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# Research Article

## **TALKING THE TALK: DEVELOPING A STUDENT CENTERED APPROACH FOR TEACHING COMMUNICATION SKILLS FOR OPERATIONAL POLICING**

Amanda Davies\* and Andrew Kelly

The increasingly complex police-citizen situations in which the novice police officer may be placed demand that police training environments continually assess their education programs to ensure that such programs are contemporary and meet the expectations of stakeholders. One challenge facing recruit training is the need to prepare the novice police officer to communicate effectively in often stressful and complicated situations. Police educators must develop learning strategies which provide opportunity for students to build their capacity to be effective communicators through autonomous, student-centered learning experiences. The communications teaching and learning opportunities within the Associate Degree in Policing Practice for New South Wales Police Force (NSWPF) recruits is no exception. This paper discusses the changes that have occurred to the delivery of communication training to NSWPF recruits over the past 15 years. It considers the merits of incorporating authentic teaching strategies and learner assessment processes into the delivery of communication education and of creating experiential learning experiences that support autonomous, self-regulated learners. In particular, it discusses the use of role plays (verbal communication trials) to provide a unique and authentic learning experience for students and to assess their verbal and non-verbal communication skills in a simulated policing environment.

**Keywords:** Experienced-based education, authentic learning, police education, communication skills, reflective practice

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## INTRODUCTION

Communication skills are a central focus of NSW Police Force recruit training, permeating all aspects of the Associate Degree in Policing Practice course that New South Wales Police Force recruits must undertake to become police officers. This paper discusses the evolution of communication training at the NSW Police Force Academy in the context of the teaching strategies used, learner assessment processes and progress towards providing students with experiential learning experiences that support autonomous, self-regulated learners (Kolb, 1984). In particular, it discusses the use of role plays as a form of student-assessment, delivered through an assessment exercise called Verbal Communication Trials (VCTs), and with the aim of providing a unique and authentic learning experience for students and to assess their verbal and non-verbal communication skills in a simulated policing environment.

The potential dangers in failing to teach police students effective communication skills is evidenced by police-citizen interactions which have resulted in injury and at times tragic outcomes. Communication is an integral component of police-citizen relationships, with poor communication likely to reduce public confidence and trust in local police, whereas, public confidence and trust can be enhanced simply by the police engaging as an active, visible and accessible part of community life (Rix, Faye, Maquire, & Morton, 2009; Bradford, Stanko & Jackson, 2009; Jackson & Sunshine, 2007; Skogan, 2006; Tyler & Fagan, 2006).

The importance of communication training and associated assessment of student capabilities in effective police communication should not be underestimated (Bodkin, 2012; Erickson, Cheatham & Haggard, 2009). The challenge for police educators is to develop learning strategies which provide opportunity for students to build their capacity to be effective communicators and this paper argues that these skills are best learned through autonomous, student-centered learning experiences.

The increasingly complex police-citizen situations in which the novice police officer may be placed demands that police training environments continually assess their education programs to ensure such programs are contemporary and meet the expectations of stakeholders. The communications teaching and learning opportunities within the Associate Degree in Policing Practice for New South Wales Police Force (NSWPF) recruits is no exception.

Communication training has long been an important component of police recruit training, so when the NSW Police Force partnered with Charles Sturt University to develop a Diploma of Policing Practice for recruits in 1998 it was apt that the subject JST112 Communication in Policing was included. In 2003, a review of the Diploma led to the introduction of the Associate Degree in Policing Practice, which included the subject PPP113 Communication in Policing.

A redesign of the curriculum in 2013 retained the communication subject, integrating the subject's core learning content and approaches into the delivery of all subjects across the curriculum. In 2009, the VCTs were introduced to the PPP113 subject in order to address a gap in the students' learning experiences related to the use of verbal communication skills in simulated policing situations. The VCTs were carried over into the new curriculum on the basis of the consistent positive feedback received about the efficacy of the exercise from both teachers and students.

#### THE ROLE OF COMMUNICATION IN POLICE EDUCATION

There is universal agreement among law enforcement agencies that one of the most important skills for a police officer is effective interpersonal communication (McDermott & Hulse, 2012; Fitch & Means, 2009; Ceniceros, 2003). The collective challenge for police educators globally is the development of effective communication education and assessment programs which both prepare and sustain officers in the course of their policing duties.

The critical nexus lies between the pedagogical approach applied in teaching communication skills and the capacity for such an approach to provide learning experiences which lay the foundations on which the student is able to independently build and sustain these skills for and in the reality of policing the streets. Such an approach is consistent with the teaching and learning strategy of the Associate Degree in Policing Practice course. The course curriculum has a strong emphasis on experiential learning and the use of policing scenarios to give context to learning and a focus on student-centered approaches in the classroom (Charles Sturt University, 2014).

Police education has long been criticised for its teacher-centered focus and failing to promote critical thinking and the problem-solving skills police require in their operation roles however an increasing shift among police educators to a learner-centered approach is encouraging deeper learning and a higher level of cognitive engagement among policing students (Shipton, 2009). O'Neill and

McMahon (2005, p.29) describe student-centered learning as giving students a choice in their education, enabling students to be active learners who do more work in the class than the lecturer does, and as a shift in the power relationship between the student and the teacher. The concept of student-centered learning has been credited in education scholarship from as early as 1905 but it was not until the 1980s that student-centered learning began to gain broad acceptance as an alternative to teacher-centric practices in adult learning environments as part of a paradigm shift away from teaching to learning (O'Neill & McMahon, 2005). This paradigm shift has been reflected in the changes to the ADPP curriculum and delivery, as well as NSW Police Force recruit training more generally.

Communication is discussed and applied in all subjects studied by NSWPF recruits, including weapons and appointments training, but the inclusion of a formal communication subject in the first three months of recruit training gives focus to key written communication skills, such as report writing and essay writing, and to verbal communication skills demonstrated through in-class role plays. A further opportunity for the application of communication skills is offered to students through their participation in simulated police practice exercises. The simulated police exercises in the subject PPP111 Simulated Policing Acquiring Confidence focus on the application of law and police procedure with communication skills being a contributor to the overall capacity of the student to demonstrate confidence.

Assessors in PPP111 consider the communication ability of recruits in simulated policing situations however limited weighting is attributed to communication skills in the formative assessment. This is premised on the underlying rationale that the communication skills education and assessment resided in the teaching and assessment for the Communications in Policing subject. Changes to the curriculum in 2013 have sought to better integrate communication into the delivery of all aspects of the ADPP, including the police practical subject formally known as PPP111.

Prior to the introduction in 2009 of the Verbal Communication Trials (VCTs), there was a disconnection in the pedagogical approach to communication skills education within the NSWPF recruit program. Within the program there did not exist opportunity for students to participate in an exercise for learning and assessment that centered exclusively on their verbal communication skills. Such skills are of key importance in a police officer's duties (see Erickson, Cheatham & Haggard, 2009; Cornett-De Vito & McGlone,

2000). Individual VCTs exercises were designed for incorporation with the PPP113 Communication in Police Subject and more recently introduced on a permanent basis in the new ADPP curriculum for the following reasons:

- to teach effective verbal communication skills;
- to provide best practice learning opportunities to develop such communication skills;
- to incorporate verbal communication assessment exercises to support student-centered learning; and
- to contribute to the transfer of learning between theory-based subjects such as PPP113 and practical subjects such as PPP111.

The use of the word trial reflected the experimental status of the VCT exercise and the need for evaluation prior to permanent inclusion in the program.

#### VCT DESIGN PRINCIPLES

The VCTs developed for the PPP113 subject require the student to participate individually in role play scenarios based on real time and realistic police-citizen interactions. In recent years, role playing has become a frequently used tool in law enforcement education and training (Van Hasselt, Romano & Vecchi, 2008). Role playing has a firm foundation in education for its benefits in allowing students to practice what they have learned, to provide a basis for discussion, contribute to developing emotional intelligence, promote group work and generate student enthusiasm and interest (DeNeve & Heppner, 1997). It is particularly valuable in police education as recruits often only have limited personal experiences and may rely on media depictions of policing to draw upon when reflecting and applying police practice and law.

A key element to experience-based learning is that learners analyse their experience by reflecting, evaluating and reconstructing it (sometimes individually, sometimes collectively, sometimes both) in order to draw meaning from it in the light of prior experience (Andreson, Boud & Cohen, p225).

The design of the VCTs draws on the work of Knowles (1990, p.61) who suggests adults "learn new knowledge, understandings, skills, values and attitudes most effectively when they are presented in the context of application to real-life situations". Further design principles for the development of the VCTs

encapsulate the fundamental concepts of situated and authentic learning as espoused by Eiseman (2001, p.1) which suggest:

... situated learning advocates a greater recognition of the importance of context in learning, arguing that learning embedded in relevant context, provides both motivation for learning, and in particular heightened learning outcomes. Of particular focus in situated learning is learning for the acquisition and development of the knowledge, skills and attitudes required for professional practice.

Important also to the design parameters of the VCTs was the perspective of Jonassen (1994, p. 223) who in discussing the meaning of authentic, commented:

... most educators believe that “authentic” means that learners should engage in activities which present the same type of cognitive challenges as those in the real world (Honebein, Duffy, & Fishman, 1993; Savery & Duffy, 1996), that is, tasks which replicate the particular activity structures of a context.

Similarly, Bennell and Jones (2004, p. 21) suggest that military research indicates that students retain 90 per cent of learning when the process engages them in realistic practice of required skills. Functional principles implemented into the VCT design included the need to design tasks that reflect the complexity of the policing environment, to design a learning environment that supports and challenges the learner’s thinking, and to provide opportunity for reflection on the content learned and the learning process (Savery & Duffy, 2001).

While recognising the potential for situated and authentic learning experiences in the context of the VCTs, one of the key design tasks for these exercises was to enable assessment of participants to be conducted. The challenge for educational design in developing learning opportunities which are not only contextualised to resemble real world application and which also have the capacity to provide for authentic assessment activities was identified in the work of Wiggins (1989). Wiggins suggests that pivotal to the creation of common ground between the learning and assessment context and real world application is the authentic nature of the context in which the learning and assessment is situated, "the tasks are either replicas of or analogous to the kinds of problems faced by adult citizens and consumers or professionals in the field" (1989, p. 229).

An important criterion for the VCTs was premised on creating an activity which would encourage a student-centered approach to learning delivery. The rationale for this design approach was founded on providing opportunity for students to become independent learners with the knowledge to critically reflect on their work in a process of adjusting and modifying their approach to tasks and activities. The experiential learning approach advocated by Kolb (1984) provides a pedagogical construct in which students experience an activity, reflect on the activity, interpret and generalise to the context of their learning, apply their understanding and adjust and/or modify their approach and reapply, thus the learning is continually evolving and renewing. Figure 1 represents Kolb's Adult Experiential Learning Cycle.

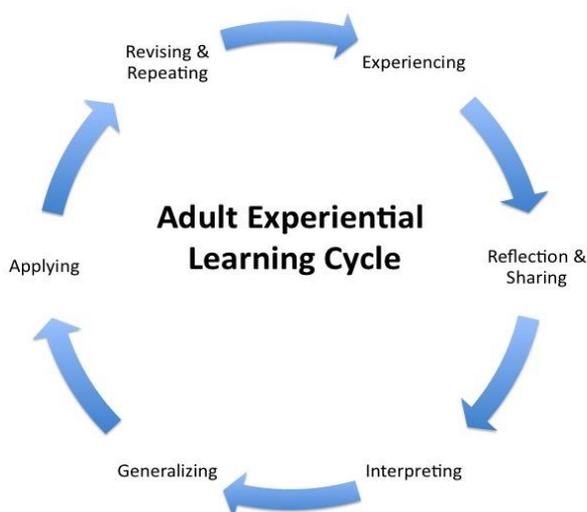


Figure 1 — Kolb's Adult Experiential Learning Cycle

While the literature indicates that an effective learning environment is that which situates the learning in authentic contexts, in the field of law enforcement education, it is often neither practical nor desirable to replicate completely authentic police-citizen interactions. A key attribute of the VCT design is its focus on verbal communication interactions without the requirement to replicate the complexity of the fidelity characteristics which would more closely resemble the real world policing environment. For example, VCT role plays are structured to avoid the need for the recruit to use weapons and appointments, while the use of any force by the recruit in the carefully designed scenarios is often evidence of ineffective communication in the circumstances.

The VCTs draw on a model which has previously been utilised by the United Kingdom National Police Improvement Agency (NPIA) in their police recruitment process. The NPIA model centers on assessment of applicants ability to demonstrate problem solving skills, together with critical thinking and incorporates assessment of personality traits, for example, discrimination and racism. The NPIA model required applicants to attend a room and before entering they are provided with information relating to a scenario involving a member of the public; the applicants take up the role of an employee tasked with resolving the issue at hand. A point of difference with the VCTs is that while the NPIA model is utilised in the police recruitment process, the applicants are not tasked with taking on a police role in the scenario. VCTs are a good example of practice-based education as opposed to the NPIA's use of the exercise to assess the suitability of potential recruits.

Practice-based learning and assessment models in non-police education fields have also provided guidance in the development of the VCTs. The medical education field, for example, utilises a similar model to the NPIA where learning and assessment are situated in role plays. The commonly recognised label for the medical role plays are OSCE's (Objective Structured Clinical Examinations) and they form an integral component of learning experiences for medical students and ultimately assessment of their learning. Similarly to the NPIA process, the University of Wollongong (UOW) employs OSCE modelled assessment processes during their selection of medical studies candidates.

Prospective medical students are directed to a room and provided with a scenario involving a member of the public with a medical related complaint or situation. The scenario requires the candidate to demonstrate critical thinking and problem solving abilities. The student assessment in the role plays is one component of their overall application and assessment for candidature. These examples support the claim that the design of the VCTs is based on well-established models of learning and assessment.

The point of difference which sets the VCTs design apart is their utilisation as an assessment and learning experience for police students specifically based on demonstration of verbal communication skills. This predominantly includes the management of conflict and the effective use of active listening, rapport building, empathy and assertiveness, which are reflected in the assessment rubric (see Figure 2). Assessment of critical thinking and problem solving within a

police context remains situated in the practical subject PPP111 Simulated Policing Acquiring Confidence.

### VCTS IMPLEMENTATION

The VCTs were initially introduced as a non-assessable learning exercise in the latter stages of the PPP113 subject, building on the learning development and experiences gained by recruits in the first 11 weeks of their training. In the exercise, students are tasked with attending a location (generally a small room) where they are provided with a printed sheet containing information relating to the scenario. The student is given one minute to read the instructions, simulating the limited information provided in a call from police radio to a general duties police officer in the field.

The student enters the room where they immediately encounter a role player and an assessor seated to the side. It has been identified that the use of fellow recruits as the role players in the PPP111 scenarios limited the realism of the activity because the recruits did not have the experience of similar events to draw upon. In order to add realism to the VCT scenario, an experienced police officer or trainer in plain clothes is used as the role player. As recruits enter the room they are confronted by a role player affected by a combination of factors, which might include anger, intoxication, mental illness and anxiety. At the conclusion of the role play, the tutor and the experienced role player provide feedback to the student on their performance and encourage discussion from the student on their performance. Additionally, students are then provided with a performance reflection form to complete.

Students are provided with a debriefing document with questions as prompts to guide reflection on their VCT experience. A key role for the performance reflection process is to develop student skills in relation to reflection on performance. Such reflection is seen as being valuable within their studies and in the performance of their policing duties.

The positive anecdotal evidence from the student experience with the VCTs was encouraging. The central themes that evolved were:

- students valued the contribution to their learning and development from the opportunity to individually demonstrate their verbal communication skills;

- students indicated their experience in the VCTs provided valuable feedback on their learning progress and where deficient, suggestions as to how to adjust/modify their skills; and
- students indicated their learning was enhanced through the opportunity to demonstrate their skills without the distraction of other class members observing the performance.

Of equal importance in the process of trialing the inclusion of the VCTs as a subject-based activity was the perspective from the tutors/assessors involved in the trial. Here also the evidence was anecdotal and reinforced the feedback received from the participating students. The feedback from the tutors revealed the following:

- the VCTs offered opportunity to provide individualised feedback on performance;
- the VCTs offered opportunity to assess the participant's verbal communication skills without the distraction of other class members observing;
- the VCTs offered opportunity to assess the participant's verbal communication skills without the distraction of assessing police procedural tasks; and
- the VCTs offered opportunity to work collaboratively with the participants to develop their reflective practice.

In 2012, the VCTs changed from being a non-assessable to an assessable item with the PPP113 subject, replacing one of two existing written assessments to give balance to the topic assessments. This modification does not appear to have affected the positive views held by students and tutors regarding the value of the learning experience derived from participation in the VCTs. The trialling of the VCTs as an assessable exercise within the communication subject and the resultant indications of their potential to provide valuable learning outcomes for participants precipitated formalising the VCTs as an assessment process. A key criteria considered in the development of the VCTs was to identify an assessment method that would contribute to a student centered approach to learning and assessment.

## VCTS ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK

The key features of the VCTs assessment tool which would contribute to a student centred approach to assessment were the capacity to: (1) communicate the learning outcomes and performance expectations; (2) enable focused feedback; (3) describe levels of quality of performance on a learning continuum aligned with Bloom's taxonomy of learning; and (4) provide a guide to students for self-reflection on their performance and importantly a guide for future enhanced performance.

The criterion identified for the VCTs align with the fundamental principles of rubrics designed for assessing learning. The work of Andrade and Du (2005, p.1) suggests that a rubric is a "document that articulates the expectations for an assignment by listing the criteria, or what counts, and describing levels of quality from excellent to poor". Rubrics, as discussed by Popham (1997) have three core features: Evaluation Criteria, Quality Definitions and Scoring Strategy.

These core features are widely acknowledged in the education community as the overarching parameters for rubrics, the explanation of the more precise guiding details in rubrics design is where individual interpretation in design are presented (see Glickman-Bond & Rose, 2006; Quinlan, 2006). Importantly, the literature suggests concurrence on the capacity for rubrics to establish benchmarks along a continuum which provide clarity as to the expectations for learners. This concurrence is reflected in the work of Reddy (2007) in presenting a review of the literature centered on the purpose, design and evaluation of rubrics.

In the context of the police recruit education program, where students continually scaffold their learning and demonstration of communication skills, an assessment tool which guides reflection and reapplication is paramount. Effective and appropriately designed rubrics which clearly articulate learning outcome criteria and levels of achievement/performance have the capacity to create transparency, reduce bias and support objectivity in an assessment process. Further, rubrics support learners' self-assessment and ownership of their engagement with and achievement of learning through setting the parameters for levels of quality. It is these features of the rubrics based assessment process which aligns seamlessly with the intent of the VCTs. Table 1 presents the VCTs assessment rubrics.

To date there is no formal research data attached to the evaluation of the VCTs. The anecdotal evidence provided by students and tutors suggests the rubrics are readily adopted for:

- the clarity they provide of what is required to demonstrate capability along the learning continuum;
- the student centered and driven approach to learning achievement;
- the relevance of the learning experience; and
- the evidence of satisfactory or unsatisfactory learning achievement.

Within the ADPP, several iterations of the VCT assessment rubrics have been implemented as the program has progressed. Refinement of both the VCT scenarios and the assessment rubrics is anticipated to be an evolving process as they are developed to embrace best practice educational pedagogy. Tutors assigned to the teaching of communications skills and implementation of the VCTs and the rubrics assessment indicate that the process provides a transparent platform from which to provide student feedback and guidance for performance enhancement. Situating the assessment rubrics as a component of the overall VCT experience aligns with the experiential learning construct advocated by Kolb (1984). The VCTs take up the role of the 'experience' upon which the learner reflects, modifies behaviour and reattempts in the cyclic process.

The curriculum delivery design for the ADPP has been remodelled in preparation for commencement in 2014 and the VCTs remain an integral component of the program. Following an evaluation and modification of the ADPP assessment model, the VCTs will be a non-assessable exercise included in a week of practice-based activities in the final week of the police recruits first three months of training. Further empirical evaluation of the VCTs is needed to establish its worth as an educational exercise although the anecdotal evidence provided by tutors and students strongly supports its continued inclusion in an integrated and practice-based police recruit training course.

Further empirical evaluation of the VCTs is now planned to establish their specific value in transitioning police students from the classroom to their field of operation. This paper acknowledges the work of teaching staff on the ADPP who have contributed to the development of the VCTs and the accompanying assessment rubrics.

PPP113 COMMUNICATIONS IN POLICING – VCT ASSESSMENT SHEET

Total Score:  
**/70**

Student:

No:

Class:

SATISFACTORY (See Score Criteria) Score: 6 (Satisfactory) 7 (Above Average) 8 (High Level) 9-10 (Outstanding) <i>*Student MUST be able to be understood AND comprehend communication to gain a satisfactory score</i>	UNSATISFACTORY (See Score Criteria) Score: 0 (Not attempted) 1 – 5 (Poor)	Score	Comment on verbal and non verbal behaviours/skills/characteristics Verbal: choice of words, jargon, age/gender/cultural appropriate words Non verbal: eye contact, paralanguage, posture, facial expressions, hand gestures, position, etc.
<p><b>1. Introductions and rapport building</b> Seeks some common ground and may use disclosure (only if appropriate) and explains reasons for interaction (IPE) Appears to acknowledge and respond to any communication barriers or noise (internal or external) No prejudice or stereotyping evident</p>	<p>No introductions or explanation for interaction (IPE) Uses unprofessional language – acts superior, is overbearing, rude and/or disrespectful Fails to recognise and respond to barriers or noise Allows prejudice/stereotypes to negatively impact situation <b>*Struggles to comprehend and/or verbally communicate effectively</b></p>		<p>PLEASE JUSTIFY YOUR DECISION WITH RELEVANT COMMENTS AND/OR HIGHLIGHTING OF ASSESSMENT INDICATORS <b>(Consider if the student's overall behaviour was consistent with the Oath of Office and the professional and ethical standards expected by the NSW Police Force)</b></p>
<p><b>2. Active/critical listening</b> Attending: good eye contact, head nods, appropriate gestures/posture and facial expressions Avoids unnecessary interruptions Hears and acknowledges the emotion behind the words Provides feedback – paraphrases/mirrors/repeats</p>	<p>Poor or no listening, marginal listening or evaluative listening Forms inferences, opinions or assumptions instead of listening to and establishing the facts Regularly or inappropriately interrupts Poor feedback <b>*Struggles to comprehend and/or verbally communicate effectively</b></p>		
<p><b>3. Empathy – provides reassurance and support</b> Verbal and non verbal communication is consistent Effective use of eye contact, posture and facial expressions Good use of paralanguage (tone, pitch, speed and volume)</p>	<p>Displays apathy or is overly sympathetic Inappropriate eye contact, posture and/or facial expressions/poor paralanguage <b>*Struggles to comprehend and/or verbally communicate effectively</b></p>		
<p><b>4. Questioning skills</b> Uses open questions and appropriate closed questions (eg. TED – tell me what happened, explain what happened and describe what happened) Uses questions to maintain control of the encounter Establishes what has happened</p>	<p>Uses irrelevant, inappropriate closed and/or leading questions Allows the other person to dominate the encounter Appears lost and confused as to what to do <b>*Verbal communication difficult to understand</b></p>		
<p><b>5. Assertiveness</b> <i>*Focuses upon what is relevant, establishes their goal and what is not negotiable, sticks to their bottom line (repeats if necessary), and treats others with appropriate respect</i> <i>*The assertiveness and conflict indicators are only suggestions. Please do not be limited to them. The main issue is whether the student handled the conflict well, irrespective of the means – please comment.</i></p>	<p>Tending towards being passive (timid or unsure) or aggressive (inappropriate yelling, manipulation, threats or use of force). Does not control ego. Becomes argumentative and/or unreasonable, 'buys in' to irrelevant issues Fails to stick to bottom line <b>*Struggles to comprehend and/or verbally communicate effectively</b></p>		
<p><b>6. Conflict resolution skills</b> Deflects verbal abuse (eg. uses BUT as deflector) <i>*Some indicators: asks person to comply, sets the context and explains why, provides some options and explains consequences of non compliance, confirms action and then takes action (is able to justify action taken)</i> Takes a safe position Actions relate to relevant law, policy and procedure</p>	<p>Fails to respond to conflict Fails to ignore verbal abuse (within reason) Inappropriately withdraws, accommodates, compromises or threatens the use of force Uses unprofessional/inflammatory language Actions are inappropriate, disproportionate and/or unlawful (provides no justification for action) Takes dangerous position <b>*Struggles to comprehend and/or verbally communicate effectively</b></p>		
<p><b>7. Resolution and disengagement</b> Uses correct law, policy and procedure Makes appropriate decision and uses clear, succinct and relevant language to explain action Appropriate disengagement for situation Leaves contact details and explains any future action</p>	<p>Takes inappropriate or unlawful course of action Unsatisfactory resolution and/or explanation of action Due to overall poor communication leaves person feeling angry, confused and/or resentful towards police Inappropriately fails to leave contact details <b>*Due to poor communication, resolution is unclear</b></p>		
<p><b>Additional Comments:</b></p>		<p><b>SCORE CRITERIA:</b> <b>Unsatisfactory (1-5)</b> – indicators not demonstrated and/or poorly attempted <b>Satisfactory (6)</b> – indicators demonstrated to a basic level (may be unsatisfactory in several indicators) <b>Above Average (7)</b> – indicators demonstrated to a better than satisfactory level <b>High Level (8)</b> – indicators demonstrated to a highly skilled level <b>Outstanding (9-10)</b> – indicators demonstrated to a superior level</p>	
Assessor Sign:	Print Name:	Date:	

Table 1 — VCTs Assessment Rubrics

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# Research Article

## INTER-ORGANISATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN INTELLIGENCE AND LAW ENFORCEMENT ORGANISATIONS: WHAT ARE THE OPTIONS AND HOW ARE THEY DIFFERENT?

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In the second decade of the twenty-first century, intelligence and law enforcement organisations are working more closely together than ever before. The security challenges they collectively face are complex, and “wicked” in nature. No public sector organisation is capable of achieving success alone in this area in the way envisaged when siloed, functional departments and agencies were created to deliver government policy outcomes. In working together, a variety of relationships are entered into that move organisations from positions of *autonomy* in their day-to-day activities, towards situations where *mergers* with other organisations could be the outcome. But, do those involved appreciate the difference between, say, cooperating and collaborating? Scholars agree that the language of relationships is often used interchangeably, even casually. So do intelligence and law enforcement organisations really appreciate the types of engagement they are entering into? More importantly perhaps, what they will require of them? This paper discusses the limited variety of inter-organisational relationships that exist as well as the differences between them. It focuses on the language that is used to describe intelligence and law enforcement relationships so that that relationship can become clearer. This, it is posited, will assist those engaging in, or researching, such relationships to discern what is actually meant when they are spoken of or written about.

**Keywords:** Intelligence, law enforcement, inter-organisational relationships, relationship continuum, whole-of-government, wicked issues, transnational crime

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## INTRODUCTION

Intelligence and law enforcement organisations in Australia and New Zealand face various complex and “wicked” (Rittel & Webber, 1973) security challenges in the 21<sup>st</sup> century (Fleming & Wood, 2006, p. 2). These challenges are coupled with the increased need for financial constraint as nations emerge, slowly, from the effects of the Global Financial Crisis. In these complex and constrained times governments continue to seek improved efficiency, minimised cost, and essentially strive for more from less. Scholars agree (Christensen & Laegreid, 2007, p. 1,060 citing Boston & Eichbaum, (2005); de Maillard & Smith, 2012, p. 262; Dupont, 2007, p. 78) that efficiency and effectiveness can be achieved through engagement in a variety of *inter-organisational relationships*, ranging from networking through to collaboration. These relationships move organisations from positions of *autonomy* in their day-to-day activities, towards situations where *mergers* with other organisations could be the outcome (for example, see Brown & Keast, 2003, p. 6: citing work by Cigler (2001), Hogue (1994), Leatz (1999) & Sziron et al. (2002))

Against this backdrop, intelligence and law enforcement organisations are confronted with whole-of-government requirements seeking to re-adjust the Australian and New Zealand public sectors after the New Public Management (NPM) changes of the 1980s (Christensen & Laegreid, 2007, pp. 1,059–1,060). These whole-of-government efforts address the unexpected fragmentation of public sectors, and the inability of siloed, specialist departments to effectively deal with wicked, complex, cross-boundary problems (Bollard, Cochrane, Foulkes, Prebble, Tahi & Wintringham, 2001, pp. 4–5; Christensen & Laegreid, 2007, p. 1,060).

To address fragmentation, public sector organisations are now being encouraged to work with other public sector entities and non-traditional counterparts using networks and collaborations (Christensen & Laegreid, 2007, p. 1,061). Accompanying these new working arrangements exists the need to understand the types of relationship that organisations can have with other organisations. How these relationships relate to each other, and what differences there are between them—if in fact there are differences. Unfortunately, the terms used to identify the various relationships are often used interchangeably (State Services Commission, 2008, p. 7), some would even say casually (O’Flynn, 2009, p. 112).

This paper examines the types of inter-organisational relationships the scholarly literature identifies. It discusses how these relationship types fit into a continuum which, in this researchers approach, enables organisations to best determine the type of engagement to enter into based "... [on] context and individual circumstances" as envisaged by Smith & Wohlstetter (2006, pp. 251–252). Finally, the paper describes the features each relationship type has. These features are either shared with other relationship types or particular to an individual type. This description is intended to remove the confusion created by interchangeable use of names and labels.

### WHAT THE LITERATURE TELLS US

A review of the international literature shows that over time scholars have examined and categorised relationships occurring *between organisations* that are trying to achieve outcomes which are more difficult, if not impossible, when tackled alone (Arnstein, 1969; Axelrod, 1984; Eppel, Gill, Lips & Ryan, 2008; Huxham, 2003). The four most commonly referred to of these relationships are: networking, cooperation, coordination and collaboration.

The literature reveals several scholars who identify a hierarchy for three of the relationships, most commonly spanning cooperation through to collaboration (Axelrod, 1984; Cigler, 2001; Heavey & Murphy, 2012; Himmelman, 2002; Mattessich & Monsey, 1992; O'Flynn, 2009). Common to all relationship hierarchies is that each higher step requires, or attracts: the need for additional inputs, the likelihood of increased compromises by the parties, and, ultimately, acceptance of increased risk and loss of organisational "turf" (Cigler, 2001; Heavey & Murphy, 2012; Himmelman, 2002; Mattessich & Monsey, 1992). It is well documented that protection of organisational turf is often a challenge to working together (Agranoff, 2006, pp. 61–62; McGuire & Agranoff, 2011, p. 268; Severance, 2005, pp. 6–7). This is particularly so in government agencies, including those involved in intelligence and law enforcement activities (Bamford, 2004, pp. 744–745; Bollard et al., 2001, p. 41; Davies, 2004, p. 517).

In their discussion of relationships, Cigler and Himmelman (Cigler, 2001, p. 74; Himmelman, 2002, p. 2) add a fourth interaction titled "networking," described as involving the least degree of formality and input by those participating, and consequently sitting below all other levels. Mattessich and Monsey (1992) do not include networking in their typology instead restricting the interactions to cooperation, coordination and collaboration in that order

(1992, p. 42); however, Eppel et al. (2008, p. 13) do include it, naming it somewhat differently as “communication” and stating that it is informal in nature and involves information sharing on an “as required” basis. While the topic of networking has given rise to its own body of research and accompanying literature (Agranoff & McGuire, 2001; Cigler, 2001; Mandell, 2001), in at least one instance (Brown & Keast, 2003, p. 9), it is posited that “whereas the ‘3Cs’ [Cooperation, Coordination, and Collaboration] are focused on relationships, networks are concerned with the structural arrangements between entities ...”

After completing the literature review on inter-organisational relationships, it is evident there are four commonly identified types. These span a continuum ranging from the *least* formally connected and resource intensive, through to the *most* formally connected and resource intensive. For the purposes of this paper—drawing on the work of Cigler, Eppel et al., Himmelman, and Mattessich and Monsey (Cigler, 2001, pp. 74–76; Eppel et al., 2008; Himmelman, 2002, pp. 2–4; Mattessich & Monsey, 1992, p. 42)—the four types are:

- Networking;
- Cooperation;
- Coordination; and
- Collaboration.

These relationship types are collectively referred to as NC<sub>3</sub> in this paper.

Three other relationship types were assessed for possible inclusion in the typology. *Co-production* was considered, however, it was discarded due to its focus on the interaction between service users (consumers) and service providers (departments or organisations) (McKenzie et al., 2008, p. 35; Ryan, 2012, p. 317). Therefore, it sits outside the scope of this work that looks only at inter-organisational relationships.

Likewise, *Partnership* was also considered. This term is often used interchangeably or in conjunction with collaboration (Andrews and Entwistle, 2010, pp. 679–680; Cigler, 2001, p. 75; Huxham, 2003, p. 402; Kanter, 1994, p. 97; Khan, 2003, p. 116). The reference to “shared expense, profit and loss,” in the word’s dictionary definition (Oxford, 1989, p. 79) aligns with Himmelman’s (2002, p. 4) view that collaboration involves a situation where “they share risk, responsibilities, and rewards.” Mattessich and Monsey’s (1992, p. 11) description of collaboration also involves “shared responsibility; mutual authority and accountability for successes.” In light of these views, it was

determined that partnership is sufficiently analogous with collaboration, or, according to Cigler, all four types on the relationship continuum (Cigler, 2001, pp. 74–75), that it did not warrant a separate place.

Finally, another relationship type (or perhaps more correctly “relationship descriptor”) that warranted examination was “*Unity of Effort*.” This term came to prominence through the findings of the 9/11 Commission (Kean et al., 2006, p. 416). The term was explored further by Severance (2005, pp. 22–23) in PhD research. Severance determined Unity of Effort should be viewed as a “fundamental organizational virtue that underlies or permeates the broader set of organizational efforts that are undertaken to achieve a desired outcome.” The result, therefore, is that it did not require separate inclusion in the typology of relationships, as, to draw on Severance’s (2005) view, its virtue underlies all four of the commonly used terms.

Having confirmed the outline of a relationship continuum consisting of four distinct inter-organisational relationship types, it is appropriate to now discuss how to conceptualise the continuum and its application to the intelligence and law enforcement worlds. For example, can a low intensity, simply formed network arrangement meet the needs of agencies when it comes to inter-organisational responses to wicked security problems? Or, conversely, is a more formal, higher intensity arrangement, such as a coordinated or collaborative relationship, better suited?

### RELATIONSHIP CONTINUUM DISCUSSION

While many of the authors in the literature review sample supported the concept of relationships forming a hierarchical set of steps, Smith & Wohlstetter (2006, pp. 251–252) sought to “challenge [that] assumption.” Instead, they suggested that organisations determine the nature of their inter-organisational relationships based “instead [on] context and individual circumstances.” They went on to assert that “a new way to differentiate partnerships is needed – one that assesses the different types of cooperation neutrally, so that participants may shape their partnerships based on their specific needs” (pp. 251–252).

By reviewing the literature on inter-organisational relationships, and deliberating on the contrasting views of a “hierarchical” continuum or a “context” and “circumstance” based one, four inter-linked concepts crystallised. The first related to the strong case the inter-organisational literature makes for the existence of four relationship types (NC<sub>3</sub>) spanning a range from the *least*

formally connected and resource intensive, through to the *most* formally connected and resource intensive (Axelrod, 1984; Cigler, 2001; Heavey & Murphy, 2012; Himmelman, 2002; Mattessich & Monsey, 1992; O'Flynn, 2009). The concept concurs with the argument that these distinct types move organisations from positions of *autonomy* towards situations where *mergers* with others could be the outcome (for example, see Brown & Keast, 2003, p. 6: citing work by Cigler (2001), Hogue (1994), Leatz (1999) & Sziron et al. (2002)).

The second concept draws directly from the works of Cigler, Himmelman, and Mattessich and Monsey (Cigler, 2001, pp. 74–76; Himmelman, 2002, pp. 2–4; Mattessich & Monsey, 1992, p. 42). It was the subject to discussion earlier in this paper regarding the NC<sub>3</sub> types being four different relationships existing between the states of autonomy and merger. This second concept, therefore, situates the NC<sub>3</sub> types on a relationship continuum (RC), bounded at the ends by the states of autonomy and merger, in the order set out and presented above. Thus the concept expands the original four inter-organisational relationship types to six, with the inclusion of autonomy and merger.

The third concept concerns how the continuum should be visualised. The literature, through use of the term hierarchy, suggests a stepped, somewhat linear view, however, this paper proposes an alternative circular shape. The concept of a circular shape picks up on Smith & Wohlstetter's (2006) argument, whereby context and circumstances induce (or force) an organisation to move from a default position of autonomy to a relationship setting which suits both its needs and the change driver(s) it faces. Actually, the proposal is to visualise the RC as a dial with six settings that can be “selected” by organisations when they encounter a situation requiring them to change their current inter-organisational relationship arrangements. The reason for the change could be a “focusing event” as described by Birkland (1997, p. 22) (for example, the 11 September 2001 (9/11) terrorist attacks), or a slower-timed policy, environmental or issue based impetus.

In having to make a change to the relationship arrangements, as detailed above, the fourth concept proposes that organisations actually make three interlinked changes when they shift relationship settings. The first is relationship *type* focused, the second is relationship *structure* focused, and the final one is relationship *extent* focused. On the structure front, the change includes two distinct choices at three of the relationship type settings (cooperation, coordination, and collaboration) to enter either a networked arrangement

involving two or more other organisations (Muller-Seitz, 2012, pp. 428–429; Provan & Kenis, 2007, p. 231), or to choose a simpler dyadic arrangement with a single other organisation (Alter & Hage, 1993, p. 49). While at the other three settings on the RC (autonomy, networking, and merger) only one structural option is available to the organisation.

The third change an organisation makes is deciding the extent (or intensity) to which it engages with its new partner(s). Various authors have considered this issue and described it in different ways (for example, Brown & Keast, 2003; Mattessich & Monsey, 1992; Provan, Fish & Sydow, 2007; O’Flynn, 2009). Axelsson & Axelsson (2006, p. 82) write of “limited” and “extensive” activity. While Muijs, West & Ainscow (2010, pp. 18–19) discuss “low,” “medium,” and “high” interactions. Taking account of these earlier and contrasting views, extent for the purposes of this work was defined as having two levels. One is *strategic* where joint objectives and outcomes (or visions) are agreed and organisations adjust operational activity to achieve these. The other is *specific* involving focused or targeted engagement, predominantly at the operational level, impacting only a particular part (or parts) of the organisations.

Figure 1 depicts these three changes made when situations dictate a change of inter-organisational relationships. In the figure, if the relationship dial (left side of the figure) rotates clockwise, then the structure dial (centre of the figure) and the extent dial (right side of the figure) also rotate clockwise the same number of settings.

Two real world examples of the RC dial concept operating in practice arose from the 9/11 attacks. In the United States of America (US), following inquiry and debate on what caused and contributed to 9/11, a decision was taken to merge 22 federal agencies to form the new Department of Homeland Security (Department of Homeland Security, nd; Whelan, 2012, p. 1). While some, or many, of the agencies involved can be anticipated to have had inter-organisational relationships already in existence, the US federal government determined the need to reconfigure the arrangements. So the government “rotated the relationship dial” to merger for all 22 agencies and the new organisation was created.

A different inter-organisational relationship outcome was arrived at from the same 9/11 events, this time in the United Kingdom (UK) with formation of the Joint Terrorism Analysis Centre (JTAC) (Andrews, 2009, p. 817; Bamford,

2004, p. 744). In that case, the decision was taken by “around a dozen” organisations (Andrews, 2009, p. 817) to rotate the relationship type dial to collaboration, the structure dial to networked (a dozen interacting agencies), and the extent of engagement dial shifted to specific (i.e. threat assessment was the issue). The JTAC collaboration sought to “... ensure that the analysis and assessment of counter-terrorism intelligence is a ‘much more collaborative process’ providing increased efficiency and responsiveness to customer requirements” (Bamford, 2010, p. 744, quoting the Intelligence and Security Committee Annual Report 2002–2003).

The JTAC collaborative/networked/specific extent of engagement approach was also adopted by Australia and New Zealand respectively with the establishment of the National Threat Assessment Centre (NTAC) and the Combined Threat Assessment Group (CTAG) (Walsh, 2011, pp. 110–111; Wardlaw & Boughton, 2006, p. 140; Whibley, 2013, p. 5). All three of the assessment organisations mentioned involve collaboration between agencies in the intelligence and law enforcement communities of the respective countries.

While the phrase “rotate the RC relationship dials” may make the process sound simple and far from complex, like tuning a radio, this is not the intention. Undoubtedly, before such actions are taken, discussion and debate is entered into within and between organisations. In such situations, government may also seek to exercise policy leadership and steer organisations toward inter-organisational relationships they approve of, or desire. For example the “whole of government” and “joined-up working” of the 1990s and 2000s in Australia and New Zealand illustrate this government leadership–steering process in action (Bollard et al., 2001, pp. 4–5; Christensen & Laegreid, 2007, p. 1059; Paul, 2005, pp. 31–32).

Changes like the formation of a new department or development of a collaborative venture comes with challenges (Svendsen, 2010, p. 308), again, this paper does not seek to trivialise the complexity of such undertakings. The circular depiction of the RC and use of the phrase rotating the dials does, however, represents the idea that inter-agency relationships consist of a finite group of settings that are capable of being selected by agencies and which, as suggested by Smith & Wholstetter (2006, pp. 251–252) allow organisations to assess “the different types of cooperation neutrally.” No setting is superior to another. Each offer a choice regarding the degree of coupling an organisation decides it needs to achieve what it desires, in the circumstances being faced.

The next section of this paper outlines what makes the NC<sub>3</sub> relationship types different from each other, how this difference was determined, and how it is observable. This addresses the challenge created by the interchangeable use of the NC<sub>3</sub> terms and the risk this creates in the study and description of inter-organisational relationships (Mattessich & Monsey, 1992, p. 42; O’Flynn, 2009, p. 112).

### ANALYSIS OF THE NC<sub>3</sub> RELATIONSHIP TYPES

To broaden the pool of scholarly knowledge available to assess the innate features of inter-organisational relationships the initial literature review used to identify relationship types was expanded. In total, a sample of 57 scholarly sources on the topic of inter-organisational relationships was gathered. The sources came from across the spectrum of organisational behaviour literature and included material from public and private sector environments. Once gathered, the sources were subjected to analysis to determine the features of each of the NC<sub>3</sub> relationship types.

The sampling method chosen to gather the sources involved “handpicking” scholarly works. This was combined with the selective sampling of additional sources from those referenced in the handpicked material (similar to O’Leary’s “snowball” sampling (2010, p. 170)). The handpicking process involved searches of the Journals Database available through the Charles Sturt University (CSU) Library. It used the search tool “EBSCOhost (all) Research Databases” and its “Academic Search Complete” function. This facilitated access to 7,300 peer-reviewed journals. The searches used key words commonly used in connection with inter-organisational activity. These included, for example: “network,” “collaboration,” and “cooperation,” or a combination of terms, such as: “co-ord\*” AND “organis\*” AND “behave\*.” Each search was bounded by use of the time frame 1990–2012.

The National Library of Australia’s catalogue was also used to identify scholarly books for consideration. Again, sampling included key word searches using the same technique as described earlier. Finally, a search using *Google Scholar* was made seeking scholarly articles or books with twenty or more citations that could also be considered for use as data sources in the research. Once more key word searching as described above was used, however, this time only the first 100 returns were visually scanned to identify sources.

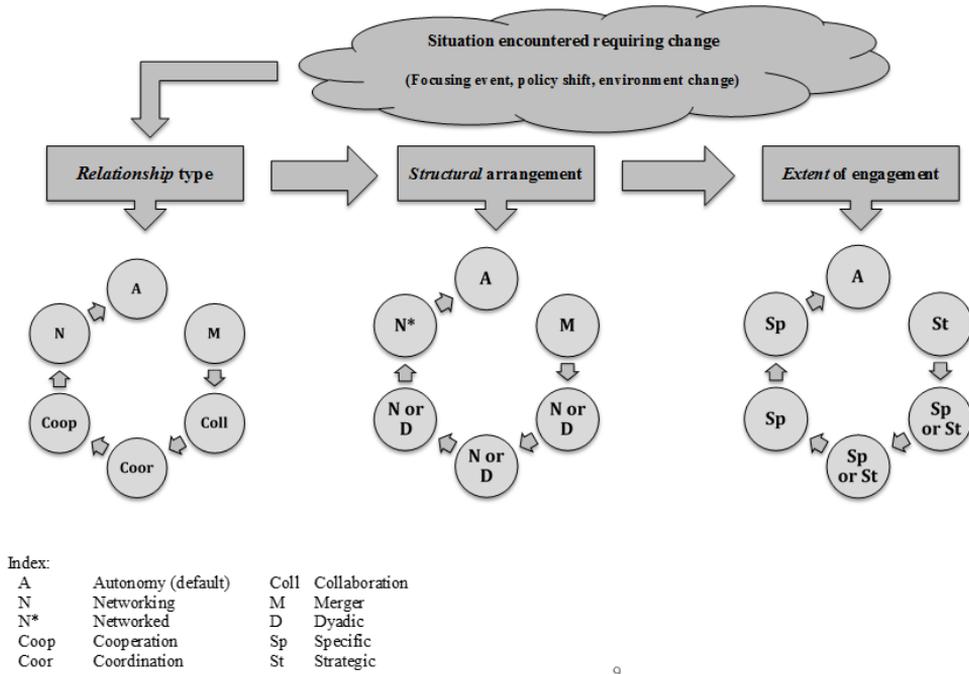
At the end of the gathering process, 42 peer-reviewed journal articles, ten book sections, three scholarly books and two non-scholarly documents were selected for the analysis phase. With regards to the two non-scholarly documents identified, one was a paper by Himmelman, a consultant and writer on organisational engagement (Himmelman, 2002). It was identified through both the handpicking and selective sampling methods. The paper was included in the sample due to its content and referencing in peer-reviewed articles. The second item was a report by Mattessich and Monsey (Mattessich & Monsey, 1992) prepared for the Wilder Research Foundation. It was identified in a similar fashion to the Himmelman paper. It was also included due to its content and referencing in peer-reviewed articles.

In order to develop the description of each NC<sub>3</sub> type, each source was read and a research record made of the relevant content. Subsequently, all the research records were interrogated using searches of words or part-words to retrieve references to various relationship types. By way of example, for networking, the search used: “network”—which also returned variations of the word including: “networks” and “networking.” For cooperation, the search used: “cooper”—which also returned: “cooperate,” “cooperation,” “cooperating,” and “cooperative.”

During this process, use was made of what is commonly referred to as the “Kipling Method of inquiry”—Who, What, When, Where, Why and How (Kipling, 1934, pp. 586–587). The questions were framed as: Who uses this type of relationship? When do organisations use this type of relationship? Why do organisations use this type of relationship? How is this type of relationship formed? What are the other features of this type of relationship? And finally: Where is this type of relationship used?

Some sources provided data on more than one NC<sub>3</sub> relationship type. For example, an author may have written about both networking and cooperation in the same article. In such cases the source was used for both networking and cooperation, and was recorded as a source for each. The results of reviewing sources to support the feature identification process are shown in table 1.

Figure 1 — The Relationship Continuum Dials



To develop and present the NC<sub>3</sub> relationship types and their associated features, mind-maps were used, supported by *SimpleMind* software. Each relationship type had a mind-map created for it with the Kipling Method questions arrayed around the central theme—the relationship type being considered.

NC <sub>3</sub> type	Number of potential sources of data for each relationship type	Number of sources used to provide data for each relationship type
Networking	45	24
Cooperation	44	25
Coordination	46	20
Collaboration	46	26

Table 1 — Data sources identified and used to define the NC<sub>3</sub> types

As each mind-map was constructed, a record of the sources mentioning the features identified was created using the text box associated with each node on the mind-map. These source mentions were referred to as “references.” This enabled multiple references supporting inclusion of a feature to be recorded. It also ensured auditability was built into each mind-map. Occasionally, material was found which presented a counter point of view to earlier data establishing a feature’s presence in a mind-map. These counter points of view were recorded in the map using the same process as for references.

When the four mind-maps were finished a spreadsheet was created listing all of the features identified, the number of references they received, as well as the counter points of view found in the literature sample. The spreadsheet contained 135 separate features spanning all four mind-maps. By way of example, the results for the feature “resource sharing” are shown in table 2.

Feature	Networking		Cooperation		Coordination		Collaboration	
	Referenc	Counte	Referenc	Counte	Referenc	Counte	Referenc	Counte
	e	r	e	r	e	r	e	r
Resourc e sharing	16	1	5	2	3	1	8	0

Table 2 — “Resource sharing” references or counter points in each NC<sub>3</sub> mind-map

### NC<sub>3</sub> ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

To determine how best to manage the quantity of data requiring analysis for each NC<sub>3</sub> type, three mathematical calculations were explored. Firstly, the mode (O’Leary, 2010, p. 238; Prunckun, 2015, pp. 258) was calculated to determine the most commonly occurring number of references per feature in each model. For all models the mode equalled one. Secondly, the mean (O’Leary, 2010, p. 238; Prunckun, 2015, p. 256) was calculated to determine the average number of feature references in each model. For networking and collaboration, the mean was three, while for cooperation and coordination the mean was two.

During these calculations it was noted the data contained some extreme numbers. For example, in the networking mind-map the number of feature references ranged from one through to sixteen, with no feature having twelve to

fifteen references (i.e. there was a gap between eleven references and sixteen references). Therefore, the final calculation undertaken was to determine the median (O’Leary, 2010, p. 238; Prunckun, 2015, pp. 257–258), or mid-point, number for feature references in each model. The use of the median helps mitigate the impact of extreme numbers in a range (Prunckun, 2015, p. 258). The results identified a different median for each model. They were: networking: five & six, cooperation: three, coordination: four, and collaboration: five.

Given that the data for the NC<sub>3</sub> analysis contained extremes, it was decided to use the median number of feature references in each model to analyse the data. Therefore, all features with a total number of references less than the median were excluded from further consideration. This reduced the original 135 features down to a more manageable 22.

Before conducting an analysis of the individual relationship types, a macro-level assessment was undertaken to determine what features may be common across all four of the NC<sub>3</sub> types. For consistency, the three mathematical calculations detailed earlier were also completed for the combined feature references across all four NC<sub>3</sub> types. This confirmed: (a) the mode number of references was one, (b) the mean number of references was four, and (c) the median number of references was nine. The macro-analysis, therefore, only considered features with a combined total of nine or more references across all types (the median or above). Eight features were identified meeting the criteria and they are displayed in table 3.

This analysis led to the view that these features—due to their cross-relationship type noteworthiness—are fundamental to the formation and operation of NC<sub>3</sub> inter-organisational relationships. It is argued they represent the core elements for why, when and how inter-organisational relationships develop.

To clarify, inter-organisational relationships occur when organisations (both public and private) encounter difficult challenges (wicked problems in the public sector, while the equivalent in the private sector is the need to continually innovate in the face of uncertainty and complexity); organisations, therefore, enter relationships to share information and knowledge concerning the challenges and to garner access to resources they need and do not have; to accomplish this they must establish and maintain trust in their counterpart(s) and

contribute to some form of collective action; the relationship itself can develop from two quite distinct pathways: the informal (emergent) one, or the formal (designed) one; ultimately, this all occurs in order to achieve what cannot be achieved by them remaining autonomous.

Table 3 — Combined total of nine or more feature references across the four relationship types.

Features	Networking	Cooperation	Coordination	Collaboration	Combined total
Resource sharing	15	3	2	8	28
Informal (emergent)	11	5	2	4	22
Info/knowledge sharing	9	6	3	4	22
Formal (designed)	5	2	7	7	21
Trust	8	2	1	9	20
Achieve what cannot be achieved alone	2	5	2	7	16
Wicked problems	6	1	1	3	11
Collective action	3	1	4	1	9

Beyond the core elements, the second analysis undertaken using the macro data and median criteria for each relationship type, revealed shared features. The shared features were mentioned by the sample’s authors as associated with two or more of the NC<sub>3</sub> types. Table 4 displays these shared features.

It was observed in table 4 that three different relationship types share two features. The first of these features is: “formal (designed),” shared by networking, coordination and collaboration. A possible explanation for this is that inter-organisational relationships are important to organisations, requiring them to commit resources—either by way of sharing material, or staff time and effort to make the relationship work—therefore, comfort is found in having a formal structure underpinning the engagement.

The second shared feature across three types is: “resource sharing,” associated with networking, cooperation and collaboration. There are two possible explanations for this from the literature. One theory describes how a tightening of the economic environment sees resource scarcity occurring, the result being inter-organisational relationships forming to mitigate the threat (Thomson & Perry, 2006, p. 20). In the intelligence and law enforcement context, this could see sharing of expensive and scarce resources—for example, surveillance teams—between agencies when investigations exceed the resource holdings of one particular organisation.

Table 4 — Features shared between NC<sub>3</sub> relationship types

Features	Networking	Cooperation	Coordination	Collaboration
Informal (emergent)	☐	☐		
Formal (designed)	☐		☐	☐
Resource sharing	☐	☐		☐
Shared objectives/goals			☐	☐
Information/knowledge sharing	☐	☐		
Achieve what cannot be achieved alone		☐		☐
Trust	☐			☐
Governed without hierarchy	☐			☐

The second theory suggests the narrowing of organisational mandates results in greater specialisation and loss of the broader range of resources organisations were able to call upon from “in-house” sources (Andrews & Entwistle, 2010, p. 680; Knobens, Oerlemans & Rutten, 2006, p. 390), this results in inter-organisational relationships forming as a means of re-gaining access to that broader range of resources. In the intelligence and law enforcement context, the development of information and intelligence fusion centres would fit this theory (Persson, 2013, pp. 15–16; Whelan, 2012, p. 22; Aniszewski, 2011, p. 7).

The first theory detailed has greatest applicability to the private sector while the second is more relevant to the public sector and the earlier mentioned fragmentation resulting from NPM (Christensen & Laegreid, 2007, p. 1,060).

Additionally, the analysis revealed the two relationship features “governed without hierarchy” and “trust” are shared by networking and collaboration. This seems a logical nexus, whereby the absence of hierarchical power results in compensation in the form of trust development between the parties with regards to not taking undue advantage of one another in a relationship. A further revelation was that relationship types closer to the autonomy setting on the RC (figure 1) share the feature “informal (emergent) development,” while those closer to the merger setting share “formal (designed) development.” Again, this seems a logical situation given the relationships are moving from an environment of loose coupling (networking) towards tighter coupling (collaboration).

An associated point is that networking also shares the “formal (designed) development” feature with coordination and collaboration. This apparent anomaly is explained by the sample literature—in the public sector environment—as occurring due to networking being the formalised bureaucratic response to the outcome of NPM philosophy that results in a more specialised and fragmented public sector (Bollard et al., 2001, pp. 4-5; Doig, 2005, p. 423; Turrini, Cristofoli, Frosini & Nasi, 2010, p. 528).

The final analysis conducted sought to determine if there were any features principally linked to a relationship type. The analysis revealed each type did in fact have features (or a feature in the case of cooperation) that met or exceeded the median reference threshold, and which are principally linked to a specific relationship type. They are:

*Networking:*

- Three or more organisations are needed to form a network;
- Contracting is a means by which networking arrangements can be entered into;
- Tackling “wicked problems” is a reason to enter networking arrangements;
- A network’s activities can involve a central agency, or lead-agency, governance arrangement; and
- Reciprocity is expected between the parties involved in a network.

*Cooperation:*

- A lower intensity of involvement and risk is experienced in this type of relationship.

*Coordination:*

- A controller, or work-regulator, can be used to manage this type of relationship;
- Organisational “turf” is not given up in this type of relationship; and
- Collective action is involved.

*Collaboration:*

- There is some shared risk and reward involved in this type of relationship;
- Good communication channels are important for collaborative success;
- This relationship type involves intense engagement between the parties; and
- Greater time commitment is required to make the relationship successful.

These principally linked features are assessed as especially noteworthy elements of the relationship types they are associated with. Therefore, they can—when viewed as a group and not individually—be considered the features portraying the sought after identifiable differences between the four NC<sub>3</sub> types.

## CONCLUSION

This paper describes six relationship settings that intelligence and law enforcement organisations can choose between when situations determine they should work together. The continuum containing the relationship choices can be thought of as a set of three dials. The turning of the relationship dial alters the nature of the inter-organisational relationship type. It also provides opportunity to adjust the structural arrangements affecting the organisation’s relationship and the extent to which the organisation interacts with other(s).

The most recent and high-profile changes affecting the intelligence and law enforcement communities, it is posited, arose out of the 9/11 and subsequent terrorist events. As a direct result, a number of relationship changes were enacted, some of which were touched on briefly in this paper. As a longer-term result of 9/11, however, the IC and LEC are now required to be constantly considering and, when necessary, adjusting their inter-organisational relationships, at both the strategic and specific levels. To operate in this new world, it is important that those required to make and manage such changes understand the choices they have, and the subtle differences between them.

Setting aside the end points on the relationship continuum (autonomy and merger), the four remaining relationship settings have in common eight underpinning features. These form the core elements that organisations must experience to move from a default position of autonomy into an inter-organisational relationship with others. The four relationship types also have a number of features that they share with one or more of their counterparts.

Finally, analysis of the sample authors' work revealed features that are principally linked and especially noteworthy in respect of individual inter-organisational relationship types. It is contended that these features help untangle and define the nature of the relationship an organisation has chosen to enter into when, in everyday use, the terms applied to relationships can be used inappropriately or interchangeably.

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## Book Review

### *Policing Vulnerability*

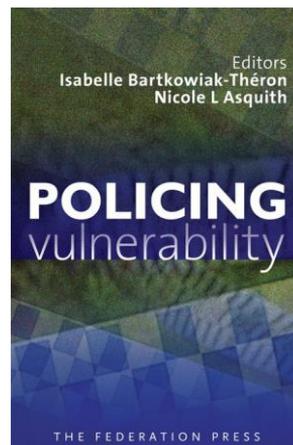
by Isabelle Bartkowiak-Theron and Nicole L. Asquith

The Federation Press, Sydney

2012, 320 pages

ISBN-9781862878976

Reviewed by Emma Colvin



In this edited collection, the editors begin by asking important questions about the way vulnerability is perceived, categorised and dealt with by police. In particular, they unpack the terminology around vulnerability and examining the way markers of vulnerability have been addressed in academic research, critiquing siloed approaches that focus on primary dimensions of diversity that do not account for people presenting with multiple markers of vulnerability. The authors encourage a respectful approach to discussing vulnerability that focuses on individual agency rather than emphasizing disadvantage. This is refreshing, especially as there is sometimes a tendency in scholarly writing on vulnerability to be paternalistic. Bartkowiak-Theron and Asquith stress the importance of cultural competency in policing and assert that it can be an asset rather than an encumbrance.

This collection comprises work by authors that interrogates policing and vulnerability at all stages of contact. The book is split into five sections that are based on the progression through the policing process from first contact through to sentencing and punishment, providing critical analysis on crucial stages of intervention.

The first section of the book examines the first point of contact between police and vulnerable people. This is a stage that can set the tone for future interactions and early intervention, as such it has the potential to inform those working at the coalface on how to effectively manage these first points of

contact. Stanford's chapter interrogates risk dynamic in constructing and categorizing risk. While she highlights the inherently political nature of risk dynamics within a neo-liberal system, her research found that in practice workers interacting with vulnerable people tend to take a less conservative approach. Based on her findings she encourages workers to take a reflexive approach. Doctors Bartkowiak-Theron and Corbo Crehan's following chapter further critiques the categorisation of vulnerability and delves into assumptions about vulnerable group membership. They question the assumptive nature of the legal system when markers of vulnerability are identified, noting that just because a person may be a member of a group that has been identified as vulnerable, this does not necessarily signal a certain level of disadvantage. Bartkowiak-Theron and Layton's chapter provides a useful analysis of police recruit education, exploring effective ways of educating recruits on interactions with vulnerable people.

Part two broadens the focus from first response to deviancy, commencing with Winter and Asquith's study on quality of life policing in Tasmania. They recommend that police involved with community programs need to exercise awareness and community engagement rather than take a 'top-down' approach to community policing. The role of the police liaison officer is critiqued by Bartkowiak-Theron, who argues that while the role is important both within the police organisation and the community, a siloed approach may not be the best way to respond to people with multiple markers of vulnerability. Clifford's chapter on use of force, the media and vulnerability is particularly pertinent to law enforcement practitioners in light of recent cases that garnered significant media attention, e.g. Tyler Cassidy and Roberto Curti.

In part three, which focuses on police responses to vulnerability, Herrington and Clifford look at responses to mental illness. The "joined-up" approach discussed in this chapter may be of help to police and other agencies at the frontline of mental health policing. Egan-Vine and Fraser's chapter on police response to refugees raises important issues when dealing with CALD communities. This section is concluded by Asquith's discussion of complaint-making, which may prove of interest to those working with vulnerable people in helping them approach police. Part four transitions to vulnerability and custody, including a chapter by Huntley that examines the, to date, relatively under-researched area of acquired brain injury. Lorana Bartel's chapter on indigenous deaths in custody demonstrates that more than 20 years since the Royal

Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody there is still some way to go in addressing the Commission's recommendations. Readers involved in police investigation may also find Roberts and Herrington's chapter on psychological vulnerability and investigation proves useful.

The final section of this collection examines the transition of vulnerable people from police to the next stage in the process with Bartels and Richards examining vulnerability in the courtroom, Robinson addressing restorative justice and diversionary options and Graham examining desistance from crime. While this section covers interactions that do not necessarily directly involve police, it provides an important picture of the pathway vulnerable people tread throughout the criminal justice system.

While offering practical solutions grounded in empirical evidence and scholarly research the editors rightly note that the efficacy of these solutions is reliant on resourcing and political support. This book may primarily act as a guide for police when dealing with vulnerable people, its use and interest readily extend beyond serving police officers and recruit training to anyone working in the social and criminal justice sector.

#### ABOUT THE REVIEWER

**Emma Colvin**, BA, MCrim, is a lecturer in Justice Studies at Charles Sturt University. She is currently completing her PhD in criminology at Monash University examining the use of therapeutic bail in the Australian state of Victoria. Her research interests include therapeutic jurisprudence, bail, remand, and vulnerability in the criminal justice system. She is currently working on a collaborative research project looking at out of home care service provision and children in care who are entangled in the criminal justice system.

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