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**Working with the Police:
A Positive Outlook from a National Sample of Probation and Parole Officers**

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Abstract

Formal police-probation/parole partnerships were popularized in the early 1990s, many modeled after the perceived success of Boston's Operation Night Light. Yet funding dissipated in the 2000s and little research was completed. This study represents the first national survey of frontline probation/parole officers concerning the prevalence of partnerships with police, their support for partnerships, and an examination of factors that influence that support. Findings reveal many partnerships exist informally and very few report the lack of any partnership with police. Indeed, these results confirm working with police is an integral function of community supervision work, especially in regards to information sharing.

Keywords: *Probation, Parole, Partnership, Mission Distortion, Enhanced Supervision*

1. INTRODUCTION

Probation and parole have been at the center of the criminal justice reform rhetoric in recent decades (Cullen *et al.*, 2017; Schwartz, 2018). Mass imprisonment is not sustainable (Aviram, 2015; Cullen *et al.*, 2017) and community supervision has been viewed as the, perhaps unrealized, panacea to this systemic fiscal and social problem (Durlauf & Nagin, 2011). Police-probation/parole partnerships, best regarded as a *promising* program or practice, represents one solution born from the frustrations of the early 1990s, motivated largely by inner-city gang violence and a recognition that many of these individuals were actively under supervision (Corbett, 1998). While there is little question that police and probation have often worked together throughout the last century (Nash, 1999b), explicit programmatic research findings have been rare (e.g., Alarid & Rangel, 2018; Worrall & Gaines, 2006) and federal funding as well as national attention to this practice has waxed and waned considerably (Matz & Kim, 2017).

Community supervision, specifically probation for adults and juveniles, is the most prominent sanction for criminal behavior (Hockenberry & Puzanchera, 2018; Kaeble & Cowhig, 2018). The adult population, for example, has grown dramatically, from 1.2 million in 1981 to 4.5 million today (Kaeble & Cowhig, 2018; Maxwell, 1982). This is well beyond the growth rate of the general population (retrievable from the U.S. Census Bureau). Yet, the Bureau of Labor Statistics reports the expected growth rate of the probation officer workforce continues to remain average in relation to other occupations. Further, officers' caseloads have increased not only in volume, but more high-risk and high-needs individuals are being placed on supervision (DeMichele & Paparozzi, 2008; Paparozzi & DeMichele, 2008). Exacerbated by recent economic strains throughout the country, probation agencies have been tasked with *doing more with less*. Partnerships with police have been viewed, at least in part, as a means of relieving

some of the burdens of probation work by allowing and encouraging police to supplement standard probation supervision, especially in regards to high-risk populations. Indeed, police have a greater presence in the community and can be more proactive when made aware of the probation or parole population in their community (Turner *et al.*, 2016). Such partnerships also coincide well with the *pulling levers* framework espoused by Kennedy (1997) and the mounting empirical support for focused deterrence strategies in policing (Braga *et al.*, 2018).

While numerous studies have systematically investigated the police perspective of police-probation/parole partnerships (for the latest overview of this literature see Kim & Gerber, 2018), a limited number of studies have included the perspectives of probation/parole officers, most of which have been qualitative in nature (Alarid, 2015; Alarid *et al.*, 2011; Matz & Kim, 2017; Murphy, 2005). This study expands on the prior work of Matz & Kim (2017) which examined a national sample of chief probation/parole officers' perspectives of partnerships with police. Using a comprehensive survey informed by the empirical literature, we examine the perspectives of a sample of *frontline* probation/parole officers from across the US. The reported prevalence of police-probation/parole partnerships, including their existence as informal or formal endeavors is also reported (Kim *et al.*, 2010). This research seeks to understand what types of partnerships are most common, according to a taxonomy derived from Parent and Snyder (1999), to what extent frontline probation/parole officers are supportive of engaging in partnerships with law enforcement, and what factors may influence that support.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. The Prevalence of Community Supervision

According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS), the US has experienced a slight decline in its adult probation and parole population since 2007, dropping from a peak of 5.1

million to about 4.5 million in 2016 (Kaeble, 2018). Recent estimates indicate there are 3.7 million adults under probation supervision and about 870,000 on parole. These overall declines have been due to a drop specifically in the probation population, while the parole population has steadily increased since 2000 when there were about 725,000 adult parolees. In other words, 1 in 68 adults are on probation and 1 in 287 on parole. Community supervision is nearly double the correctional population in prisons and jails, which equals about 2.2 million (Kaeble & Cowhig, 2018). According to the latest estimates from the National Center for Juvenile Justice (NCJJ), probation also remains the most prevalent sanction for juveniles, the most restrictive sanction in 63% (164,500) of juvenile dispositions (Hockenberry & Puzanchera, 2018). There has been a considerable drop in juvenile petitions. There were 332,000 dispositions resulting in probation in 2005, yet this was proportionally similar to 2015 with probation representing the most restrictive sanction in 60% of all juvenile dispositions (for a broader discussion of the roles and responsibilities of supervision officers see Stickels, 2007).

The convergence and increased interest in developing stronger law enforcement and community supervision agency relations in light of the growing reliance on probation sanctions more generally should not be surprising. Perhaps more surprising is how often these relations remain informal (Kim *et al.*, 2010), as “loosely coupled systems” (Weick, 1976; as cited in Alarid *et al.*, 2011, p. 80). As Lee (2010) has shown with homeland security, outside normal agency functioning, external funding often dictates what gets done. In the case of the US, federal funding specific to police-probation/parole partnerships was most prevalent in the late 1990s but has since been intermittent or nonexistent (Matz & Kim, 2017). Despite this, state-level surveys have shown partnerships do persist but with limited formalization or evaluation (Kim & Gerber, 2018).

2.2. Origins of a Partnership Taxonomy

Parent and Snyder's (1999) early research examined a variety of police-probation/partnerships and grouped these partnerships into categories based on similar goals and objectives. These findings served to inform a taxonomy of partnerships used extensively in subsequent surveys (Kim & Gerber, 2018; Kim & Matz, 2017; Kim *et al.*, 2010; Kim, Gerber *et al.*, 2013; Kim, Matz *et al.*, 2013; Kim, Matz, & Gerber, 2017; Kim, Matz, & Lee, 2017; Matz, 2016; Matz & Kim, 2017). These partnership categorizations include enhanced supervision, information sharing, fugitive apprehension, specialized enforcement, and interagency problem-solving partnerships.

Enhanced supervision partnerships were the result of formal collaborations between police and probation or parole agencies and were popularized in the 1990s, beginning with Boston's Operation Night Light (Corbett, 1998). Though empirical evaluation is lacking, the program was generally perceived as a success by practitioners and quickly replicated elsewhere, including in San Bernardino (a.k.a., Nightlight) (Worrall & Gaines, 2006). Most notable, these partnerships involve direct interactions between police and community supervision officers with probationers/parolees through joint patrols and joint home visits (Alarid, 2015; Alarid & Rangel, 2018). Ideally, the police officer could educate the supervision officer on the dynamics of the community as well as provide recommendations for additional service options that may aid the probationer/parolee's reintegration. Some even contended that the mere presence of law enforcement could demonstrate to potential problem offenders (e.g., gang members) that the criminal justice system was working together in a coordinated fashion – that their status (as a probationer/parolee) and presence in the community would no longer be unknown to police (i.e., *pulling levers*; for more see Braga *et al.*, 2018; Kennedy, 1997). It was reasoned that

probationers/parolees would take their supervision more seriously as a result (Corbett, 1998). Legally speaking, this coordination also provides law enforcement with greater flexibility in terms of warrantless searches (Turner *et al.*, 2016), though some concern has been voiced this may inadvertently lead to abusive enforcement practices (a.k.a., *stalking horse*) (Matz & Kim, 2013).

Information sharing partnerships are the most common, though predominantly informal, of all police-probation/parole collaborations (Kim *et al.*, 2010; Matz & Kim, 2017). Such agreements may involve little-to-no officer-to-officer interactions and involve solely the systematic sharing of data (e.g., fusion centers, FBI's N-DEX [National Data Exchange]; for more see Carter *et al.*, 2017; Johnson, 2007; Mueller, 2005; Wertheim, 2019). Generally, this data will consist of probationer/parolee information within the jurisdiction. This allows police to serve as additional eyes in the community, where supervision officers' presence is limited.

Fugitive apprehension concerns absconding probationers/parolees. The goal of these partnerships is to proactively apprehend these individuals. Effective communication between police and community supervision agencies can dramatically expedite this process (e.g., Parolee-At-Large [PAL], Fugitive Recovery Enforcement Team [FRET]; for more see Crawford & Talucci, 2000; Parent & Snyder, 1999). Otherwise, while a warrant may be issued, the police may not be actively seeking out these individuals.

Specialized enforcement and interagency problem-solving partnerships often overlap with one or more of the previous partnership classifications. For example, Boston's Operation Ceasefire, a larger interagency-problem solving effort, included Night Light (an enhanced supervision program) as a subcomponent of its public safety response to heightened gang violence (Braga *et al.*, 2001). Specialized enforcement pertains to specialized populations of

offenders (e.g., gang members, sex offenders, domestic violence perpetrators), while interagency problem-solving refers to any large multiagency initiatives that also involve police and community supervision agencies.

These categorizations have guided several surveys administered by the Center for Project Spotlight in Texas (Kim *et al.*, 2010) and later Pennsylvania (Kim, Matz, & Lee, 2017). These researchers were interested in understanding to what extent partnerships persisted despite the lack of federal or state funding support. In the case of Texas, funding support from the state was exhausted in 2003. Results of their research indicated that partnerships did continue, albeit primarily as informal arrangements between individual officers. Indeed, Kim and colleagues (2010) reported 86% of their Texas sample of law enforcement agencies indicated participation in some form of partnership with adult probation agencies (64% were documented as informal arrangements). However, their most recent survey found the majority of police agencies no longer possessed any such partnerships, dropping from 86% in 2007 to 32% in 2016 (about 23% were informal) (Kim & Gerber, 2018).

Finally, Kim and Gerber (2018) added adult probation chiefs to their Texas sample in 2016. Their results found about 75% of probation agencies reported some form of partnership existed with law enforcement (58% were informal). Matz and Kim's (2017) national sample of chief probation/parole officers reflects a similar pattern, though with slightly greater prevalence overall for both formal and informal arrangements. In the case of Kim & Gerber (2017), formal partnerships ranged from 5.5 to 11.8% for a given typology, whereas Matz & Kim (2017) found it to range from 19-24%. This may be due to the drop in interest in Texas specifically as evidenced by the policing respondents. Note, however, prior sample data from Kim and

colleagues (2010) did not include the adult probation perspective and Matz and Kim (2017) included juvenile probation and adult parole agencies within their sample.

2.3. Perceptions and Controversies

The perceived merging of roles between police and community supervision officers, affectionately referred to as the “polibation” officer in the UK literature (a.k.a., mission distortion) (Mawby *et al.*, 2007; Mawby & Worrall, 2011, 2004; Nash, 2008, 2004, 1999a, 1999b; Nash & Walker, 2009), and the potential for abuse by law enforcement (a.k.a., *stalking horse*) represents the two most prominent controversies surrounding police-probation/parole partnerships (Matz & Kim, 2013). Role conflict has been a source of tension for the field of community supervision since its inception (Sigler & McGraw, 1984), absent partnerships with law enforcement. Many scholars have discussed the concern that police-probation/parole partnerships may, perhaps subconsciously, pull probation and parole officers further away from their rehabilitative efforts and lead to an overemphasis on compliance enforcement (Corbett, 1998; Murphy, 2005; Murphy & Lutze, 2009; Murphy & Worrall, 2007). Yet recent surveys of chiefs and practitioners in the US have not found mission distortion to be of considerable concern (Kim & Matz, 2017; Matz & Kim, 2017). Likewise, while concerns have been expressed that police may abuse partnerships by using them as a means to harass probationers or parolees with warrantless searches (Turner *et al.*, 2016), a recent survey of probation and parole chiefs and executives found the majority did not perceive it to be a pertinent issue (Matz & Kim, 2017). Other notable concerns have included concepts of *turfism* (e.g., competition between agencies for funding), mission creep (i.e., the continual expansion of one’s role to facilitate the partnership), and organizational lag (i.e., stalled innovation and leadership) (Matz & Kim, 2013).

2.4. Current Study

This work expands on a previous examination of probation and parole *chiefs* in the US (Matz & Kim, 2017; see also Kim & Gerber, 2018), by focusing exclusively on frontline officers and their perspectives of police-probation/parole partnerships. The American Probation and Parole Association's (APPA) membership database, a nonprofit organization that represents community supervision professionals, functioned as a national sampling frame for this study (see also Matz & Kim, 2017; Miller, 2014). The APPA membership has been recognized as an appropriate resource for obtaining feedback from probation and parole professionals on a variety of field-related issues (Miller, 2014). Through this research we wish to address three research questions: 1) what is the prevalence of police-probation/parole partnerships, 2) to what extent do frontline probation and parole officers support engaging with law enforcement in community supervision, and 3) what factors influence this support?

3. METHODS

3.1. Sampling Procedures

The APPA membership is comprised of members that may include community corrections professionals, advocates, academics, and vendors. In addition, the membership structure allows for individual and organizational level subscriptions. A sampling frame was constructed that limited inclusion to those probation and parole officers associated with a full-agency membership. This approach led to a list comprising 116 community supervision agencies with a total of 3,346 officers. Thirty-two states and the District of Columbia (DC) were represented. This approach was utilized to ensure that all agencies included consisted of a complete sampling frame for that agency, reducing self-selection biases associated with individual-level memberships (Dillman *et al.*, 2009). A stratified random sampling approach was

conducted to ensure that the sample consisted of a number of potential participants, per agency, proportional to the size of that agency within the larger sampling frame. Note, however, some agencies were particularly small in comparison to others, in which case no less than one participant was selected from every agency. Within each agency contained in the sampling frame, participants were randomly selected using a random number generator. The total number of participants selected was 1,080.

A combination of web-based and paper-based survey methods were utilized. Regardless of method received, the items and structure of the survey was identical. Of the 1,080 participants selected, 682 (63%) were successfully contacted (including 13 refusals). About 37% (or 398) could not be reached by mail or email (i.e., the researchers received an undeliverable notice). A total of 156 surveys were received, resulting in a response rate of 14% (156/1,080) and a cooperation rate of 23% (156/682) (for further discussion on contact rates and cooperation rates see American Association for Public Opinion Research, 2016).

3.2. Participant Characteristics

Individual demographics and agency characteristic information associated with these respondents are displayed in Table I. Representation is strongest for probation (83%) under the judicial branch of government (56%) compared to pretrial (21%) or parole (25%) functions. Note, about 64% of respondents worked for a county-based probation agency whereas 19% indicated they worked for a state agency. The sample includes adequate representation from adult and juvenile probation supervision. That is, 55% of the sample indicated their agency supervised solely adults, 10% solely juveniles, and another 23% supervised both.

About half (52%) of the respondents indicated their agency possesses sworn officers. In terms of firearms, 34% noted they were optional while 39% explicitly prohibited them. Only

15% of the respondents indicated firearms were a requirement. The use of nonlethal force was literally the opposite, with 39% noting they were required, 34% noting they were optional, and 15% prohibiting their use. In terms of personal demographics 46% of respondents were male and 42% female, and on average they had about 20 years of experience in the field of criminal justice as well as about 10 years in their current position. Finally, respondents represented 24 states and DC.

Insert Table I

3.3. Measures

3.3.1. Dependent variable: Partnership favorability

A single ordinal measure was included in the survey to measure officers' favorableness to partner with law enforcement, adapted from Kim and colleagues (2010). Note, the item not only indicates a willingness to partner but also for such work to become standard procedure within the department. In other words, to what extent are officers in favor of sustained partnerships with police? A full listing of all survey items and their corresponding response sets are provided in a separate appendix. In addition, Table II provides summary descriptive statistics for all attitudinal and work environment measures.

Insert Table II

3.3.2. Independent variables: Partnership, , attitudinal, and work environment

Partnership typology. Current and prior engagement in partnerships was measured using a series of 20 items specific to enhanced supervision (joint ride alongs, joint home visits), information sharing, fugitive apprehension, specialized enforcement (sex offenders, domestic

violence offenders, gun removal, gang interdiction, drug trafficking), and interagency partnerships (Kim *et al.*, 2010; Matz & Kim, 2017; Parent & Snyder, 1999). In addition to marking the existence of any active partnerships that fit within these parameters, respondents were also asked to distinguish whether they were associated with formal agreements (e.g., MOUs) or existed informally (i.e., between individual officers across departments). All but two originally created items were adapted from Kim *et al.* (2010). These partnership characterizations were collapsed into five categories, consistent with Parent and Snyder's (1999) partnership classifications (see Table III). In the context of partnership support, these items are necessary to examine the impact of prior partnership experiences on future partnership favorability.

Rehabilitative ideology. A single item was included to ascertain whether the respondent perceives their department possesses a rehabilitative orientation, adapted from Kim and colleagues (2010). Of primary concern, does the respondent feel their organization collectively shares in the belief that offenders can change their behavior if appropriately supervised and assisted? Rather than being concerned with a particular role preference, this item is concerned with the belief that probationers and parolees *can* change their behavior.

Probationer/Parolee Respect for Supervision Officers. A common anecdotal benefit voiced by police-probation/parole partnership supporters has been the increased legitimacy and respect gained from probationers or parolees (Corbett, 1998). One item measured the extent to which supervision officers felt probationers or parolees treated them with more respect when in the presence of a police officer. This item was adapted from Matz and Kim (2017).

Police Respect for Supervision Officers. It was suggested that partnerships had the potential to increase appreciation and respect from policing peers (Corbett, 1998). A three-item scale was adapted from Hughes (2000). Each item concerns the extent to which law enforcement

has been respectful during their partnership engagements in joint home visits, joint patrols, and in the apprehension of a probationer/parolee. The scale possessed strong internal reliability with a Cronbach's alpha of .88.

Intrinsic benefit. The term intrinsic benefit refers to the enhancement of the inner workings of probation supervision, as opposed to external outcomes. This concept was operationalized through a four-item scale with one item adapted from Jones and Sigler (2002) and three items adapted from Kim *et al.* (2010). A single factor was extracted when conducting factor analysis, evidence these items collectively represent a single latent construct (DeVellis, 2012). The scale possessed a Cronbach's alpha of .86.

Extrinsic benefit. A four-item scale was developed to assess the extent to which respondents believed partnerships directly impact public safety. Two items were adapted from Jones and Sigler (2002), one item from Kim *et al.* (2010), and a final item from Matz and Kim (2017). Each item concerns an outcome measure of interest to probation agencies; reductions in crime, reductions in recidivism, a positive impact on police practice, a positive impact on probationers/parolees, and a positive impact on communities. Factor analysis confirmed the presence of a single latent construct. The scale possessed a robust Cronbach's alpha of .85.

Mission distortion. Role conflict has been a long-debated concern of community supervision work (Sigler & McGraw, 1984), but here the concern is to what extent working with law enforcement inadvertently sways probation officers to adopt a more compliance enforcement orientation. Three items were adapted from Kim *et al.* (2010) for use in the current study, which inquire as to the extent to which the role of law enforcement and community supervision are complimentary or contradictory. The scale possessed a minimally acceptable Cronbach's alpha of .64.

Mission creep. In addition to concerns of mission distortion, the issue of expanding one's role beyond that of their occupation has also been discussed within the collaborative literature more broadly. For example, the need to coordinate and schedule partnership meetings. One ordinal measure was adapted from Matz & Kim (2017) to capture this construct.

Leadership support for partnerships. The support of leadership has been one of the most important prerequisites for developing and maintaining partnerships according to existing literature, true for law enforcement and community supervision agencies (Alarid *et al.*, 2011; Matz & Kim, 2017). Exploratory factor analysis was conducted, beginning with a thirteen-item index. From this index, four latent constructs were identified. The first of these, leadership support for partnerships, consists of a four-item scale concerning officers' perspectives of agency leadership's favorableness to partnerships with law enforcement, adapted from Matz & Kim (2017). In addition to being receptive to partnerships, this also includes their willingness to proactively seek out partnership opportunities as well as any perceived resistance to partnership. The scale possessed a strong internal consistency rating of .84.

Partnership Formalization. This three-item scale concerns the extent to which partnerships were clearly structured with explicit goals and objectives, well documented, with an emphasis placed on ongoing outcome measurement. Two items were adapted from Weiss, Anderson, and Lasker (2002), while one item was from Chrislip and Larson (1994). The scale possessed a respectable Cronbach's alpha of .77.

Staff Support for Partnerships. A single ordinal measure inquired as to respondents' views that support staff within their department were supportive of partnering with law enforcement.

Organizational Commitment to Partnerships. A five-item scale was developed concerning the extent to which the organization's orientation, including the long-term aims of leadership, aligned with the mission of police-probation/parole partnerships. All five items were adapted from Kim *et al.* (2010). The scale was found to possess very strong internal consistency ratings with a Cronbach's alpha of .87.

Stalking horse. Two items were adapted from Matz and Kim (2017) to capture concerns of law enforcement potentially abusing partnerships with probation/parole agencies (Corbett, 1998). This two-item scale possessed a respectable Cronbach's alpha of .75.

3.3.3. Control variables: Agency and individual characteristics

Agency characteristics included geographic representation (urban, suburban, and/or rural), supervisory function(s) (pretrial, probation, and/or parole), jurisdiction level (municipal, county, state, federal), governmental branch (judicial or executive), clientele (adult and/or juvenile), if officers possess sworn status, and if lethal or non-lethal force is permitted. In the case of geographic representation and departmental function, respondents could mark all that apply. As a result, each option was treated as a separate dichotomous variable. In terms of individual demographics, respondents' gender (if male) and experience in years for current position and criminal justice more broadly were included.

4. RESULTS

Insert Table III

First, the prevalence of partnerships was examined. Table III reveals that information sharing was the most common with only 6% of respondents indicating their agency has *not* engaged in such partnerships with law enforcement. For those that have experience with these

partnerships, the majority indicated they were informal in nature (56%). Enhanced supervision partnerships were the second most prevalent with 15% indicating *no* prior experience with these approaches. Again, for those that possessed these partnerships they were more likely to be informal arrangements (51%). The other three partnership categorizations (fugitive apprehension, interagency problem solving, and specialized enforcement) were similar in prevalence with 21-25% marking *no* such partnerships existed. For those possessing such partnerships, the rate at which they were informal or formal was less pronounced, ranging from 39-42% informal and 35-37% formal.

Insert Table IV

A series of exploratory multivariate analyses were conducted to examine potential predictors that impact officers' perceptions of partnership favorability. Due to the limited sample size and a large number of predictors, hierarchical multiple regression procedures were utilized (Cohen, 1992; Hair *et al.*, 2006; Lee *et al.*, 2008; Miller *et al.*, 2009; Nosek *et al.*, 2006). Four models were constructed, with each subsequent model only retaining those variables found significant in the prior model. Though not ideal, by removing nonsignificant variables issues of statistical power could be mitigated (Miller *et al.*, 2009). Predictors were introduced so that control variables and prior partnership engagement could be examined separately, and non-significant predictors removed, prior to examining the attitudinal and work environment measures of primary concern to the extant literature. Imputation procedures, specifically relative mean substitution (RMS), were performed to reduce the impact of listwise deletion to address a considerable loss of statistical power observed from missing data (Raaijmakers, 1999). RMS has been shown to produce more accurate estimates for studies utilizing Likert-type scale data

compared to other imputation methods. Finally, several assumptions of OLS were checked, including the absence of multicollinearity, the presence of an uncorrelated error term with the independent variables, as well as confirmation that the dependent variable approximated a normal distribution (Berry, 1993). Though the data appeared to be quite heteroskedastic across models, it did not appear to be fatal.

Results are reported in Table IV. The first model examined control variables, personal and agency characteristics, in relation to partnership favorability. The model was not significant ($F = 1.652$, $df = 11$, $p = .090$, $N = 144$) and produced two significant variables. When all control variables were taken into account, engagement in probation supervision shared a direct association with partnership favorability ($b = .436$, $\beta = .199$, $p = .026$) while sworn status shared an indirect association ($b = -.330$, $\beta = -.179$, $p = .043$).

Model 2 adds prior engagement in formal partnerships with police, while also retaining the two significant variables from the prior model. Engagement in probation supervision, as opposed to pretrial or parole functions, remained significant ($b = .367$, $\beta = .167$, $p = .035$), with the addition of prior engagement in formal enhanced supervision partnerships ($b = .445$, $\beta = .258$, $p = .018$). Sworn status no longer possessed a significant association. Model 2 was statistically significant ($F = 2.801$, $df = 7$, $p = .009$, $N = 148$) but the explanatory power for understanding the variance in partnership favorability remained relatively unchanged ($R^2 = .342$, *Adjusted R*² = .117).

Model 3 again retains two significant variables from the prior model while also adding twelve attitudinal and work environment measures. This model was statistically significant ($F = 4.433$, $df = 14$, $p = .001$, $N = 141$) and explained 30-55% of the variance in the dependent variable ($R^2 = .553$, *Adjusted R*² = .306), a considerable and significant improvement over the

prior model ($\Delta F[12, 141] = 3.853, p = .001$). There were two significant variables; intrinsic benefit ($b = .105, \beta = .305, p = .003$) and mission creep ($b = .170, \beta = .194, p = .034$). None of the significant variables from the prior model maintained statistical significance. A final model was produced that included only those variables significant in model 3 ($F = 17.881, df = 2, p = .001, N = 141$). Only one variable remained significant, intrinsic benefit ($b = .115, \beta = .335, p = .001$), while the overall predictive value of the model was reduced by about 10% ($R^2 = .435, Adjusted R^2 = .189$).

5. DISCUSSION

Clearly, working with police is normal operating procedure for those working in community supervision (Kim & Gerber, 2018; Matz & Kim, 2017). Indeed, consistent with prior research conducted with law enforcement, information sharing is the most common means of engagement and this often occurs through informal interactions amongst officers (Kim *et al.*, 2010). Even in the case of more advanced partnerships, three-quarters or more of the supervision agencies sampled herein affirmed active participation in such programs, albeit a large proportion exist informally. This pattern is consistent with recent reports collected from chief probation/parole officers (Kim & Gerber, 2018; Matz & Kim, 2017).

As Kim and Gerber (2018) stress, the continued overreliance on informal partnerships is problematic. In the case of Texas' Project Spotlight, once funding was exhausted in the mid-2000s, Kim and colleagues (2010) observed partnerships continued informally. However, their most recent survey shows a significant reduction in law enforcement engagement with community supervision agencies (Kim & Gerber, 2018). Whereas a decade ago they found about 86% of law enforcement agencies were engaged in some form of partnership (64% informal), their most recent analysis shows this has dropped to 32% (23% informal). They attribute these

losses to informal partnerships that dissolved as individual officers left their respective position or organization. For this reason, they advocate for greater formalization to improve partnership longevity, yet federal funding support for such initiatives ceased in the early-to-mid 2000s as larger multi-agency collaborations gained popularity (e.g., CeaseFire, Project Safe Neighborhoods). That said, in fiscal year 2019 the Bureau of Justice Assistance offered funding support under the *Innovations in Supervision Initiative* to develop a logic model for police-probation/parole partnership programming, demonstrating a potential revival of interest in this topic area.

A closer examination of the dependent variable within this study reveals that very few held an unfavorable opinion towards partnerships with police. Frankly, this study does little to explain why probation or parole officers may be *unsupportive* of partnerships simply because it was so rare for respondents to express overtly negative views towards partnership. As such, these results are best interpreted in relation to how strongly respondents were supportive of partnerships as opposed to how *indifferent* they were towards them.

Most pertinent to concerns documented in the literature (Corbett, 1998; Matz & Kim, 2013), a variety of attitudinal and work environment measures were considered. Once incorporated into the multivariate analyses, all other variables cease to be statistically significant while the overall explanatory power of the model improves by about 20%. Ultimately, one variable retains statistical significance through the multivariate iterations; intrinsic benefit. In other words, the strongest predictor of partnership favorability for this sample concerns the extent to which respondents believe law enforcement will enhance their work from an operational perspective. For these probation/parole officers, this takes precedence over perceived extrinsic benefits. This may appear contrary to expectations, but one potential explanation for

this is the lack of clear and convincing evaluation research conducted on police-probation/parole partnerships (Alarid & Rangel, 2018; Worrall & Gaines, 2006). Such research remains limited, and this is reflected in the officers' responses. When asked if partnerships have reduced recidivism 51% indicated they could neither agree nor disagree. Given the lack of clarity in this regard, it is unsurprising to find extrinsic outcomes, which remain largely unknown, fail to offer proper motivation for partnership support at this time.

Leadership support has been consistently quoted as one of the most essential ingredients for a successful partnership (Alarid *et al.*, 2011; Murphy, 2005). It has been reiterated that without a push from the police chief or chief probation or parole officer 'nothing gets done.' However, a significant association was not observed. There is one survey item associated with leadership that is particularly noteworthy concerning whether agency executives and supervisors are *actively* seeking out new partnerships. In this particular item, 44% of respondents indicated they would neither agree nor disagree with this statement. In other words, this lack of significance appears to be a reflection of leaderships' relative indifference towards partnerships. This passive stance on partnership was also observed in Kim and Gerber (2018) and Matz and Kim (2017).

Other notable variables that were not found to be statistically significant in the multivariate analyses included the perception that probationers/parolees will take their supervision more seriously when in the presence of law enforcement, mission distortion, and stalking horse concerns. These topics have been heavily discussed within the literature but were not substantiated as significant concerns to supervision officers (Corbett, 1998; Corbett *et al.*, 1998; Matz & Kim, 2013; Murphy, 2005; Murphy & Lutze, 2009; Murphy & Worrall, 2007). In fact, some were even found to possess a positive association with partnership favorability in the

bivariate analyses despite being considered potentially negative in the literature. For example, mission distortion concerns the extent to which the role of law enforcement may skew community supervision practice (Murphy & Worrall, 2007). Instead, however, 75% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed their roles were complimentary while under 25% felt their roles were in conflict.

While stalking horse concerns were not significantly associated with officers support for partnerships, it may still be a pertinent issue for some jurisdictions. Across the two items contained in the scale, about 18-34% agreed or strongly agreed there were legal concerns about law enforcement's involvement in home visits as well as their use of shared information to engage in warrantless searches of probationers and parolees in the community (Turner *et al.*, 2016). Further legal guidance is available for agencies that continue to have concerns in this regard (Adelman, 2002; 2007; Drapela & Lutze, 2009; Jermstad, 2002a; Jermstad, 2002b; Paulsen & del Carmen, 2001; Matz *et al.*, 2015; Turner *et al.*, 2016). That said, this research demonstrates that such concerns will not deter or inhibit interest in partnership.

Interestingly, in our multivariate models agency characteristics and personal demographics did not retain their significance after controlling for partnership engagement, attitudinal, and work environmental measures, suggesting their relative impact on probation and parole officers' views on partnerships are quite limited, consistent with prior literature (Matz & Kim, 2017). In terms of prior partnership engagement, when controlling for attitudinal and work environment measures any statistical significance associated with these variables was also lost, suggesting prior partnership experiences have a limited impact on the strength of officer's support for institutionalizing future working relations with law enforcement. Given the overall positive perceptions of partnerships, it is possible this sample does not include any participants

with prior negative experiences with partnerships. It is possible those with prior negative experiences declined to participate in the study.

5.1. Limitations and Implications for Future Research

Though this was the first *national* survey of frontline probation/parole officers' views concerning police-probation/parole partnerships in the US, results must be taken with caution. First, the contact rate was 63%. Through the course of the study it was discovered that APPA does not validate its membership database, nor does it periodically purge invalid addresses or contact information. With exception to Matz & Kim (2017), prior studies utilizing the APPA membership database were conducted using convenience sampling. For example, Miller (2014) worked with APPA staff to distribute a mass email with a link to the survey. This allowed for the link to be forwarded and completed anonymously, but they could not report a response rate. This study, on the other hand, pulled a specific listing from the APPA database for survey administration. The method is stronger, but it also exposes limitations of using such membership lists. Future research should consider the potential problems that may arise when utilizing these types of lists, especially if they are not actively updated, maintained, or validated.

Further, despite its use in prior studies (Matz & Kim, 2017; Miller, 2014), there is some question as to whether the APPA membership serves as a true proxy for the community supervision field for the country. There may be unique dynamics to those agencies that join APPA that differ from those that do not (Matz & Kim, 2017). In addition, APPA's representation can vary by state. This particular sample included greater representation from county-based systems in Arizona, Indiana, and Texas. Overall, about half of the states were represented. More specifically, 24 of the 32 states represented by the APPA membership responded to the survey. While not perfect, absent the availability of a true national sampling frame, APPA's membership

still arguably represents one of the best sources for gathering national level perspectives from probation and parole professionals (Matz & Kim, 2017; Miller, 2014).

The sample size and presence of missing data were also problematic. Given limited statistical power (Cohen, 1992), RMS and hierarchical multiple regression procedures were utilized (Raaijmakers, 1999; Miller *et al.*, 2009). While not ideal, each method serves to bolster the power of the multivariate analyses. Even with these adjustments, however, the study was only able to detect moderate-to-large differences in effect sizes (Cohen, 1992). In other words, the study is at a heightened risk of committing a Type II error (i.e., failing to find a significant association when it does in fact exist) (Frankfort-Nachmias & Leon-Guerrero, 2011).

Finally, though the majority of survey items were adapted from prior studies, the validity of some important variables have not been empirically tested. That said, the Cronbach's alphas presented in Table II demonstrate very respectable internal consistency. Only one scale, mission distortion, was below .75. However, multiple variables were operationalized using a single item measure. Subsequent research should consider expanding and further operationalizing these concepts to consider more nuanced facets of a given latent construct, including those scales consisting of two or three items (e.g., stalking horse concerns) (see Bachman & Schutt, 2017; DeVellis, 2012).

5.2. Conclusions

The present study further confirms probation and parole officers are actively engaged with law enforcement, whether it be through formal or informal partnerships (Kim *et al.*, 2010; Parent & Snyder, 1999). Consistent with prior research of chief probation and parole officers (Kim & Gerber, 2018; Matz & Kim, 2017), this sample of community supervision officers also

holds overwhelmingly positive attitudes towards police-probation/parole partnerships becoming institutionalized practice.

Yet, Kim and Gerber's (2018) research is cause for alarm. From their survey of police chiefs in Texas, the prevalence of partnerships has decreased dramatically. This gradual reduction has been attributed largely to their predominantly informal nature. Informal partnerships are more vulnerable due to their reliance on interpersonal connections. As they noted, once a key individual leaves their position the partnership may naturally be disbanded. The desirable alternative, formalized partnerships have largely been the result of funding provided by the state or federal government. However, much of such funding earmarked specifically for police-probation/parole partnerships was abandoned in favor of larger multiagency partnerships in the early-to-mid 2000s, namely Ceasefire and Project Safe Neighborhoods. While such initiatives can certainly include partnerships between law enforcement and probation or parole agencies, it has since received limited empirical or programmatic attention.

Pertinent to the results contained within this study, and further corroborated in Matz & Kim (2017), it was observed that many respondents lacked confidence that their leaders were actively pursuing partnerships with law enforcement. Such passiveness may further contribute to the continued formation and dissolution of small *ad hoc* partnerships. Such informal partnerships present little-to-no opportunity for proper evaluation (Alarid & Rangel, 2018; Worrall & Gaines, 2006), which further speaks to the ambiguity surrounding respondents perceptions about the ability of partnerships to produce tangible, positive, outcomes. Such outcomes are often the basis for obtaining funding support. As a result, despite their potential, police-probation/parole

partnerships remain trapped in a cycle of informality that limits their growth and recognition as an established evidence-based practice.

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Table I
Agency Characteristics and Respondent Demographics

Variable	<i>n</i>	%
Geographic representation		
Urban	70	45
Suburban	85	55
Rural	87	56
Departmental functions		
Pretrial	32	21
Probation	130	83
Parole	39	25
Other	16	10
Jurisdiction level		
Local/municipality	5	3
County	99	64
State	30	19
Federal	1	1
Other	2	1
Missing	19	12
Branch of government		
Executive	38	24
Judicial	88	56
Other	11	7
Missing	19	12
Population served		
Adult	86	55
Juvenile	16	10
Both	36	23
Missing	18	12
Officers sworn		
Yes	81	52
No	49	31
Other	8	5
Missing	18	12
Officers armed with firearms		
Required	23	15
Optional	53	34
Not permitted	61	39
Missing	19	12
Officers armed with nonlethal force		
Required	61	39
Optional	53	34
Not permitted	24	15
Missing	18	12

(Continued)

Table I
Agency Characteristics and Respondent Demographics (Continued)

Variable	<i>n</i>	%
Respondent's sex		
Male	72	46
Female	65	42
Missing	19	12
State representation		
Alaska	2	1
Alabama	3	2
Arizona	18	12
California	5	3
Colorado	5	3
District of Columbia	2	1
Georgia	2	1
Illinois	12	8
Indiana	19	12
Kansas	1	1
Kentucky	2	1
Missouri	3	2
Minnesota	7	5
Montana	2	1
North Dakota	4	3
New York	12	8
Ohio	7	5
Oklahoma	6	4
Oregon	10	6
Pennsylvania	4	3
Tennessee	2	1
Texas	19	12
Virginia	3	2
Washington	2	1
Wyoming	4	3
Years in current position (<i>n</i> = 138)	<i>M</i> = 9.85	<i>SD</i> = 6.78
Years in criminal justice (<i>n</i> = 138)	<i>M</i> = 19.32	<i>SD</i> = 7.68

Note. In the case of geographical representation and departmental function respondents could select "all that apply" among these categorical options. As a result, the sum of these associated values will not equal 100%. All other variables contained within this table include mutually exclusive response options.

N = 156.

Table II*Descriptive Statistics of Attitudinal and Work Environment Measures*

Variable	<i>n</i>	<i>Mdn</i>	<i>Min</i>	<i>Max</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Items</i>	α
Partnership Favorability	141	4	1	5	4.11	0.86	1	--
Rehabilitative Ideology	140	4	1	5	4.21	0.80	1	--
Probationer/Parolee Respect for Supervision Officers	127	3	1	5	2.83	1.02	1	--
Police Respect for Supervision Officers	119	12	6	15	12.16	1.89	3	.88
Intrinsic Benefit	138	17	6	20	16.75	2.54	4	.86
Extrinsic Benefit	116	18	9	25	17.83	3.22	5	.85
Mission Distortion	134	11	4	15	10.94	2.21	3	.64
Mission Creep	128	3	1	5	3.38	1.03	1	--
Leadership Support for Partnerships	115	15	4	20	14.25	3.03	4	.84
Partnership Formalization	119	9	3	15	8.87	2.44	3	.77
Organizational Commitment to Partnerships	136	19	6	25	17.90	4.12	5	.87
Staff Support for Partnerships	129	4	1	5	3.60	0.97	1	--
Stalking Horse Concerns	138	6	2	10	5.88	1.95	2	.75

Note. *N* = 156.

Table III*Police-probation/parole partnership prevalence by categorization*

Partnership Type	Formal		Informal		No Partnership	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Enhanced Supervision	53	34	79	51	24	15
Fugitive Apprehension	54	35	63	40	39	25
Information Sharing	58	37	88	56	10	6
Interagency Problem Solving	55	35	61	39	40	26
Specialized Enforcement	57	37	65	42	34	21

Note. Enhanced supervision includes partnership participation that involves joint ride alongs and/or joint home visits. Specialized enforcement includes partnerships that specifically involve sex offender supervision, domestic violence offender supervision, gun and gang interdiction, and/or drug trafficking intervention. Interagency problem-solving concerns any multi-agency partnerships that are not limited to the involvement of police and probation/parole agencies (but rather may include the prosecutor's office, social service providers, faith-based organizations, etc.). The results provided concern the existence of such partnerships at a given respondent's agency, it is *not* a raw count of the number of such partnerships. Further, these are *not* mutually exclusive categorizations and a single initiative may involve multiple levels and permutations of partnership.

N = 156.

Table IV
Hierarchical multiple regression of partnership favorability

Variable	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3			Final		
	b	β	p	b	β	p	b	β	p	b	β	p
<i>Agency Characteristics</i>												
Urban	.081	.049	.564									
Suburban	-.057	-.035	.694									
Rural	-.066	-.040	.661									
Pretrial	.099	.049	.568									
Probation	.436	.199	.026	.367	.167	.035	.156	.071	.414			
Parole	-.096	-.051	.560									
Supervises only Juveniles	-.057	-.020	.807									
If Officers possess Sworn Status	-.330	-.179	.043	-.266	-.144	.069						
If Firearms are Permitted	.019	.011	.903									
<i>Personal Demographics</i>												
If Male	-.267	-.153	.061									
Years worked in Criminal Justice	-.015	-.129	.115									
<i>Formal Partnership Engagement</i>												
Enhanced Supervision				.445	.258	.018	.110	.064	.446			
Fugitive Apprehension				-.171	-.100	.290						
Information Sharing				.184	.109	.240						
Interagency Partnership				-.003	-.002	.985						
Specialized Enforcement				-.129	-.076	.468						
<i>Attitudinal and Work Environment Measures</i>												
Rehabilitative Ideology							.146	.188	.099			
Probationer/Parolee Respect for Supervision Officers							.029	.033	.662			
Police Respect for Supervision Officers							.021	.061	.597			
Intrinsic Benefit							.105	.305	.003	.115	.335	.001
Extrinsic Benefit							.020	.078	.469			
Mission Distortion							.018	.044	.644			
Mission Creep							.170	.194	.034	.141	.161	.054
Leadership Support for Partnerships							-.050	-.178	.083			
Partnership Formalization							-.006	-.016	.855			
Organizational Commitment to Partnerships							-.007	-.035	.754			
Staff Support for Partnerships							-.187	-.215	.057			
Stalking Horse Concerns							-.059	-.133	.133			
<i>R</i> ²	.335			.342			.553			.435		
<i>Adjusted R</i> ²	.112			.117			.306			.189		
<i>F</i>	1.652			2.801			4.433			17.881		
<i>p</i>	.090			.009			.001			.001		
<i>N</i>	144			148			141			141		

Appendix. Survey item measures

Partnership Favorability

1. I would be in favor of the partnership with law enforcement agencies becoming standard operating procedure in my department.

Rehabilitative ideology

1. The majority of employees in our organization believe that selected groups of offenders can change their behavior and life styles and that a balanced combination of sanctions, supervision, and services can assist them in doing so.

Probationer/Parolee Respect for Supervision Officers

1. Probationers/parolees treated their supervision officer with more respect when in the presence of a police officer.

Police Respect for Supervision Officers

1. Police have been respectful during street contacts in association with our partnership(s).
2. Police have been respectful during home visits in association with our partnership(s).
3. Police have been respectful during arrest of probationers/parolees in association with our partnership(s).

Intrinsic Benefit

1. Police have become more familiar with the probationer/parolee population because of the partnership(s).
2. Working with law enforcement agencies has been a positive experience.
3. The information received from law enforcement as a result of the partnership(s) is helpful.
4. The partnership with law enforcement agencies is an effective method for supervising offenders.

Extrinsic Benefit

1. The partnership(s) have had a positive impact on the community.
2. The partnership(s) have had a positive impact on probationers/parolees.
3. The field activities with law enforcement agencies have reduced crime.
4. Police have become more familiar with the probationer/parolee population because of the partnership(s).
5. The partnership(s) with law enforcement have impacted recidivism rates in our jurisdiction(s).

Mission Distortion

1. The roles of law enforcement agencies and my department working in partnership complement each other.
2. The roles of law enforcement agencies and my department working in partnership were often confused (reverse code).
3. There were conflicts in the roles of police and my department (reverse code).

Mission Creep

1. Because of partnership(s), our role has been continually expanding to tasks outside of probation/parole work (e.g., coordinating meetings).

Leadership Support for Partnerships

1. Our agency's executives and supervisors would be open to joining a partnership with law enforcement if they approached them.
2. Our agency's executives and supervisors are interested in any new partnerships with law enforcement agencies.
3. Our agency's executives and supervisors strongly support partnership with law enforcement.
4. There was resistance by agency executives and supervisors to the goals and activities of the partnership(s) with law enforcement agencies (reverse code).

Partnership Formalization

1. The partnership(s) possess clear goals and objective.
2. The partnership(s) have done a good job of documenting the impact of its actions.
3. My agency had concrete measureable goals to judge the success of its actions.

Staff Support for Partnerships

1. Agency staff have strongly supported the partnership(s).

Organizational Commitment to Partnerships

1. Our agency's executives and supervisors know what it will take to create and maintain an inter-agency public safety alliance in our jurisdiction, and they are committed to doing so.
2. The personal beliefs, principles, and values of our organization's executives are in alignment with the ideals which are at the core of a successful inter-agency public safety alliance.

3. Our organization's core culture is in alignment with the ideals which are at the core of a successful inter-agency public safety alliance.
4. Our agency's executives and supervisors look beyond our short term interests and make important decisions (e.g., budget requests or resource allocations) based on what will make our community safer.
5. Our agency's executives and supervisors will encourage and support our own employees to work together with the employees of law enforcement when dealing with issues or problems confronting an inter-agency public safety alliance.

Stalking Horse Concerns

1. Our agency's executives and supervisors are concerned about potential legal ramifications of bringing police officers into probationer/parolee's residence during a home visit.
2. Our agency's executives and supervisors believe police officers are likely to use knowledge of a probationers/parolee's supervision status to conduct warrantless searches of their person/property.

(Responses for all items: 0 = *not applicable*, 1 = *strongly disagree*, 2 = *disagree*, 3 = *neither agree nor disagree*, 4 = *agree*, 5 = *strongly agree*.)