is weak. It is significant at the .05 level. The direction is positive. As the variable "burned out" increases, the variable "ever gotten physical with your spouse" increases. Therefore, the more burned out a police officer feels, the more likely the police officer will get physical with their spouse. In the
correlation between the variable "parents ever got physical with you as a child" and the variable "ever got physical with your spouse" there were 872 respondents. The magnitude is .145**. The relationship is weak. It is significant at the .05 level. The direction is positive. As the variable "parents ever got physical with you as a child" increases, the variable "ever got physical with your spouse" increases. Therefore, if a police officer was abused as a child, the more likely the police officer will get physical with their spouse.

**Table 3**

Table 3 shows the results of the binary logistic regression. This table shows the results of the regression analysis when the dependent variable is the police officer being the perpetrator of physical abuse (ever got physical with your spouse). Nagelkerke R Square is similar to explained variance or adjusted R² in linear regression. The Nagelkerke R Square indicates that roughly 15% of the variation in the dependent variable is explained by these items in the regression analysis. For the variable, current rank, the magnitude is .084 with a significance level of .797. The relationship is non-existent. For police officers with higher rank, physically abusing their spouse is not significant. For the variable, age, the magnitude is -.007 with a significance level of .682. The relationship is negative, but not statistically significant. For the variable, gender, the magnitude is .578 with a significance level of .133. The relationship is positive, but it is not significant. For the variable, education, the magnitude is -.607 with a significance level of .114. The relationship is negative and also is not statistically significant. For the variable, if your spouse is a police officer, the magnitude is .639 with a significance level of .097. Respondents who have a spouse as a police officer are more likely to get physical with them than respondents without a cop as a spouse. For the variable, exercise regularly
to reduce tension, the magnitude is -1.050 with a significance level of .006. The relationship is negative. As police officers physically abuse their spouse decreases, police officers who exercise regularly increases. For the variable, feeling burned out, the magnitude is .824 with a significance level of .004. The relationship is positive. As police officers physically abuse their spouse increases, the police officer's experience of feeling burned out increases. For the variable, did your parents ever get physical with you as a child, the magnitude is .930 with a significance level of .001. The relationship is positive. As police officers physically abuse their spouse increases, parents getting physical with police officers as children increases.

In summary, the fourth chapter covered the results and findings of this thesis. There were five hypotheses being tested. Three out of the five hypotheses were supported by the data; two hypotheses were not supported by the data. The hypotheses that were supported by the data were: (Hypothesis 2) Police officers who exercise regularly to reduce stress are less likely to engage in physical abuse (intimate partner violence) compared to police officers who do not exercise regularly; (Hypothesis 4) Police officers who feel burned out from the job are more likely to engage in physical abuse (intimate partner violence); and (Hypothesis 5) Police officers, whose parents have been physical with them when they were a child, are more likely to engage in physical abuse (intimate partner violence). The hypotheses that the data did not support are: (Hypothesis 1) Police officers are less likely to abuse their spouse if their spouse is a cop than if their spouse is not a police officer; and (Hypothesis 3) Police officers that have higher ranking are more likely to engage in physical abuse (intimate partner violence).
The information that will be presented in Chapter 5 will be the conclusion. This chapter will cover major findings, limitations to research, contributions, changes to be made if re-starting thesis, recommendations for future research, and the benefits of pursuing this study.
Table 1

*Frequency Distribution of Survey Respondents, N=874*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male=0</td>
<td>761</td>
<td>87.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female=1</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>12.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ethnicity</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White=0</td>
<td>576</td>
<td>66.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minorities=1</td>
<td>292</td>
<td>33.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Education</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than B.A.=0</td>
<td>613</td>
<td>70.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B.A. &amp; Above=1</td>
<td>258</td>
<td>29.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rank</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Officer=0</td>
<td>572</td>
<td>65.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisor=1</td>
<td>301</td>
<td>34.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Marital Status</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married=1</td>
<td>582</td>
<td>76.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Live-in Partner, Divorced/Separated=2</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>23.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Parents Got Physical with You (Child)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No=0</td>
<td>567</td>
<td>65.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes=1</td>
<td>305</td>
<td>35.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Feel Burned Out</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No=0</td>
<td>590</td>
<td>68.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes=1</td>
<td>278</td>
<td>32.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Exercise Regularly</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No=0</td>
<td>554</td>
<td>64.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes=1</td>
<td>312</td>
<td>36.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Spouse is a Police Officer</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No=0</td>
<td>670</td>
<td>88.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes=1</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>11.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ever Been Physical with your Spouse</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No=0</td>
<td>797</td>
<td>91.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes=1</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>8.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 2

*Correlation Matrix* (N=874)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Ever got physical with your spouse (1=yes)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spouse is a cop (1=yes)</td>
<td>.116**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exercise Regularly (1=yes)</td>
<td>-.141**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current Rank (1=supervisor)</td>
<td>.038</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feel Burned Out (1=yes)</td>
<td>.125**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents got physical with you as a child (1=yes)</td>
<td>.145**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: * = p<.10, **= p<.05, and ***= p<.01*
Table 3

*Binary Logistic Regression Predicting Being a Perpetrator of Spousal Abuse (1=yes)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Coefficients</th>
<th>Significance</th>
<th>Exp(B)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Current Rank</td>
<td>.084</td>
<td>.797</td>
<td>1.088</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>-.007</td>
<td>.682</td>
<td>.993</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender (1=female)</td>
<td>.578</td>
<td>.133</td>
<td>1.783</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>-.607</td>
<td>.114</td>
<td>.545</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spouse is a cop (1=yes)</td>
<td>.639</td>
<td>.097*</td>
<td>1.894</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exercise Regularly (1=yes)</td>
<td>-1.050</td>
<td>.006***</td>
<td>.350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feel Burned Out (1=yes)</td>
<td>.824</td>
<td>.004***</td>
<td>2.279</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents Got Physical with You (Child)</td>
<td>.930</td>
<td>.001***</td>
<td>2.535</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>-2.747</td>
<td>.000***</td>
<td>.064</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: * = p<.10, **= p<.05, and ***= p<.01*
Chapter 5

Conclusion

Summary of Major Findings

The purpose of this thesis was to research police stress and intimate partner violence. A sample of married police officers was used from *Police Stress and Domestic Violence in Police Families in Baltimore, Maryland, 1997-1999*. There were a total of 874 respondents who answered questions regarding their work attitudes, events that have happened at work, dealing with stress, health, behaviors, and work/home issues. There were five hypotheses tested in this study. The hypotheses that were supported by the data were: (Hypothesis 2) Police officers who exercise regularly to reduce stress are less likely to engage in physical abuse (intimate partner violence) compared to police officers who do not exercise regularly; (Hypothesis 4) Police officers who feel burned out from the job are more likely to engage in physical abuse (intimate partner violence); and (Hypothesis 5) Police officers, whose parents have been physical with them when they were a child, are more likely to engage in physical abuse (intimate partner violence). The hypotheses that the data did not support are: (Hypothesis 1) Police officers are less likely to abuse their spouse if their spouse is a cop than if their spouse is not a police officer; and (Hypothesis 3) Police officers that have higher ranking are more likely to engage in physical abuse (intimate partner violence).

There is a statistical significant finding in that if a police officer's spouse is a police officer too, the police officer is more likely to get physical with his/her spouse. There is a statistical significant finding in that if a police officer exercises regularly and if a police officer has ever been physical with their spouse. It was found that there was a
weak connection between the current rank of a police officer and if a police officer has ever been physical with their spouse. However, because the significance level is greater than .10 the finding is not significant. There is a statistically significant finding between a police officer feeling burned out and if a police officer has ever been physical with their spouse. Lastly, there is statistical significant finding between if a police officer's parents got physical with them as a child and if a police officer has ever been physical with their spouse.

**Contributions**

The research in this thesis made an impact in police stress and domestic violence studies. By finding that in this sample, spouses with the same occupation, specifically law enforcement, are more likely to engage in physical abuse towards one another than cops without a spouse in law enforcement. The research also found that police officers who use positive coping mechanisms, such as exercising to reduce stress, are less likely to engage in physical abuse. The research also found that police officers who experience burnout are more likely to engage in physical violence towards their spouse than those police officers that do not experience burnout. This is extremely important because police officers need the best resources as possible to deal with the stress of being on the job in a positive way. Therefore, based off of previous research (Hakan Can & Hendy, 2014; Zhao et al., 2003; Horan, Bochantin & Booth-Butterfield, 2012; Pulerwitz et al., 2015; Halbesleben, 2010) and what was accomplished in this study police officers need to continue to have positive coping mechanisms to dealing with the stress of being on the job. The research found out that police officers whose parents have been physical with
them when they were a child are more likely to engage in physical abuse. Therefore, the findings of this thesis support Intergenerational Transmission of Violence Theory.

Limitations

There was the limitation of data being removed to strictly focus on police officers who are married, live with their partner, or are divorced/separated. There were originally 1,104 respondents after removing the "single police officers" and "widowed police officers" that number dropped down to 874 respondents. That was a loss of data to examine. Based off the removal of the "single police officers" and "widowed police officers" it also affected the number of responses to other questions (variables) of the survey. Additionally, there was a very low sample size of female police officers in this study. This is an important limitation because in the original dataset there were only 157 respondents, after removing the "single police officers" and "widowed police officers" there were only 111 respondents.

There was the limitation of intimate partner violence not being reported in the survey due to police officers being afraid to answer if they have been the victim and/or perpetrator. There is the limitation of if there are police officers who could have not told the truth if they have been a perpetrator of intimate partner violence. Therefore, all of the data was limited by truthfulness. There were not enough questions that asked about the details of the physical violence in the survey. The survey only asked if a police officer was victim of physical violence or the perpetrator of physical violence. This study could have included more variables related to the cycle of violence such as if police officers have been physical with other members of their family; for example, their children. This would further explore the cycle of violence. Lastly, this study could have included more
variables regarding police officers being victim to physical violence; for example, police officers witnessing their parents get physical with each other.

**Recommendations for Future Research**

To improve this study, an updated or a new survey of the Baltimore Police Department should be conducted to find out if spouses who are in the same occupation, specifically law enforcement, are dealing with stress appropriately. This survey is over fifteen years old. Therefore, given the current conditions law enforcement is facing in the United States, this survey should be sent to the Baltimore Police Department again and have the current police officers respond to the same questions.

Another recommendation would be to conduct a separate survey for female police officers only; that could be done through the Police Stress and Domestic Violence in Police Families in Baltimore, Maryland, 1997-1999 dataset. There is a lack of gender diversity in the dataset. Another option would be to conduct a study of female police officers through multiple police departments, since there is usually more male than female police officers. The purpose of this research would be to find out specifically how female police officers deal with work, home life, how they deal with stress, their health, and behavior. This will result in more data for researchers to study.

Another recommendation would be for researchers to looking positive and negative coping mechanisms police officers use to deal with stress. It was found in this study that coping mechanisms are significantly important. Suggestions for positive coping mechanisms to study are getting enough sleep/rest, a healthy diet, having the support of family and friends, religious or spiritual support, open exercise sharing, intervention, seeking psychological help/speaking with a therapist (if necessary) (Hakan
Can & Hendy, 2014; Zhao et al., 2003). Suggestions for negative coping mechanisms to study are smoking cigarettes, drinking alcohol, gambling, eating high fat and/or high sugar foods, drinking caffeinated beverages, trying to bottle up emotions and repress anger/emotions and then having angry outbursts, and isolation (Hakan Can & Hendy, 2014; Zhao et al., 2003).

Another recommendation would be for the Police Stress and Domestic Violence in Police Families in Baltimore, Maryland, 1997-1999, survey (dataset) to expand its questions regarding physical violence happening to them (police officers). It would be beneficial to find out police officers reactions to physical violence; whether it is at home or on the job. Based off of findings in this thesis, if you are a police officer and your spouse is a police officer, there is a vicarious strain. Therefore, there is double the amount of stress, which means, cops with spouses are likely to abuse their spouse.

Based off of data being limited by truthfulness, another recommendation would be for someone who is using this dataset would be to go beyond the dataset and look at the police officers’ personnel files. It would be beneficial to find out what they have been in trouble for, if they have a history of violent behavior, if they have been involved in shootings or if they have been involved in domestic disputes at home. Lastly, to improve this study it is recommended to add the suggested variables listed in the limitations section of this chapter. They are "if police officers have ever been physically violent with their children" and "if a police officer witnessed his/her parents get physical with each other". This could be done with further research on the cycle of violence and intimate partner violence.
If being presented to do this study over again, there would have been more focus on health and police officers; specifically comparing rookie police officers health and police officers who are close to retiring. Additionally, there could have been the possibility of focusing the research solely on female police officers. However, there would have been many limitations to that study. There would not been as much focus on intimate partner violence as it did and focus more on the positive ways police officers are using to cope with their stress. Therefore, this thesis could have been focused on positive coping mechanisms police officers are using to help them cope with the stress of the job and conducting research on which positive coping mechanisms are best for police officers to use.

In summary, the fifth chapter covered the conclusion of the thesis. This chapter covered the major findings, limitations to the research, recommendations for future research, and contributions. The benefit of this study was finding out through the data that spouses who are both police officers are more likely to engage in physical violence. Based off of the literature review wrote for this thesis this is extremely important for police officers because their stress levels are greater when they are married. It is important for police officers to use positive coping mechanisms to help them deal with the stress of their home life and work.

Another benefit of this study was finding out through the data that police officers who use positive coping mechanisms, such as exercising, are less likely to be perpetrators of physical violence. Based off of the literature review written for this thesis, this is extremely important that police officers use positive coping mechanisms to help them
deal with the stress of the job. By using positive coping mechanisms police officers are decreasing their chances for health risks and diseases.

Lastly, another benefit to this study was finding out through the data that police officers who feel burned out are more likely to be perpetrators of physical violence. Based off of the literature review written for this thesis, this is extremely important that police officers who feel burned out use positive coping mechanisms to help them deal with the stress of the job. The better positive coping mechanisms police officers have, the better able police officers will deal with their stress in a healthy way.
References


Appendix I

May 17, 2016

Dr. John Hazy, Principal Investigator
Ms. Lindsay Ferrara, Co-investigator
Department of Criminal Justice and Forensic Sciences

IRB:
Title: Police Stress and Intimate Partner Violence

Dear Dr. Hazy and Ms. Ferrara:

The Institutional Review Board has reviewed the aforementioned protocol and determined that it is exempt from full committee review based on a DHHS Category 3 exemption.

Any changes in your research activities must be promptly reported to the Institutional Review Board and may not be initiated without IRB approval except where necessary to eliminate hazard to human subjects. Any unanticipated problems involving risks to subjects should also be promptly reported to the IRB.

The IRB would like to extend its best wishes to you in the conduct of this study.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Ms. Michael A. Wirkel
Associate Vice President for Research
Authorized Institutional Official

cc: Amy Patricia Wagner, Chair
Department of Criminal Justice and Forensic Sciences