“HARD,” “SOFT,” OR “TOUGH LOVE”:
WHAT KINDS OF ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE PROMOTE SUCCESSFUL
PERFORMANCE
IN CROSS-ORGANIZATIONAL COLLABORATIONS?

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One of the most-pervasive contrasts in literature on organization management is between “hard” and “soft” approaches to managing people, representing different ways to influence behavior and improve performance (Truss, Gratton, Hope-Hailewy, McGovern & Stiles 1997). As the concepts will be used here, on the “hard” side are those approaches that seek to influence behavior by pressuring people to do things they would not have freely chosen – through control mechanisms ranging from seeking to initiate/structure choices to stronger pressures such as punishment, nagging/needling, accountability, direction, or establishing conflict-laden situations where a person’s views are challenged. On the “soft” side are approaches seeking to influence behavior by nurturing people to build a commitment to doing a good job -- through inclusion, participation, creation of strong social ties in the group, or encouragement of cooperation.

This distinction has a rich history in organization studies, dating as far back as Taylor versus the “human relations” school of the 1930’s (Bendix 1956), and continuing with Lewin’s (1938, 1939, 1943, 1947) contrast of “democratic” and “authoritarian” leadership. Gouldner's *Patterns of Industrial Bureaucracy* (1954) contrasted "leniency" in a factory, based on the idea that friendly, understanding treatment would create loyalty to the organization and motivate good worker performance, with a "punishment-centered bureaucracy" based on the view that employees needed to be strictly controlled or they wouldn't do their jobs. McGregor (1960: 34, 47, 132) compared “Theory X” and “Theory Y” as approaches to managing people. According to Theory X, “Because…[people] dislike…work, most people must be coerced, controlled, directed, threatened with punishment to get them to put forth adequate effort toward the achievement of organizational objectives.” According to Theory Y, people “will exercise self-direction
and self-control in the service of objectives to which [they] are committed” and managers should work on “the creation of an environment which will encourage commitment to organizational objectives and which will provide opportunities for the maximum exercise of initiative, ingenuity, and self-direction in achieving them.” Argyris (1957: 126) argued humans had growth and development needs, while organizations based on hierarchy assumed people “need to be pressured and needled” to work. Likert (1961: 103, 99; see also Walton 1985) contrasted managers who work to create “supportive relations” with those who “feel that the way to motivate and direct behavior is to exercise control through authority.” Some enduring contrasts in literature on leadership are between leaders who initiate structure vs. show consideration, are directive vs. participative, or are oriented towards tasks vs. relationships (Bass 1990).1

This contrast applies widely, not just in thinking about managing people in organizations. In a context of the institutional design of government, Feldman and Khademian (2001) contrast flexibility and accountability. In contemporary political discourse, Democrats are often seen as being the “mommy” (nurturing) party, Republicans as the “daddy” (demanding) one; in one experiment (Rule and Ambady 2010; see also Hays 2005), subjects examining faces tended to characterize faces they saw as “warm” as being Democrats, those seen as “powerful” as Republicans.

Indeed, one might argue that this contrast is pervasive not only in managing people, but in human interactions more broadly, and that the two approaches to influencing behavior fundamentally reflect different views of human nature. These approaches may even be seen as reflecting different individual traits or behavioral

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1 Where do contingent rewards, another very common approach towards behavior influence, fit in this categorization? Our view is that it falls into a category of its own: while not as harsh as “hard” approaches, it lacks the unconditional features of “soft” approaches and is often viewed as more controlling as well.
orientations. Bass (1990), in his overview of research on leadership, noted the basis of different approaches:

Either human nature was cursed by original sin or human nature was blessed with the inherent ability to find salvation. If people were essentially bad, they had to be controlled, directed, and uplifted by authority. If people were essentially good, they must be given the freedom in which to learn, to grow, and to overcome.

In Chinese culture (Maybury-Lewis 1989), “yang” (hard, powerful) is contrasted with “yin” (soft, nurturing); these different points of view find expression in proverbs such as “spare the rod and spoil the child” vs. “you catch more bees with honey than vinegar.”

In this paper, we explore these issues in the context of an interagency collaboration in local government in England and Wales called Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRP’s). We apply this framework to the domain of cross-organizational collaboration for two reasons. First, there is enormous scholarly and practitioner interest in the cross-organizational collaboration in general (e.g. Bardach 1998; Huxham and Vangen 2005; O’Leary, Gerard & Bingham (editors) 2006; O’Leary and Bingham (editors) 2009; Isett, Mergel, LeRoux, Mischen & Rethemeyer 2011), and a strong emerging concern about the lack of research examining the performance impact of such collaboration and its determinants (e.g. Lasker, Weiss, and Miller 2001; Koontz and Thomas 2006; Geddes 2008). Second, we wish to examine an underlying assumption in much literature on cross-organizational collaboration, though seldom expressed explicitly in the way we do here, that just about the only influence tools such partnerships have available are nurturing, “soft” ones; this is seen to be due to the lack of an employment relationship between partnership leadership and participating organizations, removing direction as an option, and to the voluntary nature of commitment or effort by partner...
organizations on behalf of a collaboration. We will put this assumption into question, and suggest an alternative way of thinking about features of a cross-organizational collaboration’s culture that are most conducive to influencing partner behavior and improving collaboration performance – a pairing of hard with soft approaches that we call, following pop psychology, “tough love.”

Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships, the cross-organizational collaboration that provides the empirical setting for this research, were established by the Crime and Disorder Act of 1998 and required in every local government area in England and Wales. CDRP’s are a collaboration consisting mostly of government organizations – the police (which are organizationally autonomous from local government), the Probation Service (a central government organization working mostly with recently released prisoners), the Youth Offending Service (also a central government organization dealing with young people at risk of crime), the Fire Service (also an autonomous local organization), local government service organizations (such as streetlighting, parks, and inspectional services), and a number of other organizations, often including the voluntary sector. Partnerships such as CDRP’s have been common in the U.K. (Sullivan and Skelcher 2002; 6 et al 2002. For further discussion, see Kelman, Hong & Turbitt 2011.)

CDRP’s provide a rare opportunity to test hypotheses about whether organizational characteristics of a cross-organizational collaboration produce improve social results in the area of the collaboration’s activity. First, by statute they exist in every local authority in England and Wales, so there are enough of them to permit quantitative

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2 A CDRP’s boundaries are co-terminous with the boundaries of the local government.
3 CDRP’s are not required to include organizations dealing with social problems such as employment.
4 Initially there were 376, although the number has been reduced slightly by mergers.
analysis. Second, their aim is crime reduction, and crime data are available at the local authority level. This combination is seldom available for research on collaborations.

In this paper, we test whether there are features of CDRP culture that have an impact on crime; if this occurs, it is presumably because the culture helps generate better decisions, and/or more and higher-quality effort, by participants.

HYPOTHESES

A “Soft” Culture

There is an old tradition in organizational studies, going back to Kurt Lewin, arguing that participation in decision-making both improves decision quality and behavioral change in the direction of the decision reached. Likert argued (1961: 100; see also Coch and French 1948) was that “[w]idespread use of participation is one of the more important approaches employed by…high-producing managers.” These effects relate partly to the nurturing function of participation (helping gain subordinate acceptance of decisions), but also significantly to other factors, such as gaining the benefit of subordinate knowledge provides valuable decision inputs. Similarly, the common view in the classic literature on conflict-resolution (e.g. Deutsch 1973) was that a cooperative style of interaction among group members promotes better decisions.

However, this view is by no means universally accepted; a review of ten meta-analyses of studies of relationships between participation and performance (Wagner 1994: 325) concluded that effects were “positive in direction but limited in size.” More generally, there is concern that “[a]n over-emphasis or exclusive emphasis on caring and concern…can become distorted and dysfunctional. …Leaders can become permissive, indulgent, and lenient. …They can compromise standards and become wishy-washy in
upholding requirements. In such cases, leaders allow others to perform below their level of capability” (Cameron, Quinn, DeGraff, and Thakor 2006: 79-80). A common view, originally associated with Vroom and Jago (1988), is that the ability of participation to produce better decisions is contingent on many features of the decision being made.

A participative organizational culture may be more common in government – even in single organizations -- than in the private sector, perhaps because of the democratic political context in which public organizations function; one study (Jago 1980) found that government organizations in general were more likely to use participative approaches than were business firms.

Much literature on cross-organizational collaboration argues that the best way to elicit effort and commitment is through a “soft” culture that places a premium on inclusion, participation, and equality among member organizations (e.g. Mattessich and Monsey 1992; Crislip and Larson 1994; Kickert and Koppenjan 1997; Alexander, Comfort, Weiner & Bogue 2001; Linden 2002; Vangen and Huxham 2003; Agranoff 2007; Bryson and Crosby 2008). Indeed, Vangen and Huxham (e.g. 2003: 219) often specifically use the word “nurturing” to describe what is sought.

Such nurturing is designed to elicit among partners the desire to become or stay involved in the collaboration. This is more important for collaborations than for single hierarchical organizations for several reasons. First, engagement in a collaboration -- sometimes literal but at a minimum active involvement -- is voluntary, compared with participation by employees in the activities of an organization that employs them. Relatedly, with regard to participative decision-making, collaboration leadership lacks the ability to direct the behavior of participants, making that alternative way to make
decisions infeasible. ("The lack of traditional hierarchy between leader and led,” Vangen and Huxham (2003: 73) note, does not allow formally for autocratic decisionmaking.") Additionally, creating a desire for involvement is more difficult among organizations in a collaboration because of the absence of common ties and culture that often automatically grow up in single organizations over time; indeed, one oft-noted problems with achieving involvement in cross-organizational collaborations (e.g. Bardach 1998) is the discordant cultures among participant organizations.

(1) Consensus decision-making: We see a culture in a cross-organizational collaboration where decisions are made by consensus as indicating a participatory culture. While consensus decision-making is impractical in a large society, so that majority voting should there not be seen as exclusionary, in a collaboration context, with few participants and ones typically of unequal power, consensus decision-making more reflects an approach that seeks to nurture participants through inclusion, especially by allowing a greater decision-making role for weaker groups

(2) Deliberative style: This is often seen as a particular virtue of collaborations: “By combining the individual perspectives, resources, and skills of the partners, the group creates something new and valuable together. …Some people and organizations change when they are exposed to partners with different assumptions and methods of working.” (Lasker, Weiss, and Miller 2001:184-85; see also Gray 1989; Agranoff and McGuire 2001). The mode of interaction described as “cooperative” in conflict-resolution literature is characterized in democratic theory as “deliberative” (Elster 1986; Finlayson 1995), emphasizing transformation of preferences, rather than aggregation of unchanged
preferences. Given that our context is decision-making in a government setting, we use the expression “deliberative style” to refer to this kind of cooperative approach.

While in a democratic polity the alternative to deliberation is some version of pluralistic bargaining, the alternative in a collaboration is some version of “takeover” of the partnership by the dominant organization (Dickinson and Glasby 2010), in the case of a CDRP by the police. This ties a deliberative style even more closely in a collaboration context to the idea of inclusion as a way to generate voluntary involvement.

3) A warm organizational climate: A group’s “climate” has been described (Lewin 1951: 241, emphasis in original) as “the atmosphere (for instance, the friendly, tense, or hostile atmosphere)” in the group, or, more broadly, as “characteristics that describe an organization” (Forehand and Gilmer 1964: 362) or “how people interpret their work environment” (Kopelman, Brief & Guzzo 1990; see also Schulte, Ostroff & Kinicki 2006). Climate dimensions in the literature (Waters, Roach & Batlis 1974) include “esprit” (“members feel that their social needs are being satisfied and, at the same time, they are enjoying a sense of task accomplishment”), “consideration” (the organization shows “an inclination to treat members as human beings and to do something extra for them in human terms”) and “warmth” (“the feeling of general good fellowship that prevails in the work group atmosphere”).

One might say that a warm climate is the overall embodiment of successful "soft" cultural features, showing the presence of a nurturing environment for group members.

H1. A “soft” culture – involving consensus decision-making, a deliberative style among participants, and a warm organizational climate -- will promote better collaboration performance.
A “Hard” Culture

A “hard” culture has traditionally had a bad name in organization studies. Skinner (1948), in his classic work, argued reward works better than punishment, because the effects of the latter are only temporary and produce negative side effects, a view that has received some support but also criticism (Arvey and Ivancevich 1980; Sims 1980). As Arvey and Jones (1985) note, there is relatively little empirical research on the effects of discipline/punishment on behavior in an organization context. In their summary of the literature, they note that punishment does appear to reduce the frequency of behaviors punished, though studies of its impact on overall job performance show mixed results. More generally, Quinn, DeGraff, and Thakor (2006: 79-80) discuss leaders who “see what needs to be done and boldly challenge others to do it... …They are exacting and hold high standards of performance. …(But such) leaders can become overbearing, manipulative, and self-serving. They can create defensiveness in others by being too tough, too insistent, too intense, or too severe. …Sabotage and resistance are not unusual responses. Rather than producing positive effects and performance that meets high expectations, performance almost always declines.”

We do know that punishment produces resentment (Day and Hamblin 1964), and this at least to some extent may be the case for other pressuring or controlling cultural features, even if milder than punishment, as well. Conflict, for example, produces stress, anxiety, and (in the case of conflict among people or groups) a worsening social climate (DeDreu 1997). Since effort and commitment in collaborations are significantly voluntary, practices producing resentment or anxiety may be problematic.
Reading the literature on cross-organizational collaboration, one might wonder whether any elements of a “hard” culture might plausibly be expected to exist at all. Nonetheless, Huxham and Vangen (2003) use the phrase “collaborative thuggery” to describe “hard” features of a collaboration culture.

**Initiating Structure**

The least-difficult element of a “hard” culture for a collaboration to develop – though also the least-“hard” as well – is one where the collaboration’s leadership plays a central role in establishing the collaboration’s agenda. This corresponds to the “initiating structure” construct in leadership research (Bass 1990). A number of discussions of cross-organizational collaborations present this as an important activity of collaboration leaders. “A very large amount of leadership activity actually centres on finding ways to control the collaboration’s agenda” (Vangen and Huxham 2003: 208; see also Bardach 1998; Agranoff and McGuire 2001). Indeed, this behavior is the primary illustration Vangen and Huxham (2003: 222-25) use of “collaborative thuggery” – perhaps an indication, given the very modest “hardness” of this feature, of how small a role the literature sees “hard” features as playing in collaboration culture.

**Accountability**

We think of accountability in the sense emphasized by Lerner and Tetlock (1999: 255; see also Behn 2001: 4, who sees this as the term’s “formal definition”), which sees accountability as involving the requirement “to justify one’s beliefs, feelings, and actions to others.” Some version of accountability is another feature of a “hard” culture that might frequently be present in collaborations, especially those dominated by government

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5 Schriesheim, House & Kerr (1976) note that different “initiating structure” scales have quite different component questions; some scales have much greater elements of directing and other stronger controls.
organizations and that therefore are part of the accountability structure existing for government. Even collaborations where government agencies are not dominant may develop an accountability culture if they are scrutinized, and hence required to answer to, the media or another government organization, if government is funding the partnership.

Because collaborations inside democratic governments exist in a context where accountability is a system norm, this is a “hard” culture feature it is plausible to believe might exist in these arrangements. It is true that accountability in what Behn sees as its vernacular sense, that is to say punishment for shortcomings, is less-available to collaborations than to traditional hierarchies. However, even accountability in the sense of having to provide an explanation puts pressure on people to think and/or behave in ways those to whom the explanations are being provided find appropriate.

Acceptability of Conflict

Although early work on conflict in groups focused on its negative effects, probably the dominant view in the literature at this point is that conflict can be beneficial to group performance, by bringing more information and points of view to the table, increasing the raw materials available for decision-making. An early advocate of this view was Coser (1956: 197), who argued, “Conflict prevents the ossification of the social system by exerting pressure for innovation and creativity.” Janis’ classic Victims of Groupthink (1972; see also Tjosvold 1985; De Dreu and Weingart 2003) criticized the impact of conformity pressures on group decision-making quality and advocated bringing conflict into decision-making processes. An interesting strand of research initiated by Nemeth (1986) has shown that, in face-to-face group settings, even when minorities don’t convert the majority to their point of view, expression of minority viewpoints often leads
the group to give greater thought to the issue under consideration, attending to more aspects of the situation, which in turn produces better decisions that are different from both the majority’s and minority’s initial viewpoints. Literature on the impact of heterogeneity on decision-making quality in top management teams (Bantel and Jackson 1989; Murray 1989; Schwenk 1989) generally reaches similar conclusions. There is also evidence that complex tasks benefit more from conflict than do routine ones (Jehn 1995).

However, the positive impact of opinion diversity can be counteracted by a negative impact from demographic or other diversity that reduces the perception of a common fate and can divide groups into in- and out-groups (O’Reilly, Caldwell & Barnett 1989; Pelled 1996; Zenger and Lawrence 1989). One strand of literature (Jehn 1995; Amason 1996) distinguishes between “task conflict” (positive) and “relationship conflict” (negative). Furthermore, some have suggested that conflict may aid in making decisions but hurt in getting a group to implement them: “Ill-will or tension engendered by decision-making conflict within a group may endure beyond the horizon of a “specific…decision… jeopardizing the future effectiveness of the group” (Schweiger, Sandberg, & Rechner 1989: 746;6 see also Sheremata 2000).

Direction

Control over behavior of organizational members frequently occurs when a legitimate source of authority provides direction (instructions) about what activities the member should or should not perform. As is frequently noted in the literature (Litwak and Hylton 1962; Litwak and Rothman 1970; Powell 1990), a distinguishing feature of cross-organizational collaborations is that participants do not have an employment

6 However, in this study, introducing decision conflict in a lab setting among experienced managers had only a small (and non-statistically significant) negative impact on acceptance of decisions.
relation with the collaboration, and thus that the ability to direct an employee’s activities that is a basic feature of this relationship is absent. Thus, direction is a feature of a “hard” culture that is seldom present in these organizations. Something of an exception may occur if a collaboration is established by law, where there may be a requirement for certain organizations to participate and fulfill certain duties – as is sometimes the case for cross-organizational collaborations in general⁷ and is the case for CDRP’s. In this situation, it may become legitimate to direct participation by reminding participants of their legal duty to contribute to the collaboration’s work.

H2. A “hard” culture – involving initiating structure, accountability, acceptability of conflict, and direction -- will promote better collaboration performance.

A “Tough Love” Culture

There is a small literature exploring the idea of “paradox” in organizations (Quinn and Cameron 1988; Denison, Hoojberg, and Quinn 1995; Lewis 2000; Blatt 2009; Smith and Lewis 2011) – the suggestion that, rather than choosing between opposite features, one might embrace both. Denison, Hoojberg, and Quinn 1995; 524-25, 528, emphasis in original; see also Quinn, Spreitzer & Hart 1992), in an early discussion of paradox, argue that, while organizational phenomena are traditionally “presented…in terms of discrete, opposing categories,” it may make more sense to see effective leadership as reflecting “multiple opposing categories simultaneously” – a style they called “behavioral complexity.” The implication, they continue, “is that leaders with a broad behavioral repertoire and the ability…to perform roles that include a degree of contradiction or paradox, will be the most effective. …Thus, the definition of effective leadership implied

⁷ Agranoff (2007) provides examples from the sample of collaborations he studied; see also Rodriguez, Langley, Beland & Denis 2007.
by the model is not the capacity to be either a monitor or a director or an innovator, but rather to perform all of these roles simultaneously.”

We apply here the idea of paradox to the impact of “hard” and “soft” cultural features on the performance of inter-organizational collaboration. The argument is that a culture mixing both will produce better results than one featuring either alone. Using a phrase from pop psychology, we call such a mixture “tough love.” This construct is not commonly used by scholars; we have come across only two mentions of this phrase in organizational studies literature. Quinn, Spreitzer & Hart (1992: 234) define “tough love” as the ability “simultaneously...[to] be able to reach out and support people, while also demanding the best they can give.” Quinn (2004: 186) defines it as being “assertive and bold yet compassionate and concerned,” calling people “to higher objectives and standards while also showing empathic, relational support.”

Though the construct is uncommon in the literature, there are many suggestions both in popular dialogue and in scholarly literature – not typically brought together under any unifying construct -- of better organizational (or personal) performance coming from a mixture of “hard” and “soft.” Prominent popular culture examples include the stereotypical sergeant in Army boot camp, who is hard on his recruits but also cares for them, and various programs to treat drug addicts.

There are also numerous examples from management theory and practice of dichotomies combined in a “tough love” way. Many (Sagie 1997) involve a mixture of participation and initiating structure and/or direction. Bass (2008: 504) argues that

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8 Maybury-Lewis (1989) notes that some cultures that feature dichotomies -- such as yin and yang -- believe these dichotomies are in constant struggle with each other (such as a battle in Zoroastrianism between light and darkness), while other cultures emphasize bringing opposites together.
good leadership integrates orientation to the task with concern for relations in the group. “Leaders have to be strong and decisive, yet sensitive to people. …[M]aximum …effectiveness occurs only when the leader is highly concerned for both production and for people.” Paternalistic leadership (Pellegrini and Scandura 2008: 567) -- often argued to be the typical style for managing employees in Chinese and other non-Western cultures -- mixes "strong authority is combined with concern and considerateness."

More specifically, Lewis (2000: 768) notes that quality management practices “require employee discretion as well as formal statistical controls.” A classic idea about using performance measures in organizations (e.g. Snell 1992) is that “hard” control of results can be matched with “soft” autonomy about how to reach them. Blatt (2009) argues that a mixture of high group identification and specific performance expectations is likely to improve team performance in entrepreneurial startups. Bailyn (1985) argues that engineers in research labs want “strategic” control (direction about what projects to work on) but “operating” autonomy (freedom to decide how to do the work). Pasmore (1998: 563-64; see also Sheremata 2000; Gebert, Boerner, & Kearney 2010) argues that innovation will be most successful when an organization both promotes “new ways of doing things” and also has “regular performance discussions” to weed out ideas that don’t make sense. “There is a need to relax control to allow innovation to occur; but there is also a need to review the results of intentional experimentation together to determine if they are what is desired by all.” Sundaramurthy and Lewis (2003 have applied this idea to the optimal operation of corporate boards. In the public sector, the leader under the Blair government in the U.K. of a unit charged with promoting achievement of agency performance targets characterized his approach as providing “challenge and support” to
departments (Kelman 2006), a phrase adapted from use of a mixture of “pressure and support” to achieve change in school systems (Fullen 1991).

Peters and Waterman (1982: 320, 322) characterize excellent companies as displaying “simultaneous loose-tight properties”: “We have talked about lots of soft traits, lots of loose traits. We have mentioned clubby, campus-like environments, flexible organizational structures,…maximized autonomy for individuals,…feedback emphasizing the positive, and strong social networks. …But at the same time, a remarkably tight…set of properties marks the excellent companies. Most have rigidly shared values. …[They emphasize] regular communication and very quick feedback; nothing gets very far out of line. …Autonomy is a product of discipline.”

How might “tough love” cultural features work to improve performance? The basic mechanism, we suggest, is that nurturing creates an environment where pressuring becomes acceptable. Cameron, Quinn, DeGraff, and Thakor (2006: 82) quote a star football player as saying about his coach, “‘Bo is the only person in the world that I will let kick me in the butt.’ ‘Why?’ we asked. ‘Because I know he loves me.” Similarly, Sundaramurthy and Lewis (2003) argue that only if agents believe that principals trust them will monitoring not have a negative impact on intrinsic motivation.

There are different ways to mix opposing impulses. Smith and Lewis (2011; see also Quinn and Cameron 1988) discuss four: (1) contingently, (2) temporally, (3) spatially, and (4) simultaneously. Only the last is what we have in mind as “tough love.”

There is a long tradition of organization research (e.g. Fiedler 1964; Lawrence and Lorsch 1966; Vroom and Yetton 1973; Yukl 2006) arguing that different approaches are contingently successful depending on with what kinds of people, or situations, they
are used – behaving, say, nurturingly with an intrinsically motivated employee and a controllingly with one who isn’t. This is a call for managers to be versatile, behaving differently depending on what a situation demands (Zaccaro, Gilbert, Thor, & Mumford 1991; Denison, Hooijberg & Quinn 1995; Hooijberg 1996; Kaplan 1996). Different techniques, however, would be used one at a time, at different times. This may be the message in Bass’ (1990) suggestion good leaders do “more of everything” than bad ones.

A second technique is to mix techniques temporally (Ford and Backoff 1988; Sagie 1997), systematically displaying opposing features at different times in an organization process. Leaders might be more directive at the beginning of an activity in setting goals, and more participative later on in discussing means. (The ideas about product teams discussed earlier emphasize control at the beginning and autonomy later. 9) Organizational “punctuated equilibrium” (Tushman and Romanelli 1985), where long periods of stability alternate with short periods of rapid change, is another example of mixing opposing features temporally.

A third technique is to separate opposing approaches spatially (Ford and Backoff 1988). A classic example would be creating an “ambidextrous” organization engaging in both exploratory and exploitative learning (March 1999) by separating parts producing current products from those developing new ones (Tushman and O'Reilly 1996).

Given the mode of operation we have proposed for a “tough love” culture to work – requiring organization members to experience both features at the same time – an organization must undertake what may be the hardest way to mix, namely to “attend to

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9 A related idea (Zaltman, Duncan & Holbek 1973; Pierce and Delbecq 1977) is that formalization (a form of control) is bad for idea-generation, but good for successful implementation of an idea once adopted.
competing demands simultaneously” (Smith and Lewis: 381). Simultaneous treatment creates a new construct: “Unlike the either/or relationships of formal logic, dialectical relationships allow contradictory opposites not only to coexist and interact, but to form something different from either” (Ford and Backoff 1988: 97). Thus, for example, androgyny is different from both the masculinity and femininity that are its constituent parts (Bobko 1985). This is different from contingent, temporal, and spatial approaches to paradox, where opposing “treatments” are not applied at the same time.

To the extent “hard” and “soft” approaches are applied more or less at the same time, they cannot be literal opposites – “x” and “not-x,” for x and not-x cannot, by definition, both be applied at the same time. Instead, approaches must be independent (Gebert, Boerner & Kearney 2010; see also Pruitt 1998 in a negotiation context), where choice of one does not exclude the other. In cooking, a dish cannot be both sweet and not-sweet at the same time, but it can simultaneously be sweet and sour. To take the example in Gebert, Boerner & Kearney, a team leader can set a framework of decision rules for the team, while encouraging autonomy in the team’s knowledge-search; one practice is hard, the other soft, but the practices are complements rather than opposites (see also Jonas, Fry, and Srivastra 1990). An economist (Blinder 1988) once titled a book on economic policy Hard Heads, Soft Hearts, calling his approach “tough-minded economics for a just society.” Here, the “love” was displayed in the choice of goals to be pursued – “a just society” – while “toughness” was displayed in the choice of means to pursue those goals. In the context of this research there is nothing logically contradictory

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10 Doing two things literally at the same moment may be impossible.
11 A warm organizational climate reflects an ongoing, background characteristic of a collaboration. Interactions between this feature and others therefore cannot be interpreted as reflecting contingent, sequential, or separated applications of “hard” and “soft” – only simultaneous “tough love.”
about simultaneous presence of a culture that pays attention to providing partners an equal chance to participate ("love") and one where leaders also are not hesitant to remind people of their legal responsibilities to participate in the partnership ("tough").

The impact of opposing approaches applied contingently would be expected to be additive, with significant positive main effects for both (assuming they are applied in appropriate situations) signifying that both approaches contribute to good performance. However, there is no interaction between the effects of the two. One treatment (when applied in appropriate contingencies) effectively improves performance whether or not the other treatment is applied in its appropriate contingencies; the total effect of application of the treatments is the sum of separate effects of the applications. The conjunction of the two approaches does not add anything further to performance;

By contrast, “tough love” implies multiplicative effects: the “soft” practice works only, or work better, if combined with the “hard” one. We therefore would expect to see the impact of “tough love” on performance expressed through interaction effects between “soft” and “hard” cultural features.¹²

There is only a small amount of empirical research testing the impacts of embracing paradox on organizational or managerial performance. Of this literature, most is unclear about the theoretical difference between additive and interaction effects. Some tests additive effects (Sagie, Zaidman, Amichai-Hamburger, Te-eni & Schwartz 2002; Judge and Piccolo's (2004). Quinn (1988; see also Quinn, Spreitzer & Hart 1991) found that managers effective on one pole of a dichotomy but ineffective on the other were seen

¹² The contrast between additive and interaction effects appears in Blake and Mouton (19820. If the unit of analysis for the impact of temporal or spatial approaches is the organization, then these approaches would be predicted to produce interaction effects, while if the unit is the subunit or the period of time, the prediction would be for additive effects.
as generally ineffective. This might suggest a multiplicative effect (effectiveness on pole x produces an effective manager only in the presence of effectiveness on pole y), but it also might result from successful application of a contingent management style (effective managers knew how to apply opposing approaches, and were able to apply them in appropriate situations). It is interesting that one survey of experienced managers asking them how best to deal with different situations and different types of employees (Blake and Mouton 1982) found that respondents generally preferred an approach mixing both “structuring” and “consideration” features, regardless of situation or type

\[H3: \text{The presence of elements of both a “hard” and “soft” culture – “tough love” -- will produce better collaboration performance than will either kind of culture by itself.}\]

No “tough love” combination has received more attention in the literature than the combination of empathy and assertiveness in negotiation, or task conflict and relationship harmony in conflict-resolution.

In negotiating, there is considerable empirical evidence that parties who have both high concern for achieving good outcomes for themselves and also high concern about the outcomes the other party – an approach variously labeled “flexible rigidity” (Carnevale and Pruitt 1992; Pruitt and Carnevale 1993; Rubin, Pruitt & Kim 1994), “dual concern” (De Dreu, Weingart & Kwon 2000), and a mix of assertiveness and empathy (Mnookin 2000) -- do better in terms of the sum total of the value of the outcomes achieved than those who either care only for their own outcomes or only for achieving harmonious agreement with their negotiating partner.

On the one hand, an approach referred to as “contending” or “competition” – the “effort to resolve a conflict on one’s own terms without regard to the other party’s
"interests” (Pruitt and Rubin 1986: 25-26; Mnookin 2000) may, if pursued vigorously enough, maximize the contending party’s returns, but seldom maximizes the sum of returns. However, neither does a “problem-solving” approach involving the “effort to identify the issues dividing the parties and to develop and move toward a solution that appeals to both sides.” “[H]igh concern with the other’s welfare in the absence of self-concern leads to rapid concession making and failure to find win-win solutions” (Carnevale and Pruitt 1992: 541) or “simply satisficing on minimally acceptable outcomes and compromises” (Galinsky, Leonardelli, Okhuysen and Mussweiler 2005: 1096); in one study (Fry, Firestone & Williams 1983), strangers achieved higher total benefits in a negotiation than couples who were dating, because the dating couples didn’t have a high enough level of aspiration and moved to reach agreement too quickly.

By contrast, assertiveness can promote value-creation because it retards agreement, giving time – but only in the context of empathy -- for creative thinking, and for new solutions to emerge. Often (Pruitt and Rubin 1986) such solutions come simply from logrolling (a party concedes on issues of less importance in exchange for similar concessions from the other party), but they can come from what Pruitt and Rubin (1086: 147) call “bridging,” developing new options not previously considered -- “neither party achieves its initial demands, but a new option is devised that satisfies the most important interests underlying those demands” (see also Fischer and Ury 1981).

In the area of group decision-making, a significant body of research (e.g. Vroom and Yetton 1973; Vroom and Jago 1978; Tjosvold 1982; Tjosvold, Wedley & Field 1986; Jehn 1995; Amason 1996) suggests that a mixture of task conflict and relationship harmony (few personality conflicts/tensions) is associated with good group decisions to
which group members feel committed. This approach is often referred to as “constructive conflict” (sometimes called “functional” rather than “dysfunctional,” or “cooperative” rather than “competitive,” conflict), where those involved try to achieve “mutually beneficial goals rather than…trying to win and outdo each other,” and “are open to being influenced rather than trying to dominate each other” (Tjosvold, Wedley & Field 1986: 127). Such a constructive approach could be produced by something that produces collective team identification (Gebert, Boerner, and Kearney 2010) and/or from group norm about having a deliberative discussion style encouraging listening and learning.

Here again, there is empirical literature (e.g. Tjosvold and Deemer 1980; Tjosvold 1982; DeDreu and West 2001)) suggesting that “constructive conflict” produces better decisions than either competitive conflict or conflict-avoidance; the DeDreu and West experiments (2001: 1192, 1198) found that presence of minority dissent in a team (where “a minority…publicly opposed the beliefs, attitudes, ideas, procedures, or policies assumed by the majority”) interacted with presence of participative decision-making (allowing “creative ideas and solutions induced by minority dissent [to] be critically examined and adopted or rejected on the basis of arguments and evidence”) to improve decision innovativeness.

In contrast to the “tough love” causal dynamic discussed earlier, the one explaining the advantage of “dual concern” over either assertiveness or empathy by itself may be seen as involving an inverted U-shaped nonlinearity where both very low or very high values of one of the elements by itself creates low performance, and a middle value for each one creates best performance. The basic idea is that "extremity in any criterion of effectiveness creates...dysfunction." (Cameron 1986: 549; see also Gebert, Boerner,
and Kearney 2010). Illustrating in a somewhat different context, Cameron argues that "too much action and innovation can create a loss of direction, wasted energy, and a disruption of continuity," while "[a]n over-emphasis on control and coordination can produce stagnation, loss of energy, and abolition of trust and morale." It is, he argues, "the presence of balanced paradoxes that energizes and empowers systems."\(^{13}\)

**H4.** A mixture of assertiveness and empathy ("dual concern") displayed by partner organizations in their dealings with each other will produce better collaboration performance than will either approach by itself.

We also hypothesize that a warm climate might, in the context of “soft” features of a culture, provide a form of “tough” pressure on people to perform better. If participants feel positively about interactions inside a CDRP, this might lead them to develop a commitment to their counterparts and to the CDRP as an organization, inducing them to feel pressured not to let the group down and thus to take their responsibilities seriously.

**H5:** When features of a “soft” culture are present in a collaboration, a warm organizational climate will constitute part of a “hard” culture, producing better collaboration performance when both are present together.

\(^{13}\) This is not the same as a tradeoff, where more of each feature is good, but one pays a price for "too much of a good thing" in not being able to attain enough of something else that is also good. Here the argument is that at some point, more of the feature is not good.
DATA AND METHODS\textsuperscript{14}

Data

Data on presence of “hard” and “soft” elements of a CDRP’s culture come from a 2008 survey of community safety managers.\textsuperscript{15} CDRP’s are managed through a network administrative organization (Provan and Milward 1995) – a dedicated unit, with its own staff, for the collaboration; “community safety manager” is the title of the person running the CDRP network administrative organization.

The survey was initiated by an email directing the respondent to an Internet-based survey involving fixed-response answers to a series of questions. After four attempts to reach the respondent by email, we attempted to do the survey by telephone. We ended up with 203 completed surveys (102 online and 101 by telephone), a 65% response rate.

Our survey included a large number of questions to test many hypotheses. This made it impossible, due to issues of survey length, to develop a battery of questions for each construct we wished to test under the overall rubrics of “hard” and “soft” elements of a CDRP culture; instead, we are forced to rely on single-question measures.

Crime data were provided by the U.K. Home Office. Data on demographic and other control variables came from the 2001 British census and other published sources.

Dependent Variable

Our dependent variable is the change in the crime rate between 2002-03 and 2008-09\textsuperscript{16} by CDRP, aggregated for nine crime categories that were the subjects of

\textsuperscript{14} For a more detailed discussion of material in this section, see Kelman, Hong & Turbitt (2011).
\textsuperscript{15} After four attempts to reach the respondent by email to initiate the survey, we attempted to do the survey by telephone.
\textsuperscript{16} Through July 1.
central government performance targets during 2005-08. We logarithmically transformed crime to enable interpretation of coefficients as percentage impacts.\footnote{To make results more intuitive, we reverse-coded crime, so a lower value (including a negative value if crime increased) means crime was higher. During this period, crime decreased in 69\% of CDRP’s; changes ranged from a decrease of 51\% to an increase of 55\%.}

**Independent Variables**

The values for our culture independent variables represent answers community safety managers gave to statements with which they were asked to disagree or agree (these were ordered on a 5-point scale, “strongly disagree” through “strongly agree”) or that required respondents to anchor themselves at a point between 1 and 7, expressing how close they felt to two polar opposite statements presented to them.\footnote{Respondents were presented with two statements at opposite edges of a 7-point scale. They were instructed: “If you completely agree with the first statement, mark ”1.” If you completely agree with the second statement, circle ”7.” If your opinion is somewhere in-between two of these alternatives, you may mark one of the numbers in-between that comes closest to your opinion.”} To make responses more intuitive -- such that a higher value for the variable meant that the cultural feature was present to a greater extent -- some variables were reverse-coded.

The “soft” culture variables were as follows:

1. **Consensus decision-making:** We asked respondents to anchor themselves on a scale with two statements as opposites: “In this Partnership, we always take decisions by consensus” and “In this Partnership, we often take decisions by majority vote, where there are some dissenters from the decision taken.” (reverse-coded)

2. **Deliberative style:** We asked respondents to anchor themselves on a scale with these two statements as opposites: “The police identify a problem and say, ‘Here’s how we need other partners to help’” and “The partners work out approaches to problems together, and, through these discussions, the police...”
frequently come to see approaches to crime and disorder reduction that they wouldn’t have seen on their own.” The latter statement was meant to capture cooperation, concern for others, equality, and empathy.19

The “hard” culture variables were as follows:

(1) Initiating Structure: Respondents were asked to agree or disagree with the statement, “A good community safety manager will seek to exert considerable influence over the Partnership’s action agenda.”

(2) Accountability: To measure accountability as a feature of a CDRP’s culture, we used a statement about a practice at meetings of the local CDRP board. This is a sort of “board of directors” for the CDRP, with a senior representative of all the major organizations in the CDRP. Typically, it is chaired either by the local authority chief executive (the highest career executive in the local government, analogous to a city manager in the U.S.), by the head of the local police, or by one of them in rotation. Respondents were asked to agree or disagree with the statement, “The CDRP board normally questions performance information at its meetings, over and above just hearing presentations of performance reports.” This captured the presence of an accountability culture in the sense of needing to give a public explanation for one’s activities and to defend one’s account against possible criticism.

19 The reference in the statement to coming to see new approaches can partly be seen as a statement of a problem-solving style that would be hypothesized to emerge from the mixture of assertiveness and empathy, but should also be seen as illustrating for the respondent the ideas of working together and concern for others.
(3) Acceptability of Conflict: Respondents were asked to agree or disagree with the statement, “It is better just to avoid subjects that might be contentious among the partners.” (reverse-coded)

(4) Direction: To measure use of direction in the sense of telling participants of their legal obligations, respondents were asked to agree or disagree with the statement, “If I were having problems getting engagement from a statutory partner, I’d have no hesitation to remind them of their legal responsibility under Section 17 of the CDA [Crime and Disorder Act].” Section 17 of the statute states that “it shall be the duty” of each organization required by the statute to become part of the CDRP “to exercise its various functions with due regard to the likely effect of the exercise of those functions on, and the need to do all that it reasonably can to prevent, crime and disorder in its area.” (Crime and Disorder Act 1998) This provision is used as a statutory basis for a requirement for organizations comprising the CDRP to work actively to further the CDRP’s crime-fighting mission, over and above other missions the organization has that are not related to crime-fighting.

The question refers only to the attitude of the current community safety manager. However, the “toughness” of a person’s management style is presumably generally a factor in hiring decisions; furthermore, the willingness of a manager to speak to participating organizations this way might be expected to reflect what is culturally acceptable. We thus believe that the answer to this question will likely reflect the CDRP’s culture and not just the idiosyncratic style.

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20 The statute that established CDRP’s.
of the community safety manager. To the extent this is not the case, this introduces noise, making any results conservative.

Finally, for the variable measuring presence of a warm climate in the collaboration, we used a statement where respondents were asked to agree or disagree with the following characterization: “It is almost always true that the more people participate in partnership activities, the more positive they become about them.”

With regard to all the independent variables discussed above, one might ask, given the agree/disagree or self-anchoring nature of these questions, whether the opposite of an answer here categorized as, say, “hard,” is a “soft” cultural feature. If true, this would render our division of features into hard and soft meaningless. We therefore note that, if one examines the question wordings, one sees that the opposite of the, say, "hard" feature presented in the question is not the positive presence of a "soft" feature, but merely the absence of a tough one. That a parent doesn’t love a child doesn’t imply that the parent puts pressure on the child – only that they don’t love the child. So, for example, in the question about whether the respondent agrees with the statement about reminding a membership organization of their legal responsibilities to the Partnership, they are expressing the presence of a feature of a "hard" culture. But if they disagree, they are not actively seeking to nurture participants along the lines of a “soft” culture, but only failing to act in a “hard” directive way. If a CDRP avoids contentious topics, or fails to demand accountability, this doesn’t imply the culture is nurturing. Making decisions by majority vote in a collaboration context is less participatory or inclusive, but it is not

We were concerned this variable might possibly be partly endogenous, i.e. that as crime decreased partners felt more warmly towards the CDRP. To examine this, we ran our model with main effects only. In this model, the p-value for “warm climate” was insignificant (.37), suggesting that, since a warm climate is not related to the dependent variable as a main effect, endogeneity is unlikely to be a major problem.
directive. A community safety manager who fails to exert influence over the Partnership’s agenda might well simply be a passive manager, not necessarily an inclusive one.

**Interactions**

To test for impacts of “tough love” combinations, we tested a total of eight interactions between “hard” and “soft” culture/climate features (including tests of the interaction between a warm climate and both hard/soft variables). The presence of a significant interaction between a “hard” and “soft” culture features argues for the impact of “tough love” as opposed to either feature alone.

**Control Variables**

In Kelman, Hong & Turbitt (2011) we tested a number of demographic and organizational variables as controls. Of the 15 variables tested, we found that only two – (church attendance and local authority population) were significant in explaining the dependent variable. Lagged crime (2002-03) was also highly significant in explaining change in crime; jurisdictions with high initial crime reduced crime more. These variables were included in our model here as well.

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22 There were a total of 14 interactions among these 8 variables that were logically possible. We eliminated a number of them on the grounds that they didn’t appear to us to create combinations participants would experience as hard/soft (accountability x participation/deliberative style, direction x deliberation; warm culture x deliberative style) or that they were empirically unlikely to co-occur (acceptability of conflict x consensus decision-making, initiating structure x deliberative style).

23 We will also test for possible interactions between “soft” features, and between “hard” ones – e.g. an interaction between accountability and direction – in addition to between “soft” and “hard” ones as the tough love hypothesis suggests. The theory suggesting the possible presence of such interactions (Porter 1996) is that features of an organization’s strategy, and perhaps by extension its culture, work better when they fit together (or are “aligned” with each other). Such possible interactions are of less theoretical interest to us, since there is nothing to suggest that alignment might be especially important for the culture of collaborations as opposed to for organizations in general.

24 The coefficients for independent variables of interest, and of other control variables, do not change if the model is alternatively specified with later-period crime as the dependent variable (instead of change in
Method

We tested hypotheses using OLS with robust standard errors. We clustered observations by police force and weighted the observations to account for non-response bias (Kelman, Hong & Turbitt 2011). We centered all variables around their mean values to reduce multicollinearity (Aiken and West 1991).

RESULTS

Descriptive Statistics

Table One presents descriptive statistics. On average, CDRP cultures were more likely than not to embody both “soft” and “hard” features – the mean value for presence of every soft and every hard feature was positive. Given that the literature has emphasized “soft” features of managing collaborations, the degree of presence of “hard” ones is noteworthy. In fact, the mean value for presence of “hard” features was higher than for “soft” ones; the single most-prevalent feature of CDRP culture was, surprisingly, willingness to accept conflict.

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25 Given the many interactions and the relatively modest sample size, we tested for the presence of multicollinearity. In the model to be presented, this was not a problem; the highest VIF score was 1.78.
26 Values (and standard deviations) for the two variables on a seven-point scale – consensus decision-making and deliberation – were converted to a five-point scale to make comparisons easier. On a seven-point scale, the mean value for each was 4.8.
27 This result is particularly strong given that the variable was reverse-coded: to express acceptance of conflict, the respondent needed to disagree with the statement, obviating any concerns about an assenting response set bias.
### TABLE 1: DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Consensus decision-making</td>
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<tr>
<td>Deliberative style</td>
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<tr>
<td>Warm climate</td>
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<td>0.88</td>
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<tr>
<td>Initiating structure</td>
<td>3.97</td>
<td>1.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accountability</td>
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<tr>
<td>Acceptability of conflict</td>
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<tr>
<td>Direction</td>
<td>4.12</td>
<td>1.13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### TABLE 2: RESULTS OF REGRESSION ANALYSIS

|                          | Coefficient | P>|t| |
|--------------------------|-------------|-----|
| Consensus decision-making| 0.0002      | 0.96|
| Deliberative style       | 0.001       | 0.83|
| Warm climate             | 0.03        | 0.03|
| Initiating structure     | -0.002      | 0.82|
| Accountability           | -0.005      | 0.50|
| Acceptability of conflict| -0.001      | 0.91|
| Direction                | 0.02        | 0.10|
| LogCrime                 | 0.32        | 0.00|
| LogPopulation            | -0.008      | 0.67|
| Church attendance        | 0.02        | 0.00|
| Acceptability of conflict x Deliberative style | 0.02 | 0.004 |
| Accountability x Warm climate | 0.04 | 0.001 |
| Direction x Warm climate | 0.02        | 0.001|
| Consensus decision-making x Warm climate | 0.01 | 0.02 |
| Direction x Consensus decision-making | 0.002 | 0.053 |
| Accountability x Consensus decision-making | -0.005 | 0.18 |
| Initiating structure x Consensus decision-making | -0.005 | 0.39 |
| Initiating structure x Warm climate | -0.002 | 0.74 |
| Constant                 | 0.90        | 0.004|

Number of obs  =  203  
R-squared      =  0.59
Hypothesis Testing

Results of our regression model appear in Table Two. R² is .59. Looking at the results in a stepwise way, initial crime explained 48% of variance in change in crime, while the other two control variables added a further 3%. Adding culture features and interactions explained an additional 8%. Table 3 presents interpretations of interaction results – percentage crime change for a one-unit change in a feature at the mean value for the interacting feature, and at one standard deviation below and above the interacting feature’s mean.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>At 1 S.D. below mean</th>
<th>At Mean</th>
<th>At 1 S.D. above mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Warm climate</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accountability</td>
<td>-0.013</td>
<td>0.029</td>
<td>0.070</td>
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<tr>
<td>Direction</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>0.029</td>
<td>0.057</td>
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<tr>
<td>Consensus decision-making</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>0.029</td>
<td>0.057</td>
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<tr>
<td>Deliberative style</td>
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<td>0.001</td>
<td>0.015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consensus decision-making</td>
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<td>0.000</td>
<td>0.012</td>
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<tr>
<td>Accountability</td>
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<td>Acceptability of conflict</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direction</td>
<td>-0.006</td>
<td>0.015</td>
<td>0.037</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The results are most consistent with H3, H4, and H5, showing the importance of a “tough love” culture in improving results a CDRP delivers. Of the seven culture variables tested, only two, one “soft” (warm climate) and one “hard” (direction), have by themselves an effect on crime in the mean CDRP: a one-unit increase in a warm climate reduces crime by 2.9%, while a similar increase in direction reduces crime by 1.5%. In
both these cases, the positive effect of the feature is magnified when paired with presence of a complementary feature: with high levels of accountability, a one-unit increase in warm climate reduces crime goes by a dramatic 7.0% and 5.7% where direction is high, and where warm climate is high, a one-unit increase in direction reduces crime by 3.7%.

Of the other five culture variables, four – consensus decision-making, deliberative style, acceptability of conflict, and accountability -- have a positive impact on crime only in “tough love” pairings. (Of the seven features tested, only one, initiating structure, has no impact either as a main effect or paired with a complementary feature.) The “dual concern” hypothesis that decisions are better when parties show a mix of assertiveness and empathy is supported. When the acceptability of conflict in the CDRP is one standard deviation higher than the mean, a one-unit increase in deliberative culture reduces crime by 1.5%. Strong presence of the two “hardest” cultural features – accountability and direction – improve results when paired with a warm climate. Like the football player speaking about his coach in the quote presented earlier, CDRP members seem to be willing to accept being subjected to questions about their performance and reminders of their legal obligations if they feel good about the collaboration.28

Furthermore, for these four cultural features, crime actually goes up if the complement is remarkable by its absence. If a deliberative style is absent, a one-unit increase in the acceptability of conflict is associated with a 3.0% increase in crime, and crime also goes up if a deliberative style is present but people avoid conflict. Presumably, the reason for these negative impacts is that without a “tough love” combination, the activities of the CDRP are valueless, and since they have opportunity costs, using up time

28 None of the interactions between “hard” and “hard,” or “soft” and “soft,” variables was significant. See footnote xx above.
and energy that could have been used for single-organization anti-crime activities, especially by the police, they take organizations away from more useful anti-crime work; in a worst case, bad feelings generated might make informal collaboration among these organizations more difficult than it would have been without the CDRP.

Four of eight “tough love” interactions were not supported. Three involved interactions of “hard” cultural features (initiating structure, accountability, and direction) with consensus decision-making. This may be because consensus decision-making does not have important nurturing effects of the kind implied in the mechanism by which “tough love” has been suggested often to operate. The correlation between consensus decision-making and a warm climate – the feature measuring nurturing outcomes most directly – is only .15, statistically significant (p=.05) but not substantively large. We note that many benefits of participation noted earlier relate to impacts unrelated to a nurturing function. In our results, consensus decision-making reduced crime only in the presence of a warm climate, where such a climate seems to create pressure to get on with making decisions, rather than just let things stagnate for want of consensus. This is a “tough love” mechanism not dependent on any nurturing impact of consensus decision-making.

The other interactions that had no impact both involved initiating structure. This is surprising because this seems to be a less-pressuring, “hierarchy light”-type approach that previous work of ours (Kelman, Hong & Turbitt 2011) found to have a positive performance impact.29

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29 It is possible that this is simply a “hierarchy light” practice that is not successful. We note, however, that we conducted “data-mining” pairwise interaction tests of initiating structure and the background variables in that paper. We found a significant positive coefficient for the interaction with local authority partisan stability, which is theoretically plausible – community safety manager agenda-setting activities can have an impact in an environment where there is stable general political agenda-setting.
DISCUSSION AND LIMITATIONS

Given the emphasis in the literature on nurturing and inclusive approaches to collaboration management, these results suggest a revision to common themes in this literature. Interestingly, the three elements of a “hard” culture likely generally to be more pressuring (accountability, direction, and conflict) had an impact on performance, at least in a context of “tough love,” while the one involving the lowest level of pressure (initiating structure) did not. The results regarding the performance impacts of a “dual concern” model of interaction among partners, on the one hand, support a common view that a virtue of partnerships is that they bring together organizations with different perspectives, producing better approaches than those that would have arisen from a single perspective. On the other hand, to the extent it is argued that the delicate nature of partner commitment in a non-hierarchical environment requires avoiding contentious issues that might cause some partners to withdraw from commitment, these results stand against that approach to partnership management.

A “tough love” combination may be particularly important for success in a cross-organizational collaboration context. Single hierarchical organizations can muddle through based on the taken-for-granted character of supervisor direction of employee activities in the context of the employment relationship, usually applied without overt pressure. In such organizations, additional “soft” or “hard” cultural features may help improve performance, and “tough love” may add an icing on the cake.

Eliciting appropriate effort in collaborations is more challenging, and these findings suggest that “tough love” may be an important way to do so. Collaborations don’t have the luxury of an employment relationship, and this creates their fundamental
challenge for inducing effort. Given this, the conventional wisdom has been to induce such effort via nurturing approaches. And indeed, an element of “love” might be required to give partners some sense of affective commitment to the collaboration, commitment that is also difficult because of the relative absence of emotional ties or common culture that often grow in single organizations. But absent an employment relationship, “tough” features may also be required to create enough of a jolt to move from a general warm and fuzzy feeling to actual sustained and productive effort.

That somewhat opposite features need both be present to create a collaboration culture that improves performance – and indeed the fact that presence of one feature if its complement is distinctly absent can make results worse than without collaboration at all – underlines the difficulty of creating successful partnerships. Given this, it is good news for the possibility of collaboration success that, for CDRP’s at least, “hard” features as well as “soft” ones were often in fact present, which may be surprising given themes in the existing collaboration literature. We would urge practitioners to understand that success may be easier if vinegar is mixed with honey, and scholars to become more sensitive to the possible presence of “tough” features of collaboration cultures.30

30 In this sense, our results complement those in Kelman, Hong, and Turbitt (2011), where we note the importance of “hierarchy-light” managerial practices as opposed to those specifically related to managing partnerships for collaboration performance improvement. We briefly note the intersection between our results here and this work. There, we did not examine (and our ex post examination does not show) interactions between “hierarchy-light” and collaboration-specific practices in improving performance. It is tempting to associate “hierarchy-light” with a “tough” culture, collaboration-specific with a “soft” one. Closer reflection suggests, however, that “hierarchy-light” practices we examined involved followup (making sure partners follow through on commitments, performance measurement, dealing with “blockages”) or achieving something more resembling an employment relationship (chief executive influence, bidding for central funds), not pressure, while the collaboration-specific ones (trust, information sharing, local initiatives), except for power sharing, were not particularly nurturing. (“Performance measurement” in our first paper is a much broader concept that the board accountability feature highlighted in this paper; the correlation in our sample between presence of the two is a tiny .03.) The two that may be the closest in terms of pressure level (reminding partners of legal obligations here and following up on commitments in the earlier paper) were both found, without interactions, to improve performance in the mean CDRP. Note we found in the earlier paper that sharing power equally hurt performance. We find
Like all research, ours has limitations. The most-important is that we rely on single questions to measure the various cultural features, which is likely to create measurement error. As noted, the reason is that our data is gathered from a much larger survey designed to test many hypotheses, limiting the number of questions we could ask about any individual phenomenon. We note that to the extent measurement error introduces noise, this biases coefficients downward, making our results conservative. We hope, however, that future tests of these cultural features in the context of “tough love” research develops stronger measures for these features than we present here.

Second, one might argue that these results might be limited to collaborations such as CDRP’s, where an important partner is the police, which have a “hard” culture and thus might be more amenable to a collaboration culture with hard aspects. However, since a number of organizations in CDRP’s (such as youth services and probation) have “soft” cultures, it would presumably not so much be the case that “tough love,” when applied, works only in organizations with a “hard” culture. Instead, the argument might be that “tough” cultural features are less-likely to appear in collaborations where none of the major participants itself has a tougher culture. We may also speculate that creating a “tough love” mix is easier when some organizations in a cross-organizational collaboration have hard and others soft cultures, which if true actually creates a potential for successful management of collaborations that doesn’t exist in single organizations, if managers exploit this opportunity.

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31 Note the similar argument in Kelman, Hong, and Turbitt (2011) regarding the performance impact of manager prioritization of hierarchy-like practices.
Third, unlike some interagency collaborations, membership in CDRP’s is mandated by law. One might argue this reduces the need for a nurturing culture, since ongoing membership doesn’t need to be induced, while also making it easier to apply pressure on participants. We therefore can’t know for sure to what extent these findings apply to collaborations where participation is strictly voluntary. Nonetheless, there are reasons to suspect these findings might apply to such collaborations as well. First, as also noted earlier, while formal membership in CDRP’s is required by law, actual participation and commitment are far more voluntary, so differences between CDRP’s and collaborations where membership is voluntary are perhaps not so large. Second, one might argue that fully voluntary membership in a collaboration heightens the tensions that underlie the hypothesis that a “tough love” culture works best, although they may make application of pressuring cultural features more difficult.

Finally, to the extent the cultural features we study here arise spontaneously out of a collaboration’s culture, rather than from management interventions, our findings have less prescriptive bite. In particular, the most-powerful “soft” feature we discovered was a warm climate, but for this result to have prescriptive implications, we need to understand how such a climate arises and whether managers can do anything to promote it. We intend to explore this question in future research using this same dataset.

Except in research on negotiation and conflict-resolution, the idea behind "tough love" -- that seemingly opposite features of an organizational situation produce better results when both are present -- has received little empirical testing (or theoretical development) in organizational studies. In public management, "tough love" has received no attention at all. We therefore regard a contribution of this paper as introducing this
construct into public management scholarship. We believe the construct aids understanding of challenges and potentials of managing cross-organizational collaborations, and we urge scholars to see whether it can illuminate performance issues in single hierarchical organizations or other aspects of the study of public organizations.
References

Crime and Disorder Act of 1998


