Determining tactics that influence partners in the creation of an interagency information sharing system

This item was submitted to Loughborough University’s Institutional Repository by the/an author.


Additional Information:

- This is a conference paper.

Metadata Record: [https://dspace.lboro.ac.uk/2134/11700](https://dspace.lboro.ac.uk/2134/11700)

Version: Accepted for publication

Publisher: Academic Conferences Ltd (© the authors)

Please cite the published version.
This item was submitted to Loughborough’s Institutional Repository (https://dspace.lboro.ac.uk/) by the author and is made available under the following Creative Commons Licence conditions.

For the full text of this licence, please go to: http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/2.5/
Determining Tactics that Influence Partners in the Creation of an Interagency Information Sharing System

Ashley Cairns, Dr Thomas W. Jackson, Dr Louise Cooke, Loughborough University, Loughborough, UK
A.S.Cairns@lboro.ac.uk
T.W.Jackson@lboro.ac.uk
L.Cooke@lboro.ac.uk

Abstract

Partnership working is increasing dramatically in the public sector in the UK. Partly as a result of reduced funding (as part of government budget cuts) but also as a reaction to the increasing realisation that sharing information improves the service individual partners can provide. This brings a new paradigm to sharing information for non-competitive purposes. To achieve the partnership aim of providing a better service each partner must attempt to put aside their normal ways of working (i.e. protecting their information) and attempt to produce an information sharing system where information can be shared legally, purposefully and in a timely manner.

This paradigm is in most cases new to the organisations involved and their approach to the level of influence they have in a partnership to produce a system can be challenging. This paper forms part of a larger research project, researching how public sector agencies can share information more effectively. The goal of the research is to develop a model for partnership information sharing, which models the outcomes of decisions made during the development stages of the system and how these have affected the overall acceptance and success of the system. The paper provides a classification of encouragement tactics which partners in a public sector partnership can utilise when implementing a new information sharing system to achieve their own objectives. The encouragement tactics classification helps to both clarify the concepts of power and influence by providing a clear distinction between the terms and bridge the terms by combining them in a single classification. This approach of a unifying classification has not previously been attempted and further work is required to validate the classification proposed in this paper.

The classification has been created from participant observation of the creation of a trailblazing information sharing system between the police and councils (districts, county and city) to improve their ability to handle antisocial behaviour.

Keywords: Public Sector, Partnership Working, Influence, Information Sharing, Multiagency working, Information Management

1.0 Introduction

Bringing partners from different agencies together to work on a joint information sharing system involves bringing together different professionals. Dawes (1996) paper on government agencies identifies that there is a traditionally strong separation of professions into different government agencies, with the profession at the core defining ‘that agency’s perspective on the world.’ Blighs’ (1979) paper also discusses an agency’s creation of reality/perspective on the world referring to professional tribes. These tribes shape their own reality with members of the tribe conforming to this reality or else facing sanctions. A group made up of representatives from different agencies will have differing views of reality and requirements for a system. To develop an interagency information sharing system for use by all the partners, the group will need to overcome these differences through the use of power and influence over other group members.

Research into power and influence spans multiple disciplines; e.g. politics – the meanings and relations of power (Parsons 1963, Pfeffer 1993), marketing – the marketing channel and the use of power within it (Hunt and Nevin 1974, Kasulis and Spekman 1980), organisational behaviour – how managers exert power and influence over subordinates (Israeli 1975, Schein 1977) and group dynamics – the power and influence members of a group have over each other (Blalock 1989).
Azim and Bozeman (1975) said ‘there are as many definitions of power as there are writers about power’. To summarise the existing literature and definitions there are four main perspectives at which power can be viewed (adapted from Ragins (1997)):

- Individual - individuals’ ability to influence another’s behaviour (French and Raven (1959), French (1993) and Dahl (1957)).
- Interpersonal –reciprocal relationship between two or more parties (Cartwright (1959)).
- Macro-organisational –controlling resources and information as a result of a persons’ position within the organisation or group (Pfeffer (1981)).
- Sociological – ‘power is viewed as a fluid relationship between groups in society’ (Ragins (1997)).

Ragins (1997) attempts to integrate the four perspectives defining power as ‘the influence of one person over others, stemming from an individual characteristic, an interpersonal relationship, a position in an organization, or from membership in a societal group’. As can be seen from this definition power and influence appear to be intertwined.

Influence research centres mainly on marketing and its ability to influence people to purchase specific products or on a managers’ ability to influence subordinates (Kipries et al 1980). Over the years researchers have not been particularly interested in studying the ways in which people at work influence their colleagues to obtain personal or to satisfy organisational goals (e.g. Kipries et al 1980; Jackson and Dawson, 1999). Zuker (1991) defines influence as ‘the ability to affect another’s attitudes, beliefs, or behaviours – seen only in its effect – without using coercion or formal position, and in such a way that influencees believe that they are acting in their own best interests’, the first part of this definition could be a definition for power in many researchers view. Influence is seen as a life skill to be developed and many popular science books have been written on how to influence people such as Cialdini (2001), How to Win Friends and Influence People (Carnegie 2006) and ‘I’ is for Influence: The New Science of Persuasion (Yueng 2011).

Further studies and definitions of the concepts increases confusion. Wrong (1979) defines power as ‘the capacity of some persons to produce intended and foreseen effects on others’ and Zimbardo and Leippe (1992) define influence as ‘the changes in people caused by what others do’ both could be defining either power or influence. It can be difficult to separate research on influence and power some definitions combine the two terms in a single definition for example Northouse (2010) states ‘power is the capacity or potential to influence’. The definitions are changeable and conflicting as are the classifications/typologies dependent on what research is being looked at.

The main issue with the existing research into power and influence is the inconsistencies in the use of the terms influence and power. For French and Raven (1959) and Dahl (1957) power is the ability to influence others. Raggins (1997) research influence leads to power. Where Salancik and Pfefers (In Leavitt et al 1988) and Parsons (1963) leads us to an understanding that power is a resource completely separate from influence, where influence is only used in the absence of power. The research detailed in this paper is taking the concepts of influence and power and applying them to how members of a partnership use these tactics to achieve their own outcomes when developing a system for information sharing. To do so a clearer distinction between the concepts of influence and power needs to be made, where further work will be able to identify the success of both influence and power tactics on the overall success of the partnership system.

This paper looks to help provide a clearer distinction between the and identify both power and influence tactics that group members utilise when developing an interagency information sharing system in a classification referred to as encouragement tactics. Section 2 provides a summary of the theoretical background to this research broken down into research on power and research on influence. Section 3 describes the participant observation used for collecting data over a seven month period from multiple meetings held by the partners, involving approximately 20 different representatives across the 10 partners and software developers. The observations along with a proposed classification for encouragement tactics are presented in section 4, highlighting examples of the different types of tactics utilised by the partners. The paper concludes with a conclusion and discussion around the results of the study and future work based on these findings.
2.0 Theoretical background

Decisions made in the development stages of a partnership information sharing system will affect the success of the system. To be able to model the success of the information sharing system an understanding of how these decisions are made must be gained. A partnership development involves multiple partners interacting through the use of power and influence to make decisions.

2.1 Types of power

French and Ravens (1959) 5 Bases of Power was one of the earliest attempts to model where people gain and utilise power. They identified five bases of power; coercion (use of force to alter behaviour), reward (providing something someone desires or removing something they do not), legitimacy (use of a feeling of obligation), expert (the use of position of knowledge or information) and referent (use another’s feelings of approval to initiate desired actions).

This later developed into the 11 bases of power (Raven 1992), which further differentiated reward (personal and impersonal), coercion (personal and impersonal) and legitimate (position reciprocity, equity and dependence) and added the power base of information. In 1998 Raven again looked at the bases of power this time incorporating the differences in hard and soft types of power. This resulted in seven types of power; personal sanctions (combining personal reward and coercion), impersonal sanctions (combining impersonal reward and sanctions), credibility (combining expert and information), legitimate equity (combining legitimate equity and reciprocity), reference, legitimate position and legitimate dependence.

Table 1 taken from Northouse 2010 p8 table 1.2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positional Power</th>
<th>Personal Power</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Legitimate</td>
<td>Referent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reward</td>
<td>Expert</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coercive</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Northouse (2010) differentiates French and Ravens 5 bases of power as either personal or positional power. Personal power is ‘the influence capacity a leader derives from being seen by followers as likeable and knowledgeable’, where positional power ‘a person derives from a particular office or rank’.

Table 2 Kraus 1986 6 Types of Power

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organisational Power</th>
<th>Personal Power</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Coercion or Pressure</td>
<td>Support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Position</td>
<td>Knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reward</td>
<td>Interpersonal Competence</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Kraus also used the 5 Bases of Power as the basis for their 6 types of power; coercion or pressure, position, reward, support, knowledge and interpersonal competence. These were split as either organisational based power (‘they may only be used as part of the organization structure’) or personal power (‘may be used in any situation’).

Etzioni (1963) developed an alternative topology of power though this is more concerned with the power of organisations. Etzioni identified three forms of power ‘classified according to the means of control applied’; coercive (physical means), remunerative (material objects) and normative (symbolic). Although this typology looks to categorise an organisation based on how power is used rather than where the people within the organisation gain power, similarities can be found with the bases of power. Coercive exists in French and Ravens classification to a lesser degree. Remunerative power is the same as reward power. Normative can be seen in the use of legitimate power where people comply due to group norms.

2.2 Types of influence
Parsons (1963) research identified three types of influence: inducement, persuasion and deference. These forms of influence are similar to French and Ravens (1959) bases of power with inducement similar to reward power (the promise of gain) and persuasion similar to expert power (the provision of information). Deference is not present in French and Ravens, but is similar to Etzioni’s (1963) normative power as deference relies on the use of ethical norms or social standards to convince someone to act in a particular way.

Other forms of influence have been identified by other researchers; conformity (behaving to fit in with the group) and self-fulfilling prophecy (a prediction that causes itself to become true due to feedback between the belief and behaviour (Merton 1968)).

Kipries et al (1980) researched the tactics people used to influence their managers, co-workers and subordinates. This identified eight dimensions of influence; assertiveness, ingratiation, rationality, sanctions, exchange, upward appeal, blocking and coalitions. How these tactics were utilised varied on who they were attempting to influence. The dimensions of assertiveness, sanctions, ingratiation and rationality were used when attempting to influence people at any status level. The dimension of coalitions was only utilised when attempting to influence subordinates and the remaining three dimensions (exchange of benefits, blocking and upward appeal) were only utilised when attempting to influence superiors.

3.0 Methodology

This paper forms part of a larger research project researching how public sector agencies can share information more effectively. The ultimate aim is to develop a model for partnership information sharing, which will model the outcomes of decisions made during the development stages of the system and how these have affected the overall success of the system. For this larger research project the researcher has been granted an active role in the project team representing one of the ten partners developing a joint information sharing system. The research has an ethnographic strategy and for the data in this paper the research method of participant observation has been adopted. Participant observation has been chosen as it allows the researcher the opportunity to experience the situation as the other group members are; helping to provide ‘direct experiential and observational access to the insider’s world of meaning’ (p15 Jorgensen 1989). Data collected from observation will often contrast with data collected from other techniques such as interviews and surveys where what is said is done differs from what is observed (p316 Robson 2011). Participant observation allowed the researcher to observe what actually happened as opposed to what participants recalled. The use of participation was also chosen due to its ability to improve the ‘quality of the data obtained during fieldwork’ and the ‘quality of the interpretation of data’ (DeWalt and DeWalt 2001).

Data was collected by the researcher at meetings between March and November 2011. These meetings are detailed in Table 3.

In early meetings the group were made aware of the researchers’ role as a participant observer. Members of the group quickly identified the researcher as a member of the organisation they were representing rather than as a researcher. This helped to minimise ‘the extent to which the researcher disrupts and otherwise intrudes as an alien, or nonparticipant, in the situation studied’ (Jorgensen 1989 p16) thus minimising reactivity (Robson 2011 p316). Representing one of the partners also reduced the researchers’ ability to manipulate the group meetings to the researchers’ goal which can be a concern with observation in particular participant observation (Robson 2011 p322).

Data from the observed meetings was recorded in a field diary. In an attempt to minimise any bias which could occur from being a representative of one partner, entries were reviewed a few days after the meeting to confirm the accuracy. Any opinions or feelings recorded were not removed as these provide an insight into how other group members may be experiencing the group meetings, but additional notes were made where appropriate.

Table 3 Meetings Data Collected From

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meeting</th>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Duration per meeting</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

| Multi-agency Project meetings | Approximately 12 participants, at least one from each partner. | 2 hours | 16/03/2011 04/04/2011 06/05/2011 |
| Side meetings (focused on specific project issues) | Varied attendance with a core group of Police project lead, partnership project manager, training representative and researcher. Additional members were based on the expertise required at the meeting. | 30 min – 2 hours. | At least one a fortnight between June and October. |
| Police Project Team | System trainers, IT, project liaisons, project manager, Business leads, System administrators and researcher. | 2 hours | 23/06/2011 29/07/2011 24/08/2011 19/10/2011 |
| Software Developers | Project manager from software development firm, Partnership and Police Project Managers, IT, Strategic Leads and researcher. | 2-3 hours. | 29/06/2011 06/10/2011 |
| IT Workshop | IT and project representative from each of the 10 partners and external software developers. | Full Day (7 hours) | 21/04/2011 |

3.1 Case study context

Case study is based on creation of a joint information system to improve the management of anti-social behaviour and the identification of repeat and vulnerable victims. The system will be developed by a partnership consisting of a Police Force (B), City Council (C), County Council (D) and seven district councils (A, E-J). The system will combining the different information and knowledge silos from each partner into one system all the partners will work from. It replaces informal information sharing practices such as phone calls, emails, local meetings, with a formalised single system which all the partners will use to store their data. Data on the system will only relate to antisocial behaviour, which is only one aspect of business for each of the partners so this will not fully replace other systems already in place. An older version of the system has been in place at partner A, who were also involved in its initial development for the previous 7 years and as such they have been identified as the lead agency (A) for the project. Since its introduction the system at A has been identified as a national model of good practice. They have been pivotal in urging the other partners to adopt this system and modify it for the joint information sharing system as opposed to other systems which were available. The project manager for the creation and implementation of the system for the partnership works for the A and they are the contact for the software developing company.
Figure 1 Overview of the Partners involved in the case study

4.0 Results and analysis

The meetings involved multiple partners depicted in Figure 1. Table 4 gives some examples of the data collected.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Example of Data</th>
<th>Observed</th>
<th>Type of Tactic</th>
<th>Classified Tactic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>E requested different search fields to fit working practices e.g. looking up a person by telephone number. The project managers’ reply &quot;I don’t see why you would need to&quot;, E was told there was no need for it and no further discussion about the idea was had in multiagency meetings.</td>
<td>Side Meeting</td>
<td>Power</td>
<td>Legitimate/Positional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B insisted on extra security testing pre go live, by forgoing this, other development work specific to B on a search engine integrated with their systems was prioritised.</td>
<td>Software Developers &amp; Multiagency Meetings</td>
<td>Power</td>
<td>Reward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B wished to delay implementation to ensure the system was completely tested pre-go live. Due to political ramifications threatened at higher level strategic meetings B was effectively forced to go live before they wanted to.</td>
<td>Side Meetings &amp; Software Developer Meetings</td>
<td>Power</td>
<td>Coercion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In the production minimum requirements each partner would need to meet before being allowed access to the system, a requirement for a certain sequence of authentication would stop B implementing a single sign on. B and the software company were able to provide knowledgeable experts to present information to the group producing the minimum requirements and convince them to reword allow the development of a single sign on as this still met the desired level of security.</td>
<td>Multiagency &amp; Software Developer Meetings</td>
<td>Influence</td>
<td>Information/Knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B had a reputation for being extremely bossy and controlling. From the beginning of the project partners have been very critical of the ideas presented by this partner reducing the level of influence they have been able to have.</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>Influence</td>
<td>Reputation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F was poor at returning documents and information for the project to progress. As such, when they have been absent from a meeting decisions have been made without seeking their consent. Other partners, who were highly involved, when absent from a discussion, their opinion has been actively sought after the meeting to ensure their views are heard.</td>
<td>Multiagency Meetings.</td>
<td>Influence</td>
<td>Involvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B will put approximately 60-70% of the data on the system. As such in discussions around layout of forms</td>
<td>Multiagency Meetings.</td>
<td>Influence</td>
<td>End usage</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
and fields required they have been allowed a greater level of say, as ultimately they will be the biggest user.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Side Meetings.</th>
<th>Influence</th>
<th>Resource Provision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B has supplied the testers for the system, from this they have been able to get the system reconfigured to a more appropriate way for them. Other partners have not done this and as such have not had this same influence.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4 Example Data

4.1 Classification:

For the classification proposed in this study French and Ravens (1959) original 5 bases of power model was used as a foundation. As Northouse (2010) did with their distinction between personal and positional power, French and Ravens original 5 bases of power were separated into either power or influence tactic based on the distinction between power and influence. This distinction was drawn from the definition made by the researcher in this study that power is the promise of rewards or sanctions exercised mainly by the use of force and coercion in order to control how a person or group behaves, where influence is the ability to alter another's’ behaviour by the provision of something they do not already posses e.g. information. The distinction is drawn based on how the tactic was implemented and whether the person being acted upon was ordered or suggested to alter their behaviour. Imposing the researchers’ definition of power and influence onto French and Ravens (1959) bases of power results in Table 5.

Table 5 French and Ravens (1959) Bases of Power split by distinction between influence and power

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Power</th>
<th>Influence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Legitimate</td>
<td>Expert</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coercion</td>
<td>Referent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reward</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This matches Northouse (2010) results of overlaying the bases of power with their distinction between personal and positional power. This result suggests that personal power and influence are similar concepts and helps to support the earlier discussion about confusion between the terms of power and influence. Although the outcome of applying the distinction to the bases of power has been the same it is important to note Northouses’ definitions refer only to power. This does not help to distinguish between power and influence as this research is attempting.

To more appropriately reflect the observed data the original five bases of power are renamed and an additional factor of Project Specific Factors has been added to influence factors, this refers to factors such as end usage, involvement and resource provision. The factors were grouped together as they only represent influence where inequality in the factor is present. E.g. in a project where all partners are providing equal resources, the provision of resource would not be a source of influence. Project specific factors were not present in Northouses (2010 p8) or French and Ravens (1959) work, it is expected that this factor reflects the partnership environment found in this study which was not present in the other research. The addition of project specific factors produces a classification which can be generalised to other projects where the partnership may be setup differently from this case study. Table 5 summarises the breakdown of tactics, with further details on the tactics found in 4.2 and 4.3.

Table 6 Proposed classification of Encouragement Tactics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Power</th>
<th>Influence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Positional</td>
<td>Information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coercion</td>
<td>Reputation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reward</td>
<td>Project Specific factors</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.2 Power tactics:

*Power is the promise of rewards or sanctions exercised mainly by the use of force and coercion in order to control how a person or group behaves.*
4.2.1. Positional

Positional (or legitimate) power is the ability to have control over the actions of others as a result of a position in the group. The case studied identified three sources of positional power; project manager, software developer contact and trainers. In developing a system in a group setting those with positional power are able to have greater control over what is discussed and ultimately have the final say in what ideas are communicated to the developers. Potentially those with positional power have the opportunity to overrule group decisions. In the case study partner D questioned a functionality of the system which could potentially produce duplication within the database; this idea was brought to the project manager but was never shared with the other partners.

4.2.2. Rewards

Reward in this context is the provision/prioritisation of a function being developed for the system. This tactic has mainly been utilised by those with positional power who hold the authority to prioritise/alter work schedules. There is the potential for partners without positional power to utilise reward power by grouping together to support an idea, in return the partner would get support for their own idea/issue. From the study B by agreeing to train all the partners standard users were rewarded by having discretion over when and where the training would be carried out.

4.2.3 Coercion

Coercion is the use of force to encourage someone to act as desired. In this classification coercion does not refer to the use of physical force, rather a more subtle use of force, that of a tarnished reputation and political fallout. No single partner wants to be blamed if the project fails. Utilising this threat of reputation and politics, partners are able to coerce others when required. From the study E, F and G wanted to wait for interfaces with their existing systems before going live, pressure was placed on these partners by A and B to go live before the interfaces were ready using the threat of blame for failure of the entire system and highlighting that other partners would be going live before all their functionality was achieved.

4.3 Influence tactics

Influence is the ability to alter another’s behaviour by the provision of something they do not already possess e.g. information. The observed meetings identified five tactics of influence; three of these have been grouped into one tactic called project specific factors as they are all dependent on the projects’ set up.

4.3.1 Information/knowledge

Information/knowledge is a key way partners influence each other. It is where one party has a greater level of expertise and can present this to another partner in a way which allows the partner to change their behaviour of their own volition. Example from the study, the original selection of mandatory fields was altered after information presented by B, E and F which demonstrated an inability to meet these mandatory fields.

4.3.2 Reputation

Reputation is the positive or negative result of another partners’ expectations of your actions. A positive reputation may result in partners carrying out actions in an attempt to please you, whilst a negative reputation could result in reactance (Brehm 1966). From the study H were extremely keen and positive from the start of the project, they have a forward thinking and innovative reputation. Ideas presented by H were received more positively than other partners.

4.3.3. Project specific factors

Project specific influence refers to factors specific to the project which will affect the level of influence a partner has. These project three factors have been observed:
1. **Involvement** – the level of participation of each partner. Those more actively involved have a greater level of influence. Data collected evidenced this where G had minimal involvement, post-go live G discovered could not complete a mandatory field, more actively involvement would have prevented the issue.

2. **End Usage of the System** – The amount each partners will utilise the system. Those with greater expected use can have a greater level of influence. E.g. I is expected to put very few cases on the system per year, their interface with the system has been given low priority due to the minimal resource drain of double keying compared to others.

3. **Resource Provision** – Level of resource whether money, equipment or people each partner provides to the group. Partners providing greater levels of resource have a greater level of influence. E.g. A and B provided the resources required to develop the risk accreditation for the system, this included making decisions which affected the whole partnership. As A and B had carried out the work other partners who were not involved were effectively forced to agree to recommendations from this work stream.

These factors are unlikely to be the only project based factors affecting the level of influence each partner has, but were the factors evidenced from this study.

---

**Figure 2 Classification of Encouragement Tactics**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Tactic</th>
<th>Tactic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Power</strong></td>
<td>Positional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Coercion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

**Encouragement Tactics**

---

**5.0 Discussion and conclusion**

Partnership working in the public sector continues to increase as does the use of information systems to share information. It is highly likely more partnership groups will need to come together to develop joint information sharing systems. Utilising participant observation to collect data over seven months in various meetings allowed the researcher a unique perspective on the experience of group members. Observation allowed the researcher to experience the roles of both initiator and receiver of various tactics evidenced in this study. The classification proposed in this paper builds on French and Ravens’ (1959) bases of power model, overlaying the distinction between power and influence. The distinction between the terms states power is the promise of rewards or sanctions exercised mainly by the use of force and coercion in order to control how a person or group behaves, where influence is the ability to alter another’s behaviour by the provision of something they do not already possess e.g. information. The distinction is drawn based on how the tactic was implemented and whether the person being acted upon was ordered or suggested to alter their behaviour. Combining the concepts of power and influence into a single classification has not previously been attempted but will provide a more holistic view of how group members are achieving their outcomes. The classification helps to both clarify the concepts of power and influence by providing a clear distinction between the terms and bridge the terms by combining them in a single classification.
The classification will allow public sector agencies in a partnership to identify tactics they previously haven’t utilised. The larger research project will model the outcomes of decisions made in the development stages to the success of the implemented system. This will help the public sector partnerships developing joint systems to utilise tactics which are more likely to result in a successful system. It is expected future work will show partners are more resistant to power tactics than influence as decisions made from a power tactic are not inclusive of the group and they are therefore not bought in and committed to the decision. This is currently a working hypothesis and needs to be tested. The project specific factors in this study may also encourage public sector partnerships in the setup phases to seriously consider the levels of resource and involvement each partner commits to; an equal distribution of resources in the project reduces the ability for one partner to push through their ideas or be solely responsible for tasks due. This has been a problem in ongoing work with a similar project in another county, the server for the joint system is located in one partners building, the partnership expects the partner hosting the server to pay all costs with no contributions being made by the other partners. In this study the server is located offsite at a neutral venue; all the partners provide equal money its purchase and maintenance. Early consideration of how influence and power tactics may be used by other partners throughout the project can help prevent later sources of contention.

The encouragement tactics classification in this paper represents the first step in a larger research project researching how public sector agencies can share information more effectively through joint information sharing systems. The larger project looks to model the outcomes of decisions made during the development stages of the system and how these affect the success of the system. The aim is that this research will allow the research community and public sector agencies to identify the likely success of a project in the development stages. By understanding the likely success of a project, it will be possible to identify potential problems and rectify these in the development stages where it is often easier and less costly to do so than once the system is implemented.

The classification helps to clarify the concepts of power and influence by providing a clear distinction between the terms and bridge the terms by combining them in a single classification. This approach of has not previously been attempted, as such further work is required to validate the classification. The classification is currently being reviewed by the partnership from the case study to gather their input which will be fed back into the classification. It will then be validated against work from another county attempting a similar project. Further work which has come from this study is the effects of repeated use of a particular tactic or type of tactic on partners and whether this diminishes its effectiveness and how the use of particular tactics affects the success of the system being developed.

6.0 References:


Merton, RK. (1968) **Social Theory and Social Structure.** Macmillan


