

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 21st 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 NC₃ 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 (NC₃) 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 NC₃ types being four different relationships existing between the states of autonomy and merger. This second concept, therefore, situates the NC₃ 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, represent 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 NC₃ 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 NC₃ 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 NC₃ 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 NC₃ 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.

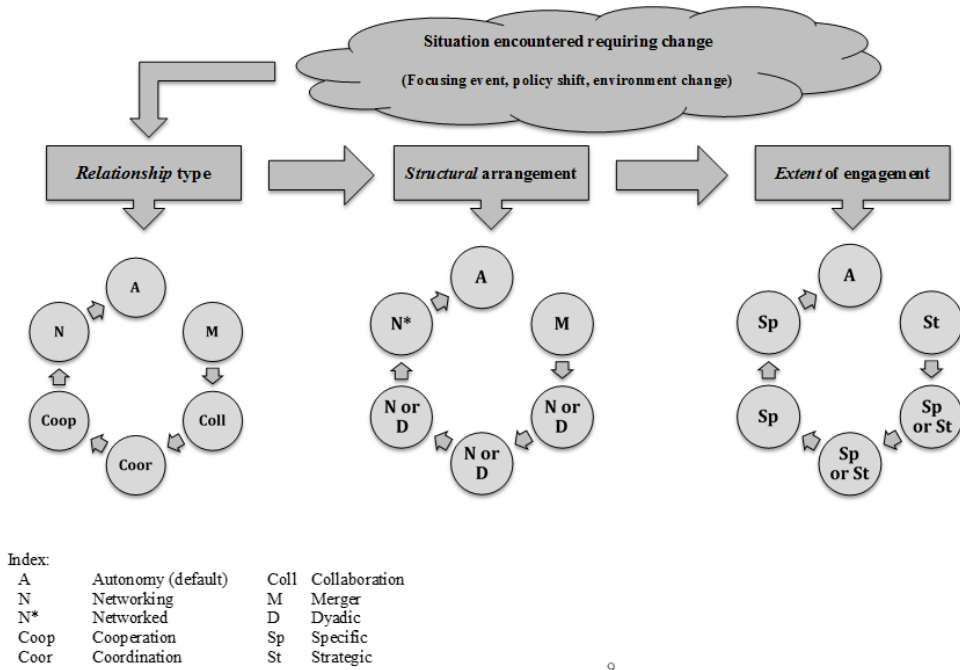
At the end of the gathering process, 42 peer-reviewed journal articles, ten book sections, three scholarly books and two non-scholarly documents were selected for the analysis phase. With regards to the two non-scholarly documents identified, one was a paper by Himmelman, a consultant and writer on organisational 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 NC₃ 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 NC₃ 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 NC₃ 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 ₃ 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 NC₃ 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 NC₃ mind-map

NC₃ ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

To determine how best to manage the quantity of data requiring analysis for each NC₃ 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 NC₃ 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 NC₃ types. For consistency, the three mathematical calculations detailed earlier were also completed for the combined feature references across all four NC₃ 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 NC₃ 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 NC₃ 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 NC₃ 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 NC₃ 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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