"Hard," "Soft," or "Tough Love": What Kinds of Organizational Culture Promote Successful Performance in Cross-Organizational Collaborations?
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ABSTRACT

One of the most-pervasive debates in literature on managing people is whether using "hard" or "soft" approaches produces better organizational performance -- those seeking to influence behavior by pressuring or by nurturing. This paper examines this question in the context of a cross-organizational collaboration in English local government between police, probation, social work, and other organizations designed to reduce crime. Using a survey to gather data about cultural features of these collaborations and actual crime data, we find interaction effects between the joint presence of "hard" and "soft" cultural features in explaining crime reduction. Taking a phrase from pop psychology, it appears that cultures characterized by "tough love" perform better than those with only "hard" or "soft" features by themselves. We suggest that further research be conducted surrounding the relationship of the "tough love" construct to organizational performance.

One of the most-pervasive debates in the literature on managing people is whether using "hard" or "soft" approaches produces better organizational performance (Truss, Gratton, Hope-Hailewy, McGovern & Stiles 1997). "Hard" approaches are those seeking to influence behavior by <u>pressuring</u> people to do things they would not have freely chosen. "Soft" ones are those seeking to influence behavior by <u>nurturing</u> people to build a commitment to doing a good job.

This distinction has a rich history, back to Taylor versus "human relations" (Bendix 1956), continuing with Lewin's (1938, 1958) contrast of "democratic" and "authoritarian" leadership. Gouldner (1954) contrasted "leniency" in a factory -- based on the idea that this would create loyalty and motivate performance -- with a "punishment-centered bureaucracy" -- believing employees had to be controlled or they wouldn't do their jobs. McGregor (1960) compared "Theory X" and "Theory Y." Argyris (1957: 126) argued humans had developmental needs, while hierarchical organizations assumed people "need to be pressured and needled" to work. Likert (1961:103, 99) contrasted managers creating "supportive relations" with those who "feel that the way to motivate and direct behavior is to exercise control through authority." Leadership literature features comparisons between leaders who initiate structure vs. showing consideration, are directive vs. participative, or are oriented toward tasks vs. relationships (Bass 1990).[1]

This contrast applies widely, not just in theorizing about organizations. In the 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"

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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.

(demanding) one; in one experiment (Rule and Ambady 2010), subjects examining faces tended to characterize those they saw as "warm" as Democrats, those seen as "powerful" as Republicans. Indeed, one might argue this contrast is broadly pervasive in human interactions, that the two approaches fundamentally reflect different views of human nature. In Chinese culture (Maybury-Lewis 1989), "yang" (hard, powerful) is contrasted with "yin" (soft, nurturing); these different views 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 a cross-organizational collaboration in English and Welsh local government called Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRP's). As researchers who focus on studying government organizations, our choice of research context grew out of interest in managing cross-boundary partnerships in the public sector, a topic that, especially in light of concerns about "connecting the dots" after September 11, 2011, has attracted significant concern in public administration scholarship (e.g., Bardach 1998; Huxham and Vangen 2005; O'Leary et al., editors, 2006; O'Leary and Bingham, editors, 2009).

From the perspective of the study of cross-organizational collaborations in government, our starting point was the view that success involves mostly skillful use of "soft" tools. (e.g., Kickert and Koppenjan 1997; Alexander et al. 2001; Vangen and Huxham 2003; Agranoff 2007; Bryson and Crosby 2008). This is seen in the first instance to be due to the unavailability of pressuring tools: there is no employment relationship among participating agencies of the sort that allows direction of member activities by hierarchical superiors, not even the contractual basis seen in alliances that firms undertake for self-interested reasons (e.g., Gulati 1995; Ahuja 2000; Mitsuhashi

and Greve 2010). Instead, for these collaborations, engagement -- sometimes literally but certainly active involvement -- is voluntary, and competes with activities in one's home organization. Adding to the challenge, creating the desire voluntarily to engage is more difficult than for single organizations due to absence of the common ties or culture often growing automatically in a single organization; indeed, different agency cultures in such collaborations are often discordant, creating a barrier to engagement (Bardach 1998). Given this, "soft" tools may not only be the only ones available; they are also the only ones able to create voluntary commitment in difficult circumstances.

We will put this assumption into question and suggest an alternative way of thinking about what cultural features are most-conducive to influencing partner behavior – a pairing of hard with soft approaches we call, following pop psychology, "tough love." We believe, for reasons we explain later, that "tough love" might be especially relevant for managing these kinds of collaborations in government. However, we have a broader aim -- to introduce the "tough love" construct into organization research more generally, with the suggestion its impacts be tested in other kinds of organizations as well.

CDRP's were established by the Crime and Disorder Act of 1998, and required in every local government area in England and Wales.[2] They consist mostly of government agencies – police (which are autonomous from local government), the Probation Service (a central government agency working with released prisoners), the Youth Offending Service (a central agency dealing with young people at risk of crime), the Fire Service (an autonomous local agency), local government service units (e.g., streetlighting, parks, and

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[2] A CDRP's boundaries are co-terminous with those of the local government.

inspection services).[3] The agencies are legally required at least formally to be members

of the CDRP. CDRP'S are managed through a "network administrative organization"

Provan and Kenis (2008) – a dedicated unit, with its own staff, separate from constituent

agencies. CDRP's frequently organize initiatives the CDRP runs itself. CDRP's are

responsible for recommending so-called "anti-social behavior orders," restrictions on

disruptive people (mostly youth) establishing limitations on others with whom or streets

where they may congregate. Some CDRP's run "warden" programs; wardens, who have

no arrest powers, patrol neighborhoods to provide additional presence and learn more

about problems, as well as checking (and informing other agencies about) graffiti or

lights with dead bulbs. Other examples of CDRP-run programs include collaborations

between police and regulatory agencies against illegal liquor purchases, police/ probation

programs to watch "prolific" offenders, and efforts involving police, streetlighting (in

charge of surveillance cameras), and other agencies to target crime hot spots.

In public administration literature, there has been concern about lack of research

on performance impacts of such collaborations and what determines it (e.g., Koontz and

Thomas 2006; Geddes 2008). CDRP's provide a rare opportunity to examine whether a

collaboration's organizational features improve performance. First, by statute they exist

everywhere in England and Wales,[4] so there are enough for quantitative analysis. Second,

they aim to reduce crime, and crime data are available. This combination is rarely present

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[3] Some other organizations, often the voluntary sector, are often asked to join. CDRP's are not required to
include organizations dealing with social problems such as unemployment.
[4] Initially there were 376, although the number has been reduced slightly by mergers.

for research on collaborations (or indeed even for single government agencies). In this paper, we test whether there are features of CDRP culture[5] that have an impact on crime.

HYPOTHESES

A "Soft" Culture

There is an old tradition, going back to Lewin (1958; see also Coch and French 1948; Likert 1961), arguing that participation in decision-making improves both decision quality and acceptance. These effects relate partly to participation's nurturing function, though also to other factors, such as gaining benefits of subordinate knowledge that helps produce better decisions. Similarly, the common view in the classic literature on conflict-resolution (e.g., Deutsch 1973) is that a cooperative style of interaction promotes better decisions. As noted, most literature on cross-agency collaborations in government argues the best way to elicit effort, given the challenges such collaborations face, is through a "soft" culture -- inclusion, participation, and equality among members.

However, this general view is by no means universally accepted; a review of ten meta-analyses of relationships between participation and performance (Wagner 1994) concluded effects were positive but limited. 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 et al.: 79-80).

We present the following features of a "soft" organizational culture:

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[5] By "culture" we mean common values in an organization expressing behavioral norms (Reilly et al 1997; Ostroff et al 2003).

(1) <u>Consensus decision-making</u>: We regard a collaboration where decisions are made by consensus as indicating a participatory culture. In a large society, consensus decision-making is impractical, so majority voting should not be seen as exclusionary. But in a collaboration, with few participants (often with unequal power), requiring a consensus for decision-making reflects an effort to nurture participants through inclusion.

(2) <u>Deliberative style</u>: 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 et al. 2001:184-85; see also Gray 1989). The mode of interaction described as "cooperative" in conflict-resolution literature is in democratic theory called "deliberative" (Elster 1986), emphasizing transformation rather than mere aggregation of preferences. Since our context is decision-making in government, we use the expression "deliberative style." The alternative is some version of "takeover" by a dominant agency (Dickinson and Glasby 2010), for a CDRP by the police. This ties deliberative style even more closely in a collaboration to inclusion as a way to generate voluntary involvement.

(3) <u>A warm organizational climate</u>: A group's "climate" has been described (Lewin 1951: 241, emphasis in original) as "the <u>atmosphere</u> (for instance, the friendly, tense, or hostile atmosphere)" in the group, or "experiences of well-being employees have from working in a setting" (Schneider et al. 2011: 39; see also Carr et al. 2003; Schulte et al. 2006). Affective climate dimensions (Waters, Roach & Batlis 1974; Ostroff 1993) include "consideration" (the organization shows "an inclination to treat members as human beings and to do something extra for them in human terms") and "warmth"

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("the feeling of general good fellowship that prevails in the work group atmosphere").

One might say that a warm climate is produced by or reflects "soft" cultural features.

H1. A "soft" culture – involving consensus decision-making, a deliberative style, and a warm organizational climate -- will promote better collaboration performance.

A "Hard" Culture

A "hard" culture has often had a bad name in organization studies. Skinner (1948) argued reward works better than punishment: the latter's benefits are temporary and produce negative side effects, a view receiving mixed support (Arvey and Ivancevich 1980; Sims 1980). Quinn et al. (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."

Given arguments in public administration literature, one might wonder whether any elements of a "hard" culture could exist in government collaborations . However, Huxham and Vangen (2003: S72), who write mostly about "soft" approaches, also briefly note what they provocatively label "collaborative thuggery": "It is not intended…that the term…should be taken literally. Clearly the term is extreme; it is used here simply to draw attention to, and raise awareness of, the pragmatic end of the spectrum of collaborative leadership activities. The identification of the 'thuggery' end …seems significant because it is so distant from the rhetoric of…a partnership approach."

Initiating Structure

The least-difficult element of a "hard" culture for a collaboration to develop is where the leadership plays a central role in establishing the partnership agenda. This corresponds to the "initiating structure" construct in leadership research, for many years considered a historical artifact but more recently (Judge et al. 2004) resurrected. Some present initiation as an important activity of collaboration leaders (Bardach 1998; Agranoff and McGuire 2001; Vangen and Huxham 2003). Indeed, such behavior is Vangen and Huxham's exhibit one of "thuggery" – an indication, given its modest "hardness," of the small role the literature sees for hard features in collaboration culture.

Accountability

We use "accountability" as in Lerner and Tetlock (1999; Behn 2001) -- requiring people "to justify [their] beliefs, feelings, and actions to others." Because collaborations inside governments exist in a context where accountability is a norm, this is a "hard" feature it is plausible to believe might exist. Having to provide an explanation pressures people to behave in ways acceptable to those to whom the explanations are provided.[6]

Direction

Control over behavior of organizational members frequently occurs when a legitimate source of authority provides direction about what activities the member should or should not perform. As is frequently noted (e.g., Litwak and Hylton 1962), a distinguishing feature of cross-organizational collaborations is that participants have no employment relation with the collaboration, and thus an ability to direct activities is absent. A partial exception occurs if a partnership inside government is established by

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[6] Accountability in what Behn would see as a vernacular sense – punishment for mistakes – is less-likely to exist in collaborations.

law, as is the case for CDRP's, [7] in which case it may be legitimate to direct participation by reminding agencies of a legal duty to contribute to the collaboration's work.

Acceptability of Conflict

Although early work on group conflict focused on negative effects, the dominant view now is that conflict can be beneficial by bringing a group more information and viewpoints. Many (Janis 1972; Tjosvold 1985; De Dreu and Weingart 2003) advocate bringing conflict into decision-making. Literature on the impact of heterogeneity on decision-making quality in top management teams (Bantel and Jackson 1989; Murray 1989) generally reaches similar conclusions. However, the positive impact of opinion diversity can be counteracted by a negative impact of demographic or other diversity that reduces perception of a common fate (O'Reilly et al. 1989).

Taking these features, we therefore also hypothesize the opposite of H1:

H2. A "hard" culture – involving initiating structure, accountability ,direction, and acceptability of conflict -- 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 et al.1995; Lewis 2000; Blatt 2009; Smith and Lewis 2011) – the suggestion that, rather than choosing between opposite features, one might embrace both. The implication, Denison et al. (1995: 528) argue, "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

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[7] Agranoff (2007) provides examples from the collaborations he studied; see also Rodriguez, Langley, Beland & Denis 2007.

leadership…is not the capacity to be either a monitor <u>or</u> a director <u>or</u> an innovator, but rather to perform all of these roles simultaneously."[8]

We apply here the idea of paradox to the performance impact of "hard" and "soft" cultures. The argument is that a culture mixing both will produce better results than one with either alone. Using a phrase from pop psychology, we call this "tough love." This construct is not commonly used by scholars; we have come across only two uses 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 calling people "to higher objectives and standards while also showing empathic, relational support."

There are suggestions both in popular dialogue and in scholarship of better organizational (or personal) performance from a mixture of "hard" and "soft." Prominent popular culture examples include the stereotypical sergeant in Army boot camp and some programs to treat drug addicts.[9] There are also numerous examples from management theory of dichotomies combined in a "tough love" way. Many involve a mixture of participation with initiating structure and/or direction. Peters and Waterman (1982: 320, 322) characterize excellent companies as displaying "simultaneous loose-tight properties": "We have talked about lots of soft traits. …But at the same time, a remarkably tight…set of properties marks the excellent companies. Most have rigidly shared values. …[They emphasize]…very quick feedback; nothing gets very far out of line." Bass (2008: 504) argues good leaders mix task orientation with concern for group

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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.
[9]   We do not refer to extreme examples, such as the original Synanon program treating addicts, which featured "breaking" participants through techniques such as isolation, humiliation, or sleep deprivation.

relations. Paternalistic leadership (Pellegrini and Scandura 2008: 567) -- often argued to be typical in many non-Western cultures -- mixes "strong authority…with concern and considerateness." Lewis (2000: 768) notes that quality management practices "require employee discretion as well as formal statistical controls." A classic idea about performance measures (e.g., Snell 1992; Blatt 2009) is that "hard" control of results can be matched with "soft" autonomy about how to reach them. Bailyn (1985) argues that engineers in research labs want "strategic" control (direction about what to work on) but "operating" autonomy (freedom to decide how to do the work). Pasmore (1998; see also Sheremata 2000; Gebert et al. 2010) argues innovation will be most successful when an organization both promotes "new ways of doing things" and also has "regular performance discussions" to weed out poor ideas. Sundaramurthy and Lewis (2003 have applied this idea to optimal operation of corporate boards. In government, the leader in the U.K. of a unit charged with promoting agency performance targets characterized his approach as offering "challenge and support" to departments (ANONYMIZED), a phrase adapted from "pressure and support" used by Fullen (1991) to achieve change in schools.

This approach has been occasionally discussed in the context of public policy choice. An economist (Blinder 1988) wrote Hard Heads, Soft Hearts, calling this "tough-minded economics for a just society": love appeared in goal choice ("a just society"), toughness in choice of means. Mead (1992: 175) was an early advocate of compulsory work programs for people on welfare, which he characterized as providing recipients a "combination of support and direction that many poor people need and want."

How might "tough love" improve performance? We suggest nurturing creates an environment where people are willing to accept (and gain the benefits of) pressuring.

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Cameron et al. (2006: 82) quote a star football player 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." Sundaramurthy and Lewis (2003) argue that only if agents believe 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 see as "tough love."

There is a long tradition (Fiedler 1964; Lawrence and Lorsch 1966; Vroom and Yetton 1973; Yukl 2006) arguing different approaches are contingently successful depending on with what kinds of people, or situations, they are used. This is a call for managers to be versatile (Denison, Hooijberg & Quinn 1995; Hooijberg 1996). Different techniques, however, would be used one at a time, in different situations. This may be the message in Bass' (1990) suggestion good leaders do "more of everything."

A second technique is to mix techniques temporally (Ford and Backoff 1988; Sagie 1997), displaying opposing features at different times in an organizational process. Leaders might be more directive at the beginning of an activity in setting goals, more participative later in discussing means. "Punctuated equilibrium" (Tushman and Romanelli 1985) is another example of mixing opposing features temporally.

A third technique is to separate opposing approaches spatially (Ford and Backoff 1988). An 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 competing demands simultaneously" (Smith and Lewis: 381).

To the extent "hard" and "soft" approaches are applied at the same time, they cannot be literal opposites, choice of one must not exclude the other (Gebert et al. 2010). In cooking, a dish cannot be both sweet and not-sweet, but it can be sweet and sour. In the context of this research, there is nothing contradictory about simultaneous presence of a culture paying attention to providing partners an equal chance to participate and one where leaders are not hesitant to remind people of legal responsibilities to participate.

Simultaneity 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, androgyny is different from both the masculinity and femininity (Bobko 1985). "Tough love" is different from either "hard" or "soft" by itself.

The impact of opposing approaches applied contingently or temporally would be expected to be additive, with positive main effects for both "hard" and "soft" behaviors (assuming they are applied appropriately). However, in such applications, there would be no interaction between effects of the two. One treatment (applied appropriately) improves performance whether or not the other treatment is applied in its appropriate contexts; the total effect is the sum of separate effects. By contrast, "tough love" implies multiplicative effects: the "soft" practice works only, or better, if combined with the "hard" one. We

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therefore would expect to see any impact of "tough love" expressed through a moderated impact of having "soft" and "hard" features in the presence of each other.

There is little empirical work testing performance impacts of embracing paradox. Most of what exists is unclear about theoretical difference between additive and moderated effects. Some research tests additive effects (Sagie et al. 2002; Judge and Piccolo 2004). Quinn (1988) found that managers effective on one pole of a dichotomy but ineffective on the other were seen as generally ineffective. This might suggest moderation (effectiveness on x helps only in presence of effectiveness on y), but it also might result from successful application of a contingent or temporal style.

H3: The presence of elements of a "hard" culture will strengthen the effects on collaboration performance of the presence of elements of a "soft" culture.

No "tough love"-style combination has received more attention than the mix of empathy and assertiveness in negotiation. In negotiating, there is considerable evidence that parties who are <u>both</u> assertive about expressing their point of view or interests <u>and</u> <u>also</u> willing to listen to others and change original demands ("flexible rigidity") achieve better summed value than either those caring only for their own outcomes or only for reaching agreement (Carnevale and Pruitt 1992; De Dreu et al. 2000). In conflict-resolution research (Vroom and Yetton 1973; Tjosvold 1982; Jehn 1995) suggests a mixture of task conflict and relationship harmony ("dual concern" or "constructive conflict") produces better decisions.

On the one hand, a "contending" approach (Pruitt and Rubin 1986) may maximize the contending party's returns, but seldom summed returns. However, "high concern with the other's welfare in the absence of self-concern leads to rapid concession making and

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failure to find win-win solutions." (Carnevale and Pruitt 1992: 541); Fry et al. 1983)

found strangers achieved higher total negotiation benefits than dating couples, because

couples agreed too quickly. Assertiveness can promote value-creation because it retards

agreement, giving time, but only in the context of empathy, for new solutions to emerge.

H4. A culture where partner interactions mix assertiveness and empathy ("dual

concern") will produce better collaboration performance than will either by itself.

Finally, we hypothesize that, where the "soft" feature participatory decision-

making is present, a warm climate provides a form of "hard" pressure on partners to

reach agreement and let the group move forward.[10] If participants feel warmly about the

CDRP, we suggest this will lead them to develop a commitment to counterpart agencies

and to the CDRP, putting pressure on them not to let the group down by using informal

veto power a consensus culture gives them to block decisions others wish to reach.

H5: In a collaboration with a participatory culture (consensus decision-making), a

warm organizational climate will constitute part of a "hard" culture, and strengthen the

effects on collaboration performance of the "soft" feature.

DATA AND METHODS[11]

Data

Data on "hard" and "soft" elements of a CDRP's culture come from a 2008

survey of community safety managers (network administrative organization leader). The

survey was initiated by an email directing respondents to an Internet instrument with

fixed-response questions. After four emails, we sought to do the survey by telephone. We

ended up with 203 surveys (102 online and 101 telephone), a 65% response rate.

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[10] As will be seen below, in a collaboration context we operationalize participatory culture as consensus decision-making.

[11] For a more detailed discussion of material in this section, see ANONYMIZED.

The survey included a large number of questions, to test many hypotheses beyond those discussed in this paper. This made it impossible, due to issues of survey length, to develop a battery of questions for each construct we wished to test as "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

For the period covered by this research, the U.K. government established performance targets for crime reduction. For 2001-04 these involved vehicle crime and burglary; there was an additional target to reduce robbery in ten large cities (Home Office 2003). For 2005-08, there were targets for reduction in nine kinds of well-reported crimes[12] (Home Office 2004, 3). Our dependent variable is the 2008-09[13] crime rate by CDRP, aggregated for the crime categories of the 2005-08 period. Crime data were provided by the Home Office; we used population data to calculate rates. We transformed crime logarithmically to enable interpretation of coefficients as percentage impacts.[14]

Independent Variables

The values for culture independent variables represent answers managers gave to statements with which they were asked to disagree or agree (Likert-type 5-point scale, "strongly disagree" through "strongly agree") or requiring respondents to anchor themselves at a point between 1 and 7, expressing how close they felt to two opposite

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[12] To vehicle crime, burglary, and robbery were added assault, wounding, vehicle interference and tampering, bicycle theft, theft from the person, and criminal damage (vandalism).

[13] Through July 1.

[14] To make results more intuitive, we reverse-coded crime, so a lower value (including a negative value if crime increased) means crime was higher.

statements presented.[15] To make responses more intuitive – so a higher value meant the cultural feature was present to a greater extent -- some variables were reverse-coded.[16]

The "soft" culture variables were:

(1) <u>Consensus decision-making</u>: 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) <u>Deliberative style</u>: We asked respondents to anchor themselves on a scale with these two statements: "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 willingness to listen to others, be open to new ideas, and show empathy.

(3) <u>Warm climate</u>: It is hard to develop a single-item measure for this. We used a statement asking respondents, "It is almost always true that the more people participate in partnership activities, the more positive they become about them." This tapped good

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[15] Respondents were presented with two statements at opposite edges of a 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."

[16] With regard to all these variables, one might ask, given the questions' agree/disagree or self-anchoring nature, whether the opposite of an answer here categorized as "hard" is a "soft" feature (or <u>vice versa</u>). If true, this would render our division of into hard and soft meaningless. We therefore note that, if one examines question wordings, one sees that the opposite of the, say, "hard" feature in the question is not presence of a "soft" feature, but merely absence of the hard one. To take an example, that a parent doesn't love a child doesn't imply the parent puts pressure on the child – only that they don't love the child. So in our question about whether the respondent agrees with the statement about reminding a member agency of their legal responsibilities, we are looking for presence of a "hard" feature. But if the respondent disagrees, s/he is not actively seeking to nurture -- only failing to act in a "hard" way. If a CDRP avoids contentious topics, or to demand accountability, this doesn't imply the culture is nurturing. Making decisions by majority vote in is less inclusive, but it is not directive. A community safety manager who fails to exert influence over the Partnership agenda might simply be a passive manager, not an inclusive one.

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feelings about working in the collaboration. Such feelings may have come about for any number of reasons (including substantively productive joint activities); the question measures the feeling – the warm climate –appearing for whatever reason.

We were concerned about possible endogeneity of a warm climate – if crime improved, it would lead to people feeling warmer about the partnership (or vice versa). The wording tried to reduce this problem by focusing attention on a specific source of a warm climate – that participation in partnership work over time produced warm feelings.

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: We used a statement about practice at meetings of the CDRP board.[17] Respondents were asked about the statement, "The CDRP board normally questions performance information at its meetings, over and above just hearing presentations of performance reports." This captured presence of an accountability culture in the sense of the requirement to give an explanation for and to defend one's actions.

(3) Acceptability of Conflict: Respondents were asked, "It is better just to avoid subjects that might be contentious among the partners." (reverse-coded)

(4) Direction: Respondents were asked, "If I were having problems getting engagement from a statutory partner, I'd have no hesitation to remind them of their legal

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[17] This is a sort of "board of directors," with a representative of all major participating agencies. Typically, it is chaired either by the local authority chief executive (the highest career executive, analogous to a city manager in the U.S.), by the police chief, or by one of them in rotation.

responsibility under Section 17 of the [Crime and Disorder Act]."[18] The law establishes a requirement that participating agencies further the CDRP's crime-fighting mission; the question measures whether the manager is willing to direct agencies to increase CDRP involvement based on a legal requirement to do so.

The question refers only to the attitude of the current 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 participants 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 idiosyncratic style. To the extent this is not so, this introduces noise, making results conservative.

Interactions

To test for "tough love," we tested eight interactions between "hard" and "soft" culture/climate features. This included: (1) all the plausible interactions between the "soft" variables consensus decision-making and warm climate with the "hard" variables initiating structure, accountability, and direction; (2) a test for "dual concern" (acceptability of conflict x deliberation); and (3) the interaction between warm climate and consensus decision-making, discussed above.[19]

Control Variables

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[18] This is the law establishing CDRP's. Section 17 states "it shall be the duty" of each agency in 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)

[19] We also tested for 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 are "aligned." Such possible interactions are of less theoretical interest, since there is nothing to suggest that alignment might be especially important for the culture of collaborations versus organizations in general.

We controlled for crime at the beginning of the period (2002-03).[20] In ANONYMIZED we tested numerous demographic and organizational variables as controls. Only two (church attendance and a London dummy) were significant.

Method

We tested hypotheses using OLS with robust standard errors. We clustered observations by police force and weighted observations to account for non-response bias (see ANONYMIZED). We centered all variables around their mean values to reduce multicollinearity (Aiken and West 1991).[21]

Robustness Checks

Although we worded the question for warm climate to minimize endogeneity, that we have only a single measure at the end of the period raises potential endogeneity concerns. Given the way our model is specified, with late-period crime as the dependent variable and lagged crime as one of the independent variables, endogeneity, if present, would appear in the form of an omitted variable bias, where an omitted x variable (change in crime) would be correlated both with our measure of warm climate and with y.

A second concern also relates to the fact that we measure treatment variables only once, around the end of the period. If the variables measure culture, our late-period measures reflect organization features growing up gradually over the period; they have been measured once, but they would say something about the organization earlier as well.

We use one strategy to perform robustness checks for both whether endogeneity (of warm climate or, conceivably but less plausibly, for any of the culture measures) is driving our results and whether our results do reflect influence of these features

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[20] CDRP's began in 1999, but earlier data was unavailable (see ANONYMIZED).
[21] Given the many interactions and the relatively modest sample size, we tested for presence of multicolllinearity. This was not a problem; the highest VIF score was 1.78.

throughout the period and not just at the time they are measured. This is to add 2006-07 crime (two years prior to the measurement period for our dependent variable) as a control.[22] With both 2002-03 and 2006-07 crime in the model, we add a measure of change in crime on the right-hand side to deal with potential omitted variable bias. Thus, to the extent coefficients significant in the regular model remain so with this additional control, it supports the view that any such relationships survive a control for endogeneity. Furthermore, as we note just below, addition of this control means we show the impact of the cultural features only for the last two years of the period. During two years, there is considerably less time for feedback loops where crime improvement produces a warmer climate to occur. This means that if a coefficient's significance persists even with a 2006-07 control, that effect is likely to be much-less influenced by potential endogeneity

Second, with 2006-07 crime in the model, we control for impact of the cultural features prior to the last two years of the period. Here, a diminution of the magnitude of coefficients implies that effects of these measures go back before 2006-07, since if effects occurred only during the last two years, no diminution would occur.

Addition of 2006-07 crime as a control both (somewhat) under-controls and also (more seriously) over-controls for potential problems. Controlling for change in crime may not fully control for endogeneity. The reason is that if warm climate has some exogenous effect on crime, 2006-07 crime is lower than it otherwise would have been where warm climate is high. This means the observed change in crime between 2002-03 and 2006-07 is (somewhat) smaller than it would have been had the treatment variable not been present, so we haven't fully controlled for change in crime over the period.

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[22] We have crime measures available for every year of this period.

However, in terms of the overall interpretation of our results, adding a 2006-07 control yields an underestimate of any impacts of these features during the whole period, since they leave only impacts in the two years between 2006-07 and 2008-09.[23] In this sense, they over-control for the impact of the cultural features on performance. Since we are interested in impacts for the whole period (while wishing to test for whether our measures capture features present before the time we measured the variables), we use this control only as a robustness check and do not suggest its inclusion in our model.

RESULTS

<u>Descriptive Statistics</u>

Table 1 presents descriptive statistics.[24] On average, CDRP cultures displayed 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 collaboration management, the degree that "hard" ones were present is noteworthy. In fact, the mean value for "hard" features was higher than for "soft" ones; the single most-prevalent feature of CDRP culture, surprisingly, was willingness to accept conflict.[25]

<u>Hypothesis Testing</u>

Regression results appear in Table 2. Model 1 contains significant control variables only. Model 2 adds main effects for the cultural features. Model 3 adds

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[23] This also means that, if we find that the coefficient involving a treatment such as warm climate loses statistical significance after adding the 2006-07 control, we cannot necessarily conclude that any effect of this treatment in our model was due to the variable's endogeneity, and thus not a genuine effect. Since including the 2006-07 control only allows us to see any impact of these cultural features for two years, an alternative explanation for coefficients that become insignificant with this specification is that the features have a large enough effect to be statistically significant only over the entire period.

[24] Values (and standard deviations) for the two variables on a seven-point scale – consensus decision-making and deliberation – were converted to five-point scales to make comparisons easier. On a seven-point scale, the mean value for each was 4.8.

[25] This is unlikely to reflect any agreement response bias. The variable with the highest mean, acceptability of conflict, is reverse-coded., and two of the questions were scales with different statements placed at opposite ends of a continuum, where no agreement bias would exist.

interaction effects. Model 4 adds the control for 2006-07 crime. Table 3 presents

interpretations of interaction results – by how many percentage points did crime

performance improve or get worse, compared with crime performance in the mean

CDRP, at a CDRP where presence of both the "hard" and "soft" feature was one-half

standard deviation above the mean; and where the "hard" feature was one-half standard

deviation above the mean, and the "soft" feature one-half standard deviation below.[26] We

also present interaction results using Aiken and West's (1991) procedures (Figures 1-4).[27]

  The results are most consistent with H3, H4, and H5, showing the importance of a

culture mixing "hard" and "soft" features in improving performance. Strong presence of

the two "hardest" cultural features – accountability and direction – improves performance

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 performance and reminders of legal obligations if they feel good about

the collaboration. Also, the "dual concern" hypothesis that decisions are better when

parties show a mix of assertiveness and empathy is supported. For three of the four

significant interactions, where the value for the "soft" feature is high, performance is

above the average for all CDRP's when the value for the "hard" feature is also high,

whereas where the value for the "soft" feature is low, it is below average if the value for

the "hard" feature is high. For two of the four, the slope changes direction under the two

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[26] During this period, crime decreased in 69% of CDRP's in our dataset; changes ranged from a decrease of 51% to an increase of 55%. At the mean CDRP, crime decreased by 10.6%. To calculate results in Table 3, we arithmetically transformed our model by making y=change in crime over the period instead of crime level in the second period; this changes the coefficient for lagged crime on the right-hand side but not coefficients of any variables of interest. To get the results in this table, we compare the predicted value for change in y (reverse-coded) with the baseline of a 10.6% crime decrease, so if the predicted decrease in crime was 12.6%, the figure in the table is 2%. We calculate values at one-half standard deviation because there are very few observations one standard deviation from the mean.

[27] To facilitate interpretation, the y axis in these figures is change in crime over the period, not 2008 crime.

conditions: if, for instance, warm climate is high, more accountability improves performance, but if it is low, it is better to ratchet back accountability, because high pressure in a background of low nurturing will annoy people.[28] Crime improvements under "tough love" conditions are modest – generally about a 2% decrease compared to the average jurisdiction – but investments in CDRP's are modest as well.

Four of eight interactions were not supported. Three involved interactions of consensus decision-making with "hard" features. This may be because consensus decision-making lacks meaningful nurturing effects. The correlation between it and a warm climate – which measures nurturing most directly – was .15, statistically significant (p=.05) but not substantively large. The literature favoring participation suggests many of its benefits come from impacts unrelated to nurturing (such as better information or decision acceptance). with an impact in a tough love context all involved greater pressure than initiating structure. Perhaps surprisingly (given the implication in the literature that collaboration managers in government can't get away with pressuring too much),[29] mere agenda-influence may not be pressuring enough to provide the toughness in tough love.

Our results from controlling for 2006-07 crime (Model 4) make us quite confident that endogeneity of warm climate (or conceivably of any of the other cultural features) is not an important problem, since interactions, including those involving warm climate,

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[28] No interaction between "hard" and "hard," or "soft" and "soft," variables was significant.
These graphs assume linear effects at extreme values – indeed, if these extrapolations were correct, one could have excellent crime performance both through "flexible rigidity" and through laissez-faire (with low levels of both conflict and deliberation). This is implausible – there are likely to be various nonlinear effects generally or locally, such that, say, at lower levels of warm climate, decreasing pressure makes crime performance less bad for a while, but at some point this relationship flattens and perhaps curves back in a reverse-U. We have extremely few observations with low levels of both "hard" and "soft" features to allow us to test for local effects. Scatterplots with values for "hard" features on the x axis and crime performance on y, for observations with low values of the "soft" feature fitted to inverted U shapes for two of the four interaction, but the number of observations for the lower values of x was extremely small.
[29] It will be recalled from the earlier discussion that agenda-influence was cited by Huxham and Vangen (2003) as their main example of a "thuggery" tough management technique.

remained significant even after controlling for change in crime. Furthermore, that coefficients went down with introduction of the additional control supports the view that the impact of these cultural features occurred throughout the period.

In this model, two interactions that had been insignificant in Model 3 became significant, though only at the .1 level. Direction had a more-favorable performance impact in the presence of consensus decision-making (p=.09), though the effect size was small. Furthermore, in the presence of consensus decision-making, if a manager tried to take the lead in setting the CDRP's agenda, performance got worse (p=.08), contrary to a "tough love" prediction. With regard to the second result, the domains where nurturing and pressuring are occurring here may be too close – making decisions by consensus where the collaboration manager seeks to take the lead on agenda-formation may be seen as hypocritical and likely to produce unproductive resentment. However, for neither of these interactions do we have any theory for why the effect would only have appeared in the last two years of the period, so we limit ourselves to noting these results.

DISCUSSION AND LIMITATIONS

In finding that a "tough love" culture can improve performance of a collaboration among government agencies in reducing crime, this study provides evidence for the broader proposition, of interest to those studying government organizations, that collaborations, properly managed, can improve public performance. Crime impacts from choice of more-effective practices are modest, though they involve crimes about which the public worries, such as assault, robbery, and burglary. But investments in CDRP's are also modest, so likely the benefits of a well-managed collaboration outweigh costs.

These results also suggest revision to the common focus in managing public-sector collaborations almost exclusively on nurturing. The literature suggests that the delicate nature of partner commitment in a non-hierarchical setting with multiple cultures precludes pressure, and requires nurturing to coax involvement. These results stand against that view. Our findings suggest "love" is indeed required to elicit participation. But "tough" features seem also to be required to provide a jolt to act, not just feel good.

That somewhat opposite features need both be present to create collaborations that improve performance underlines the difficulty of creating successful partnerships. Given this, it is good news that, for CDRP's at least, "hard" as well as "soft" features were present. We urge scholars to become more sensitive to possible presence of hard features in collaboration cultures.

However, these results also suggest a potential advantage for collaborations over single organizations that has not received attention. Collaborations often feature organizations with different cultures, which the literature presents as a problem for obtaining effort (though an advantage for developing innovative problem solutions). If participants happen to include organizations with "hard" and "soft" cultures – CDRP's include both the police, with a "hard" culture, and youth services and probation, with "soft" ones – such diversity may actually make it easier for a "tough love" culture to emerge than in a single organization. If tough love works to improve performance in all organizational contexts, including single organizations, then this cultural diversity may provide collaborations an advantage single organizations lack.

These results have implications for organization studies generally. Regarding the hoary debate about whether it is better to nurture or pressure, we find that in this situation

neither by itself improved performance on average – when the model was run with main effects only, all coefficients were insignificant. Instead, our results suggest a new reason the answer to this question may be "it depends." Existing literature suggests answers may depend due to contingencies of employee, task, or environment factors, or because a practice's effect takes an inverted-U shape (Grant and Schwartz 2011). Our result is that, if a tough love interaction is present, increasing pressure where nurturing is high will cause performance improvement, but where nurturing is low may actually produce a decline, and <u>vice versa</u>.[30] Our results thus suggest a need to reframe an old debate.

Second, by contrast with collaborations examined here, conventional organizations can muddle through based on taken-for-granted direction of employee activities in the context of an employment relationship -- usually applied without much either pressure or nurturing. However, this doesn't mean "tough love" in such settings is irrelevant. We suggest research on whether "tough love" can be a way for conventional organizations to improve performance.

<u>Contributions to Practice</u>

The emergence of "tough love" cultures in these collaborations is almost certainly serendipitous. Creating such a culture has not been preached in management training nor pop management books as a recipe for collaborative success. If indeed cultures mixing "hard" and "soft" features perform better, managers should be thinking about ways proactively to manage in order to encourage the emergence of such a culture.

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[30] There is an overlap between the inverted-U hypothesis and "tough love." Grant and Schwartz (2011: 63) suggest that one causal mechanism creating an inverted U is that emphasizing only one feature "impede[s] the attainment and expression of other strengths and virtues," whether because the alternative virtue is not valued, or because time to establish one feature crowds out time for a different one. This explanation would overlap with "tough love": performance is worse because a mix of features is absent.

Special circumstances of CDRP's may make pressuring features more available than in many cross-agency collaborations in government (though not in conventional organizations). Our measures for two of the four "hard" features – accountability and direction – involved questioning performance data at board meetings and reminding partners of obligations to participate. The Crime and Disorder Act created both CDRP boards, with agency leader members, and a legal obligation to participate. In the same regard, it may be noted that one "hard" feature available widely to partnerships – the ability of managers to influence the agenda – does not seem to have been pressuring enough to generate "tough love" pairings. Thus, the ability of a "tough love" culture to improve performance may hold as a generalization, but for many collaborations, preconditions for creating pressure may be unavailable. This suggests managers should proactively search for elements in their own situation permitting creation of pressure.

Limitations

Like all research, ours has limitations. We rely on single questions to measure cultural features, which likely creates measurement error. As noted, the reason is that our data come from a larger survey designed to test many hypotheses. Also, our climate measure comes from the perception of the top manager, not aggregated from employee perceptions, as is normal in climate research. However, measurement noise biases coefficients downward, making results conservative. Future tests of "tough love" should develop stronger measures than those here.

Third, there are various reasons to worry about the external validity of our results. Unlike some collaborations, membership in CDRP's is mandated by law. One might argue this reduces the need for a nurturing culture, since participation need not be

induced, or that resistance to a "hard" culture might be greater in a fully voluntary collaboration. Nonetheless, there are reasons the underlying relationship between "tough love" and performance might apply to fully voluntary collaborations as well. First, as noted earlier, while formal membership in CDRP's is mandatory, actual commitment is far more voluntary, so differences with fully voluntary collaborations are perhaps not so large. Second, fully voluntary membership heightens tensions underlying the view that a "tough love" culture works best, suggesting the relationship between performance and "tough love" might be the same, or even stronger. However, our earlier argument does suggest that if partnerships lack membership from agencies with both "hard" and "soft" cultures, obtaining a "tough love" mix might be more difficult than it is for CDRP's.

Finally in this regard, it is possible one reason "tough love" may be associated with improved performance is that CDRP's with "tough love" cultures apply this as a policy for interacting with the community to reduce crime. If tough love is a good community safety policy, perhaps our results depend on the policy, not on tough love's role in promoting more productive collaboration inside the CDRP, and thus have less applicability to collaborations in other domains. Our view is that, since "tough love" CDRP cultures are likely serendipitous, there may be only a modest connection between presence of such a culture and adoption of "tough love" community safety approaches. Furthermore, this link would not explain the impact of "dual concern," a soft-hard combination not the same as "tough love," on crime performance.

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

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development). We believe this construct aids understanding of challenges and potentials

of managing cross-organizational collaborations, and we urge research about whether it

can illuminate performance or other issues in single organizations as well.

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TABLE 1: DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

	Mean	Std. Dev.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Consensus decision-making	4.78	2.07	1									
2. Deliberative style	4.82	1.79	0.03	1								
3. Warm climate	4.23	0.88	0.15	0.12	1							
4. Initiating structure	3.97	1.09	0.09	-0.09	0.33	1						
5. Accountability	3.94	1.16	0.05	0.09	0.06	0.07	1					
6. Acceptability of conflict	4.42	0.84	0.05	0.11	0.14	0.07	0.20	1				
7. Direction	4.12	1.13	-0.07	0.004	0.25	0.11	0.18	0.08	1			
8. Log2002Crime	-2.99	0.46	0.02	-0.12	0.00	0.17	0.14	0.17	-0.10	1		
9. LogPopulation	11.71	0.57	-0.06	-0.02	0.06	0.02	0.09	0.12	-0.04	0.54	1	
10. Church Attendance	6.38	2.22	-0.00	-0.07	-0.11	-0.04	-0.15	-0.16	-0.17	-0.06	-0.18	1

TABLE 2

Variables	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4	
	Coefficient	Std. Error	Coefficient	Std. Error	Coefficient	Std. Error	Coefficient	Std. Error
Log2002Crime	-.72***	(.03)	-.72***	(.034)	-.70***	(.03)	-.18***	(.04)
London	.08*	(.03)	.09**	(.033)	.05	(.033)	-.0005	(.03)
Church Attendance	.01**	(.004)	.02**	(.005)	.02***	(.004)	.02***	(.005)
Direction			.007	(.01)	.014	(.009)	.02**	(.007)
Accountability			-.004	(.009)	-.006	(.008)	-.002	(.005)
Initiating structure			-.007	(.007)	-.0008	(.008)	.0004	(.008)
Acceptability of conflict			-.0003	(.01)	-.002	(.01)	-.003	(.008)
Warm climate			.01	(.01)	.028*	(.01)	.009	(.009)
Consensus decision-making			.003	(.004)	.001	(.004)	.0009	(.003)
Deliberative style			.0005	(.007)	.001	(.006)	.0008	(.004)
Direction x Warm climate					.02**	(.007)	.009†	(.005)
Accountability x Warm climate					.04***	(.01)	.02***	(.006)
Consensus decision-making x Warm Climate					.01*	(.006)	.008*	(.004)
Acceptability of Conflict x Deliberative Style					.02**	(.005)	.007†	(.004)
Direction x Consensus decision-making					.002	(.003)	.003†	(.002)
Accountability x Consensus decision-making					-.004	(.003)	-.001	(.002)
Initiating structure x Consensus decision-making					-.004	(.005)	-.006†	(.004)
Initiating structure x Warm climate					-.001	(.006)	-.002	(.005)
Log2006 Crime							-.69***	(.05)
Constant	.86***	(.10)	.80***	(.11)	.75***	(.14)	.30**	(.1)
Adjusted R²	.84		.84		.85		.94	

† $p < .1$
* $p < .05$
** $p < .01$
*** $p < .001$

TABLE 3: CRIME PERFORMANCE IMPACT OF INTERACTION EFFECTS

	Both Features ½ SD Above Mean	Hard Features ½ SD Above Mean Soft Feature ½ SD Below Mean
Accountability x Warm climate	+2.0%	-2.3%
Direction x Warm climate	+2.8%	-0.8%
Warm climate x Consensus decision-making	+2.1%	+0.9%
Acceptability of conflict x Deliberative style	+0.8%	-0.6%

FIGURE 1:
Interaction Effects of Accountability and Warm Climate
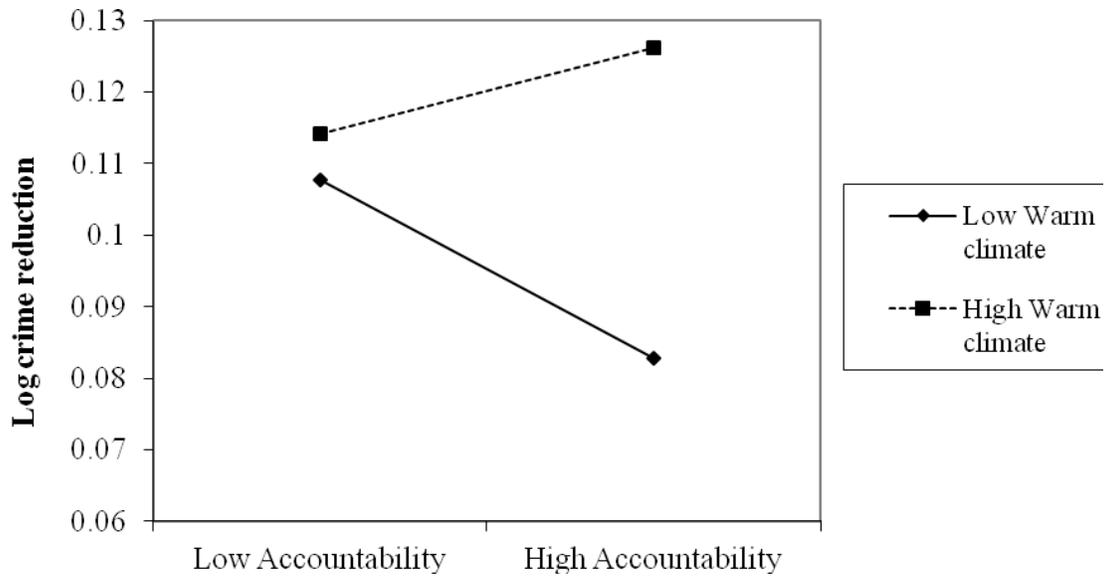
Figure 2:
Interaction Effects of Direction and Warm Climate
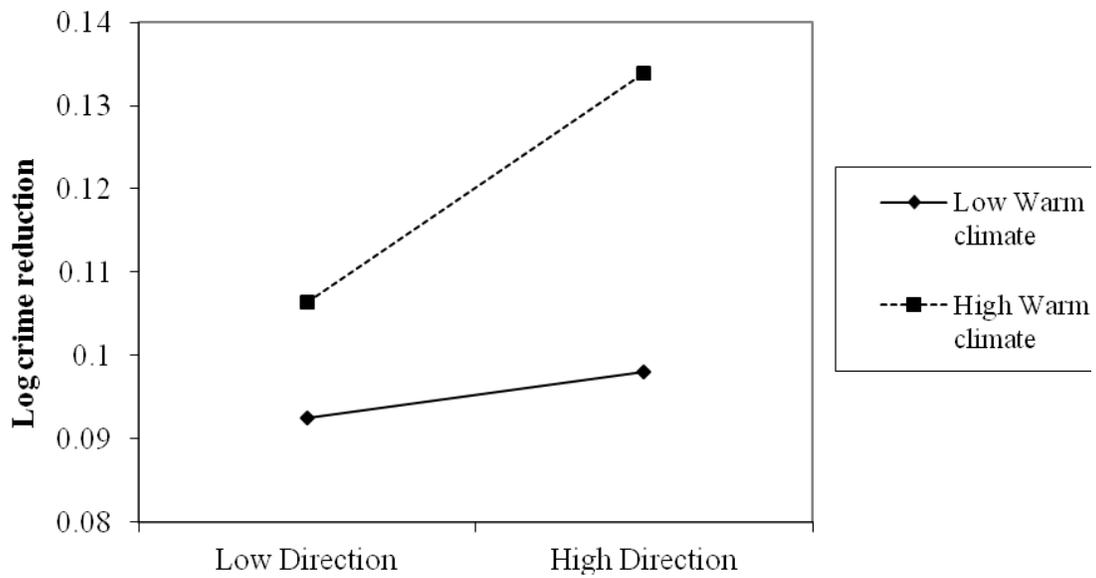
Figure 3:
Interaction Effects of Warm Climate and Consensus decision-making
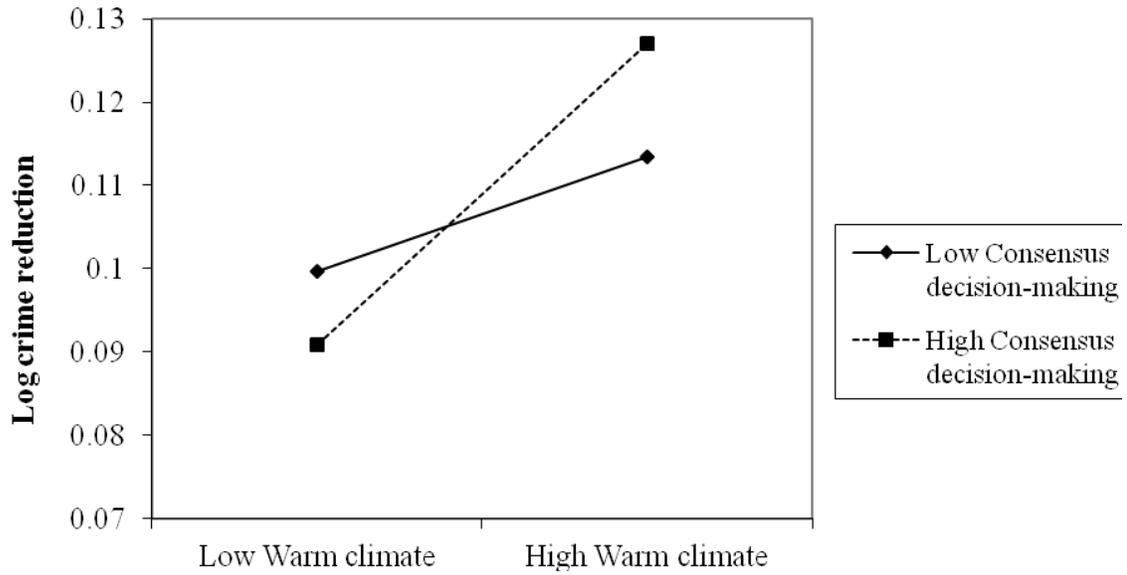
Figure 4:
Interaction Effects of Acceptability of Conflict and Deliberative Style