Tracking the Development of Coping Strategies for Police Recruits through a Network Approach

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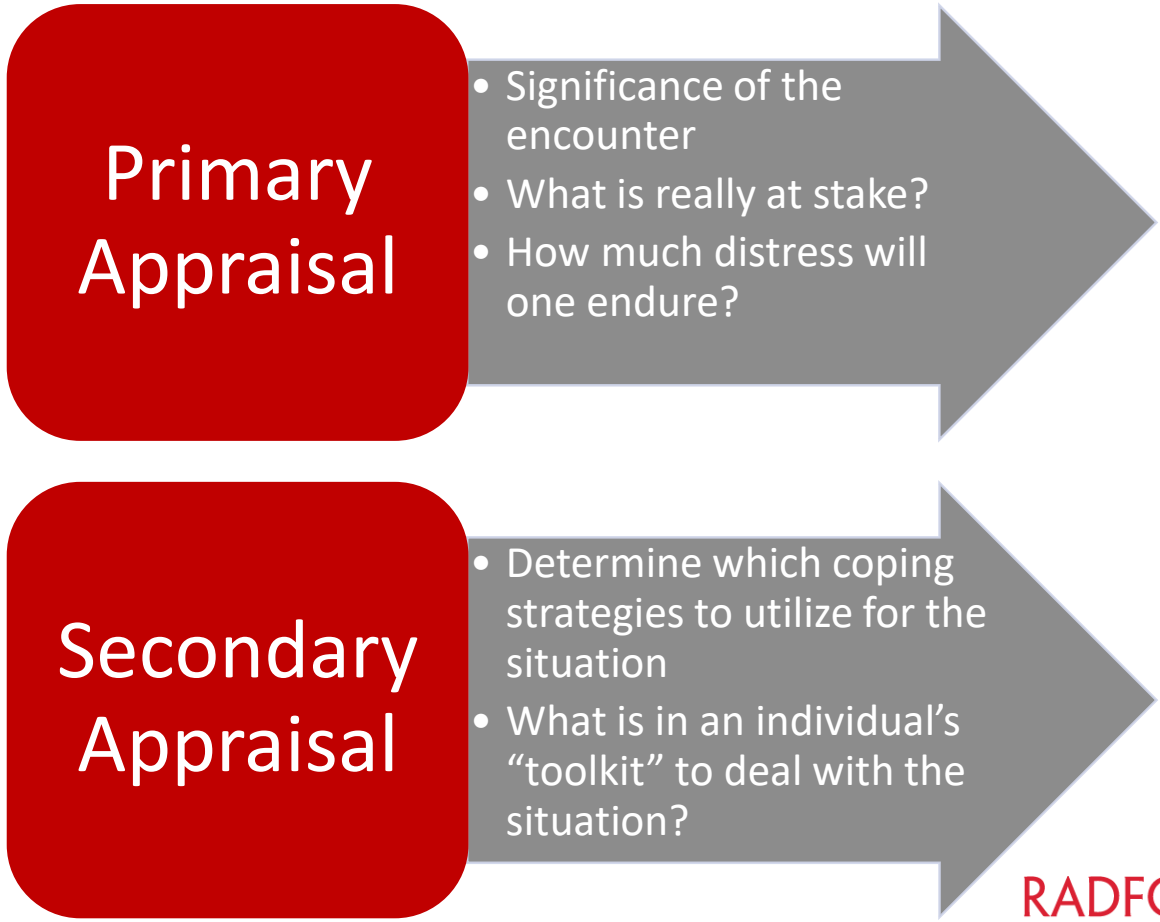
Stress in the Social World

- Stress is “a relationship between the person and the environment that is appraised by the person as taxing or exceeding his or her resources and endangering his or her well-being” (Lazarus and Folkman, 1984, p. 19)
  - Individuals are active agents
- Transactional approach
  - Individuals appraise similar situations differently



Importance of Social Support

- Cognitive phenomenological model (Lazarus and Folkman, 1984)
  - Problem-focused: actions individuals engage in to modify the situation causing distress
    - Ex: engagement, planning, active coping
  - Emotion-focused: thoughts and actions to regulate the emotional response of stress
    - Ex: denial, disengagement, avoidance
- Social support can include both emotion-focused and problem-focused coping
  - The world is a network of ties (intimate family groups and larger societies)
  - Latent and formal social rules constrain these connections
  - Cultural aspects impact emotional well-being
  - Coping is contextual

Officer Coping Strategies

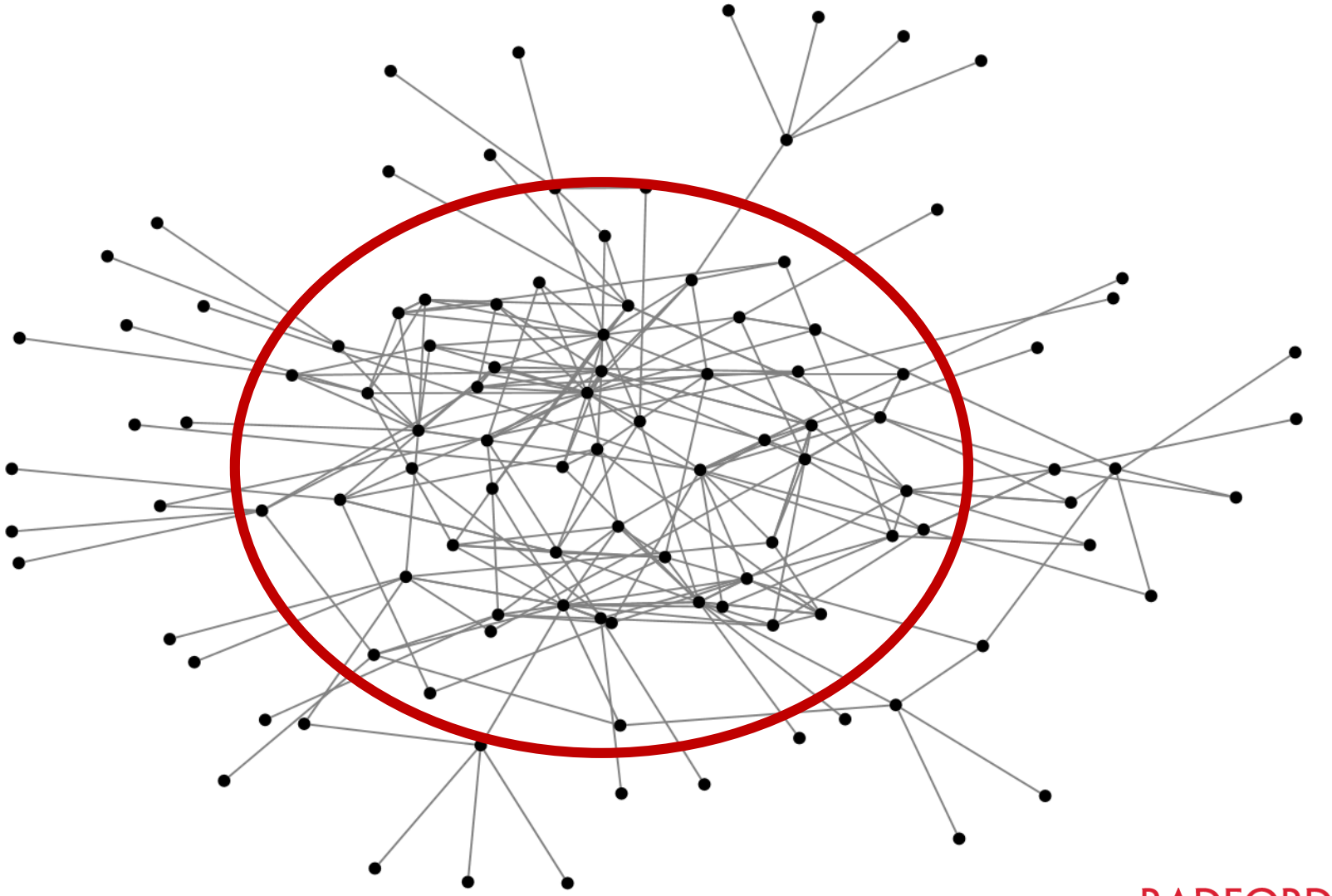
- Policing repeatedly places officers in stressful environments.
  - Stress and coping are both dynamic, fluid processes that may change due to an individual's evaluation and resources available.
- In general, officers do not utilize adaptive coping strategies.
  - Organizational climate supports suppression of emotions (Williams et al., 2010)
  - Social support, stoic self-help, and self-medication all identified as coping strategies used by law enforcement (Clifton, Torres, & Hawdon, 2018; Violanti et al., 2011)
    - Clifton et al., 2018 found social support strategies also led to decreased job motivation. Hence, why we need to pinpoint that not all networks are the same.

Coping and Police

- Ineffective coping leads to detrimental effects including PTSD (Marmar et al., 2006; Menard and Arter, 2014)
- Police culture influences the coping strategies officers use in stressful situations
  - Academies socialize new recruits into the police subculture
  - Academy training is stressful (Violanti, 1993)
    - Development of coping strategies as recruits transition through the academy
    - Longitudinal work is imperative to see transitioning process as socialization occurs
  - Rural officers face added strains and lack of resources
- Proverb by Ben Sira: “birds of a feather flock together”
  - What are the underlying characteristics of the “feathers” that are flocking together?
  - Networks are important, but not all social networks are created equally

PD1 Network

- 3 permanent patrol shifts
- Graph density = 0.039
- Geodesic distance = 3.49
- One larger groups of officers who are well connected
- Several connected through single pathways
  - Fear of dropping out
  - Low adoption of subculture



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PD2 Network

- 4 rotating patrol shifts
- Graph density = 0.022
- Geodesic distance = 4.422
- Two clusters form of officers who are well connected
- Pathways between clusters
- Several connected through single pathways
  - Fear of dropping out
  - Low adoption of subculture

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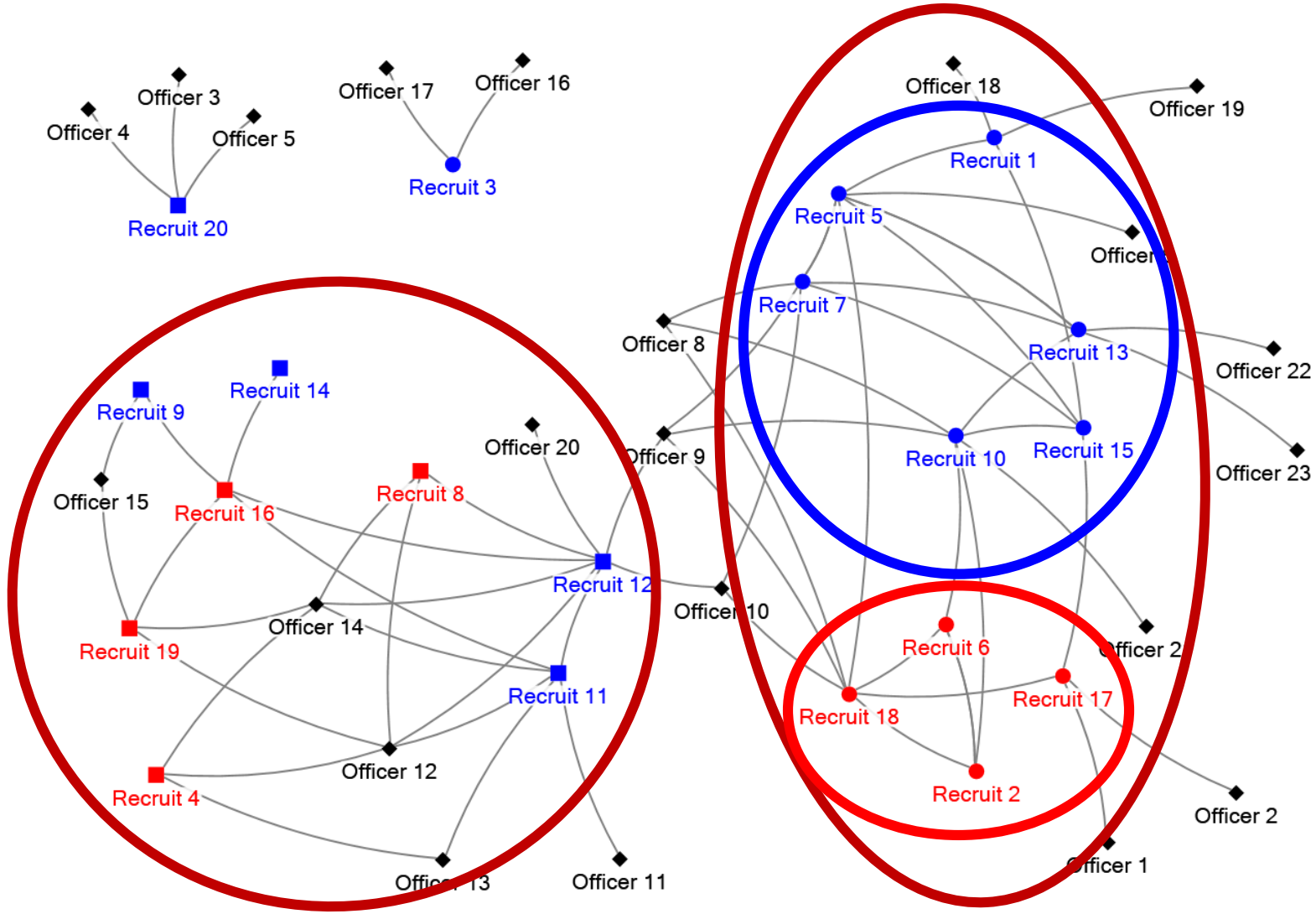
Recruit Time 1

- Day 1 of academy
- Graph density = 0.073
- Geodesic distance = 3.366
- Two clusters representing PDs
  - Applicant testing
- Recruit 20 and 3 completely separated
- Square = PD1; Disc = PD2; Red = Female; Blue = Male
- Recruit 12 was the most connected with a node degree of 8



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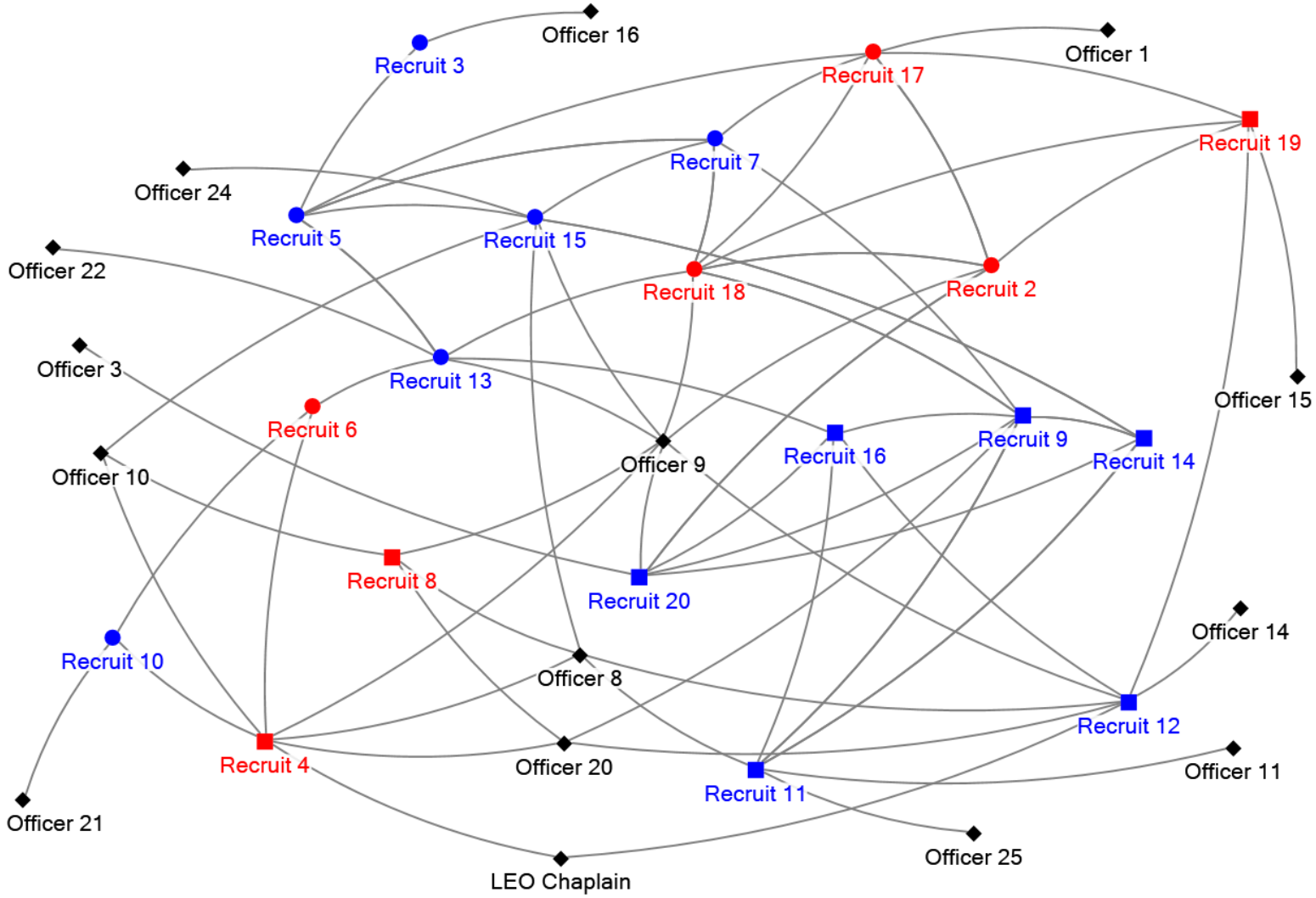
Recruit Time 2

- 3-month mid-point
- Graph density = 0.118
  - Increase from Time 1
- Geodesic distance = 2.759
  - Decrease from Time 1
- More cohesive group
- All recruits connected through at least one pathway
- Recruits 15, 9, 18, 4, and 12 all had a nodal degree of 7
  - Recruit 12 still a major node



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Recruit Time 3

- End of academy
- Graph density = 0.101
  - Increase from Time 1; slight decrease from Time 2
- Geodesic distance = 3.012
  - Decrease from Time 1; slight increase from Time 2
- More cohesive group
  - Some separation noticed among the 2 PDs
- All recruits still connected through at least one pathway
- Recruit 12 remained a key node with a degree of 7

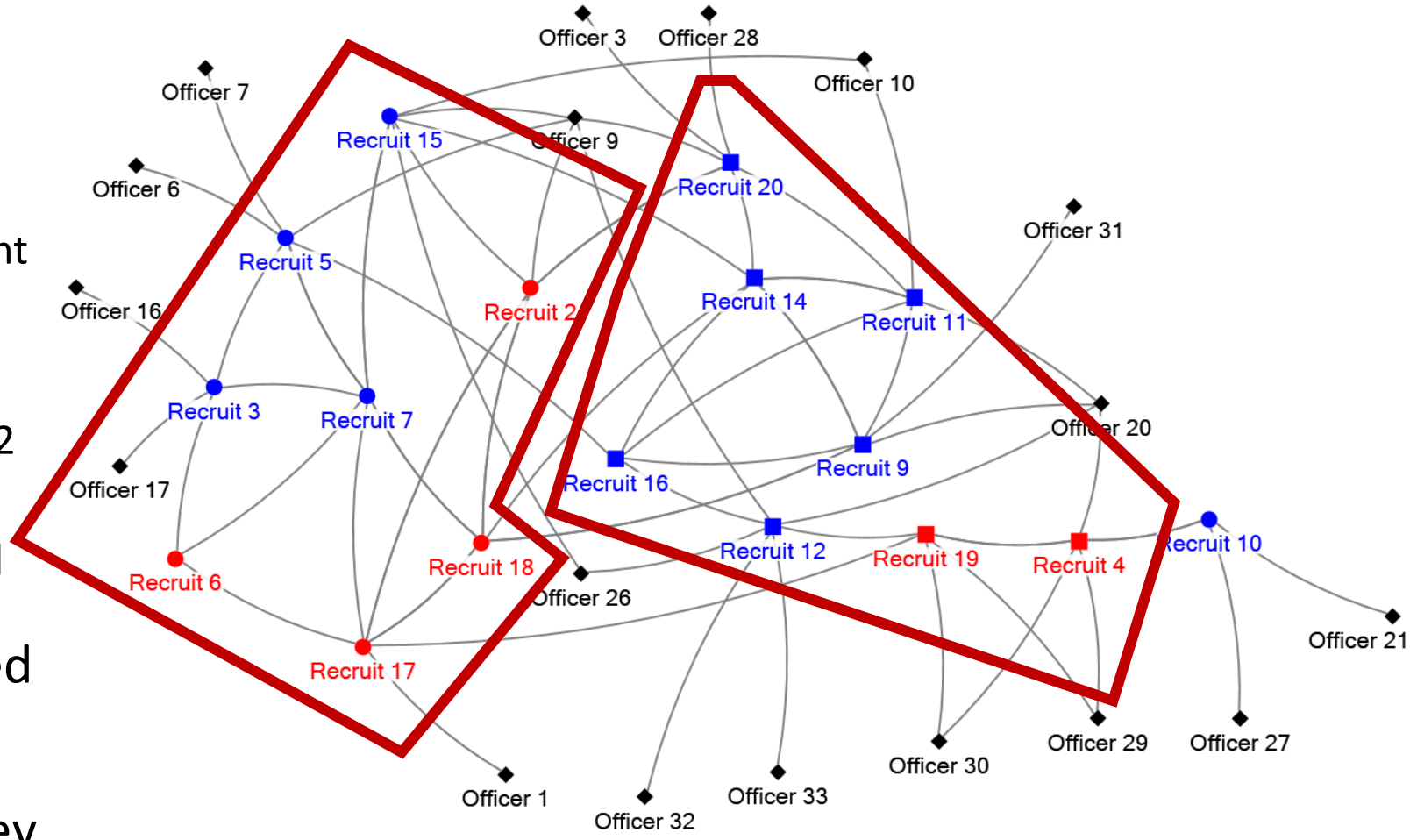

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Table 10: Longitudinal regression coefficients for the recruit sample.

Predictors	Model 1: Predicting police subculture T2 from network degree T1 and controls			Model 2: Predicting maladaptive coping T3 from police subculture T2 and controls			Model 3: Predicting adaptive coping T3 from police subculture T2 and controls		
	b	Standard Error	β	*b*	Standard Error	β	*b*	Standard Error	β
Network Degree	1.009	0.281	0.513**	-	-	-	-	-	-
Police Subculture	-	-	-	0.476	0.261	0.479	1.354	0.403	0.546**
Job Stress	0.262	0.074	0.508**	0.140	0.113	0.266	0.005	0.389	0.004
Age	-0.317	0.096	-0.334**	0.440	0.072	0.481***	0.204	0.283	0.089
Female	-0.089	1.460	-0.011	-1.312	2.136	-0.171	-12.918	6.559	-0.672+
Military	6.238	1.195	0.807***	-0.887	2.232	-0.119	-6.965	5.07	-0.373
Education	1.026	0.536	0.328+	1.540	0.584	0.474*	1.039	1.929	0.128
Relationship	-3.519	1.031	-0.471**	3.769	1.804	0.512+	9.023	3.691	0.490*
Constant	18.291	3.171	***	-14.368	6.997	+	0.444	15.936	
F	10.97***			14.09***			7.11**		
R^2	0.827			0.689			0.701		

T1=Time 1; T2=Time 2; T3=Time 3
*p<.05; **p<.01; ***p<.001

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