University of Reading

AN ABDUCTIVE INVESTIGATION INTO GOOD AND BAD CROSS-SECTOR COLLABORATIONS FROM A SOCIAL SECTOR PERSPECTIVE: THE ROLE OF COMPETENCY AND RELATIONSHIP FEATURES

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Management

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DECLARATION

I declare that, except where explicit reference is made to the contribution of others, this thesis is the result of my own work and has not been submitted for any other degree at the University of Reading or any other institution.

Tim Groves

ABSTRACT

This study is conducted within a UK social sector context and sets out to explore the lived experiences of leaders in relation to 'good' and 'bad' cross-sector-collaborations, primarily through the lens of competencies. In doing so, it directly answers calls for such research and contributes to knowledge because little is empirically known about why these collaborations so often fail, or what the commonalities and differences across good and bad collaborations are. The study takes an abductive approach and employs qualitative methods. It consisted of two interlinked studies, the first, an exploratory study comprising of three group interviews with 18 participants, and a second main study involving individual interviews with 30 senior social sector leaders. Data emerging from both studies were thematically analysed. Results from the exploratory study validated the thematic literature review in which collaboration surfaced with particular warranty, suggesting its suitability for further investigation. The study makes a number of contributions to the literature. Firstly, findings from the main study suggest that good collaborations can be viewed as a function of three key themes: competence sufficiency, balanced accountabilities and relationship sufficiency. This thesis makes a valuable contribution in relation to competence sufficiency by highlighting the importance of competence switching for good collaborative outcomes, thereby challenging the literature which tends to view competencies as 'static' across single-organisational and collaborative settings. The study contributes to the literature in relation to multiple accountabilities by establishing leaders' concomitant accountabilities as critical to the development of good and bad collaborations. In this way the study places particular saliency on mission for securing a balance between organisational and collaborative accountabilities, adding weight to theorists who highlight the importance of purpose to organisational and collaborative success. A third contribution is made in relation to relationship features, confirming the importance of trust, communication, and shared values for collaboration development along good and bad trajectories. This is the first time that these three themes have been associated with cross-sector collaborations and thus provides much needed insights into the field (Bryson et al. 2006; 2015; Gazley and Guo, 2020). Importantly, the study

contributes to knowledge by providing evidence that 'good' collaborations are found to be characterised by mission-preferencing (prioritising the mission ahead of the organisation), while 'bad' collaborations are found to be characterised by organisation-preferencing (placing the organisation ahead of the mission). This study makes several supplementary contributions to the literature. By exploring both good and bad collaborations, it addresses an important lacuna in the literature: the lack of comparative analysis as well as the lack of examination of bad collaborations (Gazley and Guo, 2020). Additionally, the study provides much-needed insights about cross-sector collaboration competencies and the lived experiences of social sector leaders engaged in collaborative practice (Bryson, 2015; Boyer et al., 2019). Finally, the study is conducted within the UK social sector, which is under-represented in the literature when compared to US studies. As such, this research provides a working model by which others can start to understand good and bad collaborations within a UK context and provides important new insights into bad collaborations.

Own work: When asked ‘what will you do when you’ve finished your PhD?’ I replied, ‘I’m going to wait until capes make a comeback!’ which gave this piece its title.

Coming together is a beginning.

Keeping together is progress.

Working together is success.

(Henry Ford, n.d)

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KEY TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

These definitions provide an initial baseline for the study. Definitions and terms vary in the data as informants were given the freedom to determine these for themselves. This approach was employed as an elicitation technique to surface a full range of informant views and capture individual sensemaking. As such, the study does not insist on informants using predetermined definitions. This approach introduces a rich and varied definitional landscape which the study has sought to privilege in keeping with the study's epistemological and methodological commitments.

Cross-sector collaborations

> '[Collaborations] are defined as cross-sector projects formed explicitly to address social issues and causes that actively engage the partners on an ongoing basis. Such projects may be "transactional"—short-term, constrained, and largely self-interest oriented— or "integrative" and "developmental" — longer term, open-ended, and largely common-interest oriented' (Selsky and Parker, 2010: 22).

Competence, Competencies, Competency

'Competence' and 'competency' are understood in practice terms as a skilful performative accomplishment that is situationally contingent.

'Competencies' and 'competency' are used in the study to describe competence in the plural, such that 'leader's competency' could account for any number of individual competencies on view.

Collaborative leadership

'Collaborative leadership' is used in this study as shorthand to denote the exercise of leadership in collaborative settings and NOT as a 'collective' or 'shared' leadership approach. In this way, a social sector leader engaged in a collaboration can be described as exercising collaborative leadership.

Social sector

The social sector is used in this study as a catch-all-phrase to describe what is often referred to in the UK as ‘the voluntary and community sector,’ ‘the Third Sector,’ ‘the non-profit sector’ etc.

ABBREVIATIONS

CAT	Collaborative advantage theory
HRM	Human resource management
ICNPO	International classification of nonprofit organisations
Inf	Informant
KMV	Key mediating variable model
KSAs	Knowledge, skills, abilities
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NPM	New public management
NVSQ	Nonprofit voluntary sector quarterly
PhD	Doctor of philosophy
P-NPM	Post-new public management
P-N & NPM	Post-new public management and new public management
PRBA	Practice and relational based approach(s)
RQ(s)	Research question(s)
SS	Social sector
UK	United Kingdom
US	United States (of America)

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter introduces the reader to various aspects of the social sector literature (Section 1.1) before outlining the background to the research problem (Section 1.2). The chapter then provides a note concerning the study's abductive approach (Section 1.3) before turning attention to consider the research questions and associated research tasks (Section 1.4). This is followed by the identification of the research activities (Section 1.5), which leads into a discussion concerning the structure of the thesis (Section 1.6). Next the research findings are summarised (Section 1.7) and the study's conceptual contributions to knowledge are detailed (Section 1.8). The chapter ends with a description of the study's importance (Section 1.9).

1.1 Introduction

This qualitative abductive study began with the aim of understanding current and near future trends impacting the UK social sector, and the requisite leadership competencies deemed critical to meeting these challenges as conceived by senior UK social sector leaders. During the grounding process, collaboration and leader's collaboration competency surfaced with particular warranty to suggest they would benefit from further investigation.

Theoretical and empirical studies exploring collaborations at and across sectoral boundaries have grown significantly in recent years (Bryson et al., 2015). During this time, notable reviews of the literature have taken place (e.g., Oliver, 1990; Bryson et al., 2006; 2015; Parmigiani and Rivera-Santos, 2011; Varda et al., 2012; and Gazley and Guo, 2020). These reviews highlight several structural weaknesses within the literature as well as a number of lacunae, which together the current study will seek to address. These features of the literature include the following:

1. The cross-sector collaboration literature is dominated by US scholarship, which represents 60.7% of published output compared with just 4% from the UK (Ma and Konrath, 2018). Additionally, the majority of studies are written from a public administration perspective with remarkably few privileging a social sector assessment (Gazley and Guo, 2020). Furthermore, the bulk of the literature utilises an organisational unit of analysis (62%) rather than an individual unit of analysis (7.1%), such as the analysis of leader's competencies (Gazley and Guo, 2020). To illustrate this point, Bryson's et al. (2015) far reaching meta-review which took account of collaborative models and frameworks, revealed that none delved particularly deeply into the selection of competencies needed for a successful collaboration. **The current study seeks to address these structural weaknesses by providing research that prioritises UK and social sector perspectives, as well as privileging an individual unit of analysis by canvassing the lived experiences of senior social sector leaders and by paying specific attention to leader's collaboration competencies.**
2. Typically, the cross-sector collaboration literature maintains a strong focus on the positive aspects of collaboration (Gazley and Guo, 2020), which has contributed to a shortfall in collaboration failure literature. This particular lacuna is compounded by a shortage of comparative research. Together, these two lacunae frustrate what is known concerning the similarities and differences associated with good and bad collaborative conditions, which further obfuscate the ambitions of policy entrepreneurs and practitioners. **More purposeful work is therefore needed to collect data across these conditions and garner fresh insights that hold out practical advantage for social sector leaders engaged in collaborative practice (Gazley and Guo, 2020). This research seeks to make a practical, theoretical and empirical contribution by providing a comparative study which takes account of leaders' lived experiences of collaborative success and failure.**

3. Collaborations are now ubiquitous (Sullivan et al. 2012) particularly for the social service and welfare sub-sectors (Koschmann, 2013), and represent an institutional form distinct from single organisations (Lewis et al. 2010; Koschmann, 2013). Despite the presence of a growing collaborative leadership literature (e.g., Huxham and Vangen, 2000b; Huxham, 2003; Crosby et al. 2005; O'Leary et al. 2010; Silvia and McGuire, 2010; O'Leary et al. 2012; Muller-Seitz, 2012; Sullivan et al. 2012; Kramer et al. 2019), **surprisingly, little is known about leadership that transpires in these contexts (Bryson et al. 2015; Kramer et al. 2019) with even less known about leader's collaboration competencies** (Morse, 2008; Sullivan et al. 2012; Getha-Taylor et al., 2016; Kramer et al. 2019). **In short, while collaboration requires leadership, the jury is still out concerning the precise nature of leader's collaborative competency, with no UK social sector study published to date to move this debate forward. This study therefore makes a valued theoretical contribution by presenting the UK's first social sector study of cross-sector collaboration that takes a competency lens.**
4. The collaboration literature is further beset with a disconnect between research and practice, described by O'Leary and Vij (2012: 517) as 'the missing link,' which they consider particularly troublesome. With the typical social sector researcher described as an academic (Brass et al. 2018) and with 83% of the literature's first authors representing academic institutions compared with just 11% from practice organisations (Gazley and Guo, 2020), it is hardly surprising that practitioners question whose interests are foregrounded in the available research (Bushouse and Sowa, 2012). **The current study is conscious of the divide between research and practice and seeks to privilege the views and sensemaking of senior leaders through the deployment of semi-structured interviews and qualitative narrative analysis.**

1.2 Background to the research problem

Collaboration is increasingly championed by UK policy makers, as illustrated by the Conservative Government's 2018 *Civil Society Strategy,* which boldly declared, 'The future we want is one of collaboration' (Cabinet Office, 2018: 11). In short, collaboration frequently appears as an essential 'requirement for addressing society's most pressing future problems' (Getha-Taylor, 2019: 45). In an age when cost-containment, state welfare retrenchment, and reactive austerity fiscal policies are exacerbated by the turbulence of global events, it is not surprising that calls for social sector organisations to collaborate are on the rise.

Despite the positive tone of much of the collaboration literature, collaborations frequently end in near misses or wholesale failure (Gazley, 2017). With so much at stake, Huxham and Vangen's (2004) stark advice appears an antithesis to the Cabinet Office's bold declarative. These authors simply conclude, 'don't do it unless you have too' (Huxham and Vangen, 2004: 200).

Due to the state of the social sector, several points related to the collaboration literature are worth highlighting:

- Social sector leaders continue to rely on leadership theories conceptualised outside of the social sector.
- Social sector leaders continue to apply leadership theories developed through intraorganisational (single-organisational) case studies to interorganisational settings.
- With collaboration championed as an economic, political, and public managerial solution to public sector and market failure, the mandating of collaboration pushes it invariably beyond the weight of evidence and towards excessive rates of failure. Collaboration failure is significantly under reported, under documented and represents a critical lacuna within the literature.

- While leadership is considered critical to collaborative success, research aimed at understanding leader's collaborative competency remains in a state of underdeveloped stasis. Given the importance and complication of collaborative competencies, it is critical that they are scrutinised in their context-specificity i.e., in UK collaborative settings. The small collaborative competency literature is found almost exclusively within the confines of US public administration scholarship, which problematises the transferability of theory developed outside the UK and outside the social sector for practice to be applied within it.

This picture reveals the need for further research into the challenges facing UK social sector leaders engaged in collaboration, and the need to better understand the differences between collaborative success and failure, and to grasp the strategic utility of leaders' collaborative competency. At a time of increased uncertainty, there appears 'potent calls' for the reframing of leadership (Bolden et al. 2011: 13). Specifically, social sector theory has yet to adequately respond to the theoretical and practical challenges presented by leadership in cross-sector collaborative settings (Sullivan et al. 2012; Bryson et al. 2015). Competence scholarship and the organisational relationships literature provides a useful lens through which to assist this critical challenge and provides much of the guiding theory in this abductive study.

1.3 The abductive journey

While social sector research has been understood as an applied science with a deep connection to practice, this appears to be frequently downplayed in the literature (Provan and Lemaire, 2012). For example, according to Brudney and Durden's (1993) review of the first 25 years of the sector's leading journal *Nonprofit Voluntary Sector Quarterly* (NVSQ), only 16.7% of articles were written from a practitioner perspective. A more recent review of the same journal (Bushouse and Sowa, 2012) revealed only modest incremental advances such that just 23% of articles published between 2000 and 2010 bore findings of

relevance to practitioners. As such, the practical impact of social sector research has been diffused and rippled at best (ibid), as opposed to wholesale and systemic, fuelled in part by what Suddaby described as research's 'fetishistic' theorising 'at the expense of phenomena' (Suddaby 2014 in Birkinshaw et al., 2014: 42). For Taylor et al. (2018), this shortage of usable research in the sector is in part 'a result of the dominant reliance of scholarship on inductive and deductive reasoning' (p. 207).

Within this social sector research space, abductive methodologies have shown themselves capable of upending this trend to produce relevant and usable knowledge (Taylor et al., 2018), thereby bridging the great divide between research and practice (Huxham, 2009; cf. Hall and Battaglio, 2019). Having debated the future of management research, Birkinshaw et al. (2014: 53) emphasised 'the value of abduction, compared to deduction or induction as the primary canon of scientific reasoning.'[1] In short, abductive research has demonstrated itself to be a real science in the real world, that is able to produce greater understanding and better realities (Starbuck, 2004).

With the intention of influencing social sector practice in the field of cross-sector collaborations, the current study has opted for an abductive approach, with the consequence that it provides an atypical thesis structure that iteratively and dialogically invests in an exchange between the study's theoretical and empirical observations, as suggested by Healey (2014) in Birkinshaw et al. (2014). With this aim in mind, the current study applies aspects of Taylor's et al. (2018; 2020) abductive approach as a guide, which consists of 5 broad steps.[2]

- Step 1: *grounding the study of collaboration within its social sector context via initial theoretical observations*. This step included a selective thematic

[1] The original sentence uses the plural form 'canons' in reference to a) a primary focus on management phenomena and b) abduction.
[2] For the purposes of the current study Taylor's et al. (2018) abduction process has undergone two modifications: a) *extension* - the inclusion of a secondary theoretical observational stage ('Step 3'), and b) *redaction* - the omission of the process's temporal elements. These alterations secure procedural clarity and provide greater fit with the current study's research parameters.

review of the social sector literature (Chapter 2). Steps (1) through to (3) complete the study's grounding process.

- Step 2: *initial empirical observations captured through an exploratory study* that sense-checked the research's grounding against the lived experience of UK social sector senior leaders, captured in group observations that have been qualitatively and thematically analysed (Chapter 3).
- Step 3: *secondary theoretical observations* – Steps (1) and (2) surfaced collaboration as a 'surprising fact' (Taylor et al., 2020: 404) that warranted further investigation via a secondary literature review (Chapter 4). Steps (2) and (3) embody Taylor's et al. (2018: 216) 'mind-preparing stage,' and have culminated in the clarification of the study's core research questions (see Section 1.4).
- Step 4: *main empirical observations, captured through semi-structured interviews* that have been qualitatively and thematically analysed (Chapters 5 and 6).
- Step 5: *theoretical and empirical observations held in conversation* in order to generate fresh insights of benefit to scholars and practitioners alike (Chapters 6 and 7). Step (5) corresponds to Taylor's et al. (2018) 'mind-and-reality stage.' A sectional overview of the first three stages which represent the grounding process is presented in Fig 1.1.

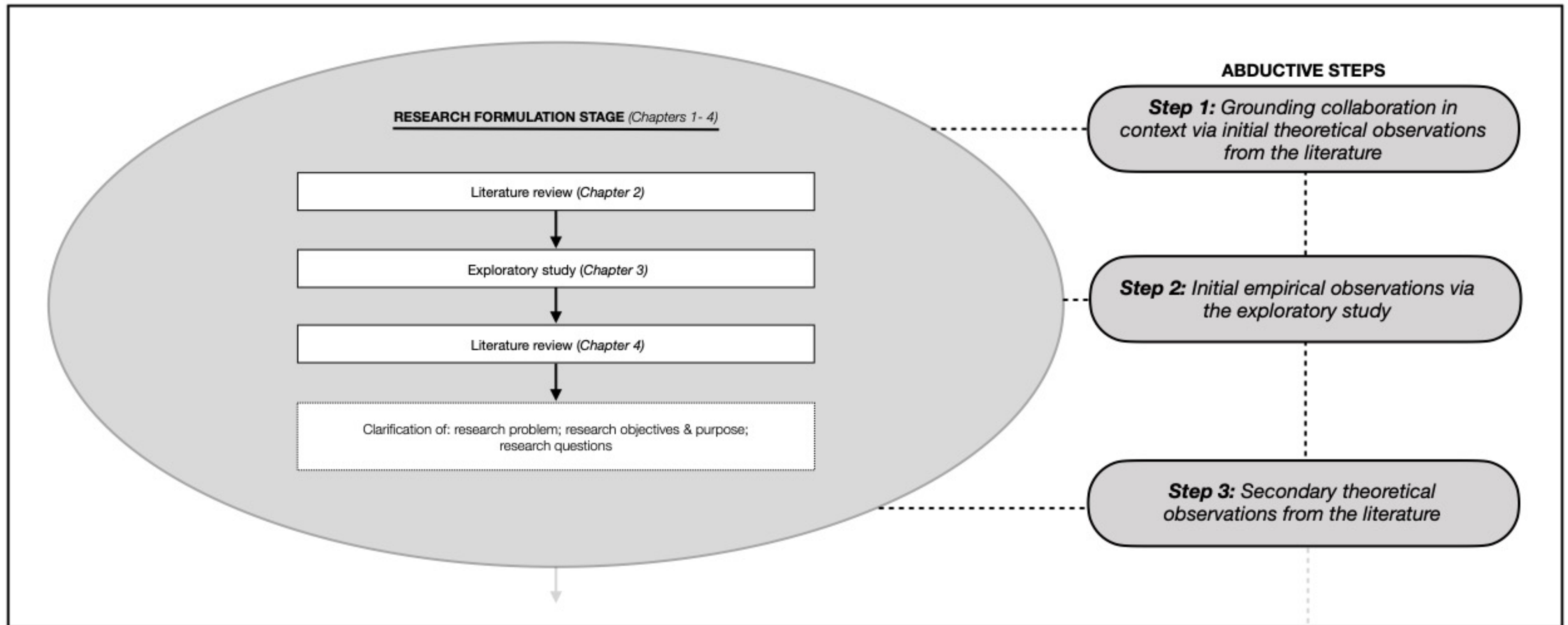


Figure 1. 1 – Sectional overview of the research and grounding process

In short, the study's abductive research approach has made possible a rich dialogical exchange between the extant literature (Chapter 2) and the data from the exploratory study (Chapter 3). This early exchange has facilitated the grounding of the study within a social sector context. It will be observed that this process provides evidence to suggest that collaboration presents a significant challenge to social sector leadership and would therefore benefit from further investigation. Additionally, this study's abductive approach has resulted in an alternative thesis structure making space for a secondary literature review.

1.4 Research questions and research tasks

Based on the study's grounding (initial literature review, exploratory study and secondary literature review) presented in Chapters 2 - 4, the evidence validated the study's interest in collaboration and collaboration competency and signalled their suitability for further exploration. As such, four main research questions were devised for the purpose of shedding light on social sector leaders understanding of collaboration, competency, and their relational aspects as implicated in good and bad collaborations.

RQ1. How do social sector leaders associate with leadership competence?
RQ2. How do social sector leaders understand collaboration?
RQ3. How do social sector leaders describe the relational issues related to collaboration?
RQ4. What competencies do leaders associate with collaboration?

The research questions are explored from a UK social sector perspective, taking account of social sector leaders experiential views of good and bad cross-sector collaborations. Concerning the competency element of the study, with competence theorists routinely criticised for their additivity i.e., the identification of new competence listings at the expense of providing more expansive descriptions, which would take account of the manner of their deployment or

interaction with other competencies or contextual features, the current study aims to improve what is known about *how* leaders activate competencies. As such this study does not set out to provide a model or framework of collaboration competencies.

In order to capture leader's lived experiences of cross-sector collaborations the current study chose a qualitative approach to data collection and analysis. As such the study selected semi-structured individual and group interviews as a way to gain access to leader's experiences and sensemaking. The exploratory study consisted of 3 group interviews with a total sample of 18 participants. The main study comprised a **different** sample of 30 participants engaged in individual online interviews. Both sets of informants represented senior social sector leaders. By way of addressing the research questions above, the interviews for both studies were recorded, transcribed and thematically analysed using the Gioia methodology (Gioia et al., 2012).

1.5 Research activities

By way of addressing the research questions outlined above and in keeping with the study's abductivity, the following research activities were carried out:

1. *Initial literature review:* This study began with a series of activities associated with the research formulation stage. This stage was concerned with grounding the research within a UK social sector context. As part of this grounding process, an initial literature review was undertaken. With the social sector literature representing voluminous amounts of scholarship covering a bewildering array of topics, a thematic review was chosen to assist the selection of relevant themes thereby providing a more manageable and coherent literature review. Selection was predicated on revealing pressing challenges affecting the social sector and its leadership. Three themes emerged of particular importance: Post-new & New Public Management (P-N & NPM), funding, and collaboration, which

were selected on the grounds that these themes represented significant challenges to social sector leadership now and into the near future.

2. *Exploratory study:* By way of sense-checking the social sector themes that emerged from the initial literature review, an exploratory study was conducted with 18 senior social sector leaders from a broad range of sub-sector domains. These included, education, youth, the arts, housing, mental health, military services, advocacy, and migrant and refugee services. The exploratory study validated the selected themes and provided particular warranty to collaboration and collaborative competency.
3. *Secondary literature review:* In response to the validating of collaboration following the exploratory study a secondary literature review was undertaken to provide a 'deeper dive' into the collaboration literature. This secondary review also included a review of the collaboration competence literature. The secondary literature review(s) completed the study's grounding process and resulted in the clarification of the study's research objectives and research questions.
4. *Research planning and implementation stages:* Having clarified the research questions, the study's methodological approach was identified. For the main study, this qualitative research project utilised semi-structured interviews to generate data that was analysed using the Gioia methodology (Gioia et al., 2012). As part of this approach the transcribed interviews underwent an iterative process of coding. In total the data underwent 4 coding cycles (see Figure 5.4). This analysis developed 1st order (informant-centric) concepts; 2nd order themes (clusters of 1st order concepts which express a coherent aspect of the phenomenon); and aggregate dimensions (theoretical abstractions derived from 1st and 2nd order data). The analysis was undertaken with the assistance of NVivo 12.
5. *Research presentation stage:* With the emergence of 1st order concepts, 2nd order themes, and aggregate dimensions, the study embarked on presenting and discussing these findings in association with the respective literature. As part of this process, informants' perceptions were cited

throughout the presentation stage in keeping with general thematic analysis guidelines. This stage also included the presentation of the study's contribution, implications, limitations, and conclusion.

These research activities are presented below (Figure 1.2) and provide the reader with an overview of the thesis structure. Table 1.1 presents a summary of the broad research stages undertaken in this study.

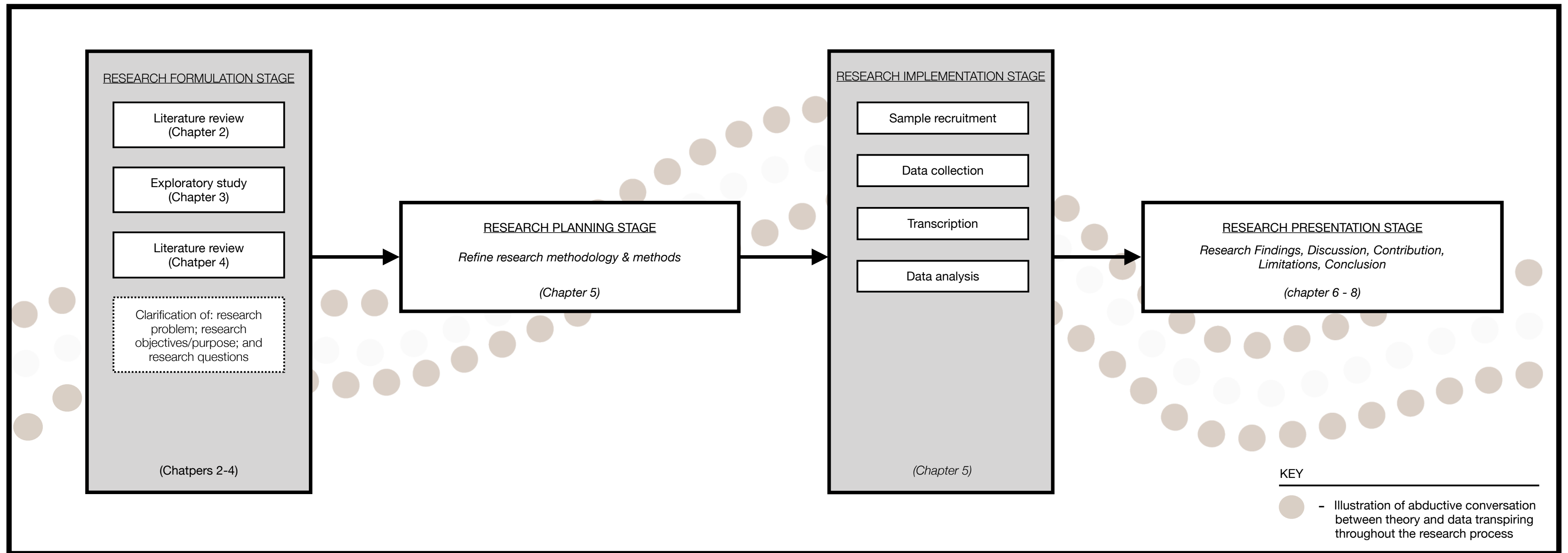


Figure 1. 2 – Summary of the research activities

Table 1. 1 – Summary of research stages

Study	Timeframe	Stage(s)/sample/method	Chapter	Purpose/key concepts/outcome
Exploratory study	Sept 2019	**Stage** Formulation stage	Chapters 1-4	**Purpose** Sense-check the selected literature review themes
		Sample n=18	Chapter 3	**Key concepts** P-N & NMP, funding challenges, collaboration
		Method *Data collection:* Group interviews *Data analysis:* Thematic analysis (Gioia methodology)	Chapter 3	**Outcome** Literature themes validated. Particular salience given to collaboration
Main study	Jun – Jul 2020	**Stages** Planning & Implementation stage Presentation stage	Chapter 5 Chapter 6-8	**Purpose** To explore how social sector leaders understand their experiences of good and bad collaborations paying attention to the role of competence and collaboration's relationality
		Sample n=30		**Key concepts** Perceptions of good and bad collaboration, competence, competency, and collaboration's relationality
		Method *Data collection:* Semi-structured interviews *Data analysis:* Thematic analysis (Gioia methodology)	Chapter 5	**Outcome** To provide conceptual contributions to the UK social sector literature, and the collaboration and collaboration competence literatures with implications for practice

1.6 Structure of the thesis

Chapter 1 provides an overview of the study, describing the background to the research problem as well as outlining the research aims, research questions, and research activities. In addition, the chapter introduces the reader to the study's abductive research approach and signals a change to the standard thesis structure. The chapter also presents the study's comparative data structure, a summary of the main research findings, as well as signalling the contributions to knowledge this thesis makes.

Chapter 2 begins by introducing the reader to the social sector definitional debate taking account of International and European perspectives. The chapter then presents a thematic review of the social sector literature. Three themes were selected for review on the basis that these provided evidence of challenges impacting the social sector and its leadership now and into the near future. The three themes in order of appearance are: P-N & NPM, funding, and collaboration.

Chapter 3 presents an exploratory study designed to sense-check the selected literature themes against the views of senior social sector leaders. Informants were asked to identify current and near future trends (themes) within the social sector alongside essential competencies. The exploratory study validated the selected literature review themes and provided particular warranty to collaboration and collaboration competency signalling their suitability for further exploration.

In light of the emergence of collaboration and leader's collaborative competency, Chapter 4 provides a secondary literature review offering a deeper dive into these literature streams. The chapter presents a structural assessment of the social sector and collaboration literatures, which share a number of structural characteristics. Two lacunae are identified within the collaboration literature itself. The first lacuna concerns the underrepresentation of collaboration failure research, and the second identifies a lack of studies utilising a comparative

research design. The consequence of these lacunae means that little is empirically known about why collaborations fail, or what the commonalities and differences are across good and bad collaborative conditions. Chapter 4 completes the study's grounding process.

Chapter 5 outlines the study's research methodology in detail. The chapter includes discussions on the various research strategies used throughout, and includes coverage of the study's philosophical, methodological and processual considerations. As such, the chapter presents details of the study's research process, approach, philosophical commitments and research design, including the methods of data collection and analysis.

Chapter 6 presents the main findings, which surfaced from the analysis of 30 semi-structured interviews with senior social sector leaders, who each drew on their lived experience of good and bad cross-sector collaborations. The findings revealed that good and bad collaborations are different in ways directly related to the study's three main themes of leader's competency, multiple accountabilities, and relationship features. The chapter presents a conceptual diptych that describes the development of good and bad collaborations ascribing a critical role to leader's preferencing behaviours.

Chapter 7 provides a discussion of the study's main findings in relation to the relevant literature. In so doing, the ensuing discussions are held against the backdrop of the study's research questions (RQ1-4) which provides the chapter its essential structure.

Chapter 8 provides a summary of the main findings and describes the study's main conceptual contributions. This chapter outlines the study's limitations and provides suggestions for future research. In closing, the chapter offers the study some concluding remarks.

1.7 Research findings

Collaboration was observed in this study as involving three themes – leader's competency multiple accountabilities, and relationship features. This study provides evidence to illustrate that good and bad collaborations are different in ways directly related to these three themes. As Figure 1.3. illustrates, the study surfaced a conceptual diptych at the centre of good and bad collaboration, ascribing a central role to leader's preferencing behaviours (yellow elements) for the exercise of these three themes (green, turquoise, royal blue elements) along mission- or organisation-preferencing lines.

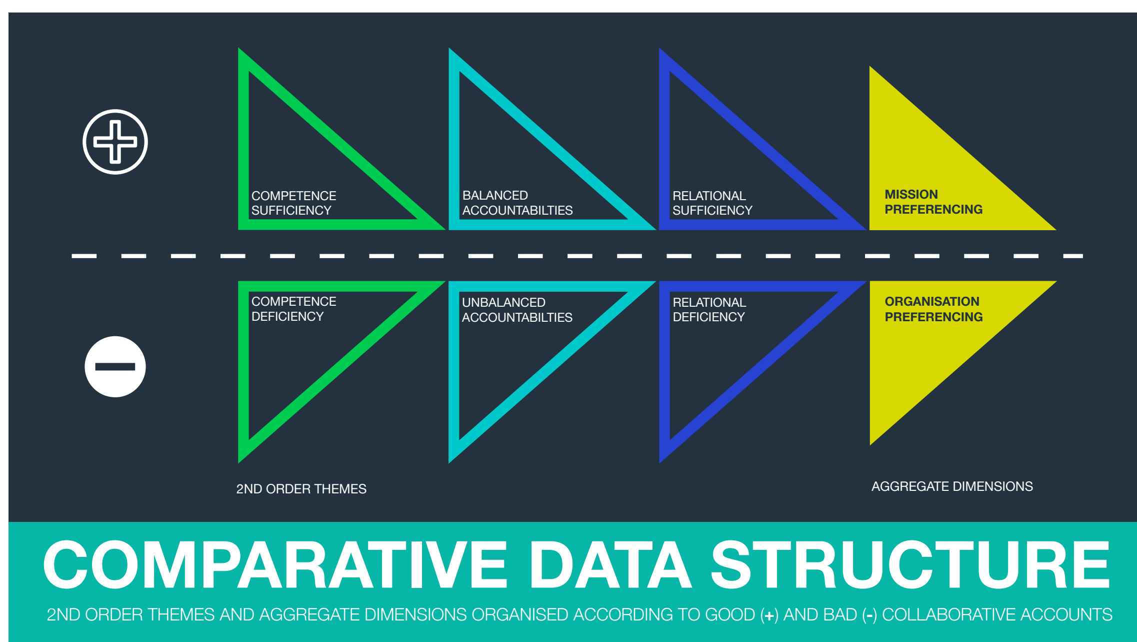


Figure 1.3 – Summative comparative data structure: illustrating 2nd order themes and aggregate dimensions organised according to good (+) and bad (-) collaboration accounts

Figure 1.4 provides a summary of the study's main research findings which are organised according to leaders preferencing behaviours i.e., mission- and organisation-preferencing, as observed according to good and bad collaboration accounts.

	LEADER'S COMPETENCY	MULTIPLE ACCOUNTABILITIES	RELATIONSHIP FEATURES	
MISSION PREFERENCING	• Individual competencies switched in response to contextual contingencies i.e., intraorganisational competencies switched in favour of interorganisational competencies • Competence switching supported by on-going competence updating • Social sector collaborative competency emphasizes sectoral, motivational & ethical characteristics	• Good collaboration is achieved and maintained by a balancing of organisation, mission, and collaboration priorities • Mission priorities receive privileged operational significance when balance is threatened • Good collaboration requires the active resistance of self-interested opportunistic behaviours and the privileging of mission priorities	• Trust surfaced as an essential feature of collaborative success • Communication considered an essential feature of good collaboration. Critical aspects included: listening and the strategic use of safe dialogical spaces • Organisational and collaborative values vitalised and given collective operational significance in good collaborations	GOOD COLLABORATIONS
ORGANISATION PREFERENCING	• Bad collaborations associated with poor competence switching i.e., intraorganisational competencies used indiscriminately in collaborations • Bad collaborations assocaited with competence stasis i.e., fixed rather than updated competencies • Bad collaborations associated with social sector competency systematically undermined by paucity of social sector leadership development opportunities and lack of social sector theorising impacting leader's confidence	• Bad collaboration is achieved as accountabilities fail to achieve a balance of organisation, mission, and collaboration priorities • Collaborative failure transpires in consequence of organisational prioritisation • Collaborative failure is reinforced by opportunistic behaviours i.e., hoarding reputational gains or resource advantages	• Collaboration failure associated with a lack of trust including leaders' untrustworthy behaviour • Collaboration failure associated with communication mediocrity e.g., poor listening and insufficient collective dialogue • Values alignment is assumed rather than actual. Mismatching values are rarely discussed. Values and goal setting are decoupling	BAD COLLABORATIONS

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS

Figure 1.4 – Summary of the study's main findings organised according to mission-preferencing and organisation-preferencing in association with good and bad collaborations

1.8 Contributions

Summers (2001) underscores the importance of making one's intended contributions to knowledge explicit. This study seeks to make a number of conceptual contributions to knowledge which are outlined below.

1.8.1 Academic contributions

This study makes a number of contributions to the social sector literature. First, it provides a much needed and called for study that focusses on the competencies and the lived experiences of social sector leaders engaged in cross-sector collaboration (Bryson, 2015; Boyer et al., 2019). Second, by exploring both good and bad collaborations, it addresses an important lacuna in the literature: the lack of examination of bad collaborations (Gazley and Guo, 2020). Third, it is conducted withing the UK social sector, which is under-represented in the literature when compared to US studies. The findings suggest that collaboration may be viewed as a function of three key themes: competence sufficiency, balanced accountabilities, and relational sufficiency. This is the first time (to the best of my knowledge) that these three themes have been associated with cross-sector collaboration and thus provides much needed insights into the field (Bryson et al. 2006; 2015; Gazley and Guo, 2020). Importantly, 'good' collaborations are found to be characterised by mission-preferencing (prioritising the mission ahead of the organisation), while 'bad' collaborations are found to be characterised by organisation-preferencing (placing the organisation ahead of the mission). As such, this research provides a working model by which others can start to understand good and bad collaborations and provides important new insights into bad collaborations.

The findings in relation to each of the three key themes also make a contribution to the literature. The findings relating to competence sufficiency highlight the importance of competence switching in collaboration. This is a novel finding and something that has been underplayed in previous research where competencies

are seen to be more static or fixed. It suggests that competencies can usefully be viewed as more flexible and more contingent upon circumstance than some of the more traditional European and US models suggest (Burgoyne, 1993; Garavan and McGuire, 2001; Bolden and Gosling, 2006; Capaldo et al. 2006; Winterton, 2009; Chen, 2010; Lindberg and Rantatalo, 2015; Getha-Taylor et al. 2016; Nicolini et al. 2017; ACEVO, 2019).

As such, the study presents a conceptual diptych at the centre of collaboration competency, ascribing a critical role to leader's preferencing behaviours, which parsimoniously describes the contingent activation of leader's competency. As such the study presents a conceptual framework for understanding *how* competencies are enacted, which is a neglected aspect of the competence literature. The study contributes to theory by offering the first UK social sector conceptualisation of collaboration through a competency lens.

The findings relating to balanced accountabilities have much significance for the P-N & NPM literature (Dees and Anderson, 2003; Guo, 2006; Hvenmark, 2016; Maier et al. 2016; Eppel and O'Leary, 2019; Suykens et al. 2019; Brandtner, 2021). The findings of this study suggest that balancing conflicting accountabilities (e.g., funder requirements, service delivery, employee engagement) was critical to good collaborations and unbalanced accountabilities were a key factor in bad collaborations. Interestingly the study found that accountabilities could often be balanced in practice by considering the mission (or purpose) of the collaboration at the heart of decision-making. Bad collaborations, on the other hand, often had unbalanced accountabilities that resulted from decision-making that put organisational priorities above mission. P-N an NPM theorists often suggest that social sector organisations should learn from the for-profit literature by focussing on organisation priorities such as having unique value propositions or making efficiency gains. (Bishop, 2007; Maier et al., 2016; Suykens et al., 2019). The findings in this study suggest that key to good collaboration may require a different approach i.e., the balancing of accountabilities through a focus on giving 'mission' and 'purpose' priority over

organisational need. The findings also have relevance for the for-profit literature, which is increasingly focussed on purpose driven business and how this can add value (Lee, 2008; Ghobadian et al., 2015; Wang et al., 2016; Money et al., 2017)

The findings presented with regards to relationship sufficiency confirm the importance of relational aspects such as trust, communication, and shared values to good collaborations found in for-profit contexts (e.g., Morgan and Hunt, 1994 and Money et al., 2017). While the findings in relation to this aspect are not as novel when compared to findings in relation to competence sufficiency and balanced accountabilities, it is important to signal a contribution to context here, by establishing the importance of relationship features to the lived experience of social sector leaders in cross-sector collaborations. There are also some intriguing findings, especially with regards to opportunistic behaviours – which were often resisted in good collaborations and embraced in bad ones. This, in itself, may not be surprising, but the manner in which they were resisted perhaps is. The findings suggest that opportunistic behaviours were often resisted by a focus on mission preferencing rather than organisation preferencing. The findings thus add to the literature not only by confirming the importance of relationship features, but signalling how aspects, such as opportunistic behaviours may be overcome in practice.

While this study does not claim a methodological contribution, it provides a useful template for others wishing to conduct abductive research qualitatively. This is timely, as a number of leading journals (e.g., the Academy of Management Discoveries) are highlighting the importance of such research to management and the lack of such research at this time.

1.8.2 Implications for policy makers and practitioners

This research has remained cognisant of the practical implications of its findings and, by extension, has sought to bridge the divide between research and practice. As such, it is hoped that these insights might improve social sector

leadership as well as influence leadership development initiatives aimed at enhancing social sector leader's collaborative performance. In short, the study envisages practical and policy enhancements associated with collaboration, not least, greater attention given to safeguarding social sector leader's collaborative competency when designing, mandating or championing cross-sector collaborations or when commissioning social sector leadership development programs.

Note

While the study's contribution undoubtedly holds a degree of relevance for social sector leadership theory, the study deliberately maintains a critical distance from this vast and complex literature. To the degree that leadership is foregrounded, it is only in association to the study's primary concern which is collaboration, competency, and collaboration's relationality. To that end this study steers clear of the voluminous and challenging domain of social sector leadership theory.

1.9 Importance of the study

Recent reviews of the social sector literature have revealed that much of it suffers a geographical distribution disparity. While the social sector's leading journals (*NVSQ*, *Nonprofit Management and Leadership*, and *Voluntas*) display a geographical spread of scholarship, UK studies still appear in the minority. As such the current study seeks to contribute to the development of UK social sector scholarship.

Both the social sector and collaboration literatures display an underrepresentation of practitioners' voices and concerns (Hall and Battaglio, 2019; Gazley and Guo, 2020). Boyer et al. (2019: 213) for example comment: 'although there is extensive literature on collaboration, rarely have the leaders' own perceptions been the focus of analysis.' With much of the collaboration research focused on the organisational level of analysis what is often missing is

the human and the relational (Gazley and Guo, 2020). Among the missing aspects of analysis Bryson et al. (2015: 650) highlights leader's competencies. This study confronts these lacunae and seeks to produce knowledge of interest to researchers and practitioners by taking account of senior sector leader's perspectives.

The social sector and collaboration literatures have been criticised for their positive tone (see Coule et al., 2022) such that constructionist and post-positivistic methodologies appear incommensurate with the literature's normative methodological conservatism. Within the collaboration literature, such strong positivism has resulted in the mandating of social sector collaboration (Gazley and Brudney, 2007; Almog-Bar and Schmid, 2018; Bano , 2019; Brock, 2020; Krogh, 2020) which invariably pushes policy and practice beyond the weight of evidence and towards excessive rates of failure. This normative positivism conceals a lack of collaboration failure research. With collaboration 'hardly an easy answer to complex public problems' (Bryson et al., 2015: 648), more needs to be known about why, how and under what conditions collaborations fail.

In short, the importance of this study can be measured on several fronts. The study answers calls in the literature for more research into the conditions associated with good and bad collaborations. This study suggests that it is mission priorities as opposed to organisational interests that are critical to the development of good collaborations. As such, for the first time, this study establishes good collaboration as a function of competence sufficiency, balanced accountabilities, and relationship sufficiency; as well as establishing bad collaboration as a function of competence deficiency, unbalanced accountabilities and relationship deficiency. This study therefore extends knowledge of collaborative success and failure through the application of a comparative research design. This research comes at a time when state actors and policy entrepreneurs are redoubling their commitments to the collaborative ideal (Cabinet Office, 2018), as such this study asserts its practicality, relevance and fecundity.

Chapter 1 has provided the reader with a general introduction to the research, outlining the background to the research problem as well as presenting the research questions and identifying the research tasks. In addition, the chapter has introduced the study's abductive approach and described the five abductive steps influencing the research process as well as impacting the structure of the thesis. Having set the stage for the study's research - to better understand the challenge collaboration presents UK social sector leaders - the chapter provided an early presentation of the study's comparative data structure and main study findings. Additionally, the chapter alluded to the study's several conceptual contributions to knowledge.

Chapter 2 will introduce the social sector's definitional debate taking account of International and European perspectives. The chapter will then turn its attention to a thematic review of the social sector literature, identifying P-N & NPM, funding, and collaboration as representative of challenges impacting the social sector and its leadership now and into the near future.

CHAPTER 2. INITIAL THEORETICAL OBSERVATIONS: SOCIAL SECTOR THEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter begins by presenting the reader with a review of the social sector definitional debate and takes account of International and European conceptions. This is followed by a review of the social sector literature. Acknowledging the capaciousness of this literature, a thematic review has been deployed by way of providing a coherent organising principle. Each selected theme represents a challenge facing social sector leadership now and into the near future. Three themes were selected for review – P-N & NPM, social sector funding and cross-sector collaboration. The chapter draws to a close with a review of the competence literature. This chapter forms an essential constituent of the study's abductive grounding process. As such the selected literature themes will be sense-checked against the views of senior social sector leaders in a subsequent exploratory study (Chapter 3).

2.1 Social sector conceptualisations

An emphasis is placed in this study on collaboration's contingency, relationality and practice, and therefor requires a contextually sensitive theorisation that places a premium on the review of the social sector's definitional literature. The following review reveals a contested debate involving essentialist definitions on the one hand and contingent conceptualisations on the other, concluding that it may now be useful to adopt a more fluid conceptualisation of the social sector.

2.1.1 The International Classification of Nonprofit Organisations and Salamon and Sokolowski's European model

A growing body of literature has contributed to the social sector definitional debate over the last three decades (e.g., Salamon and Anheier, 1996; Evers and Laville, 2004; Alcock, 2010; Alcock and Kendall, 2011; Salamon and Sokolowski,

2014, 2016; Defourny et al., 2016), with little sign of a unifying consensus emerging (Defourny and Nyssens, 2016 in Defourny et al., 2016). Salamon and Anheier (1992; cf.1996), motivated by the perceived lack of attention paid to the social sector and the 'imprecise' (1992: 267) theorising which typically took place, set about to articulate a 'structural' and 'operational' definition (p. 268) of the social sector. This work was incorporated into the John Hopkins Comparative Nonprofit Sector Project. Together this work and the author's book, '*The Emerging Nonprofit Sector: An Overview*,' made a significant contribution to the social sector definitional debate with the creation of the 'International Classification of Nonprofit Organisations' (ICNPO), which became the dominant international model for the social sector (Evers and Laville, 2004). The criteria behind the ICNPO included the 'comparability, operationalizability, and 'institutionalizability' of the classification into national and international 'official statistical systems' (Salamon and Sokolowski, 2016: 1516; 1523).

The challenge of institutionalising a classification system into official statistical systems is balancing the need for conceptual simplicity with the need to capture the social sectors diversity (Alcock and Kendall, 2011; Alcock et al., 2013; Salamon and Sokolowski, 2014; 2016; Weisinger, 2016; Gazley, 2017; Will et al., 2018). Social sector diversity renders the sector 'one of the most perplexing concepts in modern political and social discourse' (Salamon and Sokolowski, 2016: 1515); a 'loose and baggy monster' (Kendall and Knapp, 1995 in Alcock et al., 2013: 40); 'at once a visible and compelling force in society and an elusive mass of contradictions' (Frumkin, 2002: 1). In short, the literature presents a 'big tent thesis' with the social sector constituted by a bewildering variety of organisations, organisational forms and activities, including:

> 'religious congregations, universities, hospitals, museums, homeless shelters, civil rights groups, labour unions, political parties, and environmental organizations, among others. Nonprofits play a variety of social, economic, and political roles in the society. They provide services

> as well as educate, advocate, and engage people in civic and social life.' (Boris and Steuerle, 2006, in Will et al., 2018: 1016)

The ICNPO and international handbooks (i.e., the United Nations (2018) '*Satellite Account on Non-profit and Related Institutions and Volunteer Work*') are designed to set standards for the measurement of the social sector's economic activity. This economic framing is problematic for the definitional debate because it only takes account of economic activity and interactions between economic agents (to the exclusion of all other activities and interactions). In this way, technical and official classification systems (influenced by economic theories) have become the dominant voice in the definitional debate such that the ICNPO describes the social sector as the 'third or social economy' (TSE). For the ICNPO, the TSE is made up of three main institutions – those not controlled by the government (such as voluntary sports or arts associations); related institutions not controlled by the government (such as cooperatives and social enterprises); and volunteer work. For the ICNPO, these institutions are characterised by: private interest (not controlled by the government); serving the social good or public purpose; and the engagement of voluntary action (free from coercion) (United Nations, 2018). The ICNPO's general economic approach (and associated economic epistemologies) are used extensively by definitional researchers and policy makers, as we shall shortly see.

As perhaps is to be expected from such an ambitious project, the ICNPO has generated criticism. Evers and Laville (2004), for example, criticise the ICNPO's perceived 'American bias' (p.13) on the grounds that the project is thought to underemphasise a 'historical-dynamic' (p. 11) that is of particular relevance to the European social sector discourse. From a European perspective, social sector definitions are thought to be the result of specific 'legacies of political and cultural change' (Alcock, 2010: 12). The ICNPO is further criticised for failing to account for the European provision of limited profit distribution (Defourny et al., 2016). Alexander (2010) argues that legally:

> 'the European third sector also covers organizations that aim to meet the social and financial needs of their members. The distinction here therefore is not between profit and non-profit making groups, but between maximizing returns for individual investors and collective or mutual benefit' (p. 3).

In addition to the above, European social sector studies portray the sector with long standing ties to the state and the market (Brudney, 1990; Evers and Laville, 2004; Kendall, 2009). Alcock and Kendall (2011), speaking of the UK social sector, refer to state and social sector ties as a longstanding 'strategic unity,' underwritten by 'shared,' 'cross-cutting' concerns (p. 464). Similarly, Alexander (2010) points to the 'long European traditions combining collective action, mutual aid and welfare economies provided by a mixture of churches, local and central government and private philanthropy' (Alexander, 2010: 3).

Of particular relevance for the current study is the contribution of Salamon and Sokolowski (2014; 2016), and their European sector conceptualisation (see Figure 2.1), which can be seen as a response to the criticisms levelled against the ICNPO highlighted above, and a concern that sector scholarship invariably simplified definitional research by concentrating research attention mainly at the social sector organisational level ('NPIs,' 'nonprofit institutions' in Figure 2.1). Keen to widen the net, Salamon and Sokolowski (together with the European Union's 'Third Sector Impact Project') set about reconceptualising the social sector, taking into account the European provision of limited profit distribution, the presence of cooperatives and mutuals, and the emergence of social enterprises, which at the time of their writing 'remained under-conceptualized in reliable operational terms' (2016: 1515).

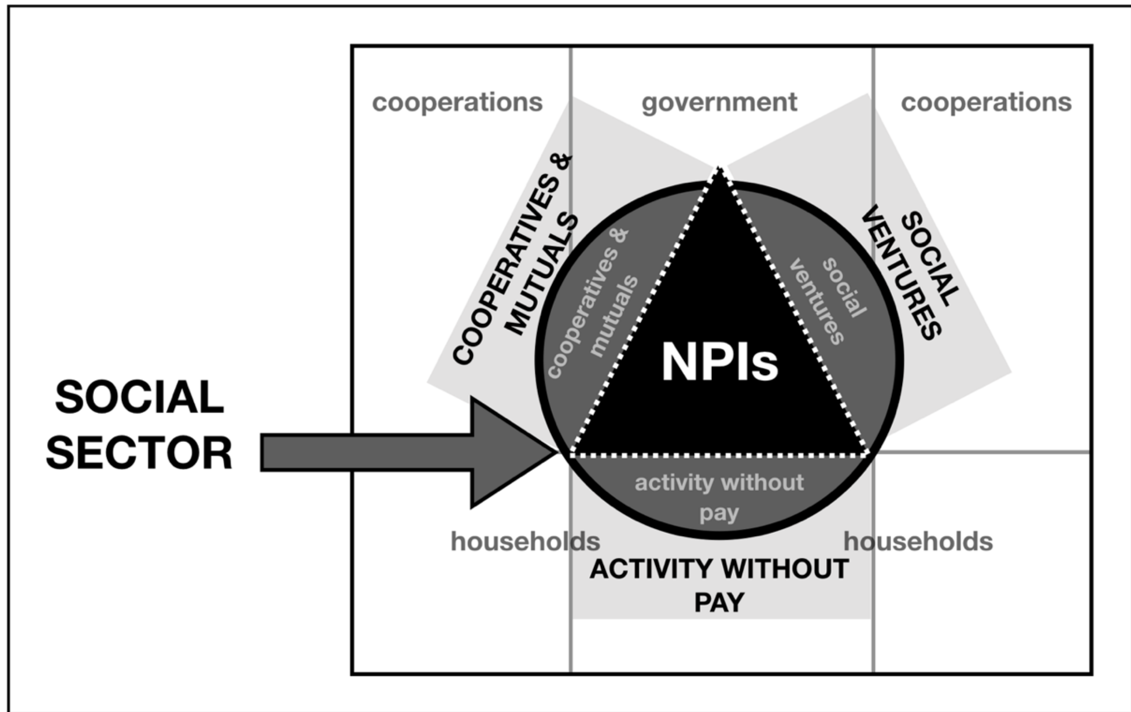


Figure 2.1 – Conceptualising the social sector in Europe[3]

Salamon and Sokolowski's reconceptualisation of the social sector not only incorporates social and economic enterprises, but also allows for the inclusion of civil activity in the form of volunteerism ('activity without pay'). Critically, these authors depict a European social sector that, in part or in whole, is made up of what many would concede as the 'core' institutional social sector entities (Gronbjerg, 2016 in Defourny et al., 2016), these being: (a) social sector organisations, (b) social enterprises, (c) voluntary action, and (d) cooperatives and mutual societies (Salamon and Sokolowski, 2016). What however remains in contention within this literature is the nature of integration between the principle parts (Defourny et al., 2016). For example, Salamon and Sokolowski's model remains silent on the dynamic interplay of state and social sector, with little or no overlap displayed between the two domains (Gronbjerg, 2016 in Defourny et al. 2016), which may be taken by some to suggest that the state-social sector dynamic is either 'clear-cut' or 'not relevant for a conceptual model' (Gronbjerg,

[3] Source: Salamon and Sokolowski (2014; cf. 2016: 1531). To aid clarity reference to 'social sector' has replaced 'third sector' in the original model. Note: NPI = 'non-profit institutions'.

2016 in Defourny et al. 2016: 1554). This critical omission further obfuscates the impact of state sponsored policy and regulatory incursions that the social sector is frequently forced to contend with (Kendall, 2009; 2010; Han, 2017). Despite the many advancements this work provides the European definitional debate, Salamon and Sokolowski's narrow in- and out-scoping processes excludes from this conceptual map functions (and their relationality) that represent the delivery of mandated public services, such as mandatory education, welfare, social service or health care provisions, which are increasingly delivered through cross-sector collaborations. In attempting to produce a concise conceptual map, Salaman and Sokolowski raise important questions concerning the new delimitations of the social sector, but in doing so set terms of reference which excludes the challenge cross-sector collaboration presents to the social sector's essential character and identity. As such these authors stop short of contending with the sectors essential hybridity and collaborative dynamic. Commenting on the changing UK policy environment Pape et al. (2019: 2) add:

> 'It is probably now safer to think of the UK [social sector] as an evolving, unstable hybrid both containing and expressing a wide and complex range of social and political forces.'

In summary, a contested definitional debate in Europe has been playing out since the 1970s, influenced in part by the ICNPO, and Salamon and Sokolowski's later conceptualisations. European research challenges the historical and contextual deficiencies of the ICNPO as well as the side-lining of the social economy and social enterprise (Defourny, 2014; Defourny and Nyssens, 2014). Salamon and Sokolowski's (2014; 2016) European model addresses many of these criticisms and is therefore of particular use to the current study, not least in having situated the social sector in its immediate conceptual context i.e., as sectorally landlocked.

2.1.2 Evers and Lavilee and the European debate

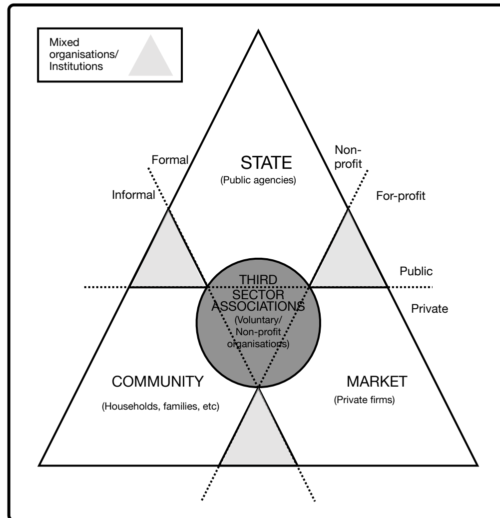
The UK Civil Society Almanac (2020) produced by the National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO), conceptually utilises the work of Evers and Laville (2004), who have had a significant impact within the European definitional debate (see Figure 2.2 for Evers and Laville's conceptualising[4] and NCVOs application). Evers and Laville (2004) provide a critique of international classification systems (e.g., ICNPO) and offer a 'European way' of conceiving of the social sector (2004: 36). These authors identify four features of the European way. Firstly, the European approach describes the social sector in terms more inclusive than simply organisations and organisational actions of charities. This approach includes organisations excluded from the ICNPO such as social enterprises, mutuals and cooperatives. Secondly, the European definitional debate describes the social sector in terms of a hybridised tripolar economy incorporating the monetary economy of the market, the non-market economy of the state, and the non-monetary economy of the community and voluntary sector (Evers and Laville, 2004). These author's comment:

> 'In other words, the third sector is not defined as a clear-cut sector and is approached more as a component of the economy based on solidarity and a hybridization of different economic principles.' (2004: 20)

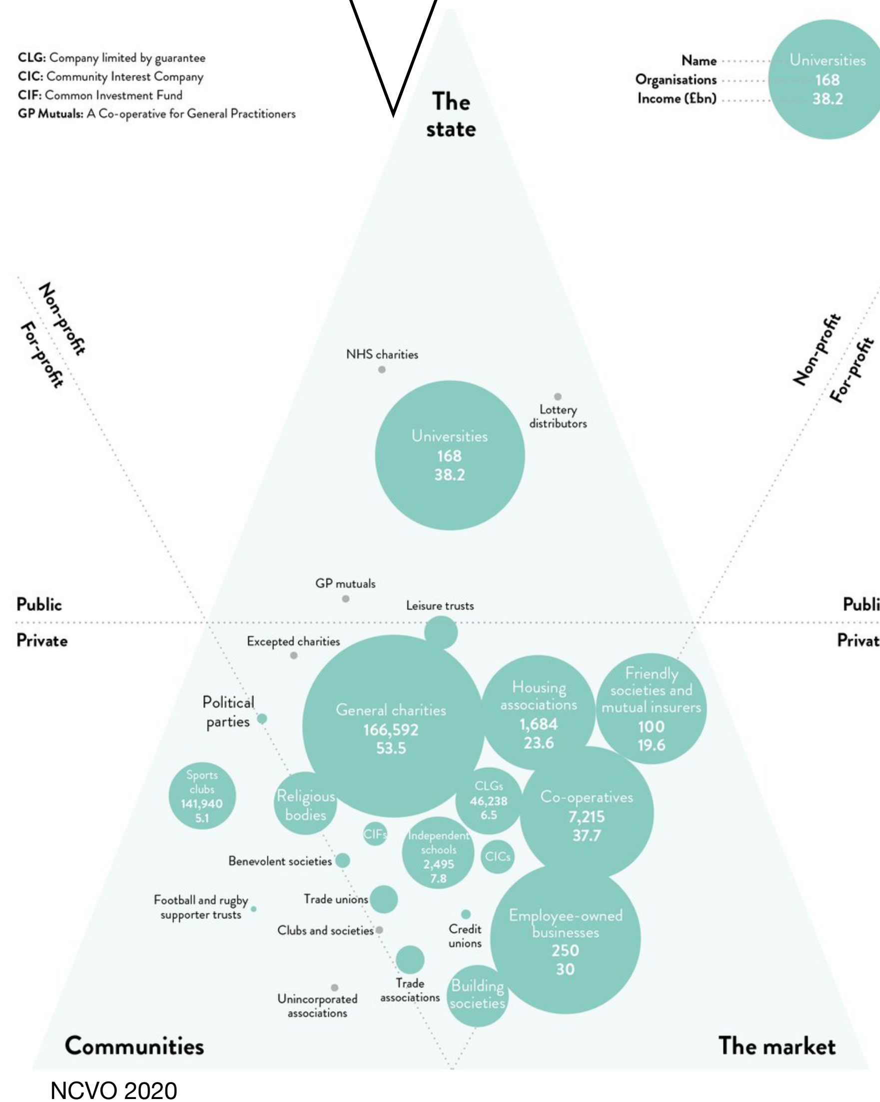
The third feature of Evers and Laville's 'European way' concerns a focus on the 'open, mixed, pluralistic and *intermediate nature'* of the social sector (2004: 36). As such, across Europe, the social sector is invariably more commercial and often closer to the state than either US or international models (Pape et al., 2019). Finally, for Evers and Laville (2004), the European definitional debate emphasises the social sector's connection with state welfare delivery, often described in the literature as a mixed economy of welfare provision (ibid). It is here that European definitional scholarship makes space for cross-sector collaborative action – a feature almost entirely ignored in international models.

[4] Evers and Laville's model is a modification of Pestoff (1992 in Evers and Laville, 2004).

Evers and Laville's hybridic conceptualising (see Figure 2.2) has come at a time (for the definitional debate) when interest in organisational hybridity (Litrico and Besharov, 2018; Suykens et al., 2019), and wider processes of social sector hybridisation (Brandsen et al., 2005; Greenwood et al., 2011; Morrison, 2016; Skelcher and Smith, 2017) are on the rise. While hybridity is not a new phenomenon (Schildt and Perkmann, 2017), it has increasingly been asserted that the social sector has 'stumbled into a period of intense organizational hybridity' (Billis, 2010: 46). It is argued that hybridity sets the social sector definitional debate along a 'creek not only without a paddle, but also without a reliable map' (Billis, 2010: 46). In short, definitional research appears to be slow in responding to either hybridity on the one hand or to collaborative practice on the other, preferring (for statistical purposes) economic frames of reference, which are yet to show any real signs of responding to the challenge that collaboration presents.



Evers and Laville (2004)



NCVO 2020

Figure 2.2 – Social sector conceptualisation[5]

[5] Sources: Top left: Evers and Laville (2004); central image: NCVO (2020).

2.1.3 Three broad approaches

Alcock and Kendall (2011) identify three broad approaches within the definitional literature. The first cluster of studies attempt to delineatethe sector with reference to ‘conceptualising its boundaries,’ including it’s core and its limits (2011: 452). Salamon and Anheier (1996); Frumkin, 2002; Dahan et al., (2010); and, Salamon and Sokolowski (2014; 2016) exemplify this approach. Reed (1997 in Dart, 2004: 292) make this essentialist conceptualisation plain.

> ‘The defining boundaries of any phenomenon can be set not only in terms of some set of traits but also in terms of a distinguishing essence. There exists such a feature in a large portion of the nonprofit sector that I believe it is conceivably its more distinctive and influential characteristic...The components of this ethos *inter alia* are an orientation toward general amelioration, motivation that rests on some idea or moral principle, and a sense of mutuality, trust and common cause among people engaging in nonprofit activity.’

The second cluster of studies reject aspects of the first approach. Instead of categorical solidity and research into *distinct* social sector characteristics, these studies favour a pragmatic ‘heightened definitional sensibility’ (Alcock and Kendall, 2011: 452) within which definitions are chosen on the grounds of their suitability to the research question. By way of illustration, under this approach researchers are free to exclude social economy and social enterprise from the definitional debate depending on the research approach and context at hand. This second methodology is frequently employed within theoretical and conceptual studies (Alcock and Kendall, 2011). The third group of studies pushes the pragmatic and contextual specificities evident in the second cluster the farthest. This definitional contingency seeks to attend to the historical and political contingencies at work within each new frame of reference under investigation (Alcock and Kendall, 2011).

In summary, this review of the social sector's definitional debate has surfaced a nuanced picture in which consensus has been elusive. To varying degrees, definitional scholarship has sought to contend with the sectoral landlocked dilemma by developing terms of reference which employ in- and out-scoping processes that fail to adequately account for the social sectors complex cross-sector collaborative characteristics and boundary spanning practices. Salamon and Sokolowski (2014; 2016) and Evers and Laville (2004) do more than most to make possible the inclusion of cross-sector collaboration within their conceptual frameworks. The NCVOs appliance of Evers and Laville's conceptual model provides evidence of its real-world application and illustrates the social sector's readiness to incorporate and reify what the literature has yet to fully come to terms with i.e., the social sector's boundary spanning essentialism. As such, this study adopts a more fluid definitional conceptualisation of the social sector allowing for cross-sector collaboration to play a larger part within the definitional debate.

2.2 SOCIAL SECTOR THEMES

This section explores a range of social sector themes by way of contextualising (abductively grounding) this study within its social sector context. This section begins by articulating the selection criteria used to identify the literature under review, before reviewing three social sector themes which each represent challenges to social sector leadership now and into the near future.

2.2.1 Selection criteria

Literature has been selected in accordance with the study's abductive approach (see Section 1.3) and research goals (see Section 1.4). Specifically:

- While the overall review draws significantly from top tier journals (3 and 4 star rated or impact factor 2.7 and above), additional articles that sit below or outside this academic rating have been shortlisted if they meet the remaining criteria. These additional articles, while few in number, include industry, practitioner and sector specific articles and reports, which help to mitigate 'deliberate selection bias' along 'high-ranking, citation count (Gazley and Guo, 2015: 1; 2).
- The selection of social sector themes, has sought a balance between the sheer breadth of the literature and the need to provide a workable focus, in keeping with guidance from Gazley and Guo (2015). Thematic selection has been made in accordance to several factors: (a) analysis of an indicative keyword search of 134 articles and research notes drawn from the sector's highest ranking journal (NVSQ), for the period of 2018 and 2019 (see Figure 2.3); (b) keyword searches via the University of Reading's search engine including for illustrative purposes: 'nonprofit,' 'non-profit,' 'third-sector,' 'social-sector,' 'voluntary and community sector,' 'collaboration,' 'partnership,' 'collaborative,' 'challenge,' 'trend,' 'feature,'

'competence,' 'competencies,' 'competency,' 'capability,' 'skills,' 'management,' 'leadership,' etc., across social sector journals and non-social sector journals were articles have focused in full or in part on social sector leadership; and (c) snowball selection and pragmatic abduction (Gazley and Guo, 2015; Taylor et al., 2018) which has enabled the gradual surfacing of the RQs.

- Articles utilising qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods have been included. Empirical and conceptual approaches have been treated with equal weight.
- In addition to the primacy of social sector studies, a broad range of disciplines have also been included if they are deemed to assist the study and not forestall the premium placed on social sector scholarship. These studies have included: organisational studies, competence studies, collaboration studies; and public administration.

While limits have been set on the scope of selection in keeping with guidance from Gazley and Guo (2015), the selection process has enabled a broad synthesis of literature, which enabled the selection of relevant themes and assisted the clarification of the RQs.

2.2.2 Understanding social sector themes

A characteristic of published academic social science work (including social sector scholarship) invariably involves managing constraints set by editorial boards, which limit research focus and ambition, such that most studies represent single issue research (with tight research parameters). While this approach continues to drive forward discrete contributions to scholarship, it fails to capture a 'fuller' (Kramer et al., 2019) and more 'dynamic' (Antonakis et al., 2012) portrait of the phenomena under review. Yet phenomena, like real life, invariably contain many 'parts' or 'themes' that jostle for position, intersecting and criss-crossing with almost breathless limitability and consequence. By selecting a thematic approach to the literature review within an abductive research project, it is

possible for the study to capture themes that speak to each other and perhaps most importantly speak back and forth with the lived experience of senior social sector leaders e.g., through the exploratory study (Chapter 3).

In accordance with the study's abductive approach, this part of the literature review seeks to present the reader with themes that emerged from the literature prior to the exploratory study. This literature review facilitates the study's grounding in its social sector context. In order to manage the bewildering array of multifarious literature streams that constitute social sector scholarship, an approach involving the isolation of discrete social sector themes has been employed. To assist the selection of thematic items suitable for review, a keyword analysis of 134 articles and research notes published in the social sector's top-tier journal (NVSQ) in 2018 and 2019 was undertaken with the assistance of NVivo 12 (see Figure 2.3).

Figure 2. 3 – Social sector themes

The shortlisted themes were selected for their ability to represent a wide number of the themes presented in Figure 2.3, that begin to speak back to the challenges facing social sector leadership now and into the near future (see Table 2.1). The three literature review themes are:

- P-N and NPM
- Funding challenges
- Collaboration

Table 2. 1 – Literature review: Selected themes

Sector Theme	Associated Themes	Sector Consequence
• P-N & NPM	• Managerialism • Marketisation • Performance management • Business-like solutions	• Altered professional standards • Evidence-based practice • Performance-based contracts • Service improvements
• Funding Challenges	• Government cost containment • Sector starvation cycle • Revenue diversification • Unwelcomed regulation & sanctioning activities • Competitive funding markets	• Adjustment of program aims • Cuts to overhead spending • Organisational mortality anxiety • Collaborative prerequisite • Administrative & bureaucratic burden
• Collaboration	• Joined up government • State and market failure • Integrated service solutions • Collaboration across sectoral lines	• Collaborative governance with power (a)symmetries • Collaboration as an innovation solution • Collaborative advantage – resource share, visibility & legitimacy • Organisational hybridity

2.2.3 P-N & NPM

NPM was introduced into public management and latterly into the public infrastructure (Schubert, 2009) in the 1980s and 1990s, in an attempt to subject the public sector to market discipline and improved efficiency (Purdue, 2005; Laffin, 2019; Mills et al., 2019). The selection of this theme is of particular importance to this study because P-N & NPM have done more than most to impact the routines of social sector practice over the course of the last four decades.

Despite the 'Adieu NPM' sentiment (De Vries and Nemec, 2013: 13) within the literature, there is evidence in social sector and public management literatures that P-N & NPM continues to impact state-sector relations (i.e., Christensen and Laegreid, 2011; De Vries and Nemec, 2013; Crosby and Bryson, 2018; Pape et al., 2019; Reiter and Klenk, 2019). For example, there is widespread agreement that P-N & NPM's associated themes retain a relevance, making P-N & NPM a significant 'cross-cutting' sector theme (Pape et al., 2019: 2; Marchand, 2019). These managerial reforms have done much to reshape social sector leadership

and have instigated drives to standardise social sector practice in line with P-N & NPM principles (Marchand, 2019). As a cross-cutting theme, P-N & NPM have affected state, social sector, and market leadership practices and service delivery restructuring, particularly in the field of welfare services. P-N & NPM, was a rationalised response to a perceived 'need to downsize the public sector' (De Vries and Nemec, 2013: 6), and confront government inefficiency (Christensen and Laegreid, 2011). This led to 'a greater emphasis on performance', especially through the measurement of outputs, 'the injection of market-type mechanisms' and 'a wide spread substitution of contracts for hierarchical relations as the principal coordination device' in the public sector (Pollitt and Bouckaert, 2011 in Pape et al., 2019: 2-3). Hood (1991 in De Vries and Nemec, 2013: 6) identified a number of UK specific NPM features, including 'hands-on management, performance measures, emphasis on output and controls…disaggregation of and competition within the public sector, copying private sector management styles and input discipline.'

Christensen and Laegreid (2011: 131) develop the NPM portrait further:

> 'NPM focuses primarily on strengthening managerial accountability, based on output, competition, transparency, and contractual relations, and thus represents a departure from old school public administration, where various forms of accountability were based on input processes and procedures, hierarchical control, legality, trust, and cultural traditions.'

P-N & NPM's attention on 'market-oriented strategies to improve public services' (Smith, 2018: 369) emphasise quantitative performance measurements, outputs, efficiency, and the frequent challenge of realignment of the social sector's organisational values (Reiter and Klenk, 2019), which under certain conditions have resulted in altered user-sector relations (Smith, 2018). This has been made possible through the narrative of user choice, higher levels of accountability, the introduction of competitive posturing, and the mounting pressures on the social sector's cooperation mechanisms (Pape et al., 2019). It is argued that P-N & NPM's managerial and practice logic in the social sector have become

normalised via institutionalised forces with business-like routines having gained 'heightened legitimacy and enhanced taken-for-grantedness' (Colvvas and Powell, 2006 in Reiter and Klenk, 2019: 13). Applying Suchman's (1995, in Reiter and Klenk, 2019) notion of legitimacy to a social sector context, it is possible to see legitimacy as the generalised assumption that business-like actions are appropriate and desirable within social sector practice.

Given the political power differentials between the state and the social sector (Coule and Bennett, 2018), the social sector literature typically renders P-N & NPM along more negative lines than the public administration literature. To illustrate, Christensen and Laegreid (2011) writing from a political science and public administration perspective, depict NPM in positivistic terms as a managerial device concerned with 'empowering the people' (p. 132), in which social sector exposure to competitive forces is theorised to 'produce efficient, high-quality services' (p. 132). For Christensen and Laegreid (2011), P-N & NPM is seen as a solution to the coordination and integration problems that went unchecked under NPM, which had resulted in a fragmented welfare domain. Under these conditions, P-N & NPM is treated in the public management literature as a public administrative pull toward 'recentralization and reintegration,' which is theorised as a necessity given NPM's 'problem delivering on efficiency' (Christensen and Laegreid, 2011: 133).

The social sector literature however frequently offers a more nuanced and downbeat assessment (i.e., Siltala, 2013), and can be seen investigating the associative challenges P-N & NPM presents the social sector's mission, identity, and autonomy (see Table 2.2). With increased State demand for operational transparency and user-responsiveness, the social sector literature can be seen drawing a 'critical' link, for example, between performance management and issues such as austerity (Harris, 2018; Smith, 2018). The social sector literature maintains that P-N & NPM often result in operational cuts to the social sector, and a re-prioritisation of services in favour of projects whose outcomes are easy to capture. Within this context, Smith (2018) reveals an underreported associated shift in State contracting, which favours large sector organisations with 'sufficient

infrastructure and capacity' (p. 369) to evaluate service delivery along P-N & NPM lines. The social sector literature therefore draws attention P-N & NPM's competitive rationalisation (Smith, 2018) underwritten by a preference for privatised service solutions (Buckingham et al., 2013).

Table 2. 2 – P-N & NPM: consequential elements

Consequential Elements of P-N & NPM Theme	Authors
The rise in managerialisation	Shirinashihama (2019)
The professionalisation of the sector	Hwang and Powell (2009)
Priority given to business-like management tools and practices	Arvidson (2018)
Marketisation forces	Han (2017)
Consequential 'deterioration' of sector's 'distinctive contribution'	Eikenberry (2004: 138)
Consequential 'transformation of services into fundamentally different entities'	Dart (2004: 304)

Commenting on the social sector wide implications of professionalisation, Hwang and Powell (2009) make the salient point: 'the widespread efforts to professionalize are likely to have the effect, perhaps unintended, of making a heterogeneous collection of organizations into a distinct, coherent sector with a common set of organizational routines' (p, 271), which these authors see as resulting in a 'reduction in variance, and an embrace of standardisation rather than experimentation, in the sector' (p, 294). The social sector literature continues to scrutinise these and other challenges that state and market forces present (e.g., DiMaggio and Anheier, 1990; McKay et al., 2011; Buckingham et al., 2013; Maier et al., 2016; King, 2017).

In summary, P-N & NPM represents the rationalisation of the social sector, which has sought to incorporate business-like approaches into social sector leadership, underwritten by a marketisation rhetoric and practice. The consequences of this have variously been articulated in the literature, revealing a broad range of views from State positivist approaches to social sector unease and critical protest (Gazley and Brudney, 2007). In short, the literature treats managerial reforms as a force – for good or ill – with varied

emphasis on: competition, market dynamics, efficiency, service innovation, tight fiscal controls, performance, accountability, autonomy, stability, State retrenchment, new governance, co-production, professionalism, and collaboration, which have had an enduring impact on social sector practice. P-N & NPM are seen to impact the social sector in a number of ways that include: State approved sector leadership standardisation, professional competence modelling, and professional sector accreditation (Gazley and Brudney, 2007; Buckingham et al., 2013).

2.2.4 Funding challenges

2.2.4.1 Government Funding Challenges

For many social sector organisations, particularly those within welfare services (Lu and Zhao, 2019), their survival is thought to be dependent on forming appropriate responses to government managerial reforms, policy revisions and changing funding priorities (Venter et al., 2019). Cornforth et al. (2015), exploring social sector-government collaborations, demonstrate that changes in the political sphere, such as revised government funding priorities can influence changes within other collaborative levels, such as at the organisational and local delivery levels (Cornforth et al., 2015; Venter et al., 2019).

The importance of this theme for the study's grounding is evident in the wide-ranging consequential impact that funding reforms can have on the social sector and its leadership (see Table 2.3). These consequential elements have done much to inform social sector leaders collaborative strategies, such as in pursuant of gaining competitive advantage in contested funding markets.

Table 2. 3 – Funding: consequential elements

Consequential elements of the funding theme	Authors
Government support, protection, resources, and tax relief	Knutsen (2012)
Funding accompanied by high levels of administrative and bureaucratic burden	Wiley and Berry (2018); Lu and Zhao (2019)
Late payments	Park and Mosley (2017)
High levels of mortality anxiety, particularly in times of austerity	Heylen et al. (2018)
Regulation crowding out the social sector's unique adaptability	Wiley and Berry (2018: 58s); Hogg (2018)
Short funding cycles & low salary expectations	Lee and Sabharawal (2016)
Increased competition	Bunger (2013)
Program inflexibility	Wiley and Berry (2018)
Coercive pressure to comply with government values	Knutsen (2012)
Insistence on professionalising the social sector	King (2017)
Instability due to changing political agendas	Weerawardena et al. (2010)

In the UK, the literature identifies a steady reduction in government funding (TSRC, 2013b), particularly in the aftermath of New Labour's 2010 defeat and the rise of the (Coalition and) Conservative Government's austerity policies (Alcock et al., 2013). The social sector reluctantly accepts the prevailing field conditions (Moulton and Sandfort, 2017), with the government propagating 'state logics coercing rule-following behaviours' (Onishi, 2019: 246), which frequently require social sector leaders to 'redefine their services and restructure their programs to align only with the needs that are defined and proven by the government' (Knutsen, 2012: 1002). In these circumstances, 'government rules, regulations, monitoring and sanctioning activities constrain and regularise organisational structure' (Morrison, 2016: 899), which frequently involves the risk of mission drift by a thousand cuts (TSRC, 2013b; Barinaga, 2018). Park and Mosley (2017) point to the literature that highlights a social sector 'in flux due to market pressures and changes in government-funding arrangements' (p. 515), which 'emphasizes results over community connections and deemphasizes the partnership [logic]' (p. 518).

According to the social sector literature, at a time of government 'cost-containment and welfare retrenchment' (Dagdeviren et al., 2019: 143), and the introduction of austerity management, which is principally understood as a drive to reduce the public deficit, the absence of adequate funding has risked social sector stability (Weerawardena et al., 2010), and has become the most prevalent financial and leadership constraint in recent years (Pape et al., 2019). To illustrate this point, attention turns to explore funders use of overhead ratios and social sector consequences.

2.2.4.2 Funding and Overhead Ratios

In 2004, the American 'Nonprofit Overhead Cost Project' laid the foundations for what Gregory and Howard (2009) later would refer to as the 'nonprofit starvation cycle.' Given the ease with which the model presents a complex range of ideas, interrelationships, and the compounded nature of consequences, it is surprising (from citation data and a keyword search), that this work has gained only a small foothold within the social sector literature (i.e., Marwell and Calabrese, 2014; Lecy and Searing, 2015; Lee and Woronkowicz, 2019), with only one European example found (Schubert and Boenigk, 2019).

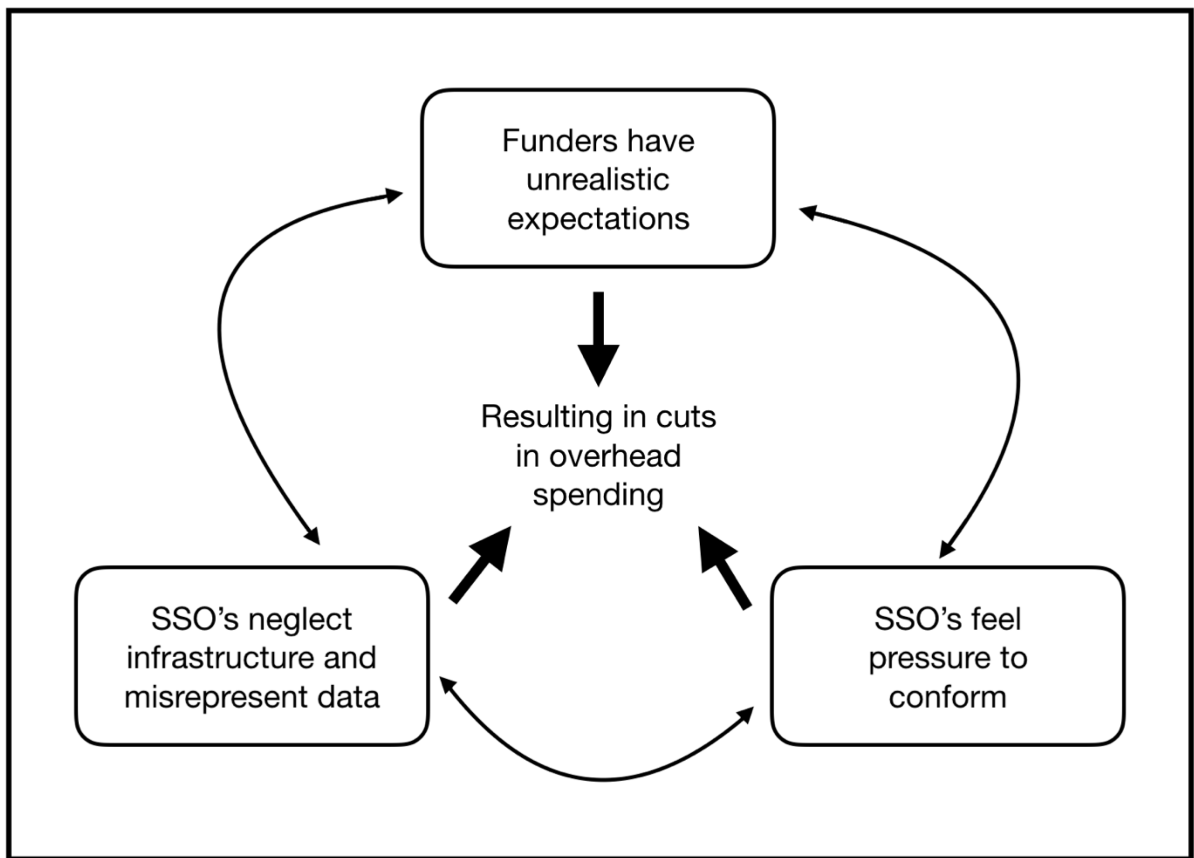


Figure 2. 4 – The social sector starvation cycle[6]

Gregory and Howard's (2009) article opens with the following vivid description:

> 'A vicious cycle is leaving nonprofits so hungry for decent infrastructure that they can barely function as organizations – let alone serve their beneficiaries.' (p, 49).

For these and subsequent authors, the consequences of a lack of infrastructure investment overtime could be the difference between organisational flourishing and organisational extinction (NOCP, 2004; Marwell and Calabrese, 2014; Lecy and Searing, 2015; Lee and Woronkowicz, 2019; Schubert and Boenigk, 2019). While the literature variously speaks of 'infrastructure' and 'overhead spending' interchangeably, these terms typically refer to 'expenses incurred from operations

[6] Source: authors adaptation of Gregory and Howard's (2009) model, incorporating elements from Lecy and Searing (2015); and Schubert and Boenigk's (2019) visualisations. SSOs = social sector organisations.

not directly related to programs' (Lecy and Searing, 2015: 541), and include 'accounting, fundraising, information technology, human resources, physical plant, and other common organizational elements that stand behind and support a nonprofit's mission and program' (NOCP, 2004: 6).

The starvation cycle begins with funder's unrealistic expectations for overhead spending 'where expectations refer to the numerical threshold for an acceptable overhead ratio' (Schubert and Boenigk, 2019: 469), which in turn leads to social sector organisations reducing their overheads in a 'low pay, make do, and do without' manner (Gregory and Howard, 2009: 50), running the risk of 'underfed overhead[s]' (2009: 51). If this were not enough, a double jeopardy is introduced with social sector organisations underreporting on their overhead spending to gain competitive advantage in a highly contested funding market (Lecy and Searing, 2015); and, in a mimetic and isomorphic turn of events reifying funder's initial expectations and decreasing overhead ratios. The compounded and cyclical nature of these 'deeply ingrained behaviors' has the quality of 'chicken-and-egg' about it (Gregory and Howard, 2009: 50), with a hollowing out of organisational administrative infrastructure (Lecy and Searing, 2015).

Lu and Zhao (2019) citing the overhead literature (preferring the terminology of 'administrative expense ratio') bear out the general consensus from the literature that 'society does not favor nonprofits high AERs [administrative expense ratio] because organizations with more administrative expenses may not maximize their program outputs, which undermines their capacity to advance charitable purpose' (p. 1145). The starvation cycle literature appears to question funder's use of overhead ratios as a meaningful proxy for organisational effectiveness (NOCP, 2004; Lecy and Searing, 2015). The public administration literature argues that overhead ratio spending enables funders to meet the challenges of: (a) capturing reliable performance measurements, where none appear readily available, (b) securing organisational trustworthiness in light of misreported financial ratios and high profile sector scandals, and (c) onboarding P-N & NPM managerialism and business-like approaches, including the incorporation of lean fiscal rules and the call for organisations to justify their expenditure (Lecy and

Searing, 2015; Schubert and Boenigk, 2019). Despite funder's fascination with overhead ratios, the starvation cycle literature seems united in support of the following claim:

> 'Given the ubiquity of overhead measures as a performance metric, the absence of solid research linking low overhead and nonprofit performance should cause some concern.' (Lecy and Searing, 2015: 556)

Evidence from US (i.e., Marwell and Calabrese, 2014; Lecy and Searing, 2015), and European (i.e., Schubert and Boenigk, 2019) studies reveal that overhead spending has significantly decreased in recent years (TSRC, 2013b; Schubert and Boenigk, 2019), yet beyond this point the literature reveals a more nuanced picture. Specifically, (a) the European study (Schubert and Boenigk, 2019) only shows a statistically significant decline in organisational overhead spending amongst organisations in receipt of non-government funding, and (b) the US study (Lecy and Searing, 2015) shows that a steady decline in overhead spending is accompanied by a rise in fundraising expenditure (as part of overhead spending). In contrast, Marwell and Calabrese (2014) and Schubert and Boenigk (2019) highlight the opposite trend – 'as the deficit margin from government funding increases, spending on grantmaking actually declines' (Marwell and Calabrese, 2014: 1048).

Marwell and Calabrese (2014) introduce the 'deficit model of collaborative governance', which maintains that government welfare funding overlooks and underdelivers organisational overhead spending when making a funding award, which requires the social sector recipient to pick up the shortfall thereby subsidizing government programs, leading to 'a perverse financial management consequence: the more government funds a nonprofit receives, the more costs the nonprofit must cover on its own in order to secure that right' (Marwell and Calabrese, 2014: 1038). Despite these minor discrepancies, one finding receives full support – moving forward social sector organisations will need to invest in their own organisational infrastructure (Smith, 2018).

In summary, (while sub-sections of the social sector in the UK have enjoyed periods of State support and protection) the social sector as a whole has endured under-investment wrought by austerity politics and welfare restructuring (Coule and Bennett, 2018; cf. Dagdeviren et al., 2019), within which an 'accelerated decoupling' (p. 147) of State and welfare delivery has made State-social sector relations even more complex and opaque (Harris, 2018). With organisational sustainability a primary strategic priority (Weerawardena et al., 2010), increasingly social sector leaders have been required to adopt cost reduction strategies, social return on investment approaches (Pape et al., 2019), and revenue diversification programming (Hung and Hager, 2019). In addition, leaders are having to respond to competitive tendering, payment-for-results, and inflexible evaluative criteria that together constrain social sector practice (Arvidson, 2018; Venter et al., 2019).

The next section explores the study's final social sector theme, cross-sector collaboration.

2.2.5 Collaboration

The academic and practitioner interest in collaboration, particularly cross-sector collaboration, has steadily increased over the last few decades (Kramer and Crespy, 2011; O'Leary and Vij, 2012; Al-Tabbaa et al., 2014; Gazley and Guo, 2015; Gazley, 2017; Almog-Bar and Schmid, 2018; Barinage, 2018), with collaborative scholarship concentrating predominantly on theoretical and conceptual analysis (Kramer and Crespy, 2011; Gazley and Guo, 2015). Within the literature, collaboration has gradually replaced traditional public service solutions (Getha-Taylor, 2008), and is variously corelated to themes of joined-up-government (Sullivan et al., 2012) which is fuelled by P-NPM tenets (Shumate et al., 2018) that have been adopted by consecutive UK governments on ideological and pragmatic grounds (Alcock, 2003; Alcock and Kendall, 2011; Alcock et al., 2012; Alcock et al., 2013; TSRC, 2013b; Harris, 2018).

In addition to collaborations utility as a public sector management strategy (Suarez, 2011), collaboration is also becoming one of the most championed solutions for tackling the many challenges represented by other social sector themes, and is fast becoming a prerequisite for the public and private funding of the sector (Smith, 2018; Bouchard and Raufflet, 2019). Table 2.4 presents further rationalisations in the literature used to justify the continuing rise in collaborations.

Table 2.4 – Reasons for collaborating

Rationalisation	Authors
• Resolving wicked social problems	Williams, (2002); Grint, (2005); Selsky and Parker, (2005); Getha-Taylor, (2008); Christensen and Laegreid, (2011); Austin and Seitanidi, (2012a); Cornforth et al. (2015); Hodges and Howieson, (2017); Shumate et al. (2018); Fick-Cooper et al. (2019); Zeimers et al. (2019)
• State and market failure	Dahan et al. (2010); Buckingham et al. (2013); Defourny et al. (2014); Jaskyte et al. (2018)
• Integration of service strategies	Smith, (2018)
• Pooling of complementary resources	Bouchard and Raufflet, (2019)
• Pursuing 'strategic value of difference'	Ospina and Foldy, (2010: 302)
• Leveraging resources, knowledge, visibility and legitimacy gains	O'Leary and Vij, (2012) Shumate et al. (2018)

Brinkerhoff (2002) divides the state-social sector collaborative literature into three streams, the first stream he termed 'normative literature' (p. 20), which views collaboration from a social sector perspective within which collaboration (Brinkerhoff preferring the term 'partnership') is seen as an ethical normative response to social and political reality, one that 'takes the moral high ground' (ibid) by emphasising collaboration's empowering credentials and civil engagement possibilities. The second stream of literature Brinkerhoff describes as 'reactive literature,' which is cast in more state- and corporate-centric terms. This literature, drawn from corporate organisational policy documentation, practitioner journals and academic studies, 'typically describes and explores an organization's partnership work in glowing terms, in an attempt to counter criticism' (p. 21), and reinforce corporate responsiveness to the collaborative

ideal. The third stream, was considered to have a pragmatic and analytical focus, which explores collaboration along 'instrumental lines' (ibid) with a focus on efficiency and responsive mechanisms, and with an interest in organisational relations, i.e., state-social sector ties. Brinkerhoff identifies a political theory thread within this third stream and acknowledges the literature's interest in P-N & NPM governance and its impact on collaboration.

This study will be seen to take a practice and relational approach to the conceptualising of collaboration, which speaks back to Brinkerhoff's three streams. Table 2.5 provides support for the study's relational approach. This practice and relational approach however differs from Brinkerhoff's first two streams in that it is not organised by particular positional loyalties, be the state, social sector, or market. While this approach allows for the recognition and incorporation of position critical studies, they are organised here on practice and relational terms. Elements of Brinkerhoff's classification overlap with this practice and relational classification. For example, Brinkerhoff's identified power asymmetry studies, can be situated within the practice and relational approach allowing for an enhanced comparative analysis, with an improved comprehensive quality of review, which could combine studies of agentic analysis of power asymmetry with studies of motivation analysis.

Table 2. 5 – Relational studies and their emphasis

Description	Example
• Studies including motivations, conflict, conflict resolution, and power asymmetries	Archer and Cameron, (2013); Gazley, (2017); Barinaga, (2018); Sharp, (2018); AbouAssi et al. (2019); O'Brien et al. (2019)
• Antecedent and prerequisite features utilising resource dependency, institutional and network theories • Institutional logics, and strategic action fields	Varda, (2011); Ofem et al. (2018); Reay and Hinings, (2009); Pache and Santos, (2013); Battilana and Lee, (2014); Maibom and Smith, (2016); Chen, (2018)

• Collaborative goals and goal resistance • Organisational effects • Outcomes • Benefits and value creation	Shumate et al. (2018); Suykens et al. (2019) Hardy et al. (2003) Austin and Seitanidi, (2012b) Austin and Seitanidi, (2012a); Weber et al. (2017)

There are a number of limitations within the collaborative literature:

- The cross-sector literature is predominantly characterised by research investigating collaboration across one sector border i.e., between two sector agents, for example, state and social sector (e.g., Suarez , 2011; Bode and Brandsen, 2014; Cornforth et al., 2015; Wilson, 2018), or business and social sector (e.g., Austin, 2010; Austin and Seitanidi, 2012a; Austin and Seitanidi, 2012b; Schiller and Almog-Bar, 2013; Al-Tabbaa et al., 2014; Bouchard and Raufflet, 2019; Mironska and Zaborek, 2019). This approach, adequate in itself however can lead to simplified and overgeneralised conceptualisations. Therefore, in light of collaborations inherent complexity studies with higher levels of theorising and conceptual abstraction are to be commended (Antonakis et al., 2012)
- By extension, organisational and leadership studies investigating tri-sector collaborations across state, social sector, and market borders are rare (Huxham, 2003; Selsky and Parker, 2005; Shumate et al., 2018), despite becoming a more common social sector phenomenon
- Research into leadership specifically aligned to a collaborative context is under researched in the literature (e.g., Huxham and Vangen, 2000; Crosby and Bryson, 2005; Connelly, 2007; Getha-Taylor, 2008; Kramer and Crespy, 2011; Hamlin et al., 2011; Sullivan et al., 2012; Boyer et al., 2019; Shier and Handy, 2019). Some of this literature, for example Sullivan et al. (2012) , emphasise collaborations symbolic shift from hierarchy to relationships, which provides 'the context for a radical re-appraisal of leadership across business, public and third sectors' (p. 43). Crosby and Bryson (2005) point out the dispersed nature of leadership within collaborative contexts, and the relational challenge of sharing leadership. Huxham and Vangen (2000: 1167) identify

‘leadership through process,’ which at its core holds a relational and communicative dimension, as does the collaborative leadership task of ‘representing and mobilizing’ (Huxham and Vangen, 2000: 1170) collaborative members. These examples each speak back to this study’s practice and relational construct, and make for the investigation of collaborative competency which incorporates aspects of practice and relationality, possible and desirable.

Taking a competency approach to cross-sector collaboration is an acknowledgment of the pivotal role that leadership plays in the fortunes of the collaborative success. Collaboration presents social sector leadership with a host of new operational and relational challenges. Competence scholarship provides a valuable lens through which to approach such challenges, enabling the identification of leadership competencies along relational and practice-based lines specifically engineered with the new collaborative terrain in mind.

In short, collaboration emerges within the literature (including the practitioner literature e.g., Charity Commission, 2010; ILM, 2018; Fick-Cooper, 2019) as a critical feature of social sector life. With collaborative success far from guaranteed (Gazley and Guo, 2015) more research is needed to understand leadership’s new role in securing collaborative advantage (Huxham, 2003) and creating collaborative value (Austin and Seitanidi, 2014). This study’s exploratory study (Chapter 3) will shortly present evidence that validates the three literature themes, placing particular warranty on collaboration and collaboration competencies. In light of this, the next section will provide a review of the competence literature

2.3 Competence

This section begins with a general review of the competence literature before considering practitioner and academic competence models. We will discover that collaboration is considered an important competence for

practitioner models (Callanan et al., 2015; Clore-Social-Leadership, 2016; Cortes and Ferrer, 2018), but remains theoretically under developed, limiting its utility in the field. Yukl's 'Hierarchical Taxonomy of Leadership Behavior' (Yukl, 1999; Yukl, et al., 2002; Yukl, 2008; Yukl and Mahsud, 2010; Yukl, 2012; cf. Yukl et al., 2019) provides the academic comparator, which again reveals collaborative capabilities to be under explored.

2.3.1 General review

Competence, as a way of understanding the talent and high performance of effective people (Boyatzis, 2011), has become a 'ubiquitous' (Bolden and Gosling, 2006: 147) feature of human resource management (HRM) (Garavan and McGuire, 2001; Le Deist and Winterton, 2005; Boyatzis, 2008) since its inception as a HRM tool in the 1970s (Haland et al., 2006; Boyatzis, 2011; Campion et al., 2011).

While the emergence of competence within the management and organisational literatures is credited to the work of the Boston Group (Campion et al., 2011; Baczynska et al., 2016) – particularly McClelland (1973), Boyatzis (1982), and latterly Spencer and Spencer (1993), early signs of competence thinking can be traced back to previous theorists. Muller and Turner (2010) highlight the behavioural school of the 1940s with their focus on leadership traits, personality and individual difference theories. Le Deist and Winterton (2005), credit White (1959) as the first to employ the term when linking personality characteristics with superior job performance, while Sandberg (2000) pays particular tribute to Taylor (1911). The modern competence literature traces the development of competence through the US behavioural school of the 1940s to the contingency school of the 1960s (Yukl, 2002), with their focus on leadership styles and early situational theories, through to the charismatic theories of the 1980s (Bolden et al., 2003; Muller and Turner, 2010), and on to the emotional intelligence school of the 2000s (Truninger et al., 2018), where there is now evidence of biological and neurological features playing a part (i.e., Boyatzis, 2011).

Competence has been variously defined within the literature with subtle geographical distinctions (see Table 2. 6). Broadly, the US approach favours a rationalistic, post-positive behaviouralism (Velde, 1999; Sandberg, 2000; Boyatzis, 2011), with personal difference as the unit of analysis. This approach seeks to investigate characteristics, personal qualities, and attitudes held by high performing individuals. The UK (and European) approach has taken as its point of departure the creation and regulation of professional standards aimed at inspiring and measuring performance. Both approaches emphasising superior performance, generalisability and the creation of generic competencies (Boyatzis, 1982; McClelland, 1973; Sanchez, 2004).

Table 2.6 – Geographical distinctives[7]

Basis of difference	UK approach	US approach
Intent	Facilitate standardisation & professional codes	Enable superior performance
Attention	Job & individual development (incl. KSAs)	Behaviour, traits and personal attributes
Developmental outcomes	Performance standards for job function and professions	Description of effective superior behaviour driving performance
Organisational context	Specific job functions & professional interests over and against significance of context	Context and behaviour correlation
Starting point	Job-related tasks	Individual characteristics
Methodology	Job functional analysis	Criterion sampling
Andragogy	Constructivist view of learning	Cognitive view of learning
Scope	Cross-role & leadership level (with features of cross-sector) generic competencies	Cross-role, leadership level, and sector generic competencies

This study adopts a practice and relational based approach (PRBA) to competence, which incorporates some elements of the UK and US approaches,

[7] Source: Adapted from Garavan and McGuire (2001: 150).

without succumbing to either position. For example, the study's relational, practice-based approach utilises the UK emphasis on a constructivist view of learning, and the US approach to context and behaviour correlation.

Competence continues to evade definitional consent. Despite this, Velde (1999); Sandberg (2000); Sandberg and Pinnington (2009) and Lindberg and Rantatalo (2015), discern two broad ranging approaches in the literature: entity-based and interpretative-relational-based (e.g., PRBA). The entity-based literature coalesces around three clusters: (a) worker-orientated cluster, which concentrates on the 'input' dimension of worker traits and personal characteristics, and has evolved to incorporate worker knowledge, skills and abilities (KSAs), as well as personal vision, values, philosophy, life career stages, style, interests (Boyatzis, 2008; 2011), motivation and unconscious dispositions (Chen and Chang, 2010; cf. Boyatzis, 2018); (b) work-orientated cluster, which concentrates on the exploration of the 'output' dimension of job-related tasks, which supports localised tautological descriptions of competent performance, and the rise of professional standards, regulation and professional accreditation, and; (c) multi-method orientated approaches which seek to synthesise both approaches (Spencer and Spencer, 1993; Battilana et al., 2010; Blomeke et al., 2015). In summary, competence is theorised in entity terms as an attribute of an individual, team or organisation (Sanchez, 2004), or a capability to perform a particular task along prescribed standards or, in integrative terms, as a synthesis of input to output conceptualising, described by Ellstrom and Kock (2008) as 'competence-in-use' (p. 7). Ellstrom and Kock (2008: 7) comment:

> 'Thus, competence-in-use might be seen as a dynamic process of learning mediating between the capacity of the individual and the requirements of the job. This means, among other things, that both factors related to the individual and factors related to the job may facilitate or limit the extent to which the individual may use and develop his or her actual competence.'

Table 2.7 – Sample of the competence literature

Author(s)	Definitions (in bold) and features
McClelland (1973; 1993)	**A competency is an underlying characteristic of an individual that is causally related to criterion referenced experienced and/or superior performance in a job or situation** • 'Underlying characteristic': deep and enduring part of one's personality • 'Causally related': competency *causes* or *predicts* behaviour and performance as measured by *specific criterion* or *standard* • 'Criterion-referenced': *effective* performance (threshold competence), *superior* performance (differentiating competence) • Reliance on criterion sampling • Criticises intelligence tests (i.e., correlation does not equal causation)
Boyatzis (1982; 2008; 2011)	**A competency is a capability or ability, a set of related but different sets of behaviour organised around an underlying construct called the 'intent'** • *Threshold competencies*: essential to job performance but not causally related to superior performance (incl. knowledge, motives, traits, self-image, social role, skills) • *Differentiating competencies*: causally related to superior job performance (incl. cognitive, emotional, and social intelligences) • Best fit of individual competence, job demands and organisational environment
Spencer and Spencer (1993)	**A combination of motives, traits, attitudes or values, content knowledge or cognitive behaviour skills; any individual characteristic that can be reliably measured or counted and that can be shown to differentiate superior from average performance** • Dimensions of competence: intensity, completeness of action, scope of impact. Most of the difference between average and star performers found in first two dimensions
Woodruffe (1993)	**A competency is the set of behaviour patterns that the incumbent needs to bring to a position in order to perform tasks and functions with competence** • Competencies as behavioural repertoires
Hoffmann (1999)	• *Performance* rationale: individual and organisational improvement, change • *Standards* rationale: standardized skills, setting minimum standards, introducing change • *Attributes* rationale: determining learning content • *Performance* & *standards* approaches deemed inadequate within complex environments • US favours *attributes,* UK *standards* • Unifying purpose: improving human performance at work
Shippmann *et al.* (2000)	**Competence defines "successful" performance of a certain task or activity, or "adequate" knowledge of a certain domain of knowledge or skill**

Author(s)	Definitions (in bold) and features
	• Operationally defined taxonomic categories with illustrative and observable behaviours
Garavan and McGuire (2001)	• Competence is attributed multiple meanings (depending upon context and perspective). Understanding is dependent on *scope* (individual/organisational), *aim* (improving performance/gaining market power), *range of HR instruments* used (selection/pay/training), and *structure of HR function* (centralised/decentralised).
Le Deist and Winterton (2005)	• Holistic competence model featuring cognitive, functional, social, and meta-competences
Dulewicz and Higgs (2005)	• *Intellectual* competencies: critical analysis & judgment, vision & imagination, strategic perspective • *Managerial* competencies: resource management, engagement communication, empowering, developing • *Emotional* competencies: self-awareness, emotional resilience, intuitiveness, interpersonal sensitivity, influence, motivation, conscientiousness.
Hollenbeck *et al.* (2006)	• Analysis included experiences & insights of seasoned leaders • Identified *useful* leader behaviours • HRM functions incl. selection, training, self-development.
Sandberg and Pinnington (2009)	• Heideggerian existential ontology used to conceptualise competence • Knowing-in-action privileged
Kosmala (2013)	• Competence as socially negotiable and open-ended • Competence as social performance and discursive practice
Blomeke et al. (2015)	**Competence is the latent cognitive and affective-motivational underpinning of domain-specific performance in varying situations** • Competence conceptualised as a continuum • Competence modelling which challenges the dichotomy of disposition verses performance
Lindberg and Rantatalo (2015)	**Competence is the inferred potential for desirable activity within a professional practice** Authors highlighted: • Entity-based & interpretative-relational perspectives • Ellstrom's (1997) 'competence-in-use'

While the entity-based approach has dominated the UKs use of competence, PRBAs make available for investigation a 'situation-competence' coupling which is largely omitted within the entity-based approaches. Additionally, while entity-based approaches traditionally theorise competences as stable over time and context, PRBAs acknowledge that competence is situated and mutable over time

and context. This study suggests therefore that to better understand leadership behaviours in general and leadership competences in particular, social sector research needs to better understand the interplay between context and competence (Gottfredson and Reina, 2020), acknowledging that context is a moderating factor (Oc, 2018) in the development of leadership competences. Day and Antonakis (2012 in Peus, 2013: 778) comment that 'understanding the contextual factors in which leadership is embedded is necessary for advancing' leadership knowledge. Collaboration therefore presents a challenge that entity-based approaches are not well placed to meet, but which the PRBA with their coupling of context and competence are.

In emphasising practice, the PRBA conceptualises competence in socially negotiated terms, tied to professional and organisational systems of practice (Gherardi, 2000), which fabricate knowledge (tacit, procedural, political, cultural, etc.) through situated discursive practice (Kosmala, 2013), normalising identity-related scripts, and occupational discourse enactments. Gherardi (2000: 217) comments:

> 'Altogether, *practice* articulates knowledge in and about organizing as practical accomplishment, rather than as a transcendental account of decontextualized reality, whether one assumes a realist ontology or a social constructionist one.'

Table 2.8 demonstrates the variety within the practice-based scholarship. While the entity-based approaches, particularly the behavioural schools, have generated a plethora of material pertaining to the characterisation and description of individual competences, the literature and its HRM modelling have had less to contribute regarding *how* these competences are thought to be 'enacted in skillful performance' (Sandberg, et al., 2017: 2). Conscious of this lacuna, the current study aims to shine new light on collaborative competences as a way of addressing this shortfall.

Table 2.8 – Sample of the practice and relational based approaches to competence

Author(s)	Definitions (in bold) and features
Velde (1999)	**Competence as an individual's dynamic conception of the work and his/her relationship to it, embedded in context and work relations** • Includes all elements of a workplace environment including individual sensemaking-in-context
Sandberg (2000)	**Competence as constituted by the meaning that work takes on for the worker in his or her experience of it** • Person and world inextricably linked through lived experience
Capaldo et al. (2006)	**Competence as an individual ability or characteristic activated by an individual with personal, organisational and environmental resources** • Competences situated, idiosyncratic and activated in time and place
Dall'Alba and Sandberg (2006; 2007; 2015)	**Competence as an integration of skilful knowing, acting, and being-in-the world** • Incorporates an embodied critically reflective conception of practice as integrative performance • Understanding of self, work, others, and tools align to form specific competences
Ellstrom et al. 1997; Ellstrom and Kock (2008)	**Competence as the interaction between the individual and the job** • Competence-in-use: the dynamic process of learning mediated between the capacity of the individual and the requirements of the job
Kosmala (2013)	**Competence as mutable, fragmented, socially negotiated and open-ended.** • Competence as social performance and discursive practice
Lindberg and Rantatalo (2015)	**Competence as the inferred potential for desirable activity within a professional practice** • Understanding competence via practice theory, i.e., competence as participation in practice
Blomeke et al. (2015)	**Competence as a balanced continuum between disposition (underlying traits, and affective-motivational) and situation-specific skills (criterion behaviours)** • Conceptualised as beyond dichotomies and towards an integrative continuum
Gherardi and Strati (2017)	**Competence as a collective and processual practice** • Related to performative knowledge in situated, bodily, and emotional terms
Sandberg et al. (2017)	**Competence as a skilful performative accomplishment** • Process-based perspective

In conceptualising competence in practice terms two aspects of Schatzki 's (2005) practice theory are worth noting for the current study's understanding of practice.

- Human actions take place in relational and 'social arenas of action,' 'pervaded by a space of meaning in whose terms people live, interact, and coexist' (p. 470).
- The context (social site) of action is a 'mesh of practices and material arrangements,' referred to as 'practice-arrangement bundles'.

Practices 'inject a deep dimension of commonality' (Schatzki, 2005: 480) into social arrangements, and within a collaborative context this commonality is more contested, and arguably more critical than in single organisational settings. Used within a competence construct, practice enables a nuanced analysis of leadership performance as a highly effective interface with various practice logics, and opens up competence to include tacit, relational, processual, political and prosocial situational performativity.

In short, a PRBA acknowledges that leadership transpires amidst a complex exchange of people and their environment requiring a finely tuned situational acuity (Day et al., 2014). By identifying the specific mesh of practice bundles, a PRBA to competence scholarship establishes a dynamic view of competencies. To better understand collaboration through the lens of competencies, it is imperative that the study better understand leader's views of the collaborative context.

2.3.2 Competence models

It has been the case that leadership in the social sector has been missing a social sector specific leadership theorising of its own. While this call has largely gone unanswered, the new collaborative landscape issues a fresh challenge to social sector researchers, namely to reconceptualise social

sector leadership for collaborative practice. Acknowledging that collaboration presents a challenge to social sector leaders now and into the near future, and in order to produce useable knowledge we now move to consider the academic and practitioner sources alongside each other (see Table 2.9).

This study's comparators include the following sources.

- Hierarchical Taxonomy of Leadership Behaviours (Yukl, 2012).
- Six Capabilities of a Social Sector Leader (Callanan et al. 2015, produced in association with McKinsey & Co.).
- Clore Social Leaders Capabilities Framework (Clore Social Leadership, 2016).
- Entrepreneurial Leadership Competences (Cortes and Ferrer, 2018, co-commissioned by the European Union).

The practitioner sources represent European conceptualisations, with the exception of the US McKinsey report, which has been widely used in the UKs social sector and provided inspiration for Clore Soc ial Leadership's modelling.

TABLE 2. 9- COMPETENCE MODELS: ACADEMIC AND PRACTITIONER SOURCES

Academic source	Practitioner sources		
Yukl's Taxonomy (2012)	Callanan et al. (2015)	Clore (2016)	Cortes and Ferrer (2018)
Task-Orientated	Problem solver	Focused strategist	**Leadership: Others**
• Planning	Generous collaborator	Generous collaborator	Engaging & developing others
• Clarifying	Motivated mentor	Empowering enabler	Interpersonal communication
• Monitoring	Responsible steward	Passionate advocate	Collaboration
• Problem solving	Applied researcher	Inspirational communicator	
	Savvy networker		**Leadership: Self**
Relations Orientated		Courageous changemaker	Adaptability
• Supporting			Self-awareness
• Developing			Learning orientation
• Recognizing			
• Empowering			**Strategic: Internal**
			Environmental understanding
Change-Orientated			Creativity & innovation
• Encouraging innovation			Analytical thinking
• Advocating change			
• Inspiring vision			**Strategic: External**
			Vision & strategical thinking
External			Financial sustainability
• Networking			Advocacy
• External monitoring			
• Representing			**Additional competences**
			Planning & organising
			Impact orientation
			Alliance building

2.3.2.1 Academic Source: Yukl (2012) Hierarchical Taxonomy of Leadership Behaviours

Yukl's taxonomy is the result of his synthesis of half a century of behavioural research and integrates these diverse leadership behaviours into a parsimonious taxonomy. Yukl's model has undergone minor revisions since its inception. For the purposes of this study, reference is made to Yukl (2012), in which four meta-categories are presented: task, relations, change orientations and external. Later versions omit the fourth category. While the external meta-category does not pay sufficient attention to the 'contextual contingencies' (Oc, 2018: 218) inherent in leadership practice, it does provide a weak theoretical link between individual competencies and the social world in which leadership is practiced. Yukl's taxonomy lacks a situation-competence mediator, exemplifying the entity-based approach to competence that has come to dominate much of the field (notable exception: Boyatzis, 1982; 2008; 2009). By association, generic, context-decoupled theorising also overlooks the emergence of new social forms of working, such as cross-sector collaboration.

2.3.2.2 Practitioner Source: Callanan et al. (2015) Six Capabilities of a Social Sector Leader

All three practitioner sources identify collaboration as a core aspect of their competence models. McKinsey & Co. asked participants to rank 33 leadership attributes in order of importance for social sector leaders in the next five to ten years. Three of the top five attributes related specifically to collaboration. While 49% of participating leaders considered collaboration a top priority for sector leaders only 24% considered themselves 'strong' users of this competence. Breaking the collaboration competence down into sub-competences McKinsey and Co. highlight 'joint problem solving', 'caring more about solving the shared problem than receiving credit' and 'championing the growth of other collaborative partners'. The report recommended funders support the development of social sector leader's collaboration competences via development and program

solutions that incorporate a collaboration dimension. In short, according to this report, collaboration matters to social sector leaders.

2.3.2.3 Practitioner Source: Clore Social Leaders Capabilities Framework

Clore Social Leadership is a leading UK social sector leadership development agency with a strong reputation across the sector. In 2016, the team at Clore shared the McKinsey report with a cohort of 22 social sector leaders and Clore Fellows, with a view to inform the development of a UK social sector specific capabilities framework. Whilst this work resulted in a significant revision of the McKinsey model, collaborative competence was retained, speaking to its relevance for social sector leaders in the UK (as much as in the US). This competence is described with reference to four items: ‘establishes and grows collaborative partnerships and relationships’; ‘generously shares information, assets and time’; ‘builds trust through seeking and giving feedback’; and ‘invites inclusive contribution, valuing skills and knowledge, [and] respecting diversity’.

2.3.2.4 Practitioner Source: Entrepreneurial Leadership Competences

Concerned about the consequences of social and technological change, and the slow pace of take up across the European Union’s social sector of such technologies, the European Union co-commissioned the development of the ‘Entrepreneurial Leadership Competences’ model, with a view to stimulate new competences. The report claimed to be ‘the first Europe-wide initiative for improving leadership in [the] sector’ (2018: 5). For the authors, the model depicts ‘core’ competences deemed relevant for all sections of the social sector, irrespective of industry or specialism. The report defined collaboration as being ‘about working in a cooperative way with others, both within and outside the organisation, even beyond own market/sector or country, combining individual with interdependent and common goals, based on common values and a shared culture’ (p. 16).

Several points are worth making concerning these models:

- Collaboration is given differing levels of importance across the academic and practitioner sources.
- The practitioner sources all highlight the relevance of collaboration for social sector leadership.
- The academic comparator, influential in its field (Borgmann et al., 2016), lacks a situation-competence mediator, which obfuscates the task of conceptualising leadership competences relevant for collaborative practice and contextual contingencies.
- The parsimony of all sources problematises the leadership competence construct and limits its ability to produce actionable knowledge for the practicing social sector leader. While collaboration strongly emerges within the practitioner material, these examples leave the construct largely underdeveloped. This picture is notably starker within the academic comparator. This overall lacuna across all sources suggest that a 'fuller full-range' (Antonakis and House, 2014 in Kramer et al., 2019: 398) conceptualisation is now required. This study seeks to make a significant contribution to knowledge by investigating leadership competencies specific to the collaborative context through the lens of PRBAs to competence. In short, this study aims towards furthering the collaboration and social sector literatures with the conceptualisation of social sector leadership collaborative competences.

2.4 Chapter summary

The literature highlights the importance of collaboration in terms of social sector definition, identity and leadership. Specifically:

- **The definitional debate, which has been waging in Europe since the 1970s, has been opened up further by the collaboration theme. The research proposes that it is time for a more fluid and comprehensive**

social sector definition which takes account of collaboration's conceptual and practical challenge.

- Social sector research continues to rely on theories conceived outside of the social sector, as well as the application of theories developed for a single organisation to collaborative contexts.
- State sponsored managerial and funding reforms have impacted the social sector. Co-opting collaboration within a wider set of managerial and policy reforms aimed at state-retrenchment and cost-containment which emphasise increased competition, market-oriented strategies and hikes in program accountability and performativity.
- Collaboration is fast becoming one of the most championed solutions employed by social sector agents in tackling wicked social problems that state and market alone are unable to resolve.

It is argued here on PRBA grounds that a more comprehensive (Antonakis et al., 2012) understanding of social sector competencies requires a conceptual link between the views of leaders and context along agentic grounds. This approach speaks back to Gardner's et al.'s (2020) recommendation that studies related to competence pay attention to the leadership context, a recommendation which still now is only receiving 'moderate levels of attention' (p. 21). In this sense, social sector themes act therefore not just as constraints to progress but as the raw material from which competence can emerge.

Over the last two decades research has concluded that the benefits of collaboration are invariably hard won (Gazley, 2017), being 'complex, slow to produce outputs, and by no means guaranteed to deliver synergies and advantage' (Vangen, 2017: 263). It is surprising therefore that the collaboration and social sector literatures have left collaboration competences under theorised.

Competence has been variously defined within the literature with subtle geographical distinctions, with the UK approach emphasising standardisation and normative professional controls aimed at inspiring and measuring performance. The UK adoption of competence has been dominated by entity-based approaches stressing either the 'input' dimension of worker traits and personal characteristics; the 'output' dimension of job-related tasks, which supports localised tautological descriptions of competent performance; or a mixture of the two approaches.

This study employs a PRBA to competence, highlighting its suitability to the task of advancing the fields understanding of leadership competences by better conceptualising the interplay between context and competence. Used within a competence construct, PRBA enables a nuanced analysis of leadership performance as a highly effective interface of tacit, relational, processual, political and prosocial situational performativity.

The brief comparator review highlighted the scant descriptions of competence elements of most competence models, which inhibit more complete conceptualisations (Day, 2012; Antonakis et al., 2012). While the practitioner sources identify the importance of collaboration for social sector leaders, once again it leaves this largely underdeveloped. This lacuna justifies the study's interest in collaboration and collaborative competences and signals a contribution to knowledge in this nascent field.

CHAPTER 3. EXPLORATORY STUDY

3.1. Introduction

The initial aim of the main study was concerned with understanding the challenges effecting the social sector (and its leadership) now and into the near future. To that end, the research has been abductively grounded within a UK social sector context which identified three themes from the literature that were sense-checked against the views of senior social sector leaders within an exploratory study. This chapter will describe the exploratory study's validation of the social sector themes and the placement of particular warranty on collaboration and collaborative competency (see Figure 3.2).

3.2 Context and sample

In keeping with the study's abductive approach, the selected elements to surface from the initial thematic literature review (i.e., P-N & NPM, funding, and collaboration) were sense-checked against the views of senior social sector leaders in this exploratory study. To that end the exploratory study would involve group interviews as a proven and convenient method of sampling opinion (Yardley, 2000).

It is worth noting that the exploratory study sample is not the same sample used in the main study. The exploratory study sample of 18 experienced social sector leaders contained a gender split of 13 female and 5 male. Participants represented a broad range of social sector sub-sectors including: education, youth, the arts, military services, mental health, housing and homelessness, advocacy, disability, community enterprise, migrant and refugee services, international development, and human rights (see Table 3.1).

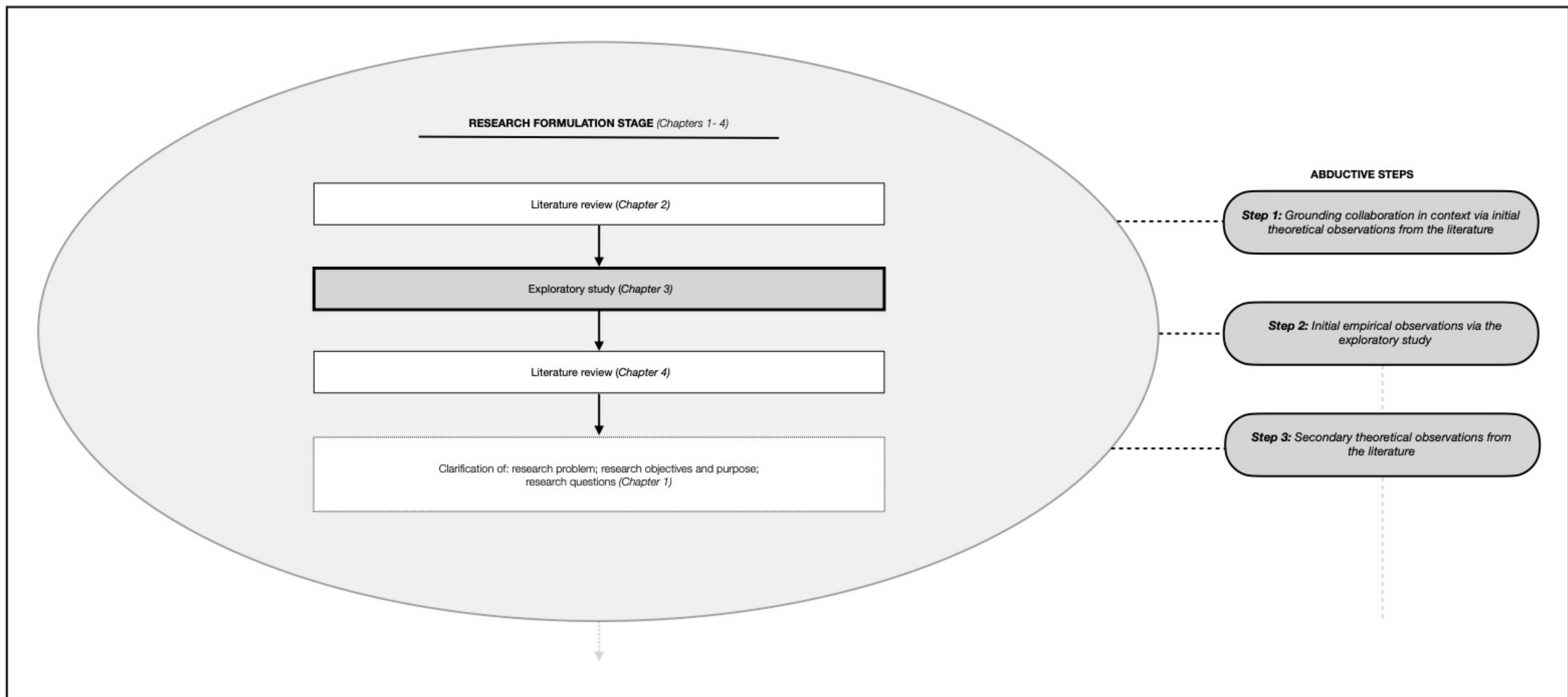


Figure 3. 1 – Research formulation stage: situating the exploratory study within context

Table 3.1 – Exploratory study: sample demographics

Informants	Age	Gender	Sub-sector
1	45	Female	Infrastructure
2	29	Male	Youth
3	43	Female	Community enterprise
4	60	Female	Education
5	38	Male	Military services
6	51	Female	Infrastructure
7	50	Female	Disability/advocacy
8	57	Male	The arts
9	38	Female	Mental health
10	48	Female	Migrant/refugee
11	50	Female	Housing/homelessness
12	45	Female	Mental health
13	44	Female	Education
14	38	Female	Housing/homelessness
15	50	Male	Human rights
16	39	Female	Youth
17	51	Female	Advocacy
18	54	Male	International development

3.3 Method of data collection and research questions

Data was gathered using semi-structured group interviews. This method of data collection was selected for its ability to manage 'depth and complexity' (Galletta , 2013: 191) and its ability to capture 'the multi-dimensional nature of lived experience' (Galletta, 2013: 2). The group interviews were carried out face to face at a Clore Social Leadership 'Experienced Leaders' event in September 2019. Three group interviews took place, each lasting between 40 and 53 minutes. The interviews were recorded and transcribed before being qualitatively and thematically analysed.

As part of the semi-structured group interview process, the researcher was free to probe informants in ways that would be considered prejudicial in structured interviews. As such informants were encouraged to clarify or expand on their thinking when necessary. Additionally, group informants were given the freedom

to answer on their own terms and define the central concepts (e.g., 'collaboration,' 'competence') as they saw fit. This approach was employed as an elicitation technique to capture individual informant's own sensemaking. This technique is particularly suitable for data collection that centres on capturing personal experience and privileged information (May, 2001; Silverman, 2013). In order to abductively ground the study within a UK social sector context the following research questions were devised:

1. What are the major themes (trends) in the social sector now?
2. What themes do you foresee for the future social sector?
3. What leadership competences will be needed to deal with these future themes?

Table 3.2 – Group interview guide

Stage	Questions
Introduction	• Welcome; nature of the study; confidentiality; withdrawal; housekeeping
Opening	• Please tell me your name, and briefly, what first drew you to leadership in the social sector?
Key Questions	• What are the major themes (trends) in the social sector now? • What themes (trends) do you foresee for the future social sector? • What leadership competences will be needed to deal with these future themes?
Ending	• What did we miss during our discussion, is there anything we should have talked about but didn't?

3.4 Data analysis

The data was qualitatively and thematically analysed using the Gioia methodology (Gioia et al., 2012; Gehman et al., 2018) which is well placed to generate knowledge grounded in human experience. The Gioia methodology has become a preferred approach for qualitative management researchers in recent years (Mees-Buss et al., 2022). Thematic analysis is able to produce 'social as well as psychological interpretations of data' (Braun and Clarke, 2006: 97), which is particularly useful given the social nature of group interviews and group data. The analysis began by amassing codes and clustering these within 1st-order

concepts that were then theoretically abstracted through subsequent analysis into 2nd order themes and aggregate dimensions. Keen to showcase informant's own words (and avoid proceduralism i.e., the slavish enactment of research 'templates,' Mees-Buss et al., 2022), the exploratory study's data structure provides illustrative informant extracts lifted from group interviews (where typically coded 1st-order concepts would preside). This informant-centric breach of thematic analysis protocols allows, for the purpose of this exploratory study, a more appreciative and immediate connection to the informant's perspectives (see Figure 3.2). Analysis was undertaken with the assistance of NVivo 12.

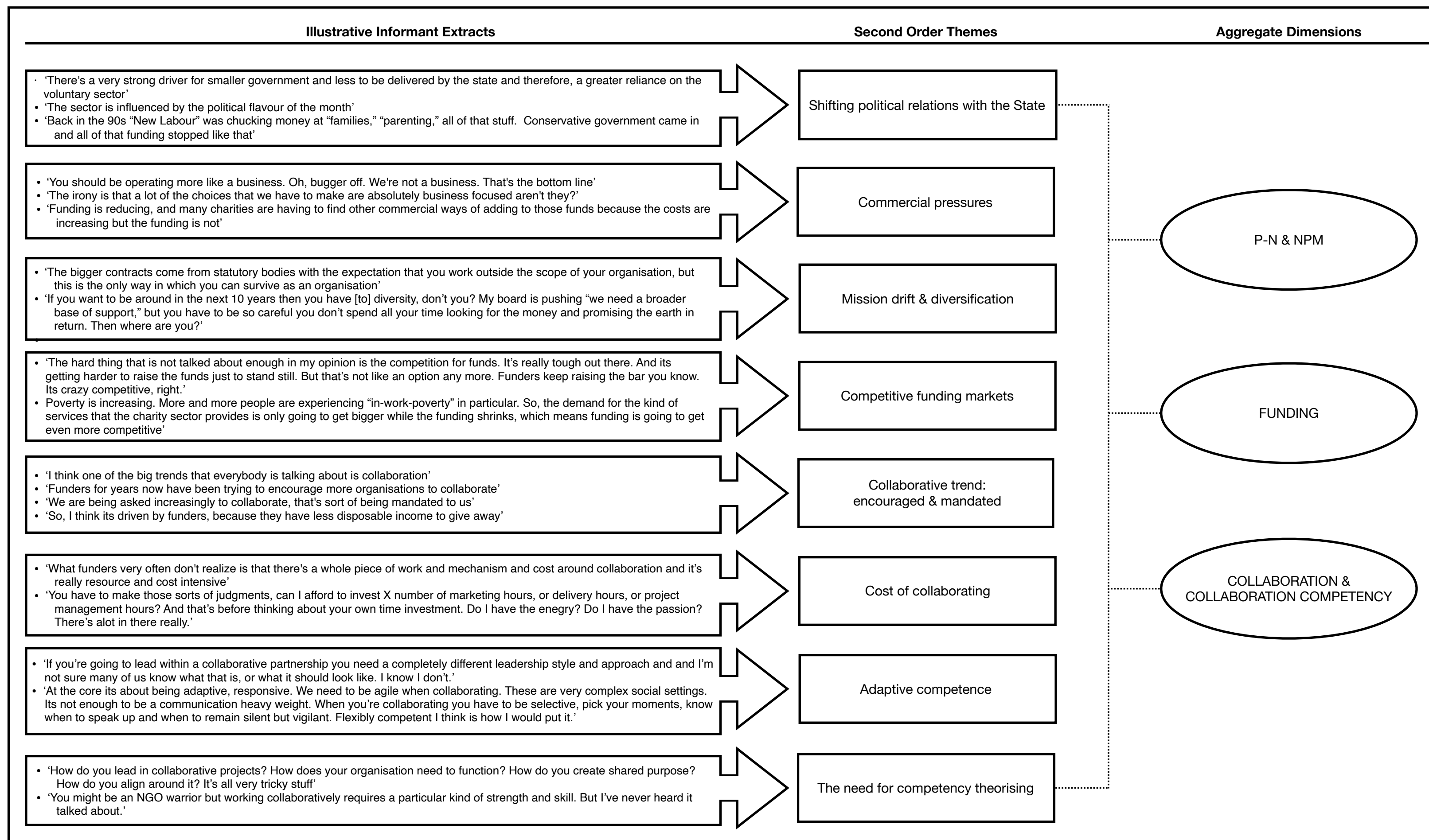


Figure 3.2 – Exploratory study data structure[8]

[8] Based on the Gioia Methodology (Gioia et al., 2013)

3.5 Findings

As the data structure illustrates (Figure 3.2), the exploratory study findings surfaced general agreement between informants' views and the thematic literature review, thereby validating the selected themes of P-N & NPM, funding, and collaboration. Of interest to the current study, informants expressed a degree of uncertainty and hesitation when asked to detail appropriate leadership approaches for collaborative settings. Despite this however the study was able to identify 34 competence themes associated with collaborative action across the three group interviews. The majority of these themes surfaced in response to the interviewer probing for more detail or rephrasing the question, which suggests that leaders were not used to discussing competences per se. Table 3.3. and 3.4 provide a sample of informant responses relating to collaboration in light of RQ1 and RQ2 (i.e., current and near future social sector trends). Table 3.5 offers a sample of responses to RQ3 (i.e., future competences). Table 3.5 provides a mix of competencies (i.e., collaborative and non-collaborative competencies).

TABLE 3. 3 – RQ1. Current themes impacting the social sector: the emergence of collaboration

Illustrative informant quotes	Themes
• 'I think one of the big trends that everybody is talking about is collaboration'	Collaboration trend
• 'What funders very often don't realise is that there's a whole piece of work and mechanism and cost around collaboration and it's really resource and cost intensive' • 'You have to invest in building the relationships. You have to get the legal relationship right. You have to be really clear about roles and responsibilities and territory'	Collaboration cost
• 'How do you lead in collaborative projects? How does your organisation need to function? How do you create shared purpose? How do you align around it? It's all very tricky stuff' • 'The thing about collaboration is that there are lots and lots of different ways of collaborating, and that can be at the heart of the difficulty'	The need for collaboration competency
• 'Funders for years now have been trying to encourage more organisations to collaborate' • 'We are being asked increasingly to collaborate, that's sort of being mandated to us' • 'So, I think its driven by funders, because they have less disposable income to give away'	Collaboration mandated
• 'People see each other as competitors no matter what' • 'We've almost got in some parts of the sector, "monopolies" taking over and winning'	Competition

Table 3.4 – RQ2. Future themes impacting the social sector

Illustrative informant quotes	Themes
• 'I wonder if in 10 years time we'll be facing an environmental crisis and so all the strategic thinking and planning and collaborative expertise will be critical'	Collaborative solutions to global crisis
• 'There will be an expectation that within cross-sector collaborations it will be the social sector that will bend over backwards to make things happen'	Asymmetrical collaboration
• 'We need a vibrant sector in the future, that's rich and dynamic. We are going to need competition and collaboration'	Managing competitive collaborative tensions
• 'The charity sector needs a wake-up call. You won't like me saying so, but thing is many of us leaders need reprogramming. We are so used to doing things a certain way, I'm not sure some of us know how to [collaborate]'	Collaboration as a leadership challenge
• 'What makes collaboration so likely in the future is that funders continue to demand it. That said we do have a long history of working together'	Competing motivations to collaborate
• 'We will see funders looking to collaborate themselves' • 'We are beginning to see more strategic relationships between funders'	Funder collaboration
• 'At the core its about being adaptive, responsive. We need to be agile when collaborating. These are very complex social settings. It's not enough to be a communication heavy weight. When you're collaborating you have to be selective, pick your battles, know when to speak up and when to remain silent but vigilant. Flexibly competent I think is how I would put it.'	Adaptive competence
• 'I hope in the future we will have learnt the lessons, dealt with our egos, and collaboration will be the natural way to work. […] Imagine'	Future collaboration normalised

Table 3. 5 – RQ3. Future leadership competences

Illustrative informant quotes	Themes
• ‘I think competence is about flexibility, openness, being able to adapt your leadership style’ • ‘Flexibility […] adapting to the changes whether that’s changing government agendas or pressures from within the sector’	Adaptive Leadership
• ‘Finding the common ground so that you’re able to have the impact you’re seeking’ • ‘Being able to work across sector in a constructive way even when the values might be different, and the process might be different’ • ‘Collaboration requires change management, organisational transformation, human resource shifts, changes of policy, practices, services’ • ‘The things that will be needed all the more include the ability to negotiate and influence across all levels of hierarchy’ • ‘Collaboration is about going open and imaginatively into conversations’ • ‘There is something about the competences needed to work collaboratively with the state’ • ‘Integrity and trust are so vital to the building of those collaborative relationships’	Set of collaborative competences
• ‘It’s the ability to refocus, reframe’	Agile cognition
• ‘It’s about driving change’ • ‘Challenging the organisation when it is blinkered and only looking out for its own interests’	Managing change
• ‘It’s understanding the sector, understanding the changes and understanding why the changes occurred’ • ‘What’s very interesting is where do you fit into the overall ecosystem? And what’s your role within that ecosystem?’	Field awareness

Illustrative informant quotes	Themes
• ‘For me core competences include resilience, adaptability, people skills, empathy, being a good listener, communication skills’ • ‘It’s those interpersonal skills, being a people person, managing relationships’ • ‘Being compassionate with your team is a big big part of that’	Interpersonal competence
• ‘I think it all comes down to trust. Can you build trusting relationships? Is your organisation going to come through and do what it commits too? Maintaining and servicing trust is such a critical leadership competence, but no one talks about it’	Trust
• ‘It’s important that leaders are aware of their emotions and able to manage them. If you’re working for a social purpose its almost your duty to recognise your own state’ • ‘If we don’t have leaders who are adept at self-care then we won’t have organisations that can collaborate effectively’	Self-awareness & Self-care
• ‘There’s also the historical stuff as well. There’s a lot of history between organisations and that’s before you get to the personalities’	Managing historic relationships
• ‘Creativity and innovation are key for the sector. It can be the difference between being around in 10 years or not’ • ‘The fact is we’re dealing with a lot of really entrenched issues that don’t have straightforward answers. So, service innovation is a kind of requirement’	Innovation

3.6 Discussion

The exploratory study was designed to sense-check the literature themes (P-N & NPM, funding, and collaboration). The exploratory study has validated these themes and placed particular warranty on collaboration and collaborative competencies which would benefit from further investigation. This discussion incorporates literature sources where these support the data (the data is presented in the body of the text using single quotation marks).

3.6.1 P-N & NPM

While leaders in the sample did not use the terms P-N & NPM, their discussions did confirm that these managerial forces continue to impact the social sector (Pape et al., 2019; Reiter and Klenk, 2019). This theme was manifest in the discussions across current and future social sector themes (RQ1 & RQ2) with frequent references to associated themes, such as managerialism, marketisation, performance management, and business-like solutions. Reference to P-N & NPM themes were generally raised with suspicion, which appears in keeping with the literature review (e.g., Christensen and Laegreid, 2011; Harris, 2018; Smith , 2018). While sections of the literature consider P-N & NPM passé, social sector leaders still appear to confront its many associated themes on a daily basis, be that in terms of the rise in social sector competition (Bunger, 2013; Sharp, 2018), commercialisation (McKay et al., 2011; Han, 2017), evidence-based commissioning (Weerawardena, 2010; Siltala, 2013), or the threat of mission drift (Barinaga, 2018). Together these findings validate this theme and the social sector consequences, highlighted in Table 2.1 (Chapter 2). The exploratory study also surfaced contradiction across the sample. The following quotes, coming from two different participants, provide a particularly lively example.

> ‘You should be operating more like a business. Oh, bugger off. We're not a business. That's the bottom line.’

> 'The irony is that a lot of the choices that we have to make are absolutely business focused, aren't they?'

'Managing the competition,' and 'service innovation' provide examples of social sector competence associated with the P-N & NPM theme.

3.6.2 Funding

Informants were only too aware of the challenges that competition and competitive funding markets presents to the social sector (Lu and Zhao, 2019). This particular challenge involves social sector leaders in 'managing competition' (Bunger, 2013), 'increased demand,' 'doing more with less' (Alcock et al., 2013; TSRC, 2013b), managing 'payment-by-results', and 'competitive contracting'. The data surfaced a number of associated issues such as the risk of 'mission drift' (Knutsen, 2012; Barinaga, 2018; Beaton, 2020) the hidden 'costs associated with collaboration', 'collaboration mandated' by funders (Oliver, 1990; Getha-Taylor et al., 2019; O'Brien et al., 2019; Krogh, 2020), and burdensome funding requirements such as the incorporation of technology as part of program delivery. In short, the findings readily concede with the literature that the social sector is under pressure because of state funding changes (Park and Mosley, 2017). Informants perceived the pressure on social sector organisations on the increase, as the following extracts illustrate.

> 'Poverty is increasing. More and more people are experiencing 'in-work-poverty' in particular. So, the demand for the kind of services that the charity sector provides is only going to get bigger while the funding shrinks, which means funding is going to get even more competitive'

> 'We may well be moving into a world where there is a greater reliance on non-state actors with less resources'

The following competences appeared in association with this social sector theme: 'managing competition', 'strategy', 'innovation', 'trend spotting', and 'knowing when to stop'.

3.6.3 Collaboration

Collaboration surfaced in the informants answers to all three research questions (present trends, future trends, and competences), providing validation for the theme and an acknowledgement of its importance to the social sector. Informants were well versed in the public and private sector rationales behind the mandating of collaboration as a public management strategy (Suares, 2011) aimed at inspiring service innovation. Informants appeared to accept that collaboration is a stable feature of the social sector and 'here to stay'. However, informants frequently treated collaboration with suspicion, when correlated with funders' mandating. Additionally, informants challenged the public sector's received wisdom that collaboration generates collaborative value on all occasions (Coupet et al., 2020). Here informants pointed to power asymmetry and the asymmetrical distribution of risk and benefits. For example, one informant commented:

> 'There will be an expectation that within cross-sector collaborations it will be the social sector that will bend over backwards to make things happen'

Collaboration surfaced as a particular challenge to social sector leadership as evidenced in the quote below.

> 'How do you lead in collaborative projects? How does your organisation need to function? How do you create shared purpose? How do you align around it? It's all very tricky stuff'

The findings revealed a wide range of competences associated with collaboration. Amongst those directly associated with leading within a collaboration were: 'adaptive leadership', 'finding the common ground', 'working

with value differences', 'managing complex change', 'human resource skills', 'negotiating and influencing across all levels of hierarchy', 'being open and imaginative' and 'integrity and trust'.

In summary, the exploratory study aimed to sense-check the initial literature review themes against the views of senior social sector leaders, thereby completing the study's grounding process. The exploratory study validated the three themes and provided particular warranty for the study's interest in collaboration and the conceptual development of collaborative competences specific to the UK social sector.

Having validated the literature themes and identified collaboration and collaborative competencies as a theme that would benefit from further investigation – in keeping with the study's abductive approach – a second literature review was deemed necessary to provide a 'deeper dive' into the collaboration and collaborative competence literatures and provides the content of the next chapter.

CHAPTER 4. SECONDARY THEORETICAL OBSERVATIONS: COLLABORATION, AND COLLABORATION COMPETENCE LITERATURE REVIEWS AND REVISED RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In response to the exploratory study's validation of collaboration and collaboration competency, this chapter provides a secondary literature review, offering the reader a deeper dive into this literature. Having commented on the study's abductive design (Section 4.1) the chapter outlines some of the structural characteristics of the social sector and collaboration literatures (Section 4.2). Next, the chapter reviews the definitional literature (Section 4.3), followed by a review of the collaboration success-failure literature (Section 4.4). Because collaborations are often seen in the literature as relational phenomenon attention then turns to explore the interorganisational relationship literature (Section 4.5). Here the study makes use of Morgan and Hunt's (1994) Key Mediating Variable model to assist the organisation and analysis of the study's relational data. Next, the collaboration competency literature is explored (Section 4.6) before, followed by the clarification of the study's research questions (Section 4.7). The chapter ends with a summary (Section 4.8).

4.1 Abduction

This study is informed by an abductive methodology which can be described in terms of an iterative, creative inferential process based on the exploration of surprising empirical research evidence (Timmermans and Tavory, 2012). As an applied social science, it is startling to note that the social sector literature often fails to speak *back* to practice. Thanks to abduction's recursive process it is well placed to *push the data back against the theory* (Timmermans and Tavory, 2012) (or through the theory) to generate novel findings to often overlooked

phenomenon. In this way, the exploratory study's validation of the initial literature themes calls for a further iteration i.e., a secondary literature review offering a deeper dive into the collaboration and collaboration competence literatures. Before embarking on this next iteration several comments are made in relation to the structural features of these literatures.

4.2 Collaboration: secondary literature review

4.2.1 Introduction

Collaboration surfaced as a thematic element of interest during the study's initial literature review (Chapter 2). Having undertaken an exploratory study (Chapter 3) as part of the grounding and sense-checking process, it was confirmed that collaboration presented not only as a salient contextual feature of social sector practice, but also as an undertheorised challenge to social sector leadership, that was further obfuscated by the lack of collaboration competency theorising. These surprising facts suggested that collaboration and leader's collaboration competencies would benefit from further investigation. Consequently, the current chapter presents a 'deeper dive' into the collaboration literature as well as offering an introduction into the nascent collaboration competency literature. Together, this secondary literature review has informed the clarification of the study's main research questions (see Section 4.5).

4.2.2 Salient structural features of the social sector literature

Several general observations are made here concerning the state of the social sector literature. Whilst providing more detail here, these concerns mirror those identified at the start of this PhD (i.e., Section 1.1). This study asserts that these features have influenced the social sector's collaboration literature precisely because the latter represents a sub-set of the former, and therefore shares a number of common structural characteristics. Five characteristics of the social

sector literature appear prescient in light of the study's current research parameters.

Firstly, social sector scholarship represents a field of voluminous *interdisciplinarity*. For example, Brudney and Durden's (1993) content analysis (of the NVSQ) identified 34 disciplines when coded for the lead author's disciplinary affiliations. Ma and Konrath (2018) citing Hall (2006), locate the foundation of modern social sector scholarship at the confluence of numerous 'mainstream disciplines,' including but not limited to 'history, sociology, and economics' (p. 1139). While reviewing 35 years of social sector scholarship within an international development context, Brass et al. (2018) revealed a similar picture, highlighting that most research on social sector organisations transpires in interdisciplinary (as opposed to discipline-specific) journals.

Secondly, the field is characterised by a *geographical distribution imbalance,* such that the majority of research originates from within the US. Ma and Konrath's (2018) study sampling 2848 bibliographic records together with 51,945 additional cited references published between 1986 and 2015, found 60.7% of articles emanating from the US compared with only 4% from the UK. This picture is supported by Brass et al. (2018) who noted that 'the model author in this sample is an academic based at a university in the *global North'* (p. 140 emphases added).

Thirdly, Kang et al. (2021) half century investigation of NVSQ publications, concluded that social sector scholarship exhibited a broad *thematic stability* such that 'in almost 50 years the field of nonprofit studies is not strongly fluctuating' (2021: 17). For these authors, social sector research 'seems more focused on fine-tuning than expanding new thematic topics' (ibid). Shier and Handy (2014), having explored research trends within social sector graduate studies present a similar flat-line assessment within which there appears a 'narrowing of the general topic areas within the study of nonprofits' (p. 826). This thematic stasis when overlaid with a sharp fall in collaboration research since 2001 (Ma and

Konrath, 2018) appears to challenge collaborations fecundity within social sector scholarship at a time when collaboration as a practice appears on the rise.

Fourthly, social sector scholarship comes in for criticism on account of its *methodological and epistemological conservatism and positivistic normativity,* such that according to Coule et al. (2022), only 4% of articles published across the three leading social sector journals over four decades (i.e., 1970s-2000s) employed a critical methodology. These authors go on to suggest that the incommensurate nature of constructionist and post-positivistic methodologies with a positivistic research hegemony continues to side-line critical scholarship within the field (ibid).

Finally, the literature *underrepresents practitioner-led research,* such that 'Northern *academics* create most [of the] published knowledge' (Brass et al., 2018: 140 emphases added). Appropriating Corley and Gioia's (2011) 'utility principle,' which suggests that good scholarship contains practical relevance and foresight, it is possible to comment: 'One source of the [underrepresentation of usable knowledge] problem is that [social sector] scholars have, in effect, created a closed industry engaged in producing knowledge intended mainly for other academic knowledge producers' rather than practitioners (Corley and Gioia, 2011: 20). Hall and Battaglio (2019: 463) comment: 'It is important that researchers talk to practice—and listen.' These authors go so far as to encourage academics to 'get our hands dirty' with 'real-world problems' (ibid). For these authors, '[w]e should be thinking not just about research outputs but research outcomes—that is, the impact realized in the real world as a result of the findings our research produces' (Hall and Battaglio, 2019: 463).

4.2.3. Structural aspects of the collaboration literature

Theoretical and empirical interest in collaborations at and across social sector borders has continued to grow over the last few decades (Seitanidi and Lindgreen, 2010; Bryson et al., 2015), such that Getha-Taylor (2019) remarks

emphatically that 'collaboration is not a passing fad,' 'but rather a requirement for addressing society's most pressing future problems' (p. 1, 45). Over the last few decades, several notable systematic- and meta-reviews have taken place (e.g., Oliver, 1990; Bryson et al., 2006, 2015; Parmigiani and Rivera-Santos, 2011; Varda et al., 2012; Gazley, 2017; and Gazley and Guo, 2020). Gazley and Guo's (2020) wide ranging systematic review spanning 40 years (1972-2015) of nonprofit collaboration research, surfaced four general themes and identified several lacunae within the literature. As these authors findings provide the most up-to-date and far-reaching review of the extant literature, their analysis will provide the bedrock for this section's structural assessment of the literature.

Gazley and Guo (2020) highlight 'the strong normative tone that pervades' the research (p. 213, see also Gazley and Brudney, 2007), such that mandated public sector calls for social sector collaboration frequently appear to push the practice beyond the weight of evidence (Agranoff, 2006; Chen, 2010; Cornforth et al., 2015; Almog-Bar and Schmid, 2018; Bano, 2019; O'Brien et al., 2019; Brock, 2020; Krogh, 2020). With collaborations invariably 'complex, slow to produce outputs, and by no means guaranteed to deliver synergies and advantage' (Huxham and Vangen, 2005; O'Leary and Bingham, 2009; Andrews and Entwistle, 2010; Vangen and Huxham, 2012; 2013; Gazley, 2017; cf Vangen, 2017: 263), Gazley and Guo (2020) suggest that 'practitioners in the sector need more guidance from the scholarship' (p. 213), particularly as collaborations become increasingly challenging (Bryson et al., 2015).

Thematically, Gazley and Guo describe the literature as 'diverse but "siloed"' (2020: 224), such that it displays a fragmentation wrought in part by the breadth of 'contexts, geography, and collaborative forms' (ibid), which foster the production of 'blind spots' and invariably leaves them unchallenged (O'Leary and Vij, 2012: 516). Siloed research suggests that scholarship takes place within the imposed strictures of 'particular field[s] of operation, country or region, or academic discipline' (Gazley and Guo, 2020: 224). Gazley and Guo's second theme concerned the imbalance in research coverage, and included researcher

affiliations, units of analysis, and geography. For example, 83% of studies (when coding only the first authors) were affiliated with academic institutions compared to 11% affiliated with social- or public-sector organisations. This finding resonates with O'Leary and Vij's (2012) assessment of the literature concerning the 'missing link between theory and practice', which they describe as 'disturbing and worrisome' (p. 517).

Having affirmed collaborations' multi-theoretic and multi-analytic status, Gazley and Guo (2020) explored the frequency of multiple units of analysis i.e., human, organisational, and collaborative dimensions. These authors found the largest group of studies employed an organisational unit of analysis (62%). The findings also revealed that the human unit of analysis i.e., leader's attitudes, perspectives, competencies and characteristics were 'least likely to be included in organizational studies of nonprofit collaboration' (O'Leary and Vij, 2012; Boyer et al., 2019; Getha-Taylor, 2019; cf. Gazley and Guo, 2020: 225). Similarly, Bryson's et al.'s (2015) meta-review revealed that **none of the reviewed collaborative frameworks 'delves very deeply' into personal aspects of leaders, such as 'the array of attitudes, competencies, and capacities needed for effective collaboration'** (p. 650). Concerning the geographical coverage imbalance, Gazley and Guo's findings highlighted a global spread of studies across 85 countries. However, despite this impressive level of global activity, the majority of studies were observed to have originated from the US.

Thirdly, despite the presence of more than thirty 'micro-theories' (2020: 221), Gazley and Guo highlight the domination of the 'Big Four' organisational theories across the literature i.e., 'Resource Dependency, Network, Transaction Cost Economics, and Institutional Theory' (2020: 225). This picture appears to have changed little since Gray and Wood (1991), and Wood and Gray's (1991) earlier analysis of the literature. Guo and Acar (2005) surface a number of criticisms concerning the literature's overreliance on such theories:

> 'Despite their explanatory power, these theoretical perspectives have been criticized for their insufficient attention to those constraints on...an organization's institutional environment...its structural context...as well as other contextual and organizational process factors' (p, 341).

At stake for Gazley and Guo (2020) within this unchallenged theoretical oligopoly, is the risk that researchers reproduce biased conclusions based on the application of disciplinary loyalties and theoretical boundedness, that coalesce within disciplinary echo chambers. Concerning the field's expansive interdisciplinarity (Guo and Acar, 2005; Huxham and Vangen, 2005; Emerson et al., 2012; O'Leary and Vij, 2012; Bryson et al., 2015) the literature is said to suffer from 'a piece-meal approach' and, therefore, is thought to lack a coherent 'overarching theory' (O'Leary and Vij, 2012: 516).

Gazley and Guo's fourth and final theme concerned the scale of methodological advance, sophistication and diversity within the literature. In this regard, improved methodological sophistication is seen to be needed in that 'the academic study of collaborative organizational activity in any field - human services or others - still reflects efforts to simplify an extraordinarily complex [phenomena],' with the consequence that 'flattening the context for collaboration too far can leave out key dynamics that are not translated to practice' (Gazley 2017:1; see also O'Leary and Vij, 2012).

Among the various lacunae identified by Gazley and Guo (2020), two appear particularly apposite for the current study. **Gazley and Guo draw attention to the underrepresentation of research investigating collaborative failure.** This gap is associated by Gazley and Guo with social sector scholarship's ever-present positivism (see also Selsky and Parker, 2010). Gazley and Guo (2020) comment: 'collaborative efforts often fail, and these failures are not carefully documented or analyzed in the existing literature' (p. 228). While Bryson et al. (2015) argue that 'cross-sector collaboration is hardly an easy answer to complex public problems' (p. 648). The danger of omitting failure cases within the main

collaboration corpus includes running the risk of inflating a priori outcome measures or overestimating effects at the expense of generating fresh insights or simply overlooking the obvious (Gazley and Guo, 2020).

The second gap identified by Gazley and Guo concerns a lack of comparative research, such that little research has taken place that compares collaborative activity across conditions, such as the comparing of good and bad collaborative conditions (Gazley and Guo, 2020). The consequence of this comparative deficit is that the literature languishes ‘with no clue as to the commonalities and differences in collaborative activity across [these] conditions’ (ibid). Gazley and Guo therefore issued a call for more purposive comparative research with a view to validating and improving existing theories as well as generating fresh insights. Reflecting on this lacuna, Gazley and Guo look forward to a time when research yields ‘theoretically rich descriptions of how collaborative activity both fails and thrives in the nonprofit sector’ (2020: 229).

In summary, it has been observed that the collaboration literature shares a number of structural characteristics with the social sector literature of which it is a part. Both literatures express an overreliance on: a) positivistic epistemologies; b) an interdisciplinarity which favours the Big Four theories; c) slow moving and siloed research spaces in which subject stasis is the norm; d) a geographical distribution imbalance in which US scholarship predominates; and e) academic knowledge production at the expense of practicability. These features have resulted in two critical gaps in the literature - a lack of collaboration failure research, and the absence of comparative research.

4.3. Definitions of Collaboration

As Table 4.1 illustrates, the definitional literature’s multidisciplinarity has yielded an impressive array of definitions such that construct clarification has evaded

generalisable consensus (Bauer et al., 2022). Bedwell et al. (2012) highlights a number of pervasive conceptual weaknesses in the definitional literature, such as definitions: a) being too specific or too vague; b) operating at a narrow unit of analysis; c) omitting process features; or d) mislabelling the phenomenon altogether (ibid). For these authors definitions must be explicit about: a) levels of analysis; b) processual features and their delineation; c) identifying processes; and d) the impact of time (ibid).

O'Leary and Vij (2012: 508) highlight the 'considerable confusion' concerning the distinction between collaboration and neighbouring terms such as 'coordination,' and 'cooperation' (see also Huxham and Macdonald, 1992; Keast, 2016). This point finds support with Castañer and Oliveira's (2020) systematic literature review covering nine top journals from 1948 – 2017. Castañer and Oliveira argue that the arbitrary interchangeability and amalgamation of terms limit the literatures 'discriminant validity' (2020: 979).

Table 4.1 provides a sample of definitions from the literature, and includes behavioural, processual, relational, organisational, and economic definitional elements. Castañer and Oliveira (2020) observed that the majority of definitions expressed a behavioural bias.

Table 4. 1 – Sample collaboration definitions from the literature

Author(s)	Article Title	Definitions
Gray and Wood (1991)	*Collaborative Alliances: Moving from Practice to Theory*	A process through which parties who see different aspects of a problem can constructively explore their differences and search for solutions that go beyond their own limited vision of what is possible. (Gray, 1989; in Gray and Wood 1991). Collaborative alliance can be described as an interorganisational effort to address problems too complex and too protracted to be resolved by unilateral organisational action.
Thomson (2001) in Thomson and Perry (2006)	*Collaboration Processes: Inside the Black Box*	Collaboration is a process in which autonomous actors interact through formal and informal negotiation, jointly creating rules and structures governing their relationships and ways to act

Author(s)	Article Title	Definitions
		or decide on the issues that brought them together; it is a process involving shared norms and mutually beneficial interactions.
Agranoff and McGuire (2003) in Agranoff (2006)	*Inside Collaborative Networks: Ten Lessons for Public Managers*	The process of facilitating and operating in multi organisational arrangements to solve problems that cannot be solved, or solved easily, by single organisations.
Hardy et al. (2003)	*Resources, Knowledge and Influence: The Organizational Effects of Interorganizational Collaboration*	Collaboration is a cooperative, interorganisational relationship that is negotiated in an ongoing communicative process, and which relies on neither market nor hierarchical mechanisms of control.
McGuire (2006)	*Collaborative Public Management: Assessing What We Know and How We Know It*	Collaborative public management is a concept that describes the process of facilitating and operating in multiorganisational arrangements in order to remedy problems that cannot be solved—or solved easily—by single organisations.
Selsky and Parker (2010)	*Platforms for Cross-Sector Social Partnerships: Prospective Sensemaking Devices for Social Benefit*	[Cross-sector social partnerships] are defined as cross-sector projects formed explicitly to address social issues and causes that actively engage the partners on an ongoing basis. Such projects may be "transactional"—short-term, constrained, and largely self-interest oriented— or "integrative" and "developmental" — longer term, open-ended, and largely common-interest oriented.
Bedwell et al. (2012)	*Collaboration at Work: An Integrative Multilevel Conceptualization*	Collaboration is an evolving process whereby two or more social entities actively and reciprocally engage in joint activities aimed at achieving at least one shared goal.
Al-Tabbaa et al. (2014)	*Collaboration Between Nonprofit and Business Sectors: A Framework to Guide Strategy Development for Nonprofit Organizations*	[Nonprofit business collaboration] a discretional agreement between an NPO and a for-profit business to address social or environmental issues and to produce specific organisational benefits for both partners.
Bryson et al. (2006) in Bryson et al. (2015)	*Designing and Implementing Cross-Sector Collaborations: Needed and Challenging*	Cross-sector collaboration is the linking or sharing of information, resources, activities, and capabilities by organisations in two or more sectors to achieve an outcome that could not be achieved by organisations in one sector separately.
Gazley (2017)	*The Current State of Interorganizational Collaboration: Lessons for Human Service Research and Management*	Organisational collaboration describes dynamic relationships involving coordinated activity based on mutual goals.

Author(s)	Article Title	Definitions
Castañer and Oliveira (2020).	*Collaboration, coordination, and cooperation among organizations: Establishing the distinctive meanings of these terms through a systematic literature review*	[Interorganisational Relationships] result from the *direct* negotiation among (the representatives of) *all* the organisations involved in the IOR and that remain legally independent for the access, exchange (including pooling or sharing), and/or generation (jointly develop new) of resources.

The current study initially employed Gray and Wood's (1991) definition, before adopting that of Selsky and Parker's (2010), in order to avoid Bedwell's et al. (2012) conceptual weaknesses, and to provide ample accommodation for the emerging data, such as the interplay of organisational- and mission-interests which surfaced as critical aspects of the study's main findings.

> '[Collaborations] are defined as cross-sector projects formed explicitly to address social issues and causes that actively engage the partners on an ongoing basis. Such projects may be "transactional"—short-term, constrained, and largely self-interest oriented— or "integrative" and "developmental" — longer term, open-ended, and largely common-interest oriented' (Selsky and Parker, 2010: 22).

4.4 Collaboration success-failure literature

While the field of collaboration scholarship emits an essential positivistic vibrancy (Bingham and O'Leary, 2006), the literature continues to report high failure rates in practice (Babiak and Thibault, 2009; Bryson et al., 2015; and Schmid and Almog-Bar, 2020). For Gazley and Brudney (2007), what tends to be ignored in the general literature is:

> '...the potential institutional costs of interorganizational alliances, including mission drift, the possible loss of institutional autonomy or public accountability, cooptation of actors, greater financial instability, greater

> difficulty in evaluating results, and the expenditure of considerable institutional time and resources in supporting collaborative activities' (p. 392).

Writing from a public administration perspective, Andrews and Entwistle's (2010) findings challenge the taken-for-granted positivistic assumption that collaborations invariably produce advantage, having found no evidence to support their hypothesis that public-and-social sector collaborations improved either service efficiency or equity gains (i.e., enhanced client outcomes). Acknowledging that collaborations are 'highly resource-consuming and often painful', Huxham and Vangen (2003: 420; cf. 2004: 200) offer sober advice to would-be interactors: '[t]he strongest piece of advice to managers (and policy makers) that derives from the [data], therefore, is "don't do it unless you have to"'.

Despite the complexities, challenges and 'uneven results' that collaborations present (Huxham and Vangen, 2000a; 2000b; Gazley and Brudney, 2007; cf. Bryson et al., 2015: 647; Gazley, 2017; Eppel and O'Leary, 2021), **research aimed at providing a better understanding of cross-sector collaborative success and failure has received limited attention** (Schmid and Almog-Bar, 2020). Table 4.2 provides a sample of the success-failure literature. Reasons given for collaborative success or failure are multifarious, and include processual, structural, institutional, and behavioural variables. Getha-Taylor's (2019) research for the 'Elements series on Public and Non Profit Administration' provides a useful contemporary example of this research. In order of frequency, Getha-Taylor's US data revealed the following reasons for collaborative failure: stress (i.e., exhaustion, conflict), internal changes (i.e., turnover and changing priorities), resource problems (i.e., scarcity, reallocation), and natural causes (i.e., natural collaborative decline). Reasons given, in order of frequency for collaborative success were: relationships (i.e., trust, equity), commitment (i.e., goal persistence), structural features (i.e., role definition, clear accountabilities), mission (i.e., common goals), and capacity (i.e., individual and organisational).

Table 4. 2 – A sample of the collaboration success and failure literature

Author(s)	Region	Article Title	Focus/Findings/Relevant Points
Thomson and Perry (2006)	US	*Collaboration Processes: Inside the Black Box*	• In a process approach five dimensions of collaboration are identified: governance; administration (structural dimension); mutuality; norms of trust and reciprocity (social capital dimension); organisational autonomy (agency dimension). • Partners share a dual identity when collaborating: maintaining organisational autonomy and self-interest and achieving collective interest and agency. Reconciling these interests is critical.
Gazley and Brudney (2007)	US	*The Purpose (and Perils) of Government-Nonprofit Partnership*	• Comparative study exploring sectoral and attitudinal perceptions of local government-social sector collaborations. • Sector perceptions (similar and differing) revealed pre-existing and experiential sectoral attitudinal variations. • Social sector executives held greater negative perceptions of collaboration than local government managers. • More research required to understand social sector exec's negative perceptions. • More research required to understand organisational costs of collaboration, including aspects of organisational autonomy, accountability, and financial instability.
Casey (2008)	-	*Partnership - success factors of interorganizational relationships*	• A review of the literature surfaced the following factors which contribute to 'partnership' success: trust and valuing interactors; leadership and change management; a partnership framework, communication; equity in decision making; power; and a facilitator. • The study called for additional contextual research with a view to implement/understand collaborative relationships.
Daley (2008)	US	*Interdisciplinary Problems and Agency Boundaries: Exploring Effective Cross-Agency Collaboration*	• Examines factors promoting and inhibiting effective collaborative relationships. • Partnership synergy, trust, leadership and performance evaluation deemed significant elements of effective collaborative relations. • Organisational environments matter to collaborative success holding interactors to account.

Author(s)	Region	Article Title	Focus/Findings/Relevant Points
Kale and Singh (2009)	-	*Managing Strategic Alliances: What Do We Know Now, and Where Do We Go from Here?*	• Examination of single and multiple alliances undertaken by a single firm in order to explain how to better manage these relations via the creation of alliance capabilities. • Relational governance, the development of trust, and relational capital identified as key to alliance success. Success factors plotted against collaborative phases.
Gazley (2010)	US	*Why Not Partner With Local Government?: Nonprofit Managerial Perceptions of Collaborative Disadvantage*	• Managerial attitudes about collaborating with the state reflect (among other factors) underlying political and social dynamics; and linked to lived experience. • Collaborations are dynamic (rather than fixed) social processes. • Collaborations can involve/originate in coercive, incentive-based and normative influences at individual and organisational levels. • Attitudinal research (incl. strategic motivations) has largely negated negative aspects of collaboration and the lived experience of leaders. • Social sector leader's negative attitudes of collaboration are shaped by (current/past) experience.
Ospina and Saz-Carranza (2010)	US	*Paradox and Collaboration in Network Management*	• Collaborations are inherently difficult, full of tension and failure is therefore high. Authors accept networks as paradoxical in nature and therefore set out to understand the managerial challenges & subsequent tactics of successful networks leaders. • Inward and outward network challenges were identified: inward (i.e., building and maintaining the network and its relationships); outward (i.e., task-orientated behaviours that interactors accomplished together or independently). • Leaders of successful networks managed the inward challenge for unity and diversity through member interaction, personal relationships and open & participatory processes. • Leaders managed the outward challenge of dialogue and confrontation by maintaining credibility, multilevel working, and cultivating multiple relationships.
Al-Tabbaa et al. (2014)	-	*Collaboration Between Nonprofit and Business Sectors: A Framework to Guide Strategy Development for*	• Authors develop a conceptual framework to facilitate proactive social sector-business collaboration strategy from a social sector perspective. Influenced by strategic management theory the framework consists of three elements of strategy: context, content, and process. A strategy allows social sector organisations to appreciate their unique attributes; identify the purpose of joint action; and recognise the risks involved in collaborating thereby reducing the risk of collaborative failure.

Author(s)	Region	Article Title	Focus/Findings/Relevant Points
		Nonprofit Organizations	• Collaboration failure is discussed under three themes: collaboration failure, collaboration cost & reputational damage.
Keast (2016)	Pacific	*Shining a Light on the Black Box of Collaboration: Mapping the prerequisites for cross-sector working*	• Identifying the processes that facilitate successful collaborative interactions. • Collaboration comprises a distinctive set of intersecting relational dimensions including: an interpersonal orientation (inc., trust); interdependency; mutuality and undertaking joint tasks that fulfil organisational and collective objectives. • Macro- and micro-relational processes identified including communicative approaches, deliberate process design, trust, and reciprocity.
ILM (2018)	UK	*Building Collaborative Capacity.*	• This report identifies six leadership capabilities essential for collaborative success: voice & communication, trust, alignment of organisational and collaborative objectives, governance, capacity to engage, and flexibility. • Flexibility, compromise, trust, confronting power imbalances and clear communication deemed critical to success. Organisational objectives rarely map neatly the collaborative goals.
Schmid and Almog-Bar (2020)	Israel	*Predictors of Success and Failure in Cross-sectoral Partnerships in Nonprofit Human Services: Reflections and Challenges*	• Identifying predictors of collaborative success and failure utilising a three-stage continuum (i.e., forming the partnership; designing its administrative arrangements/processes; and implementation, goal attainment and outcomes. • Predictors of success: agreeing shared goals, socialisation at entry stage; trust, appreciation and mutual respect; forgoing egoic actions; integration of processes and organisational structures; investment in human capital through dialogic action; leadership that differs from organisational leadership i.e., more inclusive, accountable, delegative. • Predictors of failure: gaps of organisational culture; asymmetrical power relations; struggles for control of partnership (including opportunistic behaviours); fear of losing organisational autonomy; organisational rigidity; organisational (unilateral) decisions hurt joint working.
Scott and Merton (2021)	New Zealand	*When the going gets tough, the goal-committed get going: overcoming the transaction costs of*	• Emic study's identified goal commitment. Etic study surfaced sociotechnical features associated with reduced transaction costs. Together these findings were observed to extend knowledge of successful collaborations.

Author(s)	Region	Article Title	Focus/Findings/Relevant Points
		inter-agency collaborative governance	• Common design features across emic and etic studies included: reduced number of interactors, existing relationships, cascaded levels of governance, small number of goals, transparent goals, and intermediate goal evaluation.

In summary, this section has highlighted the multidisciplinarity of the definitional literature which has failed to arrive at a generalisable consensus. Contributing to this position is the literature's conflation and indiscriminate use of neighbouring terms such as cooperation and coordination. Despite the complexities inherent in collaborative practice and the frequent reports of underwhelming results, research aimed at providing a better understanding of cross-sector collaborative success and failure has received limited attention in the literature. As this review has highlighted there is a lack of comparative research aimed at understanding collaboration success and failure in a single study. As the tables have illustrated there is also a shortage of European and UK collaboration studies, which introduces a translation gap into such scholarship. With the success and failure literature frequently referencing the importance of relationships to collaborations a review of the interorganisational relationships literature is needed and forms the focus of the next section.

4.5 Interorganisational relationships

Cross-sector collaborations represent 'a stunning evolutionary change in institutional forms' (Alter and Hage, 1993 in Selsky and Parker, 2005: 849), yet they vary substantially in their degree of organisation and relationality (Gray, 1985, see also Parmigiani and Rivera-Santos, 2011). One of the most notable sectoral interstice conceptualisations is offered by Selsky and Parker (2005; 2010), who present cross-sector collaborations in terms of a theoretical quartet consisting of bi- and tri-sectoral elements described as arenas, which parse and delimit interorganisational relationships along structural trajectories.

- Arena 1: interorganisational relationships between social sector organisations and businesses. These typically transpire around environmental and economic concerns.

- Arena 2: interorganisational relationships between government and businesses. These include infrastructure development and public utility services.
- Arena 3: Interorganisational relationships between governments and social sector organisations, and include contracted social welfare, health, education and other public services.
- Arena 4: tri-sector interorganisational relationships. These are described as large-scale national or international collaborations focused on economic and social development (Selsky and Parker, 2010: 24).

With sustained interest in cross-sector collaborations over the last few decades, tri-sectoral collaborations are no longer the preserve of large or transglobal collaborations, but are frequently incorporated into local government sponsored delivery systems (Brock, 2020).

Thomson and Perry (2006: 21) observe collaborations as transpiring through 'repetitive sequences of negotiation, development of commitments, and [the] execution of those commitments'. For Selsky and Parker (2010), the structural and relational contextualities of each arena make possible a range of negotiated positions, aligned commitments, avoidances, and what Gray (1985: 912) describes as 'appreciations'. For Gray, interactors negotiate on the grounds of and towards the joint appreciation of interdependencies. In this way, Gray (1985) offers a bounded relational and process analysis of collaborations in which they are enhanced as and when interdependent interests acquire joint appreciation status. Gray suggests that managing collaborative interdependencies requires an alternative set of responses that move beyond the standard single-organisational strategies, which in collaborative settings appear maladaptive in the face of joint interests and grounded relationalities.

Bauer et al. (2022) assert that collaborations are contemporaneously interorganisational and interpersonal, such that institutional characteristics of participating organisations and the personal attributes of organisational leaders

influence collaborative relations, structures, and outcomes. In light of this, it is worth noting that there exists insufficient attention within the literature on organisation's institutional commitments and contextual embeddedness and their consequence for collaborative action (Guo and Acar, 2005). On this basis, Guo and Acar utilise institutional, network and resource dependency theories to speak to this lacuna, and to understand the contextual circumstances through which interactors select collaborative practice. In so doing, Guo and Acar (2005) place specific emphasis on the impact of 'institutional mandates' and 'interorganisational linkages' (p. 357).

Oliver (1990) acknowledged that organisations increasingly operate in a hyper relational environment such that organisational survival is invariably dependent upon relational transactions and linkages with other organisations. Oliver's meta-review identified six critical contingencies which influence interorganisational relationship formation. Oliver's model is predicated on two assumptions. Firstly, organisations engage in interorganisational arrangements intentionally 'for explicitly formulated purposes' (1990: 242). Secondly, the roots of engagement are invariably organisational, with contingency factors predicting the type of interrelationality selected.

Key aspects to emerge within the interorganisational literature concerns trust and commitment (see Table 4.3). Bryson et al. (2006; 2015); Ansell and Gash, (2008); Provan and Kenis, (2008), all place particular significance on trust for collaborations. Schmid and Almog-Bar, (2019) highlight the significance of trust in the initial stages of cross-sector collaborations and evidence trusts impact on collaborative goal attainment and commitment. This picture is supported elsewhere (e.g., Emerson et al., 2012; Lee et al., 2012). What emerges from this literature is the saliency of trust and commitment on interorganisational relationships. This last point suggests a useful link (for this study's analysis) to Morgan and Hunt's (1994) Key Mediating Variable model (KMV).

With several applications of the KMV model found within the social sector literature, the model has proven itself adaptive to contexts and sectors beyond its original for-profit setting (MacMillan et al., 2005). Such applications include Mironska and Zaborek (2019) who applied the KMV model to social sector-business collaborations. For these authors alignment, trust and commitment (KMV elements) were proposed to influence a tripartite of collaborative values: organisational, social and reputational. Sanzo et al. (2015) also utilised aspects of the KMV model (to explore social sector-business relationalities) and found that collaborative relationships based on trust and commitment enhanced the social sector's innovation capabilities. These and other examples of KMV's applicability to interorganisational relationship studies (incl., Goo and Huang, 2008; and Paulraj et al., 2008) suggest there is much to be gained by the current study's selective application of the KMV model. Further evidence of additional jumping off points pertaining to the KMV model can be found within the social sector and for-profit literatures. For example, MacMillan et al. (2005) provide an account of a modified KMV model used to analyse South African social sector-funder relationships. For these authors, modifications to the KMV model included (amongst other things) the addition of 'nonmaterial benefits,' which were strongly associated with trust and communication. Similarly, Money et al. (2012) provide an example, drawn from the for-profit literature, which incorporate aspects of the KMV model within a wider framework used to investigate organisation and stakeholder relations (referred to as the RELATE framework). These, and other examples of KMV's more recent application (incl., Friman et al. 2002; Money et al. 2010; Hashim and Tan, 2015) provide evidence of a sustained interest in the model's utility and illustrates the range of extensions, revisions, and alternative research loci the model inspires.

Table 4.3 provides an illustration of the usefulness of KMV as an organisational device of an otherwise vast and bewildering literature. Table 4.3 provides a sample of the trust literature, leaving a wider iterative dialogue between the literature (i.e., trust, communication and shared values) and the data for the study's Discussion Section (Chapter 7).

Table 4. 3 – Illustrative sample of the extant literature exploring trust in collaborative settings

Authors	Region	Title	Research focus
Barringer and Harrison (2000)	US	*Walking a Tightrope: Creating Value Through Interorganizational Relationships*	• Review of six theoretical paradigms used to explain interorganisational relationships (transaction costs economics, resource dependency, strategic choice, stakeholder theory, learning theory, institutional theory). Also reviewed – six forms of interorganisational relationships (joint ventures, networks, consortia, alliances, trade associations, interlocking directorates. • Of relevance to the current thesis the article extrapolates from the literature potential advantages & disadvantages of participation in interorganisational relationships. Advantages include resource & market access, economies of scale, risk & cost sharing, service development, learning, flexibility, and collective lobbying. Disadvantages include loss of propriety information, management complexities, financial & organisational risks, dependency, loss of autonomy, culture clash, loss of organisational flexibility, distrust implications. • It is known that collaborative relationships can be highly beneficial. It is also known that many of them fail. Research is only beginning to understand why this is the case. The authors call for multidisciplinary approaches which examine the characteristics of successful and unsuccessful interorganisational relationships.
Das and Teng (2001)	-	*Trust, Control, and Risk in Strategic Alliances: An Integrated Framework*	• A comprehensive & integrative framework of trust (i.e., goodwill trust & competence trust), control (i.e., behavioural, output, & social control), and risk (i.e., relational & performance risk) in strategic alliances. Authors contend that trust & control represent the two critical antecedents of risk . • Several risk reduction approaches are identified including: minimizing performance risk through competence trust, output & social control; minimizing relational risk through goodwill trust, behavioural & social control.
Huxham and Vangen (2004)	UK	*Doing Things Collaboratively: Realizing the Advantage or Succumbing to Inertia?*	• Collaborative advantage describes the synergistic argument i.e., something has been achieved together that could not have been done alone. Collaborative inertia describes diminished, negligible, or slow returns. • In light of the resource costs (organisational and personal) associated with collaboration the authors advise: 'don't do it unless you have too'.

Authors	Region	Title	Research focus
Ansell and Gash (2008)	-	*Collaborative Governance in Theory and Practice*	• An inductive meta-analytical study of the collaborative governance literature resulting in a contingency Model of Collaborative Governance (based on cause-and-effect relationships) – consisting of starting conditions, the collaborative process, and outcomes. The model is further elaborated with institutional design and facilitative leadership inputs. • The collaborative model is nonlinear, cyclical, & iterative, consisting of communication, trust, commitment, shared understanding, & intermediate outcomes. • Authors identified three core contingencies: trust, time, & interdependence.
Ibrahim and Ribbers (2009)	US	*The impacts of competence-trust and openness-trust on interorganizational systems*	• Authors investigate how trust based on interactor competence & openness influences resource use. • Competence-trust & openness-trust perceptions positively influence relational aspects of human-knowledge exchange & organisational domain knowledge resources. • Competence-trust emphasises perceived trustees' abilities, knowledge and expertise. • Openness-trust emphasises honesty of communication & willingness to share knowledge & information.
Eng et al. (2012)	UK	*The Role of Relationally Embedded Network Ties in Resource Acquisition of British Nonprofit Organizations*	• Focusing on how UK social sector organisation's use relationally embedded network ties to acquire financial, human & human capital resources, the study shows that organisations leverage their social mission to improve their ability to acquire network resources. • Trust is employed as relationally embedded ties and understood as a multidimensional construct comprising goodwill trust, personal competency trust, and social trust.
Emerson et al. (2012)	-	*An Integrative Framework for Collaborative Governance*	• Within the Integrative Framework for Collaborative Governance, cross-sector collaboration represents the predominant logic & mode of action (collaborative dynamics). This consists of principled engagement, capacity for joint action, and shared motivation. This process is dynamic, nonlinear, & iterative. • Principled engagement involves the iteration of four process elements: discovery (i.e., shared interest), definition (i.e., defining common purpose), deliberation (i.e., reasoned communication & safe dialogical spaces), and determination (i.e., substantive decision making & task

Authors	Region	Title	Research focus
			assignment), which fosters trust, mutual understanding & shared commitment. Shared motivation enhances & sustains principled engagement. • Additional Framework elements include collaborative actions, impacts, & adaptations. Collaborative Governance regimes apply adaptive feedback loops to ensure sustainability & outcome success.
Lee et al. (2012)	US	*Trust in a Cross-Sectoral Interorganizational Network: An Empirical Investigation of Antecedents*	• Identification of antecedents to trust among interactors. Trust building is the result of attributes of trustors, trustees, and their relationships in combination. • Trustor's propensity to trust was an important antecedent of trust between interactors. • Reputation for trustworthiness, shared sectoral affiliations, & importance of trustee to the trustor were identified as key antecedents of trust. Shared sectoral affiliations assumes mutual trust & increased interdependence via compatible goals, values, & perceptions. • Relationship attributes highlighted multiplexity i.e., the more varied the joint activities (info sharing, resource sharing, joint programming) the higher the trust in the relationship. Trust plays an evolutionary role in relationship development & shared commitment.
Bunger (2013)	-	*Administrative Coordination in Nonprofit Human Service Delivery Networks: The Role of Competition and Trust*	• Trust/trustworthiness among organisational leaders mitigated the negative influence of competition on coordination functions. • Once co-opetition is acknowledged within the social sector, leaders (of competing organisations) can cooperate where there is trust. • For social sector leaders reducing competition is desirable. For public leaders competition is often used to as a control devise such that competitive procurement promotes quality, accountability, & innovation.
Aldoory et al. (2015)	US	*Exploring use of relationship management theory for cross-border relationships to build capacity in HIV prevention*	• Utilising relationship management theory the study identified six characteristics: trust, reciprocity, commitment, mutual legitimacy, mutual understanding, & control mutuality. Mistrust, a lack of leadership, & commitment critically impacted relationship building. • When organisational specialisations were complementary relationships of mutual benefit were created.

Authors	Region	Title	Research focus
Almog-Bar and Schmid (2018)	-	*Cross-Sector Partnerships in Human Services: Insights and Organizational Dilemmas*	• The study utilised an input-process-outcome model to understand cross-sector partnerships. • Trust was found to be a crucial factor in determining the success or failure of the collaboration in goal attainment and synergetic value terms. • The most important inputs were bridging the differences/gaps between the partners; socialisation of the partners in the partnership; and establishing a psychological and formal agreement to match expectations. • The study called for more comparative studies to enhance understanding of collaboration processes.
Boyer et al. (2019)		*Do executives Approach Leadership Differently When They Are Involved in Collaborative Partnerships? A Perspective from International Nongovernmental Organizations (INGOs)*	• Those social sector leaders with experience of collaborations were more likely to emphasise motivational leadership and relationship-based leadership than those with no collaborative experience who rather emphasised management decisiveness, cost-effective leadership, and marketing and outreach. • All informants (i.e., those with & without collaboration experience) assigned the same value to consensus-driven leadership, visionary leadership, and leadership role modelling.
Getha-Taylor et al. (2019)	US	*Collaborating in the Absence of Trust? What Collaborative Governance Theory and Practice Can Learn From the Literatures of Conflict Resolution,*	• Exploring trust from conflict resolution, psychology, and law literatures, reveal distinct assumptions applicable to collaborative studies. • All three literatures acknowledge trust to be a preferred antecedent & desired ingredient. At the same time they also point out that collaboration can be successful with diminished & no trust. • Collaborative trust is an individual perception that is the product of one's assessments, experiences, and dispositions, in which one believes, and is willing to act on the words, actions, and decisions of others. This can include a reliance on principles, rules, norms, and decision-making procedures that articulate collective expectations.

Authors	Region	Title	Research focus
		Psychology, and Law	
Breuer et al. (2020)		*Trust in teams: A taxonomy of perceived trustworthiness factors and risk-taking behaviors in face-to-face and virtual teams*	• The study explored perceived trustworthiness factors as antecedents, and risk-taking behaviours as consequences of trust in virtual and face-to-face teams. The study derived a taxonomy explaining the emergence and proximal consequences of trust in teams & integrated prior research and theories on trust antecedents and risk-taking behaviour. • The study found five main categories of perceived trustworthiness (ability, benevolence, predictability, integrity, transparency) and three main categories of risk-taking behaviour (disclosure, reliance, contact-seeking).

In summary, collaborations represent a new organisational form characteristic of a bi- and tri-sectoral interstice conceptualised as contemporaneously interorganisational and interpersonal. Despite the gradual conceptual sophistication of the collaborative literature, the consequences of institutional commitments and organisational contextualities remain stubbornly underdeveloped. Organisations were observed entering into interorganisational relationships for explicit purposes be they institutional mandates or collaborative advantage. Morgan and Hunt's (1994) KMV model has been observed within the social sector collaborative literature and is used within the current study to assist the organisation and analysis of the study's emerging data.

Building on the study's grounding process, and in result of the evidence to have emerged from the exploratory study, collaboration competency (i.e., those competencies needed when engaging in collaborative practice) surfaced as a vital if little understood feature of social sector leadership. That social sector leaders felt so unprepared for the challenge collaboration presents makes a deeper dive into this literature particularly crucial. To that end, the next section will review this small body of literature before clarifying the study's research questions.

4.6 Collaboration competencies

Bryson and colleagues (2015) theoretical meta-synthesis of the empirical collaboration literature, identified leadership and collaborative competencies to be of particular importance to collaboration success, locating these items at the intersection of collaboration processes and structures (see also Bryson et al., 2006; and Crosby and Bryson, 2010). This central location within Bryson et al.'s (2015) framework provides an affirmation of leadership and collaborative competency's ability to impact collaborative outcomes, and is supported elsewhere in the literature (see Table 4.4). For example, Sullivan et al. (2012) (also cited by Bryson et al., 2015) highlight leaders 'situated agency', such as

leaders' ability to frame and reframe macro and micro understandings of collaborative action (Sullivan et al., 2012). Both sets of authors understand collaboration as a dynamic system, within which leaders exercise 'independent effects' in contextualised agentic terms (Sullivan et al., 2012; cf Bryson et al 2015: 658). Bryson et al. (2015) signals the need for further research to better understand this independent effect and the associated competencies.

Several broad findings within the literature are worth highlighting. Firstly, as has previously been mentioned (Chapter 2), collaboration is understood as ubiquitous within the field of social sector practice often in consequence to public sector mandates (Weerawardena et al., 2010; Sullivan, 2012; Getha-Taylor and Morse, 2013; Papa et al., 2019; Brock, 2020; Krogh, 2020). Secondly, collaborative outcomes such as productivity and innovation gains are linked to leader's competence (Morse, 2008; Bryson et al., 2015; Cornforth, 2015; Getha-Taylor et al., 2016). Despite this, leadership competencies are prototypically conceived in single-organisational or intraorganisational terms (Morse, 2008; Silvia and McGuire, 2010; Getha-Taylor et al., 2016). Finally, the evidence suggests that single-organisational and intraorganisational leadership competencies are not sufficient for interorganisational and cross-sectoral collaborations (Morse, 2008; Silvia and McGuire, 2010; Getha-Taylor et al., 2016; Schmid and Almog-Bar, 2020). For Silzer (2006), in Hollenbeck et al. (2006), what competency modelling needs is a synthesis of specific 'competencies, *situations*, and outcomes' (p. 412 emphases added. By 'situations' the current study infers a licence to distinguish between organisational and collaborative situations).

Building from Van Wart's (2003) 'Leadership Action Cycle', Morse (2008) provided a model of collaborative leadership competencies set against Van Wart's tripartite framework of attributes, skills and behaviours. For Morse, many leadership competencies were thought to span organisational and interorganisational contexts -these being communication, social and influencing skills, analytical and technical skills, and continual learning. Additional to these meta-competencies, Morse's (2008) contribution centres on the identification of

competencies conceived as specific to collaborative settings. The dynamic interface between these two competency sets – organisational and collaborative – however remained unexplored by Morse.

Getha-Taylor's (2008) empirical study utilised McClelland's (1993) 'Behavioural Event Interview' technique to develop a competency model for public sector executives. This approach sought to distinguish superior from average collaborative performance thereby distilling a suite of public sector executive competencies. Getha-Taylor et al. (2016) set about testing the degree of consensus between executives and Human Resource managers concerning collaborative competencies, finding a disconnect between the two groups. Coding for elements identified by Boyatzis (1982), and Spencer and Spencer (1994), the two studies (2008 and 2016) surfaced three meta-competencies which formed the basis of Getha-Taylor's collaborative competencies model, these being: interpersonal understanding, teamwork and cooperation and team leadership.

Silvia and McGuire (2010) provided an empirical comparative case study of public sector leaders behaviours in single-agency and networked-agency settings. Silvia and McGuire sought to test the received wisdom that networks represent a distinct organisational form (dissimilar from single organisations) and therefore require differentiated leadership solutions. Comparing leader's behaviours in both contexts, Silvia and McGuire (2010) confirmed this conventional wisdom. They commented:

> '[Leaders in collaborative settings] take it upon themselves to approach network members as equals, share information across the network, share leadership roles, create trust, and be mindful of the external environment to identify resources and stakeholders. [Leaders in collaborative settings] are less apt to be task masters, generally eschewing making task assignments, setting expectations, and scheduling work to be done in the network. These findings provide empirical confirmation for some of the

conventional wisdom about [leadership in collaborative settings]' (2010: 275).

Table 4.4. provides a first pass over this literature identifying the competence items associated with each study.

Table 4. 4 – Illustrative sample of collaboration competence literature

Authors	Region	Title	Sector	Identified Competencies
Morse (2008)	US	*Developing Public Leaders in an Age of Collaborative Governance*	Public sector	Study included separate identification of organisational leadership competencies and collaborative leadership competencies. The isolated collaborative leadership competencies are as follows: *Attributes*: collaborative mindset; passion toward outcomes; systems thinking; openness and risk taking; sense of mutuality and connectedness; humility. *Skills*: self-management; strategic thinking; facilitation skills. *Behaviours*: stakeholder identification; stakeholder assessment; strategic issue framing; convening working groups; facilitating mutual learning processes; inducing commitment; facilitating trusting relationships among partners.
Silva and McGuire (2010)	US	*Leading public sector networks: An empirical examination of integrative leadership behaviors*	Public sector	Comparing leadership behaviours in single organisation & network contexts. Items measured: Treating all equally; sharing information; Looking out for welfare of others; encouraging support from superiors; identifying resources; keeping network in good standing with higher authority; creating trust amongst members; taking charge when emergencies arise; encouraging support from outside stakeholders; keeping network in good standing with outside stakeholders; brainstorming; permitting members to use own judgment in problem solving; sharing leadership role; identifying stakeholders; inspiring enthusiasm; putting suggestions (of others) into action; maintaining a closely knit network; establishing shared vision; letting others know what is expected of them; making sure others understand individual roles; establishing member commitment to network mission; publicizing goals & accomplishments; permit network to set own pace; scheduling work; influencing values & norms; asking others to follow rules; coordinating network work; establishing task agreement; keeping work moving; assigning members tasks; settling conflicts; selecting performance measures; deciding how tasks to be performed; using incentives to motivate others; changing network structure.
O'Leary et al. (2012)	US	*The Skill Set of the Successful Collaborator*	Public sector	Federal senior executive's understanding of the skills of successful collaborators. *Highest ranked skills of successful collaborators:* personal attributes; interpersonal skills; and group process skills. *Personal attributes:* open mind; patience; self-confident & risk-oriented; flexible; unselfish; persistent & diligent; diplomatic; honest; empathetic; trustworthy; respectful; goal oriented; self-aware; decisive; friendly; sense of humour.

				Interpersonal skills: good communicator; excellent listener; works well with others. *Group process skills:* facilitation; negotiation; collaborative problem solving; skill in group dynamics, culture; personalities; compromise; conflict resolution; consensus building; mediation *Strategic leadership:* big picture thinking; strategic thinking; facilitative leadership; creative approaches to problem solving; sharing of leadership, power, goals, and credit *Substantive & Technical knowledge:* technical knowledge of the subject area; project management & organisational skills; time management.
Sullivan et al. (2012)	UK	*Leadership for Collaboration: Situated agency in practice*	Public sector	Leaders as situated agents influenced by context. Agency exercised through skills & expertise i.e., 'leadership for competence'. LfC as: 1) co-governing through inclusive relationships; 2) negotiating dynamic complexity 3) judicious influence by elites; 4) achievement of key outcomes; 5) co-governing through expert facilitation.
Getha-Taylor (2008)	US	*Identifying Collaborative Competencies*	Public sector	Both studies present the same/similar findings. Both studies explore collaborative competencies from a public management context. Presented here is the 2016 study findings. The top 3 collaboration competencies are: interpersonal understanding; teamwork and cooperation; and team leadership. Each of the three top competencies contained further competence items described below. (Bold itemed are deemed 'universal' competencies i.e., being evident at a federal and state level of investigation). *Interpersonal understanding – demonstrates empathy*: listens to understand others; develops close relations with people at all levels; understands language barriers; understands fear of collaboration; questions assumptions to build understanding. Interpersonal understanding – understands motivation: understands needs for power, affiliation & achievement; understands partners' agendas, roles, goals & deadlines; recognises different reasons for collaborating. Teamwork & cooperation – inclusive perspective on achievements: inclusive achievement perspective; reluctant to claim individual credit for collective outcome (-) individual achievement perspective: 'I did this;' positive views impact 'me'; (-) views committees as a bother. Teamwork & cooperation – altruistic perspective on resource sharing: shares resources readily with others (i.e., supports altruism via personal example); balances needs of own organisation with needs of others; would rather share with too many than too few; focus on mutual benefits of sharing; (-) expects ROI; (-) views resources as organisational property, not public goods (i.e., protects 'turf').
Getha-Taylor et al. (2016)	US	*Are Competencies Universal or Situational? A State-Level Investigation of Collaborative Competencies*	Public sector	

Teamwork & cooperation – collaborative conflict resolution: seeks win-win solutions; uses boundary-spanning language to find shared meaning; desires to work together to solve shared problems; willing to ask for help; finds new ways to communicate when progress stalls..
Team leadership – bridges diversity: values other perspectives on shared problems; defers to others' expertise when appropriate; concerned with including all relevant stakeholders; sees the need to coalesce different types of people to get things done; concerned with needs of others.
Team leadership – creates lines of sight: identifies opportunities for collaboration that connect organisational goals with public service goals; connects collaborative efforts with noble public sector outcomes; demonstrates enthusiasm in connecting personal effort with larger outcomes; focus on helping the 'clients' affected by the effort.

In summary, evidence points to the salience of leadership and collaboration competencies for collaborative success. As situated agents, leaders are observed exercising independent effects across collaborations for good or ill. Despite this, scholarly interest in leader's collaborative competency remains stubbornly underdeveloped, particularly within a UK social sector context, which has yet to meet this nascent fecundity. While collaborations represent a distinct organisational form dissimilar to single organisations, differentiated collaborative leadership competencies (as opposed to the single-organisational competencies) have yet to gain wider researcher interest. As such, leadership competencies are normatively conceptualised in single-agency and intraorganisational terms. While some leadership competencies span single-organisation and collaborative settings, the former are not sufficient for effective leadership within collaborations. Within the obdurately small collaboration competence corpus, the literature has issued a broad list of competencies (and associated behavioural descriptions) which are invariably open to the criticism of oversimplified and overgeneralised items that appear to act independently of each other and their context.

In light of the study's abductivity, and in consequence of the current literature review above, attention will now turn to consider the study's research questions.

4.7 Research questions

Abduction is a 'generative process' (Saetre and Van de Ven, 2021: 685) that calls for 'disciplined imagination' (Weick, 1989: 519) at the identification of the 'anomalous or surprising' (Folger and Stein, 2017: 312). As such, the research focus of an abductive study invariably undergoes recalibration and refinement as the research progresses. In this way, emerging data becomes a source of 'inspiration' for a series of 'critical dialogues' (Alvesson and Karreman, 2007: 1272; 1274) between the study's empirical and theoretical observations. In the

case of the current thesis, the initial thematic literature review (Chapter 2) and the exploratory study (Chapter 3) surfaced collaboration as a source of ampliative inspiration, such that collaboration was observed as a salient contextual feature of social sector practice, and an under-theorised challenge to social sector leadership. Additionally, the glacial progress in the field of collaboration competency has meant that collaboration and its associated competencies appear to benefit from further exploration. Therefore, the study has undergone a revision of its research focus to concentrate more fully on the challenge of collaboration, and as a distant second to explore the operation of associated collaborative competencies. Tracking such changes, the original research focus was as follows:

> 'To explore current and future trends within the social sector: shedding new light on future leadership competencies'

Taking account of the findings in relation to the above focus, and in line with an abductive approach, this evolved into a research focus is articulated thus:

> 'An abductive investigation into good and bad cross-sector collaborations from a social sector perspective: the role of collaboration competency and relationship features'

In light of the revised research focus, four research questions were created to capture a wealth of narrative material that was then thematically analysed. These questions track informant's understanding of competence; collaborative experience, both good and bad; and relational aspects associated with informant's collaborative stories.

- RQ1. How do social sector leaders associate with leadership competence?
- RQ2. How do social sector leaders understand collaboration?

- RQ3. How do social sector leaders describe the relational issues related to collaboration?
- RQ4. What competencies do leaders associate with collaboration?

4.8 Chapter summary

This chapter is a direct response to the study's abductive research approach such that the initial theoretical observations in the form of a thematic literature review (Chapter 2) and the exploratory study (Chapter 3) surfaced collaboration as a salient contextual feature of the social sector and an under-theorised challenge to social sector leadership that would benefit from further investigation.

It was observed that the collaborative literature shared a number of structural characteristics with the wider social sector literature of which it is a part. These characteristics included: a positivistic bias; an interdisciplinarity, with the Big Four theories dominating; a siloed research field dominated by US scholarship; and the production of practitioner-facing research invariably located at the margins. Two lacunae emerged as particularly salient for the current study – a lack of collaborative failure research alongside a lack of comparative inquiry. With reports of uneven results in the literature it is noteworthy that documentation and analysis of collaborative failure is at a minimum. In light of this, there is much to be gained from exploring collaborative failure within the context of a comparative study designed to investigate commonalities and differences associated with good and bad collaborations.

The definitional literature was also observed coalescing within a multidisciplinarity such that it appeared to evade a generalisable consensus. Definitions frequently appeared too vague, too narrow, too specific, or omitting critical processual features altogether. Considerable

confusion was observed at the boarders of neighbouring concepts such as cooperation and coordination.

The collaboration success-failure literature was seen to present numerous explanations for collaborative outcomes including institutional, processual, structural, and behavioural causes. Collaborative Advantage Theory was observed influencing the literature, describing collaborations as involving tensions that require effective management in order to secure synergistic advantage and avoid inertia. This practice-based theory provides inspiration and illustration for the management of complex and voluminous data along a conceptual diptych. Additionally, the theory offers clues as to the privileging of contextual contingent constructivism.

The interorganisational relationship literature was observed describing collaborations as a distinct and diverse institutional form, which could be understood in terms of a structural and relational interstice conceived along four bounded relational interdependencies. As such the literature invariably conceived collaboration as contemporaneously interorganisational and interpersonal. Organisational commitments were observed influencing organisation's engagement decisions and their collaborative strategies. Morgan and Hunt's (1994) KMV model was selected as a guide to assist the organisation, collection and analysis of the study's relational data i.e., trust, communication, shared values.

The chapter concluded with a presentation of the study's research questions. The next chapter will set these questions within a wider methodological discussion within which the study's research philosophy and methods will be explored in more detail.

CHAPTER 5. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In the preceding chapters this study has been grounded within a UK social sector context. This grounding process involved an exchange of theoretical and empirical observations including an initial literature review (Chapter 2) and an exploratory study that sense-checked the literature themes against the lived experiences of senior social sector leaders (Chapter 3). This grounding process validated the three literature themes and placed particular warranty on collaboration and collaborative competencies. By way of completing this grounding, secondary theoretical observations were undertaken in the form of a collaboration and collaboration competency literature review(s) (Chapter 4).

This chapter outlines the study's methodological considerations and clarifies the study's research aim (Section 5.2) and research philosophy (Section 5.3), before explaining the study's research design and methods (Section 5.4). Next, the study's method of data analysis is described (Section 5.5). The chapter ends with a reflection on the study's ethical considerations (Section 5.6).

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapters represent an abductive exchange of theoretical and empirical observations. Under these conditions the literature themes have been validated, such that there appears agreement with exploratory study informants that their work as senior social sector leaders is thought to be impacted now and into the near future by the demands of: P-N & NPM's managerial rationalities, funding processes and associated funding anxieties, and cross-sector collaborations, which have acquired a normative mandatory status. Having grounded the study within a UK social sector context and having taken account of the views of senior social sector leaders, the stage has been set for the main

study. This chapter considers the methodological issues associated with the main study.

5.2 Research aim

Due to the state of the literature (see Chapters 2 & 4) it has become clear that social sector leaders continue to rely on leadership approaches conceived outside of the social sector. Additionally, social sector leaders continue to apply leadership models and theories developed within intraorganisational contexts to interorganisational settings. Given the importance of and complications associated with understanding leader's collaboration competencies it is critical that these are explored from within a UK social sector and collaborative context. Acknowledging that collaboration presents a substantive challenge to the social sector and its leadership, now and into the near future, with calls for more comparative research, this study aims to respond by providing a qualitative abductive study drawing on senior social sector leaders lived experience of 'good' and 'bad' collaborations. To that end the research aims to provide:

> *'An abductive investigation into good and bad cross-sector collaborations from a social sector perspective: the role of collaboration competency and relationship features'*

This doctoral study seeks to contribute to theory by exploring both good and bad collaborations thereby addressing an important lacuna in the literature i.e., the lack of bad (failure) collaboration research. With so much of the literature dominated by US scholarship this study will aim to privilege UK social sector leaders' perspectives. With so little empirically understood about collaboration competencies, this study will aim to respond to calls for research into 'how' competencies are activated, as opposed to developing a collaboration competence model. To that end the following research questions have been devised.

RQ1: How do social sector leaders associate with leadership competence?

The purpose of this research question is to examine how UK social sector leaders understand competence in general terms. This question provides a baseline before leaders are asked to consider collaborative competencies. Additionally, this question is designed to elicit leader's reflection of their own competence. RQ1 interview guide questions included:

- Can you tell me how you understand leadership competence?
- I am interested in understanding leadership competence - can you describe a competent social sector leader? (i.e., what does this leader *do* or *say* that demonstrates competence)
- Do you consider yourself a competent leader, why so?

RQ2: How do social sector leaders understand collaboration?

This research question is designed to surface aspects of leaders conceptualising, providing early evidence as to leader's association with collaboration. RQ2 interview guide questions included:

- How would you describe the concept of collaboration between organisations?
- Do you think collaboration between organisations (within and across sectors) is important, why so?

RQ3: How do social sector leaders describe the relational issues related to collaboration?

In order to answer this research question informants were invited to give as full and vivid an account as possible of a good and bad collaborative experience. The RQ3 interview guide questions included:

- Can you tell me a story of when you took part in a ‘good’ (as opposed to a ‘bad’) collaboration between two or more organisations?
- Can you tell me a story of when you took part in a ‘bad’ (as opposed to a ‘good’) collaboration between two or more organisations?

RQ4: What competencies do leaders associate with collaboration?

This question allowed for an explicit link between leaders’ good and bad collaboration experiences and the identification of competencies that were considered to contribute to their development. RQ4 interview guide questions included:

- Thinking of the collaboration’s successes, what leadership competences helped make this happen?
- Thinking of the collaboration’s failures, what leadership competences, actions/inactions were lacking or contributed to this?

5.3 Research philosophy

All scientific investigations presume and reproduce ontological and epistemological choices, which act to guide and justify a study’s methodological decision making (Pascale, 2012). For example, an objectivist ontology alongside a positivist epistemology seeks to unearth ‘facts’, which are systematically catalogued, codified and statistically analysed (Cunliffe , 2011). In contrast, a subjectivist ontology and social constructivist epistemology privileges provisional and context dependent perceptions, which are frequently presented verbatim (Freeman, 2006). This study utilises a pragmatic constructivist ontology, insisting that all social facts are constructed, intersubjective, and context bound (Pernecky, 2016; Onghena, et al., 2019). Ontological and epistemological commitments form research paradigms which enable the reader to scrutinise the research, including its assumptions, choice of design, data collection, analysis, and interpretative approach (Mertens, 2012). Table 5.1 provides a comparison of

three qualitative research approaches and their associated philosophical commitments.

Table 5. 1 – Comparison of qualitative research philosophies[9]

	Positivism & post-positivism	**Constructivism**	**Interpretivism**
Ontology	Ontological realism: reality exists independently from the researcher	Social reality is context-laden and independent of human perception	Ontological relativism: multiple realities, socially constructed and inter-subjective
Epistemology	Epistemic realism: phenomena stable & knowable	Human experience is knowable implicating informant and researcher in knowledge fabrication	Epistemic relativism: reality co-produced. Intentionality impacts the meaning of reality
Methodology	Nomothesis: discovery of patterns & causal laws	Build intelligible representations of human experience	Idiographic: contextualised understandings
Role of researcher	Independent observer; objective scientist	Researcher part of the study	Researcher part of the study i.e., inquisitor in situ
Proof of rigor	Validity, reliability	Declaration of ontological stance and implications	Declaration of ontological stance and implications

Research paradigms operate as organising principles i.e., as sets of ontological and epistemological assumptions (Sommer Harrits, 2011), which reveal the researcher's beliefs about the nature of the social world (Feilzer, 2010; Kindi,

[9] Source: Adapted from Point et al. (2017: 188-189)

2012). The current study employs a social constructivist paradigm which is further elaborated in Table 5.2.

Table 5. 2 – Social constructivist paradigm[10]

Ontology	Complex, rich, multiple constructs of reality; multiple interpretations
Epistemology	Subjectivist; inter-subjectivist; pluralist; socially constructed practice-based *facts*
Judgments	A posteriori (dependent on experience)
Axiology	Researcher's values impact research; researcher reflexivity required
Theory	Bounded meanings people use to make sense of their world and human behaviour within it
Methodology	Abductive; employing interpretive methods that move beyond description of to explore experiential meaning

Table 5.3 provides an overview of the research methodology and brings together in one place the study's central methodological and philosophical considerations which have impacted the study's approach from research design to data collection and analysis.

[10] Source: Authors synthesis of: Walliman (2011: 22); Mayoh's et al. (2015: 94); Pernecky (2016: 17; 78); Saunders et al. (2016: 136-137).

Table 5.3 – Research methodology overview

	Design	Decision	Justification
Research philosophy	Ontology	Social constructivist	This study aims to capture complex and rich descriptions of leaders lived experience
	Epistemology	Interpretivist	Leader's lived experiences and the act of bringing these to mind is inter-subjective
Research approach	Approach	Qualitative	The study aims for thick descriptions and deep understanding of personal experience and sensemaking
	Research logic	Abductive	Acknowledging that little research has taken account of leader's own sensemaking and lived experience of the challenge collaboration presents the UK social sector (and its leaders) an abductive approach was selected for its conceptually generative ability to produce surprising facts
Methods of data collection	Data collection approach	individual semi-structured interviews	Semi-structured interviews facilitate the exploration of senior leader's views and lived experience of collaboration, and provide access to personal reflection and privileged knowledge eliciting thick descriptions of collaborations
Research parameters	Context Unit of analysis Sample	UK social sector Individual social sector leaders Purposive sample	Acknowledging the geographical disparity in the literature this study set out to privilege a UK social sector context and the accounts and perceptions of individual leaders. As such the sample purposively selected experienced CEOs (and Directors)
Methods of data analysis	Data analysis approach	Thematic analysis (using Gioia methodology) Analysed with the assistance of NVivo 12	The study utilised the Gioia method as a way to generate 1st order concepts, 2nd order themes and aggregate dimensions across 30 informant interviews, which were recorded, transcribed, and analysed using NVivo 12

5.4 Research design and method

Figure 5.1 illustrates the study's research process beginning with the research formulation stage, followed by the research planning and implementation stages, and finishing with the research presentation stage. Figure 5.1 also sets the research process alongside the study's abductive journey.

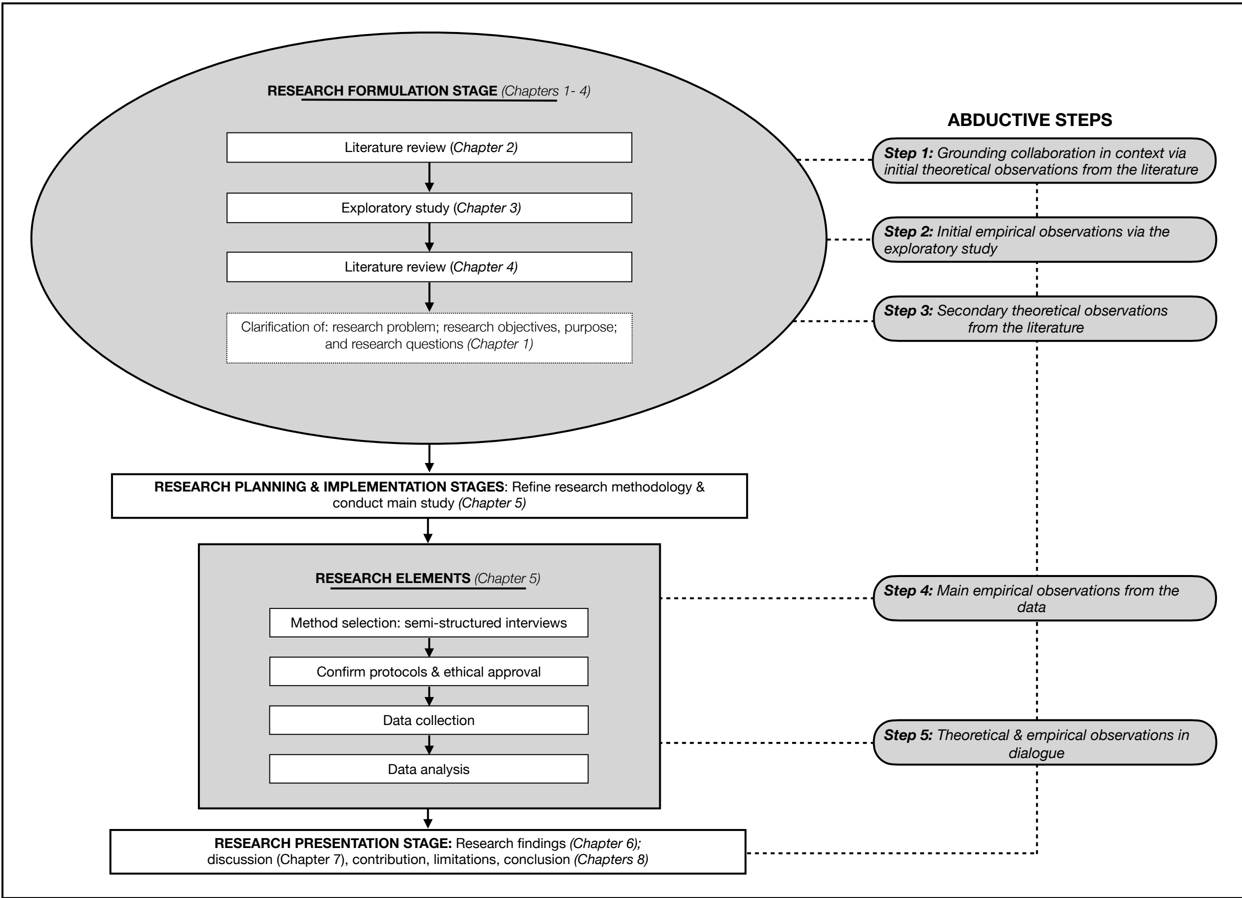


Figure 5.1 – Research process[11]

[11] Source: Authors own conceptualisation. Inspired by Morse, (2010: 342); Plano Clark and Badiee, (2010: 282); Hesse-Biber, (2018: 775); and Taylor et al. (2018: 216).

5.4.1 Research approach

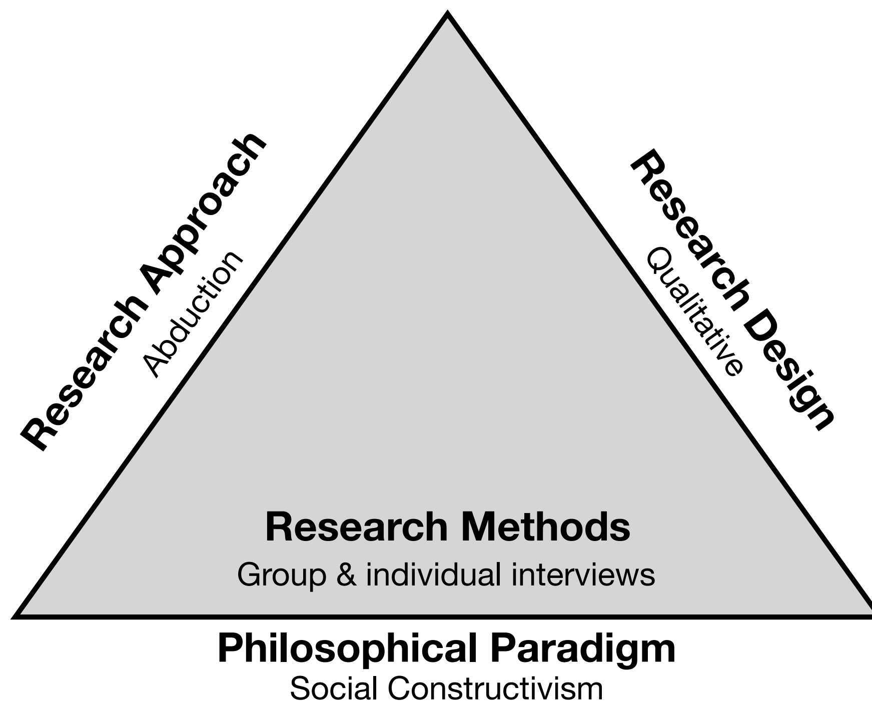


Figure 5. 2 – Research framework

Social researchers' relationship with theory and data have traditionally been organised according to either the logic of deduction or induction. Over the last two decades a third approach has emerged – abduction – in part a reaction to the frustrations felt by researchers working exclusively within a single research approach (Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2010).

5.4.1.1 Deduction

Typically, the deductive researcher begins their research journey with a thorough grasp of the theoretical terrain before presenting a hypothesis which is empirically confirmed or falsified through experimentation, manipulation or observation (Creswell, 2014). Deducing from theory is predominantly the modus operandi of the quantitative researcher. When used within qualitative studies deduction utilises theory as a lens through which to view the phenomenon under investigation, and as such place's theoretical conditions upon the research

endeavour. The danger of using deduction within a qualitative study is that *for a hammer everything looks like a nail* – that is, the deductive use of theory excludes as much as it includes – thereby reducing the chances of the researcher to be surprised by the data (Kennedy and Thornberg, 2017).

5.4.1.2 Induction

Inductive researchers typically build theory from a qualitative perspective and generally come to a theoretical position via the data. In this regard inductive researchers allow research participants to speak for themselves, and as such, this inductive logic is frequently utilised by social constructivists. Epistemologically, for these researchers the data is 'interpreted data' as opposed to raw data (Kennedy and Thornberg, 2017), and as such this 'epistemic anti-objectivity' rests on an a posteriori knowing (i.e., being dependent on experience) (Pernecky, 2016: 160). While a pure inductive logic posits theory-free induction, as in some forms of grounded theory, the majority of inductive studies are employed within interpretive and social constructive investigations (Kennedy and Thornberg, 2017).

5.4.1.3 Abduction

With the rise of wicked social problems (Dentoni et al., 2018) researchers are increasingly coming to terms with the limits of working solely from a deductive or inductive logic. It is here that abduction offers the researcher flexibility, the hope of theoretical refinement (Wright, 2017), and research that speaks to and of practice (Taylor et al., 2018). Abduction produces a back and forth dynamic between deduction and induction, theory and data, in a creative interplay which opens the researcher to surprise and the re-thinking of prevailing ideas and theories (Kennedy and Thornberg, 2017). Taylor et al. (2018) describes abduction as a 'deliberate and iterative process between actively studying the phenomenon at close range and thoughtful theory development via a frame-breaking mode of thinking' (p, 208), as such this movement in practical terms

follows its own pragmatic logic, at times predictably linear, at other times imaginatively emergent and novel (Morgan 2007). The three main research approaches are presented in Table 5.4. In keeping with the study's research aims, the current study adopts an abductive research approach.

Table 5. 4 – Research approaches[12]

	Deduction	Induction	Abduction
Aim	Theory used to generate tested conclusions	Data used to generate untested conclusions	Dynamic interface of theory and data used to generate conclusions or build theory
Logic	Beginning with the assertion of general rule and proceeds to a specific outcome	Beginning with observation that is specific & limited in scope and proceeding to a general rule	The logical process relies on creative imagination with pre-study theoretical knowledge
Typical Research Design	Quantitative. Suitable for well-defined problems	Qualitative. Suitable for little-understood problems	Suitable for ill-defined problems
Generalisation	Naturalistic generalisation – from the general to the specific	Theoretical, localised generalisation	Blend of naturalistic and localised generalisation
Application	Suitable for well-defined problems	Suitable for little understood problems	Suitable for ill-defined problems
Use of Data	Data used to evaluate hypotheses	Data used to explore phenomena, identify themes, and build conceptual frameworks	Data used to explore phenomena; identify themes, and build or test conceptual frameworks
Theory	Theory verification or falsification	Theory building	Theory to practice building
Conclusion	Conclusion guaranteed i.e., true or false	Conclusion merely likely	Conclusion is the best guess amongst alternatives
Limitations	Incapable of discovering new knowledge	Offering superficial conclusions i.e., not the bottom of things	Hypothesis/propositions require verification

[12] Source: Adapted from Saunders et al. (2016: 145); and Taylor et al. (2018: 209).

5.4.2 Research design

Mees-Buss et al. (2022) highlights the dilemma facing all interpretative constructionists engaged in qualitative research i.e., how to capture and fully render (as best one can) the subjectivities of the social world on one hand, and remain scientific, on the other. Invariably the answer, in no small part, rests on establishing a coherent research design that makes the researcher's logic visible. To that end this chapter explains the research design and method utilised for this study.

5.4.2.1 A qualitative study

This study adopts a qualitative research design underwritten by a social constructionist ontology and interpretivist epistemology. The decision to adopt a qualitative research approach is influenced by the research question, research design and the contribution one strives to make (Bluhm et al., 2011). This study seeks to privilege the perceptions of senior social sector leaders and in so doing expose vivid accounts of their lived experience of cross-sector collaborations. Prioritising informant's own sensemaking, this elicitation approach, in keeping with a qualitative methodology has shown itself capable of handling 'description, interpretation, and explanation' (Bluhm, 2011: 1869).

Despite the rise in qualitative studies within the social sector and collaboration literatures (Ma and Konrath, 2018; Gazley and Guo, 2020), these social sciences continue to be dominated by a positivistic normativity as Steinmetz (2005 cited in Maxwell, 2019: 3) describes: 'Despite repeated attempts by social theorists and researchers to drive a stake through the heart of the vampire, the [social science] disciplines continue to experience a positivistic haunting.' In describing the merits of qualitative research, Maxwell (2019) points to the importance (for qualitative research) of 'meaning' and 'context.'[13] 'Meaning' is an essential constituent of

[13] Maxwell offers a third feature of qualitative research, 'process,' which for the purpose of this argument is not developed here

qualitative research. Maxwell describes meaning as broadly relating to beliefs, values, theories, understanding that entail an informant's perspectives, which for a qualitative researcher, understanding these is the primary goal (ibid). 'Context' is a critical aspect of qualitative research. Here, the researcher accepts the contextually embedded nature of social phenomenon. Bluhm et al. (2011) define several characteristics of qualitative research in management studies, which prove valuable for the current study. Qualitative data, as understood within this thesis, stems from informant's own sensemaking such that it brings informants accounts to speech, facilitated by the application of the study's elicitation technique, through which informants exercised definitional and narrative control. Additionally, qualitative research is flexible and responsive to changes in design as data is gathered and surprising facts emerge. As such, qualitative research resists attempts at standardisation (Bluhm et al., 2011). In light of these characteristics, a qualitative methodology provides the most suitable approach for the current study, given its specific research aims and philosophical commitments.

5.4.2.2 Methods of data collection: semi-structured interviews

> 'Those of us who aim to understand and document others' understandings choose qualitative interviewing because it provides us with a means for exploring the points of view of our research subjects, while granting these points of view the culturally honoured status of reality' (Miller and Glassner, 1997 in May 2001: 127)

Interviewing has become the most pervasive form of data collection in qualitative research (Green and Thorogood, 2014 in Foley et al., 2021). This empirical study consisted of 30 semi-structured interviews with experienced senior social sector leaders. Semi-structured interviews have been selected on the basis of their well-documented ability to elicit 'depth and complexity' (Galletta, 2013: 191), and to surface 'the multidimensional nature of lived experience' (Galletta, 2013: 2). This approach to individual interviews allows the researcher to probe judiciously in a

manner that would appear prejudicial for the structured interviewer (May, 2001). By allowing the participants the freedom to speak on their own terms (Bluhm et al., 2011) semi-structured interviews become a suitable method for the collecting of data which involves personal experience, and privileged information (Silverman, 2013). The present study sits well with Flick's (2002) insistence that this approach meets the imperatives of specificity, range, and personal context. In this respect semi-structured interviews afford the participants an opportunity to talk-in-depth about their executive perspective of social sector leadership. It is the job of the researcher to capture these executive perspectives 'grasping and bringing [them] into true safekeeping' (Heidegger, 1999: 56).

5.4.2.3 Sample strategy

To better understand the challenge collaboration presents UK social sector leadership a purposive sampling strategy was used. Purposive sampling represents a 'non-random sample strategy' (Robinson, 2014: 32) and is typically selected on the basis that a particular group of individuals possess an 'important perspective on the phenomenon in question' (ibid). Believing leadership is a key role in general management (Amedu and Dulewicz, 2018), and that social sector leaders hold *important insights* into the state of the social sector as well as cross-sector collaboration, a purposive sample of experienced senior leaders (i.e., Chief Executive Officers, or Directors), with at least 6 years of experience in post were selected. Additionally, leaders were purposively selected by organisational income band range using NCVO's (2018) income range classification. The income band range for this study's sample extended from £100,000 (medium social sector organisations) to more than £200m (major social sector organisations). According to NCVO (2018) this sample represents 17% of social sector organisations but accounts for 76% of the social sector's annual income.

5.5 Method of data analysis

The semi-structured interviews were each recorded and transcribed and then thematically analysed using the Gioia methodology (e.g., Gioia et al., 2013). The

'Gioia methodology,' as it has become known, is concerned with conceptual development and is used within management and organisational studies as a way of creating research that possesses 'originality, utility, and prescience' (2013: 16). The Gioia method provides the qualitative researcher with a means of capturing and organising concepts that reveal previously opaque meanings concerning specific social phenomena (in this case, cross-sector collaborations). This involves capturing leaders lived experience 'adequate at the level of meaning' for the study's informants and 'adequate at the level of scientific theorizing' about informant's lived experience (Gioia et al., 2013: 16). This approach makes several assumptions (in keeping with this study's philosophy). Firstly, the social world of social sector leadership and collaboration are socially constructed. Secondly, the social sector leaders who are co-creators of these social realities are knowledgeable agents i.e., they are able to speak intelligently (and with feeling) about the phenomena. As such the views and interpretations of informants are privileged in this study. Thirdly, the Gioia method assumes that the researcher is also a knowledgeable agent too – competent enough to infer patters within and across the data. The thematic analysis process is detailed in Table 5.5.

Table 5.5 – Thematic analysis process

Phase	Description	Outcome
Data immersion	Transcribe, read & re-read data	Researcher familiarity
1st order concepts	Systematic coding of each transcript in full before moving on to the next.	1st order concepts stemming from informants' quotes
2nd order themes	Clustering codes into possible themes; checking themes across the full set of transcripts; 4 review cycles took place and included 2 inter-rater codings	2nd order themes emerging from 1st order concepts
Aggregate dimensions	Development of aggregate dimensions from 1st order concepts and 2nd order themes	Aggregate dimension

5.5.1 Codification of the data

As Table 5.5 illustrates, the analysis began by immersing oneself with the data, which came via the time-consuming transcribing, reading and re-reading of the data. This was followed with the processing and organisation of the data and emerging analysis through a deliberate codification which would yield 1st order concepts (produced by analysing informant quotes). This process produces several hundred 1st order concepts, as the sunburst Figure 5.3 (taken towards the end of the first coding cycle) illustrates.

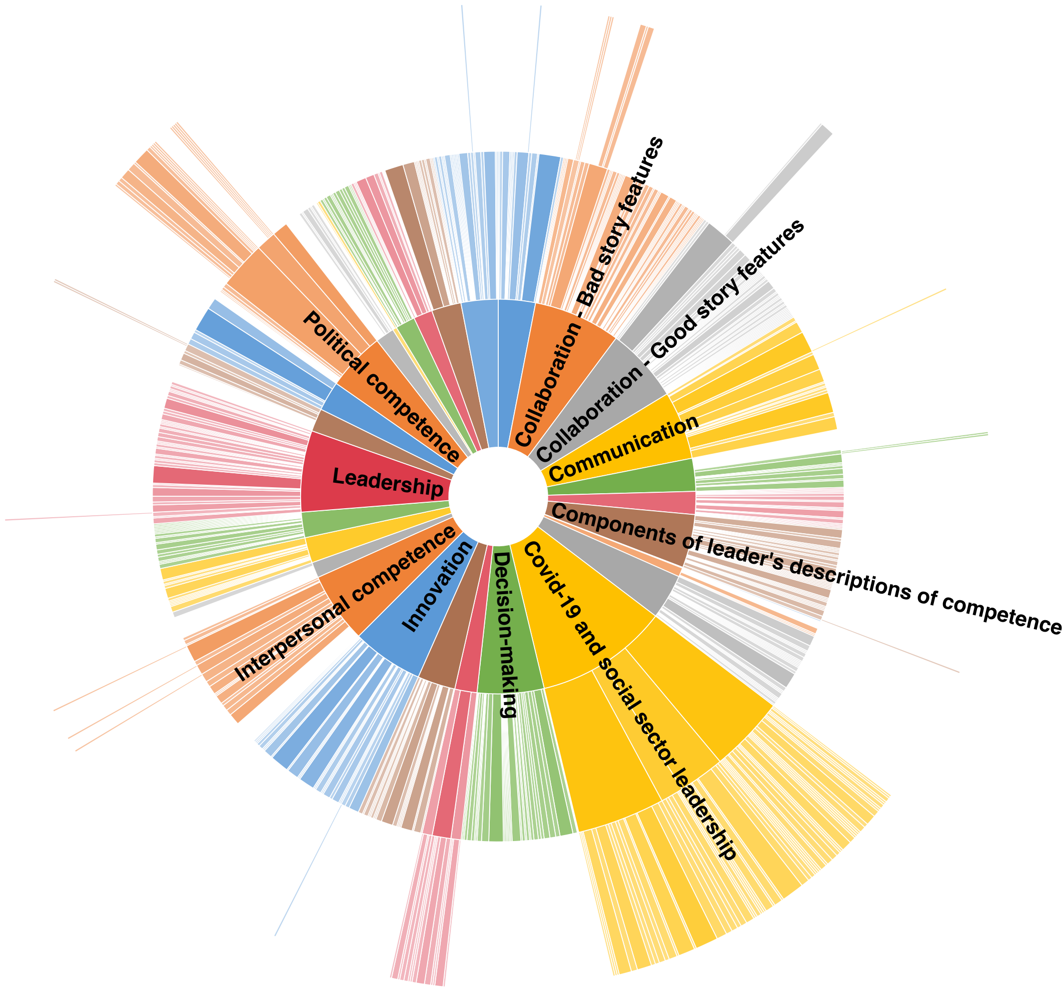


Figure 5.3 – Data analysis in progress

As the analysis progressed and 1st order concepts began to emerge, similarities and differences across these concepts were examined with a view to initiating a

2nd level of analysis, thereby reducing the number of concepts (from the bewildering) to a manageable set. At this point the researcher is asking (among other things) ‘is there some deeper structure in this array?’ (Gioia et al., 2013: 20). During this process, the current study adopted 4 coding cycles i.e., a process of clustering and revising clusters (nodes in NVivo), incorporating at two points in this process inter-rater codes, with a view to checking the reliability of the emerging analysis (strictly, for an interpretative constructivist, this was not necessary as the researcher is not seeking generalisability). The inter-rater codes captured agreement across the codes at 67.2% and 61.1% respectively. Figure 5.4 provides a snapshot of the coding in process.

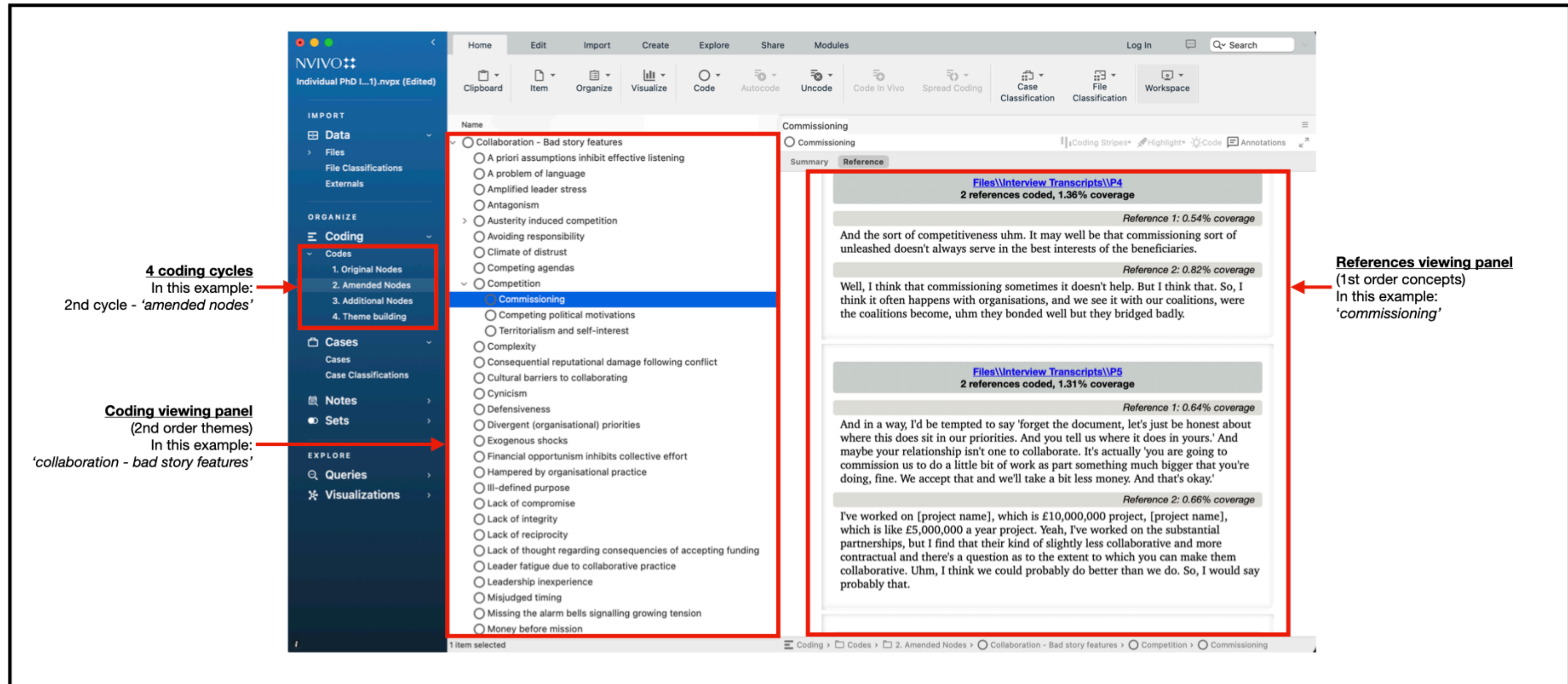


Figure 5.4 – Visualisation of analysis in action

Figure 5.5 provides the reader with an enlarged sectional view of a node map used at the 3rd coding cycle (see Appendix 4 for full map). This shows the researcher's attempt to organise the data and explore the connections and relations within the data.

Figure 5.5 – Sectional view of node map

5.5.1.1 Trustworthiness and transferability

This research pays particular attention to the trustworthiness criteria which supplants the traditional quantitative demands for internal validity. Trustworthiness is similar to aspects of Teddlie and Tashakkori's (2010) interpretive rigor: (a) 'interpretive consistency' – which involves this researcher

transcribing group and individual interviews and paying close attention to the words, themes, and phraseology of senior leaders in line with the study's ontological and epistemological constructivist commitments; (b) 'theoretical consistency' – which has been reconceptualised pragmatically here to ensure the researcher remains in-conversation with the theory whilst remaining attentive to the lived experience of participating leaders; (c) 'interpretive agreement' – this member checking strategy involved inter-rater coding to ascertain the degree of agreement, and; (d) 'integrative efficacy' – enabling a creative dialogue at the level of theory and practice.

In place of a traditional generalisability theory and external validity (FitzPatrick, 2019), this study pays particular attention to a transferability validity criteria, which emphasises the production of useful knowledge. In this sense, qualitative research is a form of social action that produces actionable knowledge. For this study transferability requires the researcher to balance academy and social sector expectations as outlined in Table 5.6. While readers of this study may find much that is useful to a non-social sector context, the study is at its best when the findings are allowed to speak back to UK social sector leaders as they come to terms with the growing demands of leadership in collaborative contexts.

Table 5. 6 – Balanced commitments[13]

Academic		Social Sector
Understanding of phenomenon; Theoretical exploration; Significant contribution to knowledge	**Focus of interest**	Workable knowledge of phenomenon; Local theory-in-use; Contribution to social sector practice
Theoretically inspired methodological rigour	**Methodological demands**	Practicability; Usefulness; Relevance to practice
Significant contribution to knowledge	**Key outcomes**	Useful research supportive of social sector leadership

[13] Source: Adapted from Saunders et al. (2016: 8).

Following the transcribing, codification, and analysis of the data, along lines described by Gioia et al. (2013), the current study produced a data structure to help show the manner of data handling and organisation, as well as visualise the links from the data (1st order concept) to theoretically abstracted aggregate dimensions (see Figure 5.6).

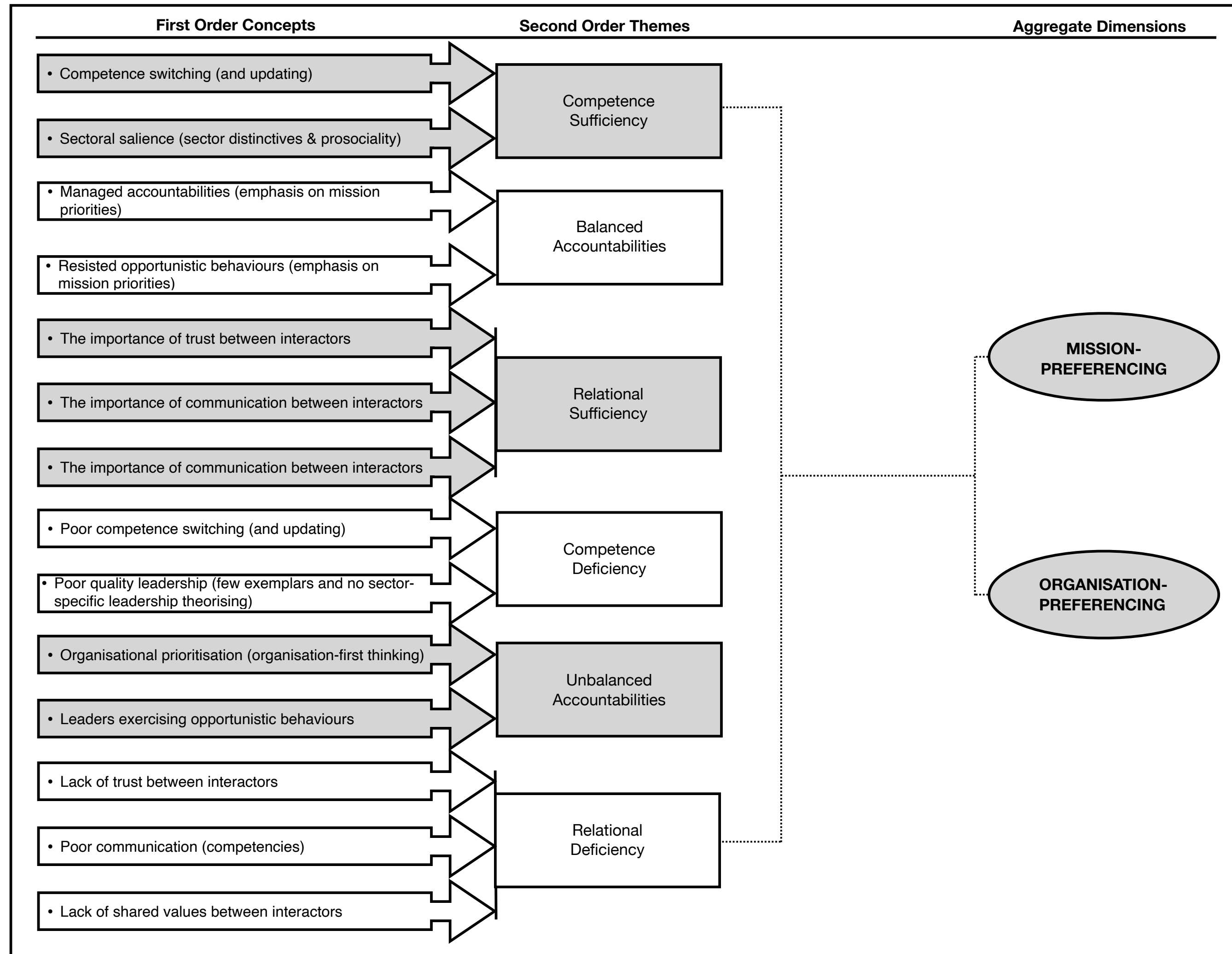


Figure 5.6 - Data structure: utilising the Gioia methodology

5.6 Ethical approval

In accordance with the University of Readings ethical approval process, approval was granted from the Research Ethics Committee in 2019 ahead of data collection. This approval covers the use of group and individual interviews as outlined above. All informants received a briefing sheet and consent form (see Appendix 6) sent via email several weeks ahead of the interview. These forms were reissued on the day of the interviews where informant consent was secured.

Informants were also given an information sheet which was issued alongside the consent form, describing the purpose of the research and explaining why they had been selected. Additionally, the information sheet also contained information under the following headings: do I have to take part? What do I have to do? Will I be recorded and how will the recording be used? Will my taking part be kept confidential? What type of information will be sought from me and why is the collection of this information relevant for achieving the study's goals? An informant number and a small demographic description – including gender and age – was assigned to each informant in order to safeguard anonymity.

This chapter has provided the reader with a description and explanation of the study's methodology. As such this chapter has made transparent the guiding philosophical, methodological and practical considerations which have influenced the research design, including the study's approach to data collection and analysis. Chapter 6 will present that main findings, and in line with the study's thematic analysis will rely on the presentation of informant quotes.

CHAPTER 6. FINDINGS

Following an introduction (Section 6.1), the analysis of the study's empirical qualitative data will be presented. The thematic analysis revealed several themes to emerge across good and bad collaborations, which have given this research its substantive content. The findings will be presented by three key themes and their relation to good and bad collaborations (Section 6.2 – 6.4) as captured in the study's thematic data structure (Figure 6.1) and comparative data structure (Figure 6.2). Evidence will be presented to illustrate that these three themes – leader's competency, multiple accountabilities, and relationship features – are activated differently in good and bad collaborative settings, such that competency in good collaborations appeared in sufficiency terms, whilst in bad collaborations competency surfaced in deficiency terms. Multiple accountabilities appeared in good collaborations as balanced accountabilities, and in bad collaborations as unbalanced accountabilities. And relationship features was revealed in good collaborations in sufficiency terms and in bad collaborations in deficiency terms.[14]

The data analysis will provide the reader with a description of good and bad collaborations by demonstrating that these themes are expressed differently across good and bad collaborative contexts. Section 6.5 will provide a comparative review of the three main themes as these were expressed across the good and bad collaboration, while Section 6.6 will present two distinct approaches to emerge from the analysis – mission-preferencing and organisation-preferencing. Finally, the chapter ends with a chapter summary (Section 6.7)

[14] Sufficiency and deficiency are used here to express the quality of competency and relationship features such that it moves description and analysis beyond baseline observations (i.e., the presence or absence of competencies), and towards a more expansive acknowledgement of their complexity and contingency.

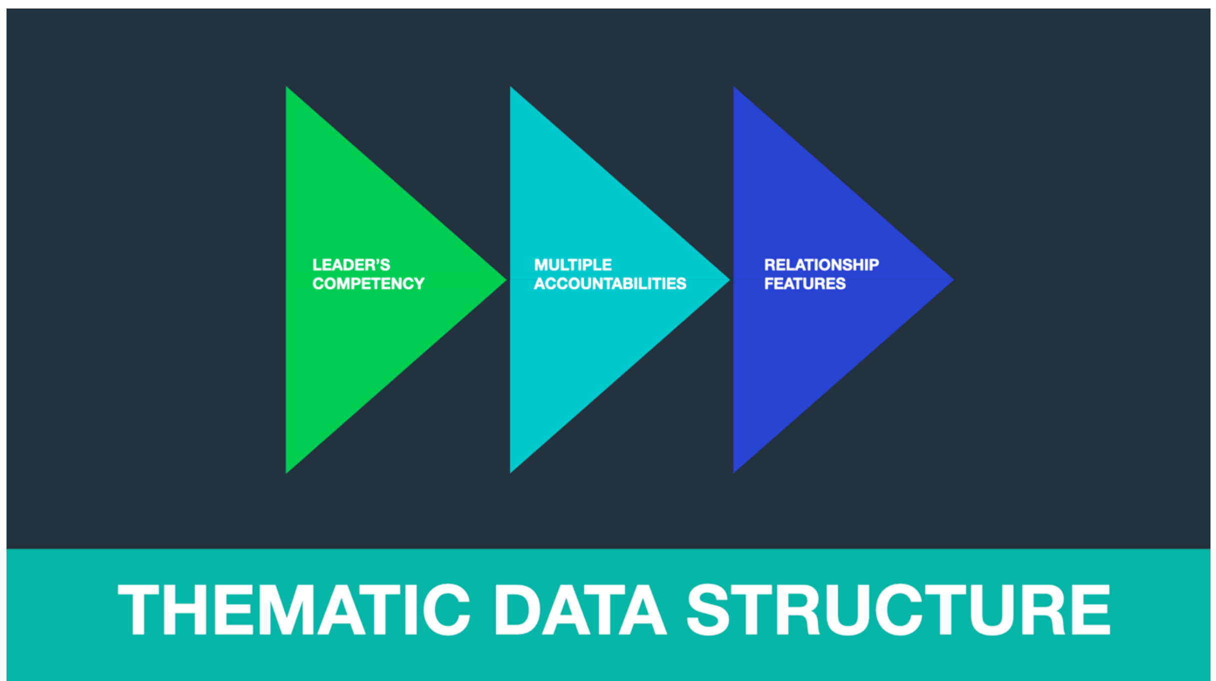


Figure 6.1 – Thematic data structure: introducing the three main themes of the study

6.1 Introduction

As previously detailed in Chapter 5 the current study set out qualitatively using semi-structured interviews and thematic analysis (Gioia methodology) to understand social sector CEOs lived experience of cross-sector collaborations, and leaders associated collaborative competencies. To that end, informants were given the opportunity to define the key concepts of the study on their own terms. As such, this elicitation devise meant that 'good', 'bad', 'competence', 'competency', and 'collaboration' acquired a meaning specific to each informant, thereby providing the study with a rich source of qualitative narrative data. Similarly, by way of understanding leader's lived experiences of good and bad collaborations, leaders were asked to provide at least one positive and negative collaboration account. By activating informant's self-determined definitional and narrative controls, this approach provided informants with the opportunity to set these terms within a narration of their own making.

The central components of this chapter will be divided into three sections corresponding to the study's three main themes (leader's competency, multiple accountabilities and relationship features), and will provide the reader with illustrative quotes related to each theme in accordance with standard thematic analysis protocols. In keeping with the study's thematic analysis, the qualitative data is treated exploratorily and descriptively and is presented via multiple quotations. Each theme will first present evidence from good collaborations before moving on to consider evidence from bad collaborations. In this way, a detailed comparative thematic analysis will gradually emerge supported by multiple informant quotations.

6.1.1 Introducing the data structure

By way of signalling the study's findings and assisting the reader's navigation of this chapter, Figure 6.2 is presented here as a visual representation of the study's data structure in relation to good and bad collaboration accounts. The data structure provides a comparative visualisation of each theme such that leader's competency (green elements), multiple accountabilities (turquoise), and relationship features (royal blue) illustrate the different ways these themes were expressed across good and bad collaborations. The data structure also highlights two aggregate dimensions (yellow), mission-preferencing and organisation-preferencing, which will be introduced in Section 6.6.

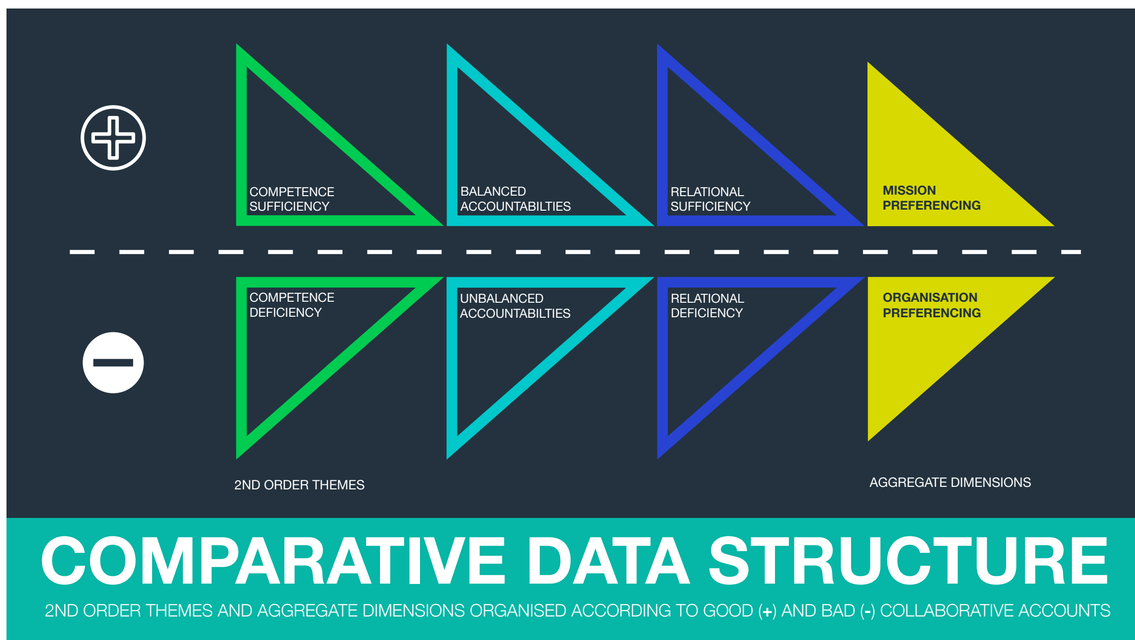


Figure 6.2 – Summative thematic data structure: illustrating 2nd order themes and aggregate dimensions organised according to good (+) and bad (-) collaboration accounts

6.1.2 Word cloud analysis

By way of introducing the study's findings, Figure 6.3 presents a graphical representation of words and concepts used with varying frequency in informant's collaboration narratives, in response to the following question: *'Can you tell me a story of when you took part in a good [and bad] collaboration between two or more organisations?'.* The word cloud analysis provides a comparative visualisation of the data revealing points of convergence and divergence across the two datasets. In keeping with standard protocols, several terms were added to the stop list and thereby removed: 'leadership', 'collaboration', and 'leader'. The top ten words in order of frequency appearing in informant's accounts of good collaborations were as follows: 'need' (122 references), 'together' (76), 'values' (67), 'ability' (61), 'money' (60), 'staff' (51), 'change' (47), 'funding' (46), 'skills' (46) and 'team' (46). The top ten words used in informant's descriptions of bad collaborations in order of frequency were: 'together' (47), 'funding' (46), 'money' (43), 'need' (42), 'difficult' (37), 'power' (33), 'staff' (28), 'organisation' (27), 'trust' (25) and 'values' (22). While this data must be treated with caution,

as the exact meanings these words signal are beyond the scope of this method (as it is used here), the analysis revealed a relatively flat distribution of terms, which suggests that more research is needed in order to better understand the differences and similarities that exist across the good and bad collaborations. It is perhaps only of anticipatory and suggestive value to highlight terms that appear exclusively within each dataset. For example, good collaborations exclusively surfaced: 'ability' (4th), 'change' (7th), 'skills' (9th) and 'team' (10th); while bad collaborations exclusively revealed: 'difficult' (5th), 'power' (6th), 'organisation' (8th) and 'trust' (9th). These and other similarities and differences will be explored in greater detail throughout Chapters 6 and 7.

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GOOD COLLABORATIONS

BAD COLLABORATIONS

Figure 6. 3 – Word cloud analysis of informant's good and bad collaboration accounts in response to the following question: 'Can you tell me a story of when you took part in a good [and bad] collaboration between two or more organisations?'

6.2 Theme one: leader's competency

Competence surfaced during analysis as one of the main themes of the study. Leader's competency was observed across the two datasets as contingently and systematically distinct such that it appeared in sufficiency terms in good collaborations and in deficiency terms in bad collaborations (Figure 6.4). This section will provide evidence of competence sufficiency first (Section 6.2.1 – 6.2.3), before turning to provide evidence of competence deficiency (Section 6.2.4 – 6.2.6).

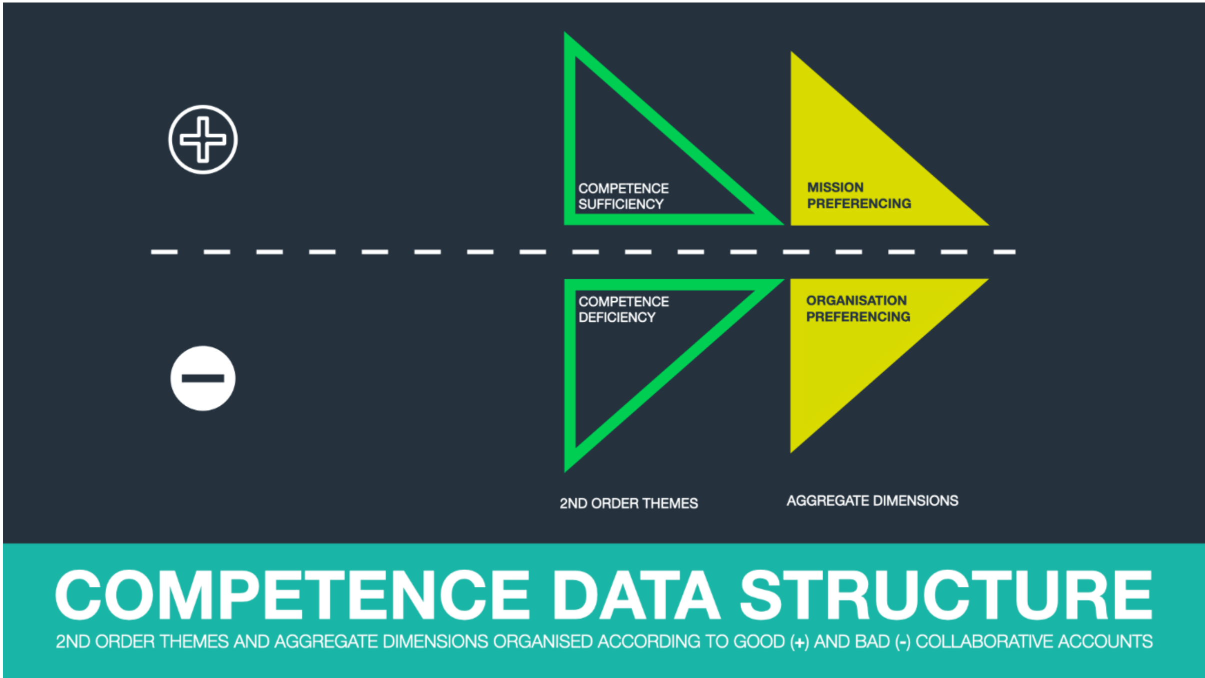

Figure 6. 4 – Competence data structure: illustrating the 2nd order themes and aggregate dimensions organised according to good (+) and bad (-) collaboration accounts

6.2.1 Good collaborations: competence sufficiency

Results of the thematic analysis revealed a surprising aspect of competency that hitherto has evaded adequate description in the literature and is described here as competence sufficiency and refers to the way competence is activated.

Sufficiency is used in this study to express the quality of competency and moves analysis beyond basic baseline observations (i.e., the presence or absence of competencies), and towards a more expansive acknowledgement of their function and contingency. Figure 6.5 highlights the 1st order concepts associated with competence sufficiency to which attention now turns.

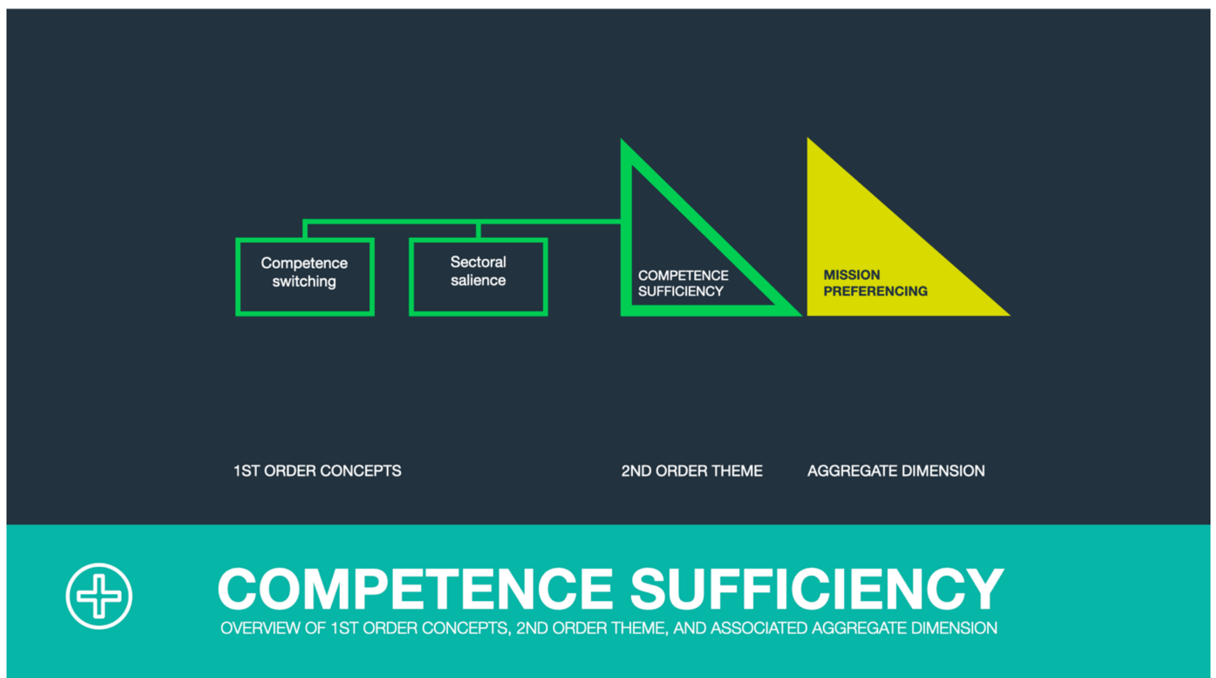

Figure 6. 5 – Competence sufficiency thematic data structure: illustrating 1st order concepts in relation to the 2nd order theme and associated aggregate dimension

6.2.1.1 Competence switching

Leader's competency surfaced in the data as a pluralistic construct, such that competency involves the ability to adaptively select and deploy a broad range of competencies in response to specific and frequently changing contextual contingencies. Competency's *essential adaptive plurality* is illustrated in the quotes below. Key to these quotes is the implicit idea that competency is adaptively activated in good collaborations such that different competencies are deployed differently across collaborative and organisational contexts. In this way,

competency acquired a considered, deliberative flexibility which was enacted in response to changing collaborative contextualities.

> ‘My understanding of that term [competency] is an individual's ability and capacity to lead whether it's an organisation or a collaboration. In order to do that well and efficiently and effectively that leader needs to employ a number of different skills in different ways to that role across those [different] settings’ (Inf_22, F, 52)

> ‘The more diverse that skill set the more you are able to flex that skill set, the more competent you are to lead in different situations.’ (Inf_01, F, 63)

> ‘So, for me leadership competency is about that set of behaviours and about how you flex and adjust and adapt your behaviours in order to achieve the outcome and the impact that you're seeking to achieve in that context.’ (Inf_13, F, 59)

By way of achieving the flexibility described above, the data revealed a phenomenon described here as competence switching - the selection and deployment of different competencies in direct response (or in anticipation) to situational conditions. This recurring theme is evident in the following quotes, which provide several accounts of leader’s adaptive competence switching in response to evolving social exigencies. These quotes provide a dynamic and contingent portrait of competency such that leaders are observed selecting, switching, and deploying competencies in acts of situated and contingent responsiveness. These quotes have been taken from informant’s reflections of leader’s competency in relation to the Covid-19 pandemic.

> ‘So, you know those [competencies] which are relevant to kind of being able to understand the external environment and deviate from a plan are quite important just at the moment. I would say that the ability around forming relationships of integrity for the benefit of the organisation are kind

> of perennial. And the ability to support people are perennial. And the ability to understand the external environment are perennial. Others go up and down according to what's going on in the outside world.' (Inf_02, M, NS)

> '[It's] been really interesting that a lot of leaders that have been competent prior to this crisis situation have struggled to be competent in the current situation [...].' (Inf_03, F, 53)

> 'So, for me a good social leader, the ones that are really excelling at the moment are those that have been able to be present so that [they] acknowledge their own limitations, really draw upon their own expertise, and to stand in that space and answer those questions and be present to people in distress in a way that they don't normally have to.' (Inf_03, F, 53)

Further analysis has revealed a feature of competence switching that is referred to here as *competence updating*, which captures competency in dynamic and developmental terms, as opposed to *competence-stasis*, which is observed as an over-reliance on a rigid set of competencies decoupled (at the point of deployment) from contextual contingencies.

> 'Then no leader is in the privileged position of being static. So, you can't just say well I'll develop three skills […] because tomorrow the world will be different. So, your competency very quickly runs out.' (Inf_01, F, 63)

According to the data, an essential feature of leader's competence sufficiency is centred on leader's ability to switch from single-organisation based leadership competencies to collaboration-based competencies such that, for example, consultation replaced command-and-control leadership approaches, as illustrated in the first quote below. The second quote describes this contingency and switching of competencies, which is rarely theorised but deemed necessary by informants if leaders are to act competently in collaboration as opposed to organisational settings.

> ‘We're not in charge of anybody. Everything is by attraction. Everything is by agreement. Everything is by consultation. And so, I'm used to having to bring people along rather than saying “I'm the boss you will do it.”’ (Inf_03, F, 53)

> ‘They don’t tell you this on the [name of leadership course], but you can’t lead an alliance like you would your own organisation, you’ve got to listen more, you’ve got to be collegiate, play well with others, work more behind the scenes, and use those influencing skills, and communication skills, and not-to-forget those soft skills I mentioned earlier.’ (Inf_14, F, 48)

In short, informants understood competency in pluralistic, adaptive, and contingent terms such that competence sufficiency required the proficient switching between competencies in direct response of localised collaboration contingencies. Competence sufficiency describes leaders’ distinguishing between organisation-based and collaboration-based competencies, suggesting that organisational competencies are not always sufficient when engaging in collaborative practice.

6.2.1.2 Social sector salience

The findings revealed that competence sufficiency was also expressed in social sector salience terms, which surfaced as: a) an emphasis on the distinctive character of social sector leadership; b) the importance of intrinsic motivational states such as passion for the social sector; and c) the privileging of prosocial ethicalities.

6.2.1.2.1 The distinctive character of social sector leadership

Social sector salience surfaced in the data in terms of a taken-for-granted emphasis on the social sector’s distinctive nature and contribution when compared to other sectors as illustrated below.

> ‘[T]he business sector compared to the social sector they're completely different. Profits are totally different when we talk about it from a commercial or youth work perspective.’ (Inf_16, M, 44)

The sectorial difference of the social sector was associated in the data with a secondary claim i.e., that social sector leadership (by virtue of sectoral differences) displays a distinct character which sets it apart from other sector leadership models (i.e., public sector leadership). This is illustrated in the quotes below.

> ‘[T]here's a different sort of leadership that's required in running a service providing charity like ours, and some of that is about process and some of that is about the sector’s unique flavour.’ (Inf_14, F, 48)

> ‘That's our job, we're delivering a social mission, we're not making money for shareholders or meeting the public duty. We're doing something quite different. So, the positions that we occupy as leaders in that is different and we have to recognize that it's different.’ (Inf_08, F, 54)

> ‘[I]n the social sector, I would say that the heterogeneous quality of the work, and the nature of the alliances and partnerships, […] requires a different kind of leadership from a system that has hierarchy, money and power at its centre.’ (Inf_12, F, 61)

6.2.1.2.2 Intrinsic motivation: social sector passion

Leader’s intrinsic motivation surfaced in the data such that competency was negated in the absence of a passion for the social sector or for social change. One informant, whilst justifying her claim of competency, cited her passion for the sector as evidence of that competency, as illustrated below.

> ‘Yes, I do consider myself to be I mean a competent leader. What I want more than anything else is to be involved with strengthening the voluntary sector. I love and am passionate and a total believer in the voluntary sector.’ (Inf_01, F, 63)

Informants’ intrinsic motivation for social change was observed influencing informants’ social sector career choices, as illustrated in the quote below. The desire to create an impact was also observed informing leader’s present-day performance.

> ‘[W]hen I saw this job, I think the potential for impact is what I was really looking for, I really wanted something that was impactful. When I was young, I took up an instrument and that changed the course of my life absolutely changed the course of my life, and so I felt very strongly that I wanted to do that [for] someone else. [informant begins to cry]. I'm feeling quite emotional. It’s so important to what I do as a social leader and how I do it.’ (Inf_11, F, 41)

In the next quote interactors of a good collaboration are described holding high levels of passion and motivation. The second quote asserts that leaders must match the passionate levels expressed by others if competency is to be maintained. Here as elsewhere competence is directly linked with passion.

> ‘And in the feedback afterwards what was very noticeable was how extraordinary it is to be part of a collaboration with people like this, so passionate so dedicated, who've been through things in their life and decided that they wanted to work on this issue with this particular project.’ (Inf_07, M, 42)

> ‘But I think that passion is a really important thing because if there is something about our sector which kind of hangs it together it's like generally everybody who works here cares about their role in it. So, if

> you're the leader in that context you have to be alongside them as somebody who cares equally, you have to match that passion. [...] It's hard to be seen like competent if you lead without that passion [for the sector]' (Inf_05, M, 50)

6.2.1.2.3 Prosocial ethicality

Competence sufficiency and sector salience were described in the data in terms of a vital prosocial ethicality, such that ethicality and competency acquired a critical tautology in informants accounts of good collaborations. By way of illustration, ethicality is observed in the following quote as the starting point for conceptualising social sector leadership and competency. The second quote provides evidence of the sector's prosocial normativism, whilst at the same time acknowledging that this expectation presents sector leaders with 'real challenges'.

> 'So, I think I always start with what is your ethic in terms of leadership. That's where I come from. So, in terms of competencies I've always looked for ways that I can come from that value base, that ethic.' (Inf_03, F, 53)

> 'I think in our sector the values have to be, are expected by our donors and our beneficiaries and our funders to be much more rooted in social justice and equality. And I think that in its own way brings some real challenges for any leader in the sector because it is very hard sometimes to live up to that.' (Inf_13, F, 59)

Ethicality frequently emerged from the data in association with leaders strategic use of values to inform operational decision-making, as illustrated in the quotes below. The second and third quotes observe leader's ethicality-in-action during the Covid-19 pandemic, providing evidence of organisational values impacting key delivery decisions.

‘So, leadership is very much values-in-action really and they're not just something in the cupboard. And when there are tough decisions to make in team meetings we've got to have those ethical discussions.’ (Inf_20, F, 58)

‘[It’s about] trying to live the values so not ducking things. When we had to furlough staff at the beginning of this month and I took a pay cut its telling staff about that, again not to make me out as some kind of great hero, but just that’s an obvious response to the kind of leadership and the kind of organisation that we want to be.’ (Inf_05, M, 50)

‘So, when lockdown was announced our trustees went in a spin and I was getting phone calls going, “we will have to shut down.” And we had a sticky two days of me going absolutely nuts. You know we are a charity for vulnerable people, and these vulnerable people are even more vulnerable now. If we pack up and go home because it gets a bit risky, we don't deserve to be called a charity anymore. I’m not doing that [...] I felt it was really really important not to abandon the people that we are here to serve. [...] I just felt very driven by our values, that’s why we’re here and that’s what we needed to do.’ (Inf_15, F, 57)

In summary, competency surfaced in good collaborations in sufficiency terms such that informant’s accounts provided evidence of proficient competence switching based on contextual contingencies. This was evident as leaders switched competences as they moved between organisational and collaborational settings. In addition, competence sufficiency surfaced in the data in social sector salient terms such that informants emphasised social sector leadership distinctiveness, social sector passion, and prosocial ethicality as vital sufficiency features. Attention will now turn to an exploration of competence deficiency which surfaced in bad collaboration accounts.

6.2.2 Bad collaborations: competence deficiency

Deficiency is used here to express the quality of competency informed by the lived experiences of senior leaders' 'bad collaborations', in 'competence' and 'competency' terms. Drawing from informant's own definitional controls and narrative choices, the reader will be presented with descriptive evidence of competence deficiency as this surfaced in the data and is captured by two 1st order concepts: poor competence switching and poor-quality leadership (Figure 6.6).

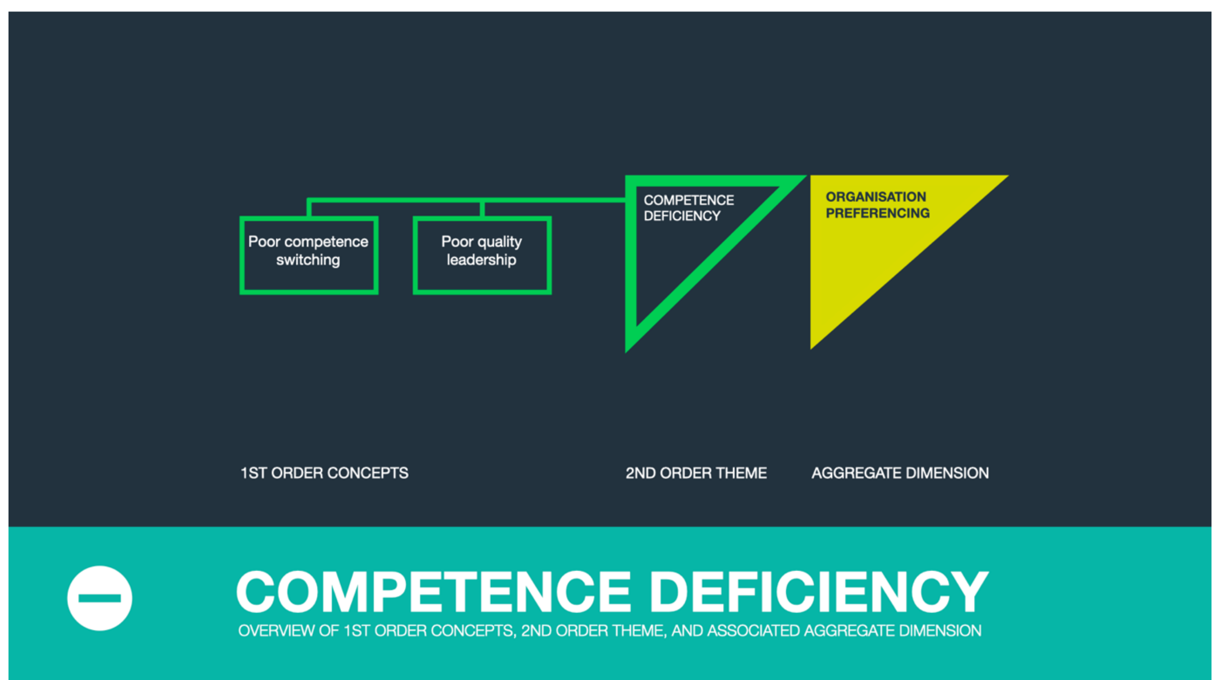

Figure 6. 6 – Competence deficiency thematic data structure: illustrating 1st order concepts in relation to the 2nd order theme and associated aggregate dimension

6.2.2.1 Poor competence switching

Competence deficiency surfaced in bad collaborations in ways that revealed leaders' over-reliance on generic competencies, particularly those developed within single-organisational settings. This over-reliance on generic and intraorganisational competences was associated in the data with a

decontextualised application of competencies, that inhibited competence switching and competence updating such that leaders failed to take account of many the contextual contingencies associated with collaborations and collaborative practice.

> ‘INFORMANT: [You] hand pick your competencies to fit the situation. [...] Really good charity leaders do this almost instinctively, right. The good ones change the way they lead and play for the audience. RESEARCHER: So, competencies are situationally contingent [...]? INFORMANT: Yeah. [...] So, I have met some incredible charity leaders who it turns out have been miserable to collaborate with because quite honestly, they’re caught up in the way they’ve always led [...].’ (Inf_06, M, 42)

Poor competence switching is described in the first quote as a failure to ‘scroll through’ and select contingently an appropriate competence. The second quote provides a vivid account of one leader failing to switch competencies altogether, preferring instead to express a brutish command-and-control approach often associated with outdated organisational leadership behaviours. This leader is observed not so much failing to moderate his response, but rather failing to switch competencies in light of collaboration’s collegiate nature.

> ‘I think it came as a complete surprise that we challenged him. I don’t think he thought, I don’t think it crossed his mind for a minute that he ought to scroll through those competencies and choose a more appropriate way to act [...] and lead.’ (Inf_18, M, 42)

> ‘He started a [collaboration] meeting with saying something along the lines of he sort of marched in and went “right, who's meeting is this?” You know everyone kind of sat up and you know the guy's behaviours were horrific. And I don't doubt for one moment that he gets things done in his world, but at what cost? And you know keeping people open minded, demonstrating that you're not cynical, that you're prepared to listen to other people's

> ideas, sparking other ideas instead of killing them off. A little bit later in the meeting he said to somebody, "quite frankly your idea makes my stomach churn!" And like, the propensity for that individual to come back with any more ideas or even anyone else in the room, everyone was too terrified to share anything.' (Inf_10, M, 46)

Leader's self-awareness frequently surfaced as a precondition of successful competence switching. This feature is illustrated in the two quotes below, the first of which highlights the ability of self-awareness to mitigate against the decoupling of competence selection and contextual specificities. The second quote observes leaders poor self- and situation-awareness and a sluggish responsiveness to fast moving ground conditions during the height of the Covid-19 pandemic.

> 'And it requires actually the ability of people [leaders] to be self-aware. The thing about those areas of perceived strength is that they can very quickly become a source of weakness depending on the situation. Being able to calibrate your response if you like is a much-needed skill.' (Inf_04, M, 57)

> '[I]t's been really interesting that a lot of leaders that have been competent prior to this crisis situation have struggled to be competent in the current situation as is, because a lot of the usual ways of working have not worked. So, you know they can suggest something only to discover that that's already been done four weeks ago, and they are slow, or that it's not appropriate anymore, or that it's just not a viable option. And that's been quite frightening you know for some of the people that have been in that situation.' (Inf_03, F, 53)

6.2.2.2 Poor quality leadership

Competence deficiency surfaced in terms of poor social sector leadership, which was expressed in terms of: a) lack of sector specific leadership development opportunities; b) lack of social sector leadership theory building, resulting in; c)

leadership inexperience and low levels of leadership confidence. Together these factors paint a picture of collaboration hampered by poor quality leadership, a lack of specific social sector leadership modelling, and the inevitability of competence deficiency.

6.2.2.2.1 Lack of social sector leadership development opportunities

Leading within the social sector is far from straightforward according to informants' accounts. The following quote illustrates while much is expected of social sector leaders in terms of competency, leaders are left to resolve (often on their own) the dilemma of selecting the most appropriate competent response to any number of situations, not least leading in collaborative settings.

> 'I suppose one of the things I've been thinking about quite a lot is the breadth of skills, experience, and competencies that leaders are expected to have particularly in the voluntary sector whether or not that's realistic. How do you work out what the most important competencies are in a particular organisation, or if a collaboration has got a particular objective or mission what are the most important competencies for that [collaboration]?' (Inf_14, F, 48)

Bad collaboration accounts surfaced a critical link between poor leadership competencies and poor outcomes, as evidenced by the first quote below. Here, as elsewhere, this association in the data is exacerbated by a critical paucity of leadership development opportunities within the sector and is illustrated in the second quote.

> '[W]hen an organisation or collaboration is going through a bad period or you read in the newspapers they have lost an employment claim, it's usually because of a lack of core leadership competencies. And just because the person is an inspiring, articulate social justice warrior who set up this NGO and has created something, you can't not talk about basic

competencies around leadership and management, because in the absence of them there is a risk of [organisation or collaborative] failure and then that risk becomes a reality.' (Inf_07, M, 42)

'I think that I would identify a lack of training, capacity building and development on [leadership] skills across the board and at senior leadership as being an issue that immediately strikes you. I don't think many of the individuals had received significant impactful, high-quality training or other support in running an NGO. I think that was one of the reasons we were seeing some of this failure.' (Inf_07, M, 42)

6.2.2.2.2 Lack of social sector leadership theory building

Bad collaborations surfaced a perceived paucity of social sector leadership development provision and by association a lack of social sector specific leadership theorising. These reflections observed leaders deploying non-social sector leadership models and theories to social sector and cross-sector collaboration practice. As such, it is possible to conclude that social sector leadership invariably transpires in under-theorised sectoral spaces. These points are variously illustrated in the quotes below. The first two quotes point to practitioners' perceptions of an under-theorised sectoral space, while the third quote links the UKs social sector underinvestment (in leadership development) alongside a deficit of UK models

'[T]he leadership that we provide for the sector is highly complex and has to my knowledge not been defined.' (Inf_01, F, 63)

'Generally speaking, it feels like there's no rulebook. Nobody's ever done a piece of work that says, "how to collaborate." If you google it there'll probably be a list of 10 things to do somewhere, but it doesn't feel like it has been explored well enough. And we've just been kind of thrown in at

> the deep end and [we're] just splashing around trying to find something to cling on to that works.' (Inf_11, F, 41)

> 'At the moment there are two particular challenges around leadership. The first is there is very little investment in professional development within the sector. If leadership is critical how does the sector support more and more people to have the space and time to invest in that? The second is there's very little measurements around what leadership looks like outside of US market models. There's not much that I've really seen that has been well evidenced and that's a good example of what leadership means in the sector.' (Inf_30, M, NS)

For one informant, the systemic underinvestment in social sector leadership development was attributable to the sector not prioritising it, or perhaps more accurately, not prioritising it above other organisational demands as illustrated below.

> 'And the third thing that was very clear to me was that leadership development was not something that the sector wanted. But it was something that the funders wanted because the funders were after excellence in leadership. People working in social sector didn't care about excellence in leadership [pause] their concerns were driven by sustainability goals and being able to prove your worth.' (Inf_01, F, 63)

6.2.2.2.3 Leadership inexperience

Given the aforementioned, competence deficiency highlighted frequent descriptions of leaders inexperience, as illustrated in the first two quotes below. The third quote provides evidence of informant's lack of confidence in light of a perceived lack of experience.

> ‘I think I was naïve, and I was too young. I hadn't been in the job long enough. So, when I arrived at [organisation name] I didn't really know what leadership was. And you know, I would listen to conversations about leadership and think, “oh, now I've understood what leadership is,” and then I'd have another conversation and think, I've lost it again, what was leadership again? So that was mistake number one.’ (Inf_01, F, 63)

> ‘So, all of that stuff you know, very complex political social issues was a huge learning curve for me. But I really didn't feel I was qualified to have led that collaboration.’ (Inf_12, F, 61)

> ‘[T]his is very much from where I sit and the people I mix with in terms of senior [social sector] leadership, there's quite a lot of anxiety or lack of confidence.’ (Inf_12, F, 61)

In summary, the findings suggest that bad collaborations surface competence deficiency such that leaders were observed to exhibit an over-reliance on competencies developed within and primarily suitable for single organisational contexts. As, such competence deficiency describes leaders’ poor competence switching decisions. Additionally, the data revealed that competence deficiency and bad collaborations were associated with poor quality social sector leadership, which was expressed in terms of: a) lack of social sector leadership development opportunities; b) lack of social sector leadership theory building, and; c) leadership inexperience. Next, the study’s second theme – multiple accountabilities – will be presented.

6.3. Theme two: multiple accountabilities

Multiple accountabilities surfaced in the data as the study’s second main theme and was observed in good collaborations as balanced accountabilities and in bad collaborations as unbalanced accountabilities

(Figure 6.7). This theme surfaced across the two datasets and proved to be a central contributor to leader's understanding of collaboration and collaborative outcomes. This section will first present evidence from good collaborative accounts of balanced accountabilities (Section 6.3.1 - 6.3.3), before turning to bad collaborative stories to provide evidence of unbalanced accountabilities (Section 6.3.4 - 6.3.6).

Figure 6. 7 – Multiple accountabilities data structure: illustrating the 2nd order themes and aggregate dimensions organised according to good (+) and bad (-) collaboration accounts

6.3.1 Good collaborations: balanced accountabilities

The study's findings revealed an accountability feature of collaboration that has largely been neglected in the collaboration (and collaboration competency) literature. It is described here in terms of the challenge leaders face managing the interface of organisation-and-collaboration accountabilities, which was often expressed in good collaborations in terms of securing and maintaining an optimal balance of organisation-and-collaboration-based priorities. Optimality in good collaborations was frequently characterised by the privileging of mission

priorities. Figure 6.8 presents the 1st order concepts associated with balanced accountabilities, which will be considered next.

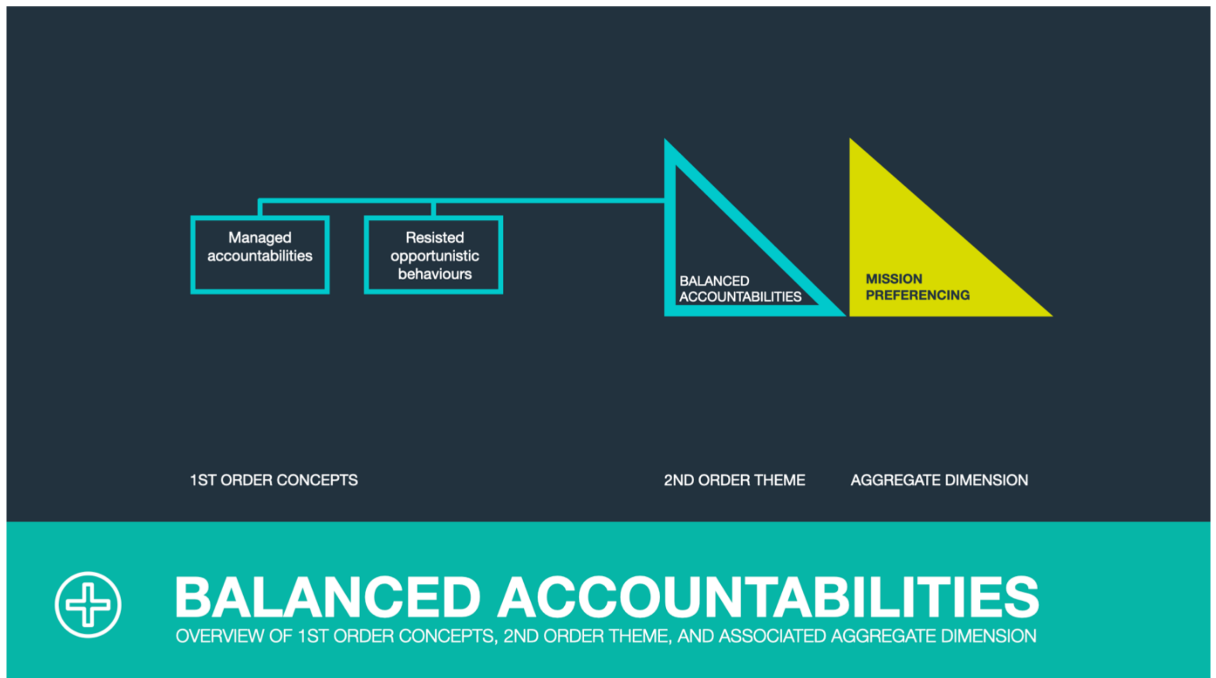

Figure 6. 8 – Balanced accountabilities thematic data structure: illustrating 1st order concepts in relation to the 2nd order theme and associated aggregate dimension

6.3.1,1 Managed accountabilities

That leaders are required to take account of - and balance - organisational and collaborative priorities concomitantly while collaborating may not be new, but surprisingly, this vital interface surfaced critically in informants' conceptualisations of good collaborations. The next two quotes illustrate the importance for leaders of balancing organisational and collaborative expectations without the loss of organisational benefits (first quote). The second quote highlights the importance of flushing these issues out at the beginning of a collaborative project.

> 'You've got to hold the position and the well-being of your organisation while managing the expectations and broader outcomes of the purpose of

the collaboration. So that's hard. That's a really fine balancing act, I think.' (Inf_22, F, 52)

'So, I think it's worth putting that stuff on the table at the start [...] and balancing your kind of care about the cause and the mission of the collaboration with some of the more pragmatic interests of the organisation which again we all must have.' (Inf_05, M, 50)

A recurring trend to emerge within the good collaboration data concerned the primacy given to mission (e.g., social change and client-centred goal setting) in the balancing of multiple accountabilities. In good collaborations, this balance is understood as an optimality i.e., the optimal balance of organisation-and-collaboration accountabilities such that an operational synthesis of organisation and collaborative mission prioritisation transpires without the loss of mission's primacy. The following quote speaks to the core challenge of managing this optimality. For this informant *changing the field conditions* in prosocial and systemic terms surfaced as an aspect of optimality, which recurred throughout the dataset.

'Here's the thing and I know this is really obvious, but I will say it nonetheless. So, a charity's legal purpose is not to sustain the organisation, right. It's written down somewhere in their Memorandum and Articles that they exist on behalf of a defined group of people or a defined charitable purpose, which is for the benefit of a group of people. And you know that's current and future beneficiaries. And so actually I think fundamentally social sector leadership to me […] means putting the delivery of their mission before the organisation's delivery of the mission. You know that means that a leader who says - our organisation has a unique ability to deliver on X, Y or Z - is not doing a good job of leadership in my view, because they would already have worked out the way to give away that unique thing so that everyone was doing it or to change the field so that everyone is doing the unique thing. […] They would think about the

> organisation as a necessary but temporary vehicle for organising work that needs to be done for the benefit of people that they're there to serve, and I know that's all lovely, it feels a bit tree huggee and hippie and whatever but that's what it says in the document. […] That doesn't come out in the theory or often the practice of leadership in our sector.' (Inf_06, M, 42)

The following quote observes good collaborations in terms of optimality, such that leaders exhibit the ability to hold in creative tension the needs of their home organisation with the mission of the collaboration. As illuded to below, this optimality is a particular feature of social sector practice.

> 'I'm always amazed […] when I look at people within the sector how they balance the collective social impact that they're collaboratively striving towards with organisational impact and sustainability, because those two things often don't fit very well together. And the very best and competent leaders they handle that really well.' (Inf_30, M, NS)

In sum, the data revealed a critical tautology such that good collaborations were equivocally observed containing an organisation-*and*-collaboration accountabilities optimality, which facilitated concomitant consequences for organisational and collaborative leadership practice.

6.3.1.2 Resisted opportunistic behaviours

Opportunistic behaviours are described by Morgan and Hunt (1994) in terms of guilefulness and self-interest, such that their intensification undermines trust. An aspect of leaders balanced accountabilities included leader's resistance of self-interested opportunism, which frequently surfaced in the data in terms of hoarding financial or reputational advantage. It was clear that good collaborations were not immune to this type of opportunistic pressure, however, leaders in these collaborations exhibited a critical self-awareness and self-regulation such that they mounted resistance to such pressures. The following quotes reveal one

informant's approach to confronting this pressure through deliberative forearming involving aspects of personal ethical agency i.e., holding oneself accountable.

> '[P]art of the conscience I guess that sits on my shoulder would sometimes say things like, leaders of charities often get privileged access to meet with funders, to meet with policymakers. That's access that the people they're there to serve don't have and it may be access that leaders of other organisations or smaller organisations don't have. So, I think again you know with this collaborative lens and thinking about accountability I feel a responsibility [...] Do I hold myself accountable for having that access that others don't have, and the privilege that brings along with it?' (Inf_06, M, 42)

> 'I think competent leaders forcing themselves into some sort of meaningful accountability, that's not very visible, but I think it's what you kind of need to do otherwise it's just too much to expect yourself to act perfectly when you get privileged access to a funding conversation.' (Inf_06, M, 42)

During the time of the global pandemic, opportunistic behaviour surfaced in terms of a drive to preserve one's organisational financial and reputational resources, placing these ahead of mission-based commitments. This was expressed opportunistically via a decision to withdraw from service delivery until the crisis subsided. This particular self-interested opportunism was resisted by leaders in good collaborations, who appealed to organisational and collaborative missions and espoused values to evoke resistant strategies at a time of great uncertainty.

> 'And I think what will separate out [collaborations – good from bad] as people look back is who actually acted in a way that was true to their values, who shut up shop and stepped back because it was costing too much or there was a risk of litigation from Health and Safety or something like that. Who took the risk-averse approach that meant that they weren't

> delivering against their values, mission and vision. I know of collaborations that did that, they just shut up shop and withdrew.' (Inf_08, F, 54)

The following quotes provide two accounts of self-interested opportunistic resistant behaviours. The first quote describes this behaviour in terms of providing boundary spanning assistance to other providers who, outside of pandemic conditions, would otherwise not have received such support. The second quote observes mission priorities and core values playing a key role in facilitating the mitigation of self-interested opportunism described by one informant as putting 'money before mission' (Inf_06, M, 42).

> '[M]aking space for those other providers of services to work with us, and for us to be the bridge I suppose to make that happen and create the circumstances so that they can cross the boundary, and they can do things that would have been impossible before.' (Inf_08, F, 54)

> 'So, there was a really good example probably about nine months ago, although given 2020 it might be four years ago, I'm not sure [chuckle]. The CEO of [organisation name], a pretty big organisation delivering lots of services [was] saying, "we're not gonna do those things anymore, they're great for our income but they don't really help us with our mission, other people can do it." Now to do that, to actually step back from income that's really tough, that's a really bold thing to do. Yeah. It's very rare you see that. There's another example actually, within [name of collaboration]. We had six agencies in a room discussing a significant funding opportunity and at the end of the day five of those agencies went "you know what, we're not gonna bid for this work." And that was such an incredible example of a collaboration that stood to its values and its mission. That's incredibly tough particularly when resources are tight' (Inf_30, M, NS)

In summary, good collaborations require inter alia the pursuit of a critical accountabilities optimality, such that organisation-and-collaboration

accountabilities are synergistically established and maintained in such a way that privileges mission priorities. A secondary aspect of leaders balanced accountabilities concerned the mounting of adequate defences against self-interested opportunistic behaviours. This resistance included the activation of personal agency and structural organisational solutions and was evident during the pandemic in instances of enabling boundary spanning activities. The next section will provide evidence from bad collaboration accounts of unbalanced or suboptimal accountabilities.

6.3.2 Bad collaborations: unbalanced accountabilities

The study's findings provided evidence of multiple accountabilities impacting collaborations in ways overlooked in the collaboration literature. Confronted with two broad accountability systems – one organisational, the other collaborative – leaders of bad collaboration accounts were described privileging organisational accountabilities ahead of mission and collaborative accountabilities, thereby facilitating the establishment of a suboptimal or unbalanced accountabilities approach. This accountabilities suboptimality is understood in relation to two 1st order concepts – organisational prioritisation and opportunistic behaviours – (Figure 6.9) to which attention now turns.

Figure 6. 9 – Unbalanced accountabilities thematic data structure: illustrating 1st order concepts in relation to the 2nd order theme and associated aggregate dimension

6.3.2.1 Organisational prioritisation

Multiple accountabilities surfaced in bad collaboration narratives, with reference to a critical suboptimality or unbalanced state of organisational and collaboration priorities such that organisational priorities were given primacy, which is alluded to below.

> 'I think there is a real risk in the social sector that people become concerned with the organisation rather than the mission or cause. [...] They become driven by the interests of the organisation rather than the mission itself.' (Inf_04, M, 57)

Increased competition and the mandated nature of much of contemporary social sector collaboration, provided further reasons for leaders to privilege organisational considerations above mission-based priorities, as observed below. The two quotes expose an otherwise hidden competitive maelstrom

enmeshed within collaborative arrangements to which social sector interactors can get stuck (first quote). Such competitiveness was frequently observed amidst funding and commissioning processes which frustrated collaborative intentions (second quote).

> ‘I think the social sector is quite complex because there's a kind of, I suppose a conflict between people wanting to collaborate but also being pushed into quite competitive situations. And I think organisations and individuals get really stuck with that and it can be really difficult, I think. And actually, that doesn't get acknowledged and talked about enough that those sorts of conflicts arise.’ (Inf_14, F, 48)

> ‘And I think those competitive dynamics, lot of those are external, forced upon organisations by the way that funding is structured and commissioned, and all those kinds of things that pitch organisations against each other and make it harder for people to work in more collaborative ways’ (Inf_17, M, 60)

Organisational prioritisation (or self-interest, in the quote below) was associated in the data with pervasive funding- and organisational survival-anxieties such that these were observed precipitating organisational prioritising strategies. For the following informant, mitigation involved the tactic of *putting the money behind you*.

> ‘I think that self-interest often boils down to an anxiety about funding and a sense of competitiveness for small pots that a lot of people are going for. [...] Unless people are in a position where they can put the money bit behind them and enter that collaborative space in a way that is really constructive and open, then the money question can be a real killer. [...] So, the funding problem is very pervasive and can have a very negative effect on collaborations, I think.’ (Inf_12, F, 61)

Organisational prioritisation featured heavily in informants bad collaborative accounts, such that it was observed influencing a wide variety of collaborative activities. To illustrate, the next quote describes collaborative decision-making transpiring amidst protectionist sensibilities such that tribal loyalties emerge.

> '[I]t was tribal, so leaders were going into that collaboration paying lip service to generating ideas to solve the problem, but actually what they were doing was protecting their own organisation. So, they're being tribal about their behaviours, which often happens, doesn't it?' (Inf_10, M, 46)

6.3.2.2 Opportunistic behaviours

Morgan and Hunt (1994), citing Williamson (1975), describe opportunistic behaviours in terms of a deceit-orientated contravention of expected role behaviours (ibid). While good collaboration interactors were described as being 'in it for the long-haul' (Inf_25, F, 60), bad collaboration interactors frequently violated this expectation and demonstrated a commitment that lasted as long as the funding was available and no longer, as illustrated in the first quote. Opportunistic behaviour surfaced in association with a wide variety of collaborative tasks. In the case of the second quote, opportunism was observed in association with interactors cynically overestimating their projected targets for financial gain.

> 'So, people came around that for the purpose of the funding opportunity not because they wanted to change the world. And because it's just advancing their own mission it means that they'll work together in that way for the length of time that the funding is available and no longer.' (Inf_30, M, NS)

> '[As] a partnership we had a total number of targets that we have to meet, and they were shared proportionately against the funding that each partner had. So, it wasn't an equal split across the partners in the funding. Some

got more than others, some bid for more than others. And I think some organisations bid for bigger amounts because they wanted more money. And then what happened was organisations like us who bid for what we knew we could do, we were hitting our targets. The other organisations weren't hitting their targets. But as a partnership we were getting penalised because we were achieving ours but other organisations weren't achieving theirs. And we were all getting penalised. And like I said, I think organisations came to the table for funding rather than thinking this is an opportunity to actually get young people into work.' (Inf_09, M, 60)

The next two quotes provide examples of opportunistic behaviours played out in the context of collaborative discussions concerned with the distribution of funds. Here opportunistic behaviours were observed taking precedence over collaborative mission-based concerns.

> '[I]t started with a pot of gold at the end of the rainbow. So, there was one of these things where a bit of government was putting out a tender for some big strategic partnership. It was worth, I don't know, ten million pounds or something quite significant over three years. And so, there were a bunch of organisations that were coming together to bid for that funding. And I remember very clearly the first meeting about this [...] started with some intros around the room and then the main content question was, "so how much will you need?" It was just like, "so how much of the budget will you need?" I was like, "is there a plan because how would I know." But it wasn't that. It was starting from, "well, we'll need at least four hundred grand in order to do something meaningful." It started from nowhere. So, it was you know it was one of those things where everyone was getting together for a common purpose but that common purpose was not the thing that you could achieve with the money. It was the money.' (Inf_06, M, 42)

> ‘There was no kind of proper collaborative, “where are we going with this” from day one. It was like, “I want the lion's share. I'm in charge. I'm going to employ all the people. I'm gonna have a really expensive infrastructure, because that draws money into my organisation, and we'll have all these people in the room because that will be impressive.” And, I'm being really flippant about this, but it really was like that.’ (Inf_08, F, 54)

The following quotes describe two accounts when social sector interactors were ‘airbrushed out’ of a collaboration, and their contributions left unacknowledged. These examples violated expected collaborative behaviour and were the consequence of one interactor attempting to take full advantage of the reputational gains associated with the collaboration.

> ‘Then we kind of said, well can you send us over the training materials because we did kind of co-write them with you, and they never arrived. [...] And then next thing I know their website is promoting this training as their product […] We'd kind of got airbrushed out of that whole kind of process. And then that youth organisation then went on to position itself as something of a youth mental health specialist. […] They were selling this great success of an amazing program as something they'd designed. […] It felt like we had been used for someone to gain the kind of kudos in a field they wanted to move into and then we were just kind of once we had served that purpose we were dumped and they moved on and didn't need us anymore.’ (Inf_21, M, 48)

> ‘So, we collaborated with the Council on a co-design process. [Together] we designed something and we got all the way to the point where there were designs emerging and the [Council Director] just came in and took it and basically said, I'll take the data now and turn that into what we're going to do, and then it became a Council project, which they then said that they'd fully consulted on. [...] They just basically took it.’ (Inf_03, F, 53)

In summary, bad collaborations were invariably described with reference to a suboptimal balance of organisational and collaborative priorities, such that organisational prioritisation and self-interested opportunism resulted in the downplaying of mission priorities in favour of organisational preferencing. Leaders behaviours were observed violating typical collaborative expectations in favour of organisational gains, such as the hoarding of collaborative resources or reputational advantage. Attention will now turn to consider the study's third main theme – relationship features – beginning with data from good collaboration accounts.

6.4 Theme three: relationship features

The findings presented here will illustrate the importance of relationship features for the development of good collaborations as captured in the data structure below (Figure 6.10). Theoretical and analytical support has been provided through the selected application of Morgan and Hunt's (1999) Key Mediating Variable (KMV) model. Collaborations were observed relationally across the two datasets as systematically distinct such that good collaborations surfaced competency in relational sufficiency terms, and bad collaborations in relational deficiency terms. Attention will be given first to good collaboration's relational sufficiency (Section 6.4.1 - 6.4.4) before turning to consider bad collaboration's relational deficiency (Section 6.4.5 - 6.4.8). Sufficiency and deficiency are used in this study to express the quality of relationship features that moves description and analysis beyond baseline observations i.e., the presence or absence of specific relational features, and towards a more expansive and detailed view of their presence-ing or absence-ing.

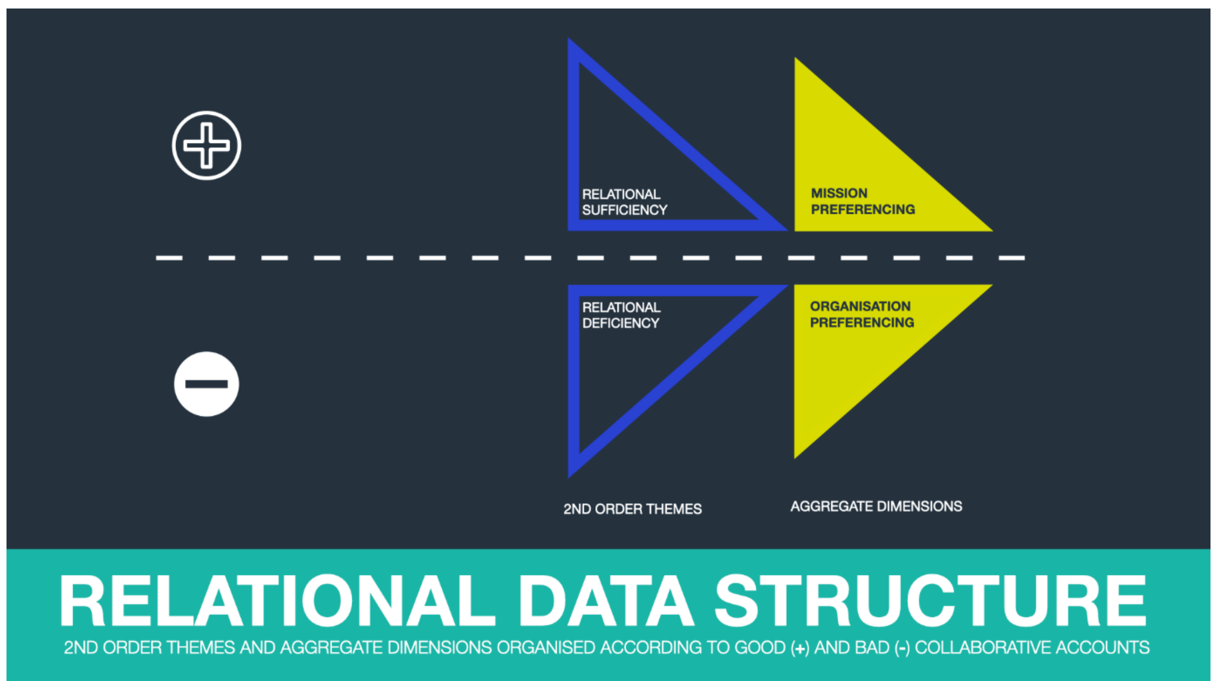

Figure 6. 10 – Relational data structure: illustrating the 2nd order themes and aggregate dimensions organised according to good (+) and bad (-) collaboration accounts

6.4.1 Good collaborations: relational sufficiency

The findings presented in this section will illustrate the importance of relational sufficiency to good collaborations. Relational sufficiency surfaced in the data in ways captured by three 1st order concepts – trust, communication and shared values – (Figure 6.11) to which attention now turns.

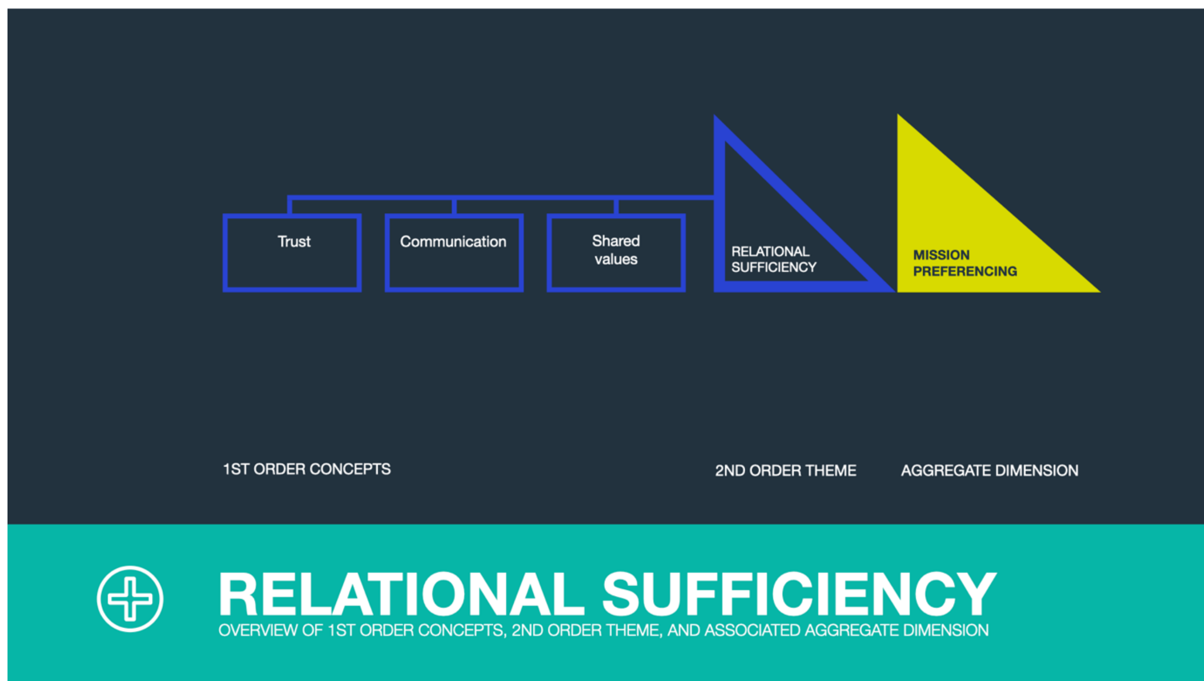

Figure 6. 11 – Relational sufficiency thematic data structure: illustrating 1st order concepts in relation to the 2nd order theme and associated aggregate dimension

6.4.1.1 Trust

According to the data trust appeared as an essential feature of good collaborations. For the following informant, collaboration was defined in direct relation to trust.

> '[Collaboration] is about people that trust each other coming together to create something together that ultimately has some kind of impact in the world' (Inf_10, M, 46)

The same informant drew further attention to trust's collaborative criticality in the quote below, making several salient points that recurred throughout the data: a) collaboration requires trust; b) working with difference (e.g., people, opinions, and goals) requires trust; and c) trust requires the suspension of self- and organisational-interest.

> 'I would describe collaborations like this, it doesn't happen without trust. You know collaboration is about a group of people with diverse opinions and views and backgrounds coming together to create something and to co-create something. And for that to happen effectively there needs to be trust, and therefore we need to suspend our own kind of personal needs and the needs of our organisations. We need to put them to one side to truly collaborate.' (Inf_10, M, 46)

Trust was observed in the data in developmental terms so that relational capital stemming from shared collaborative experiences, including past successes and failures, could be composted by competent leaders and made available to the collaboration moving forward.

> 'I think [trust is] a developing thing. I think now it exists as the elixir you know at the centre of everything [we do]. A lot of those trusts have come from all those battles that we've been through and come through and the successes and the failures. That's what builds up that core of trust. And so, I think as a collaborative we feed off that.' (Inf_03, F, 53)

Similarly, the following informant observed trust to be high such that interactors were able to capitalise on this relational feature early on in the collaboration.

> 'I would say the links, the relationships between individuals in all dimensions no matter which way you cut the cake collectively were really high. There was a lot of trust [...] We were able to build on all of that quite early on' (Inf_23, M, NS)

Trust mattered to leaders of good collaborations such that for one informant, *'trust is something we worry about an awful lot'* (Inf_30, M, NS). Trust within one collaboration's executive team surfaced with important empowerment consequences for staff and fellow interactors. In this regard, trust in the collaboration's frontline staff was associated with an executive humility i.e., an acknowledgement of one's own and others place in the collaborative ecosystem.

This empowerment fuelled by trust is understood here as the 'magic' of collaboration and is described below.

> '[A]ll the magic happened down there [frontline staff] because it was empowered and also because the people around the table [executives] trusted each other and we were comfortable in the uncomfortable kind of not having control, not really knowing where this was going, in trusting our frontline staff to do stuff and make decisions and inform us appropriately and to act when the time is right. And I think the thing that made it work was the trust element and that nobody needed to be in charge of the people around the table.'

> '[T]here's a huge requirement for humility within it, a huge amount of trust in your workforce, and the recognition that those guys that are doing it day in and day out meeting with those people and learning about those people day in and day out know much better than you what needs to happen.' (Inf_08, F, 54)

Trust repeatedly surfaced in the data in mediating terms, such that it enabled the exchange of sensitive organisational information, as demonstrated in the quote below .

> '[Trust] was again one of the main things that made it work, because we were sharing quite sensitive information about the partners that we were funding. So, we had to all be really confident that people would not breach the confidentiality of what we were discussing, and that felt very strong. And I think that was because everybody in the group shared something confidential. So everybody had skin in the game I guess in terms of needing to be able to trust everybody else in the room.' (Inf_24, F, 36)

Trust was frequently observed in association with leaders' consistent trustworthy behaviours, as evidenced below. For leaders of smaller organisations,

demonstrations of trustworthiness were considered essential for gaining access to collaborative advantage.

> 'You've been shown to be trustworthy by the way you conduct yourself and the service you deliver. You have to build trust up and people have to know that you're safe. […] You have to know what you're talking about and be wise in what you're talking about for people to trust you. For people to listen to you you've got to earn that particularly if you're a small organisation like us who haven't got the right of access.' (Inf_15, F, 57)

> 'I would say we recognize the value of trust and are good at building it. […] So that sense that you're in it for the long haul. […] You're creating trust by good communication, by enabling people, by making good decisions, by admitting you've made a mistake.' (Inf_25, F, 60)

Attention now turns to the second 1st order concept associated with relationship features – communication.

6.4.1.2 Communication

Communication, like trust, appeared as an essential feature of good collaborations. Communication surfaced in the following ways: a) *facilitation* emerged as a key aspect of communication in collaborative settings; b) communication were evident in the creation, promotion, and facilitation of *safe dialogical spaces*, which mitigated conflict; c) *listening* was understood as chief aspect of communication; and d) communication was vital to leaders' *vision casting and broadcasting* tasks.

6.4.1.2.1 Facilitation

The following quote highlights the importance of facilitation within good collaborations. Here, leaders must acquire the ability to facilitate collaborative dialogue if one is to capitalise on the creative potentialities of the collaboration.

> 'Well, I think I've had many, many of these conversations with senior leaders […], being able to facilitate collaborative dialogue and unleash the creative potential of an organisation for me is now a core leadership skill, and part of the reason for that I think is that we all want to have influence in the day job. They want, we want, to contribute ideas to things. We want to make collaborations more effective. We want to solve problems. And you know the skills of a leader to be able to facilitate those conversations for me is now core business' (Inf_10, M, 46)

Facilitative is the subject of the next quote which describes in general terms the typical invitation a facilitative leader expresses as part of their leadership in collaborative settings. Here as above and elsewhere, facilitation is associated with harnessing creativity, working at the intersectionality of silos, and generative thinking.

> 'A leader will actively invite, and their behaviours will match as well, they won't be incongruent. They'll say, I don't have all of the answers. What I'm going to do is facilitate people when there's complexity, I'm going to facilitate dialogue and invite people from outside of their KPI's, effectively outside of their silos to come and jump in with me on this, because I value the diversity of opinion and ideas. So, a collaborative leader is a facilitative leader and is about saying, I don't have all the answers, I recognize the more diverse opinions, views, and insights I can harness the more likely I am to generate a richness of ideas; but also most importantly, the collaborative leader recognizes it is better to have a whole bunch of people talking about an idea and getting behind an idea than just me driving what I believe to be the perfect solution. [...] It's about recognizing that complex problems are going to be solved at the intersection of silos because that gives us fresh thinking.' (Inf_10, M, 46)

6.4.1.2.2 The strategic use of safe dialogical spaces

Conflict and competition occurred in good and bad collaboration accounts. What set these collaborations apart were their respective use of regularised dialogue to flush out conflicting views and collectively identify appropriate mitigations. Good collaborations appeared to place a premium on talking. Talking was supported by structural and processual support such as regular meetings, having the right people in the room, and a commitment to 'keep talking' no matter the conditions on the ground. These points are illustrated in the quotes below.

> 'There was always conflict as in tensions, different views, but they [senior team] just had a very powerful way of resolving their conflicts by talking about things together.' (Inf_01, F, 63)

> 'I think we had regular meetings and that was really important, and it was really important that we had all the relevant partners present.' (Inf_12, F, 61)

> 'Creating safe spaces is also so important, having the safe space if you don't agree. Like, to create a safe container I suppose to hold some difficult conversations so that you feel you're able to say what you feel.' (Inf_11, F, 41)

> 'We were partners who kind of recognized that there were organisational tensions involved. We made the tension between the organisational and the collective interests visible and acknowledged that, and said "look this stuff's going to happen, let's make sure we talk about it, let's be as straightforward about it as we can. [...] let's have you know a commitment to talking it through".' (Inf_06, M, 42)

For the following informant, discussing potential areas of conflict or competition was understood as a core feature of leadership in good collaborative settings.

For this informant, good collaborations are rarely competition-neutral or conflict-free, rather, conflict is assumed an implicit feature of human systems. This perspective anticipates conflict and therefore provides a systemic approach free from partisan judgment as observed below.

> ‘And I do believe that it is a big role for leaders to put the elephant in the room on the table and talk about it and to be explicit. But even in good partnerships there can still be elements of competition, and in my experience if those elements of competition are discussed, and explicit, and everyone knows where they are that's better than everybody kind of just pretending that it is just fine, we're just kind of collaborative. [...] So, my view is talk about it. Be explicit. Put it on the table, and then when it rears its head it's easier to kind of handle.’ (Inf_02, M, NS)

The next quote is taken from a good collaboration which exhibited challenging internal tensions based on competing sectoral approaches and agendas. Here tensions were resolved and agreement reached through the application of one aspect of an informant’s communication competency.

> ‘[I]t became obvious that the agendas were very, very, very different. So, you've got the council agendas which were very political. [Name of business], which were very commercial. [Name of social sector organisation] which was very environmental. So, they were all really competing with each other. [...] So, I found that my role really was as a translator. That's how I always see my role in collaborations - how do I find the language that brings all of these people to an agreement when what he's going to say is going to sound completely different to what this person over here wants? But actually, I can translate them so that we can all come to an agreement.’ (Inf_11, F, 41)

For the following informant, being able to speak across sectoral lines is a critical aspect of good collaborations, particularly in light of the elasticity of sector boundaries.

> 'So, I think one of the realities of our time is the blurring of boundaries between the private, public, and voluntary sectors. And I think the ability to speak the language of other sectors is increasingly important.' (Inf_04, M, 57)

Good collaborations were frequently described in terms of managing tough conversations. This feature is identified below. The first quote tells of an incident following a gruelling funding process and the spotting of a drop in collective commitment. This dip of commitment was resolved through the use of safe dialogical spaces which enabled the surfacing of difficult conversations without the threat of collaborative rupture. The second quote provides further evidence of leader's need to *lean into* difficult conversations.

> 'Interestingly since we achieved that level of funding commitment had dissipated and that triggered some interesting conversations. Together we've stepped back and reflected on it. We've had some very, very difficult conversations, quite raw in many ways.' (Inf_13, F, 59)

> 'There is something about leaning into the difficult spots and having crucial conversations when things are hard (Inf_26, M, 35)

6.4.1.2.3 Listening

Listening recurred in the data as the sine qua non of leader's communication competency and acquired criticality for leaders engaged in complex cross-sector collaborations. Listening surfaced as a suite of techniques and practices such as stepping out from behind one's expertise, finding the common ground and shared

alignment, and giving and receiving clarification as illustrated in the following quotes.

> ‘I’ll talk from my own perspective here which is in a very cross sectoral space. […] I often am in a place where the very essence of the work is crossing boundaries. And in that space, I think leadership requires […] that you're really prepared to step out of your expertise and into a space where you're actively listening and trying to find that common ground’ (Inf_12, F, 61)

> ‘If you’re trying to hold that inter-sector space, its ensuring that people are actively listening. I think it's about ensuring clarification and playing back what you’re hearing to others, as you're doing now with these wonderful questions, to make sure that we have shared alignment and shared agreements.’ (Inf_30, M, NS)

> ‘And I think for me, the reason I started with listening was because it does feel like perhaps one of the most key things. When I talked about how it took a year to get [here], the periods where it wasn't going as quick were periods where perhaps we didn't really understand exactly what they wanted from us, and for me listening is the key to understanding.’ (Inf_26, M, 35)

The final quote provides evidence of the impact of listening on collaborative progress such that progress was speeded up as a result of listening being exercised across the collaboration.

> ‘[We] were speeding through organisational development and fast forwarding through stuff that should have taken us two or three years to make happen. And that all came down to the quality of the listening really.’ (Inf_08, F, 54)

6.4.1.2.4 Vision casting

Communication often surfaced in the data in terms of leaders shaping the collaborative vision. In relation to creating and broadcasting vision, leaders of good collaborations were often observed as 'articulate performers' (Inf_01, F, 63). Such communicative performativity is evident in the next two quotes, which provide accounts of leader's reframing of the collaborative story at critical times in a collaboration's journey. Following a change of funders and the inevitable revision of collaborative goals, leaders in the first quote choose to communicate these changes by way reframing, updating and broadcasting the collaboration's story so as to minimise the loss of support and momentum. Here good collaborations evidenced leader's willingness to capitalise on opportunities to retell and reshape the collaboration's vision.

> 'So, we changed the narrative basically, and I think that's probably, thinking about leadership competencies that's probably a really important one in the sector. How you drive that, how you tell the story so that the new narrative permeates and everyone is on the same page that takes real kind of communication skill I think.' (Inf_08, F, 54)

> '[I]f you want to lead a team or a collaboration you have to articulate where it is that you are going, your communication has to be on point, and when things change which is like all the time, you have to be quick at telling people why the change of direction, you can't leave people hanging. As a leader it's your responsibility to take people with you. [...] If you can't communicate you're not taking anyone with you.' (Inf_15, F, 57)

6.4.1.3 Shared values

In general terms, the data revealed that values played a critical role for social sector leadership, as one informant commented, '*for me something that is really key is that any social leadership role is values-based'* (Inf_13, F, 59). For another

informant '*values underpin leadership, values underpin collaboration'* (Inf_09, M, 60). Values also surfaced in specific collaborative ways. For example, according to the informant quoted below, working with values is a sign of collaborative competency. Here leaders are seen as the chief architects of organisational culture and organisational values.

> 'If someone is a competent social sector leader, they need to be authentic, have integrity and clear values, and set the tone and culture of their organisation. So, there's something about the competent leader creating those values, and creating that environment' (Inf_21, M, 48)

According to the data, shared values require dialogical action. The following quote describes the lengths taken to reach shared understanding and agreement of the collaboration's values.

> 'Yes, there is a shared sense of the values. So, one of the values that we have discussed at length, two actually. One was about equitable partnerships, and so we spent time unpacking what we meant by equitable partnerships, and we took time to talk about generous leadership. You know, we have these particular two values that's underpinning the work that we're doing.' (Inf_09, M, 60)

The next quote acknowledges that collaborations are rarely equal i.e., such that interactor power and influence differentials persist. Therefore, this quote confirms the importance of consensus, of shared-ness, and shared values for the establishing of effective collaborative relationships. The second quote places a premium on shared values, privileging these above technical competencies.

> 'Collaborations are rarely equal. [...] Working collaboratively is [therefore] about finding shared objectives and shared territory and shared values and a reason to be working together that's meaningful to all the partners.' (Inf_12, F, 61)

‘The important thing is that you share the collaborations values, you can learn the technical competencies. If you're keen and share the values, you can be looked after.’ (Inf_05, M, 50)

The study’s findings revealed leaders in good collaborations going to great lengths operationalising shared values. As such, shared values were observed being applied to numerous collaborative tasks such as onboarding (first quote). Shared values were observed as active features of collaborative decision-making (second quote).

‘So, actually in the set-up of [name of collaboration] we went through a big process of consultation and design to develop some shared values that were then written down. These shared values are engaged with by every new partner who comes on board with us. Every new partner then signs up for these values if they want to become part of this growing network. What I would say is we put a lot of effort on this onboarding process. We help them understand what they're trying to get from the collaboration. And by doing that we introduce them to the values and talk them through, so they become more meaningful than just some words on a page.’ (Inf_30, M, NS)

‘Yeah, I think as an organisation, we're very clear as to what we stand for, and what we're about. And we have a strap line, “love, hope, dignity”. And it's something we will often return to and re-visit. And it is very much. Yeah. So, it's a live thing. It’s not just something filed in a desk’ (Inf_15, F, 57)

In the next quote shared values were observed influencing the decision to refuse funding on the grounds that such funds would compromise the collaboration’s values. The second quote describes one’s public credibility in terms of behaviourally congruence values.

> 'And then we started to see that the funding was pointing in a different direction [...] So we took a decision to say well actually that's going to compromise our values in a collective sense. And that's not to the best interest of our beneficiaries. We had a strong collective belief on that. So, we kind of decided that was a sensible time to say "no thank you for the money."' (Inf_23, M, NS)

> 'Are your current donors, supports, funders, partners going to see you as a credible group of people that they would want to do business with, however it is that you want to describe it. That comes about as a result of your values, how you articulate those and transmit them to the outside world through your behaviour and how you interact with others.' (Inf_07, M, 42)

In summary, relational sufficiency surfaced in the data in such a way that trust, communication and shared values appeared sine qua non of good collaborations. High levels of trust were observed hastening collaborative returns, while leader's consistent trustworthy behaviours were seen to facilitate access and increase one's influence. Communication provided evidence of the importance of facilitation; the development of safe dialogical spaces; the criticality of regularised dialogue; the significance of listening; and the importance of communication competencies for vision casting and broadcasting. Shared values were seen as a key feature of good collaborations such that they became a touchstone for a myriad of collaborative decisions and tasks. Attention will now turn to explore relational deficiency which surfaced in bad collaboration accounts.

6.4.2 Bad collaborations: relational deficiency

The findings presented in this section will illustrate the impact of relational deficiency on leader's collaborative behaviour and will provide evidence from bad collaborations. Relational deficiency emerged in the data in relation to three 1st

order concepts: lack of trust, poor communication and lack of shared values (Figure 6.12). This section will now explore these 1st order concepts in detail.

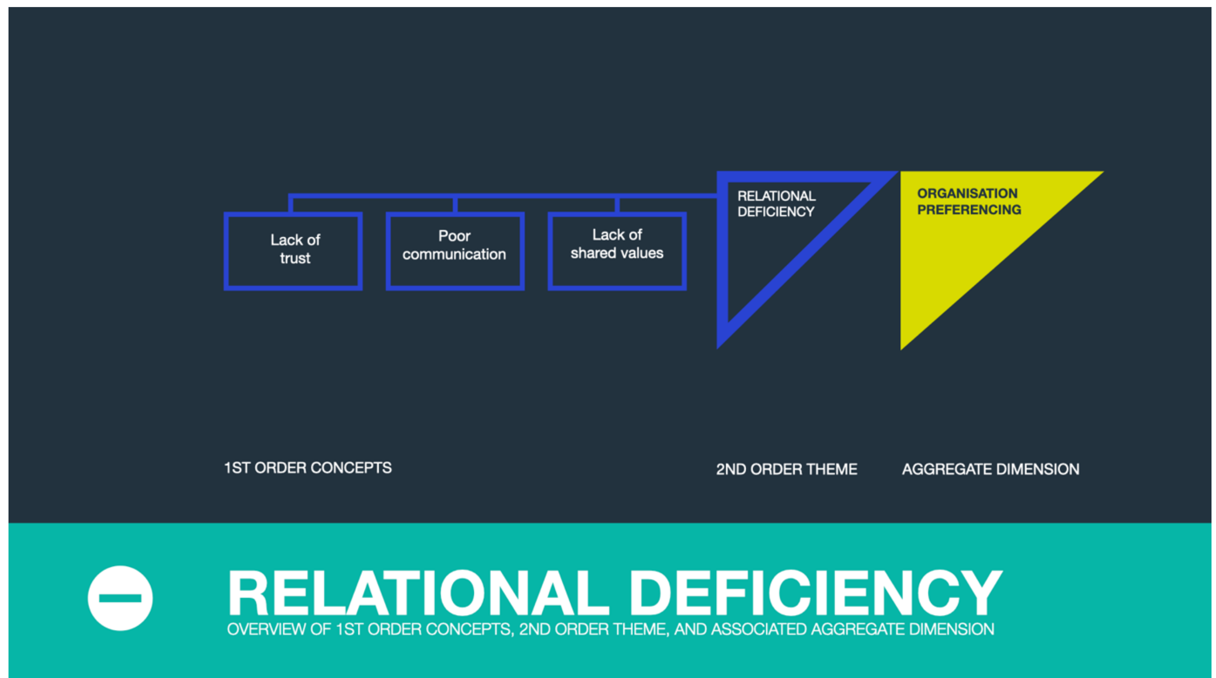

Figure 6. 12 – Relational deficiency thematic data structure: illustrating 1st order concepts in relation to the 2nd order theme and associated aggregate dimension

6.4.2.1 Lack of trust

Relational deficiency surfaced in the data in terms of a perceived lack of trust between interactors. Informants referred to a lack of trust in behavioural terms as evidenced below. In the first quote interactors contrary behaviour was observed derailing collaborative effort. In the second quote a lack of trust was observed to be insufficient to stop a collaboration achieve its goals, but it was enough to make the journey 'torturous' (Inf_11, F, 41).

> 'And we had a bunch of people that were saying all the right things. But the behaviours that were happening behind the scenes and outside of the meetings were completely opposite to what was happening in the meetings. It doesn't matter what we were collaborating about it was being derailed. It was being derailed for a number of reasons. Reason number one, [a] lack of trust.' (Inf_10, M, 46)

> ‘There was no trust, nobody trusted anybody to either do what they said they were going to do or their ability to do what they said they were going to do. I think there was a distinct lack of trust. [...] I think leadership is relational. Everything is relational. So, if you can't get that relation off the ground in a good way it's gonna be really difficult to create something that feels good, that everybody's proud of. I mean you get there in the end and you sort of have a drink at the end, you have a laugh about how difficult it was, but it's not a nice experience to go through that. It doesn't feel fulfilling, and you know it's just torturous in that kind of situation.’ (Inf_11, F, 41)

Lack of trust frequently surfaced in the data in relation to criticism, accusation, and blame, which recurred throughout bad collaboration narratives as evidenced below. Interactors were observed worrying that either they or their fellow interactors were not delivering along expected lines. These anxieties were observed inhibiting collaborative relations and undermining trust.

> ‘[P]erhaps this is maybe where it went wrong, who would do what was captured in a pretty extensive document, and then that kept on getting waved about at various periods during the thing, “Ah-ha, you haven't done that,” or “you were supposed to do that.”’ (Inf_05, M, 50)

> ‘It deteriorated to a point where there was no trust. It deteriorated to a point where there was open meetings where there were accusations of people lying, you know, it got to that point where we were saying “you never ever said that,” “no, I did,” “no, you never ever said that, go back through all of the meetings. It was never ever said.” “No, I did say it,” “no, you didn't.” You know there was a total breakdown of trust to a point where the local authority was actually engaging with the delivery partners without the knowledge of the lead partner because they didn't trust the lead partner to be getting the right messages back to the delivery partners.’ (Inf_09, M, 60)

> ‘So, they accused us of manipulating money. They've accused us of just loads of stuff, of just nonsense stuff, really. It's just been horrific.’ (Inf_22, F, 52)

Lack of trust also surfaced in bad collaborations in terms poor executive behaviours, such that trust was damaged as corrosive behaviours went unchallenged.

> ‘The final thing I'd mention is just behaviour, because at the senior level of those who signed the contract there was swearing and shouting and snarky emails and making youngest staff not feel as if they were performing well. And there were standards of behaviour that you should not be seeing in the charity world.’ (Inf_07, M, 42)

Lack of trust surfaced with particular frequency in relation to collaborations with State interactors. The first quote describes one informant’s experience of feeling mistrusted and unliked. The second quote describes another informant feeling undermined as a result of State structures and processes. This point is elaborated by the third informant who identifies the transactional quality of State relations as one reason for poor collaborative relations.

> ‘But there's this sort of general underpinning sense of they don't like us. They don't trust us. They don't want us. They think we're a bad idea. But they will make use of us. And that's a very uncomfortable, very unhealthy relationship, I suspect.’ (Inf_13, F, 59)

> ‘So, if I'm honest and this is kind of confidential, our [local government] has been one of the most difficult relationships. It is for everybody. And that's down to the structures and the culture of how they work and the way that they operate. And so, they constantly try to undermine, they like you to stay in your place.’ (Inf_03, F, 53)

‘And they [State interactor] want to pay people to do the stuff that they want people to do, and it's very very difficult. It's very transactional. There's a lot of the fundamental relationship, which is about it's actually a contractual arrangement. You have to report every three months and you get told off if you haven't said enough about X, Y or Z, or if you aren't ticking enough boxes and all the rest of it and there's always that feeling of you know they're going to take this away from you, we can cancel this at any point, you won't necessarily be a partner anymore, blah, blah, blah. So, this is very transactional, but this goes completely for me it goes completely against the key purpose of it, which is that it's intended to be a collaborative approach.’ (Inf_13, F, 59)

6.4.2.2 Poor communication

A common aspect of bad collaborations to surface in the data was the mediocrity of leaders listening competence. For one informant (first quote), having overseen the 360-degree feedback assessments for the entire senior collaborative team, poor listening emerged as a common deficit of the whole team. Similarly, leaders were frequently described as talking more than they listened (second quote).

‘I haven't even mentioned listening. Why haven't I mentioned listening? That's one of the key skills and behaviours, isn't it? And it's funny actually you say the word listening. That was the biggest, the biggest area of development for every senior leader, the biggest area for development in every single 360 pretty much that I read, “I don't think he listens.” “I don't think she's listening.” “I think he or she only hears what they want to hear,” and all that stuff.’ (Inf_10, M, 46)

‘And he would say you know someone would say, “I'll collaborate with you,” and then when you get in the room they just talk at you for three minutes. Then they'd talk for another 33 minutes, and then you leave not having contributed anything, but it's been badged as I'd love to collaborate with

you. Sometimes we say collaboration, but what we actually mean is something else.' (Inf_10, M, 46)

On several occasions male interactors were singled out dominating discussions, not listening, and failing to share their influence and bring others into this dialogical space thereby inhibiting collaborative dialogue (first quote). Consequently, poor listening was described as a disabling feature (i.e., a 'blocker') of collaborative success.

> 'There are some within the group who happen possibly to be men, who have a tendency to talk a lot and who take up that space and are not good at bringing others into that space. And that's one of the challenges we face you know. There are others of us who observed that, who acknowledged that, who do what we can to push against it quite deliberately and to make space for others. And that really I think is one of the things for me about this whole point about sharing your power and sharing that space. And it is one of the things that I know is going to be high on the agenda for this piece of [collaborative] work, because it's probably the single most obvious blocker to us making progress, because actually what happens is you don't hear from some of the best voices in the room [...], partly it's because they're not listening and partly it's because they seem to be I don't know less collegiate, I think. I guess it's two sides of the same coin, isn't it? They're not listening so much because actually they're not seeing this in quite the same way as the rest of us are.' (Inf_13, F, 59)

For the following informant, poor listening enabled a powerful interactor to dictate aspects of the collaboration's arrangements despite the discomfort felt by others.

> 'Oh, I don't think there was any listening at all going on their part. I think they had a very set idea about what they were doing, and they work very successfully in other projects in a particular way, and they wanted to roll out the same way of working within this partnership. And it wasn't what we

wanted, and it wasn't what we asked for. [...] It created huge amounts of work for everybody. So, I think they weren't listening. It was just about, let's do what we always do.’ (Inf_11, F, 41)

Bad collaborations were distinguishable from good collaborations in part by the quality, frequency and priority given to collective dialogue, with bad collaborations failing to make dialogue a collaborative priority. Commenting on why specific collaborations went awry, the next quotes point to a collective failure to discuss issues which were impeding the collaboration.

‘Well, I think that you know there will always be differences of perspective, and I think that actually they're better if they're aired and people say what they think and get stuff out on the table and do so in a way that doesn't assume that somebody else is wrong. It's just they need to acknowledge that sometimes there are different perspectives and there's no point pretending otherwise and hoping that things will sort themselves out because they don't.’ (Inf_04, M, 57)

‘And I do believe that it is a big role for leaders to put the elephant in the room onto the table and talk about it and to be explicit. It went so wrong and ended in a cul-de-sac because no one wanted to talk about things [...] It wasn’t that we didn’t talk, discussions just didn’t go anywhere. [...] we had endless meetings but failed to lift the lid and talk about where things were going wrong.’ (Inf_02, M, NS)

The next quote highlights the impact of poor communication at the intersection of sub-units within a large collaboration, were dialogue failed to rise above siloed and fragmented relations, resulting in client frustrations.

‘[T]he biggest challenge facing the collaboration was the intersection between the silos, because one team didn't talk to the other team that didn't talk to the other team. And then clients were getting fed up because

> they had five different points of contact in the same collaboration when they only wanted to speak to one person.' (Inf_10, M, 46)

Poor communication surfaced in the data in terms of a lack of transparency, such that informants expressed high levels of uncertainty and anxiety in response to a deficit of clear and open communication as evidenced in the quotes below. This anxiety appeared to be associated to the size of organisation, such that smaller organisations displayed greater levels of anxiety in response to a lack of transparency, as illustrated below.

> 'And you can end up sort of getting into all of those, into all of that thinking about well actually, is there something going really badly wrong in this relationship with the public sector or not, because they're just not very open about those sorts of things. So, I think we always end up second guessing ourselves about those sorts of things. And I think that sometimes makes it really difficult.' (Inf_14, F, 48)

> 'I think due to the nature of the huge capital project we weren't party to any of the time schedule discussions of what was happening, and we should have had all of that information. And then because we were such a small part of that cog things, big stuff would happen and change, and we weren't told. And then of course, that impacts on how we could then deliver what we were supposed to deliver. So, I think there's always [pause], if there's an inequality in scale and size and worth in terms of pounds you know, you're just automatically down at the bottom of that pile and not seen as an important part of what's going on. So, I think there's always a discussion around where you sit somewhere in that kind of priority list that we never discussed.' (Inf_11, F, 41)

6.4.2.3 Lack of shared values

Bad collaborations surfaced a lack of shared values such that interactors frequently failed to discuss values prior to or during the collaboration. Here,

values alignment was invariably assumed rather than discussed, thereby often concealing a contested and variegated portfolio of values.

> 'There's sort of an assumption that you're all in the sector so you're all kind of starting from the same value-base, which tends to be the assumption that people make [...] We would probably be much more effective if we examined our values and identified where the differences are and were honest about those differences but align behind the core shared purpose. We don't even know each other's value-base, we just assume that everybody is on the same page as us. Because you've got 20 different organisations all making that sort of implicit assumption without ever really thinking about it, that's where things go wrong.' (Inf_13, F, 59)

> 'You have to be very careful in assuming that everyone has the same values or the same interpretation of values as you do you know' (Inf_05, M, 50)

> 'I think we didn't have an explicit discussion about those things before we started working together. [...] I think we could have done that more explicitly.' (Inf_14, F, 48)

Further evidence is presented to illustrate that bad collaborations routinely failed to discuss values, preferring to assume congruence between espoused values and those in active use.

> 'Yeah. It's an interesting one, because if you look at them [values] superficially, you will say they're very aligned. So, it gets to the heart of how are values expressed? So, I think on one level you would have said we're all committed to employability outcomes. We're all committed to and believe in the value and potential of young people. So, if you stay up at that level you will say there was enormous alignment. There are then flavours as you start to dig down. If you think of it like a river, the ripples

all look very similar but there will be some currents underneath it where we're doing different things. [...] And I think that causes a rub. I think that back then one current was around how do you generate impact. And I think we had a sort of an implicit at first, later explicit theory of change which was actually different from their theory of change. So, they were delivering things that was within their belief and values about how you get change, [and] we were saying, "why aren't you doing this, why aren't you doing that?" Because we had a different belief about how you do change.' (Inf_26, M, 35)

'Everyone talked about compassion as if it was a real value [of the collaboration]. It was on all the official bumf, but no one thought to ask how present it really was. [...] It was present, but low down in the culture because other values were negating it, things like bureaucracy, competition, all those kinds of things.' (Inf_03, F, 53)

Relational deficiency also surfaced in bad collaborations in terms of interactors losing touch with espoused values (first quote). Maintaining collaborative values appeared particularly challenging (second quote) such that practical considerations meant that values appeared to get lost in translation, amidst the urgency of achieving organisational goals. For the second informant this predicament is assumed a particularly social sector issue.

'[T]he values of the collaboration when you looked at them [...] a lot [of interactors] didn't adhere to them, they kind of got lost.' (Inf_09, M, 60)

'I have a sense that if you are a social leader, honesty and truth sort of becomes a bit bound up in that. And that's quite a tricky place for a leader because as a leader you're very often having to make decisions which are about achievement and reaching a goal and all of those things. So, you can very easily, I have to be careful what I say here because it's, it's rather exposing, but you can sometimes sacrifice honesty and truth because you are cutting corners and you think you know which is the greater evil and

> you think I've got to achieve my goal and so many more people will live because of it, and if I tell a little lie here or whatever. And I just think that that is very specific to the social sector.' (Inf_01, F, 63)

Additionally, a lack of shared values also surfaced in the data in terms of a 'mismatch of values', as observed below. The first quote describes a critical values misalignment between facilitator and senior team. The second quote acknowledges the impact and challenge that misalignment represents, affirming that while not always terminal, misalignment is difficult to get past.

> 'So, I would say the kind of reasons it didn't kind of work was a kind of mismatch between the values of the Chair and the kind of values of most of the individuals and organisations who kind of comprised the collective.' (Inf_02, M, NS)

> 'I think it's pretty hard to get past values that aren't the same. That's not to say it's impossible it's just very hard to do, and we didn't do it at all well.' (Inf_11, F, 41)

In summary, relational deficiency surfaced in the data in terms of a lack of trust, poor quality communication and a lack of shared values. Trust was observed in behavioural terms such that contrariness, criticism and State transactionalism all eroded deposits of trust. Poor communication surfaced in terms of poor listening, scarce collaborative dialogue and a lack of safe dialogical spaces, and poor transparency. A lack of shared values was evident in terms of assumed alignment, a priori assumptions, losing touch with the espoused values, and a critical mismatch of interactor values. Next, Section 6.5 offers a brief comparative review of the three themes as they appeared across the two collaboration scenarios.

6.5. Comparative summary of themes across the two datasets

This section provides a summative presentation of the three themes and is organised comparatively according to good and bad collaborations (see Figure 6.13). This section will consider in turn, leader's competency, multiple accountabilities and relationship features.

Figure 6. 13 – Summative comparison of the main themes: organised according to good and bad collaborations inclusive of 2nd order themes and 1st order concepts

6.5.1 Theme one: leader's competency

The study's findings revealed that leader's competency emerged differently across good and bad collaborations, such that good collaborations surfaced competence sufficiency and bad collaborations revealed competence deficiency. Critical to informants understanding of competency in collaborative settings was the identification of competence switching. Leaders in good collaborations exhibited the proficient use of switching and updating mechanisms, whereas leaders in bad collaborations expressed an over-reliance on a small number of intraorganisational competencies such that competence-use in bad

collaborations failed to take adequate account of the interorganisational contextual contingencies, unlike their good collaboration counterparts.

Similarly, accounts of competence in good collaborations emphasised the social sector's distinctive character, and in turn the distinctive nature of social sector leadership. Here, competent social sector leaders sought to apply their competency in ways that took account of the social sector's distinctive characteristics. Bad collaboration narratives did not surface this competency feature.

Competent leaders in good collaborations exhibited high levels of intrinsic motivation, which surfaced in terms of a passion for the social sector. Additionally, these leaders expressed a prosocial ethicality which informed leader's competent performance in collaborative settings. By contrast, these features (intrinsic motivation and prosocial ethicality) rarely surfaced in the accounts of bad collaborations. These narratives instead revealed in competence deficiency terms a paucity of quality leadership. Bad collaborations revealed a lack of high quality and affordable leadership development opportunities within the sector, and associatively a lack of specific social sector leadership theorisation. Together, poor leadership development and insufficient social sector leadership modelling meant that social sector leaders in bad collaborations were invariably leading in under-theorised spaces. Under these conditions, leaders were observed utilising non-social sector leadership models and competency frameworks that were derived from intraorganisational case studies. Bad collaborations also surfaced as a consequence of systemic underinvestment in leadership development leader's *felt* inexperience, accompanied by a lack of confidence in one's leadership competency.

Table 6. 1 – Theme one - leader's competence: a comparative review

Good collaborations	Bad collaborations

• Competence switching
• Competence updating
 	
• Social sector salience
  ○ Social sector distinctiveness
  ○ Intrinsic motivation (sector passion)
  ○ Prosocial ethicality
	• Decontextualised application of competencies
	• Competence stasis
	• Poor quality leadership
	  ○ Lack of social sector leadership development opportunities
	  ○ Lack of social sector leadership theory building
	  ○ Lack of leadership confidence

6.5.2 Theme two: multiple accountabilities

Findings across the two datasets revealed that collaborations were influenced equivocally by leaders' responses to multiple accountabilities, producing balanced accountabilities (i.e., optimality) in good collaborations and unbalanced accountabilities (i.e., suboptimality) in bad collaborations. Good collaboration narratives exercised a critical accountabilities optimality such that organisational, missional, and collaborative priorities were balanced whenever possible, and that mission priorities were privileged when parity was compromised. For good collaborations, this multiple accountabilities dynamic was openly acknowledged, allowing for resolutions to be jointly discussed. In bad collaborations, multiple accountabilities were not openly acknowledged and, as such, systemic solutions failed to materialise. As a consequence, bad collaborations observed a suboptimal balance such that organisational priorities were privileged at the expense of parity, and the loss of mission's premium. Suboptimality also surfaced in bad collaborations in association with organisational funding anxieties and a perceived threat to organisational sustainability. Good collaborations were characteristic of accountabilities optimality that privileged client-centredness and mission-based outcomes. In contrast, bad collaborations were characterised by

an accountabilities suboptimality such that self-interest and organisation-based prioritisation prevailed.

Differences across good and bad collaboration narratives could also be explained in terms of leader's responses to self-interested opportunistic behaviour. Leaders of good collaborations exhibited restraint and resisted opportunistic behaviours, choosing instead, for instance, to act with generosity and a willingness to empower others. Additionally, good collaborations provided examples of leaders who introduced structural and processual accountability mitigations when these did not exist. In contrast, leaders of bad collaborations were observed exercising self-interested opportunistic behaviours such that leaders were observed hoarding reputational advantage and financial gains. Leaders of bad collaborations were also observed violating interactor convention and exercised contrary leadership behaviours in support of organisational advantage.

Table 6. 2 – Theme two - multiple accountabilities: a comparative review

Good collaborations	Bad collaborations
• Balanced accountabilities (optimality) o Managed accountabilities o Resisted opportunistic behaviours	• Unbalanced accountabilities (suboptimality) o Organisational prioritisation o Opportunistic behaviours

6.5.3 Theme three: relationship features

Influenced by Morgan and Hunt's (1994) Key Mediating Variable model, the study revealed that relational features surfaced differently across the two datasets. As such, good collaborations demonstrated high levels of trust, communication and shared values; while bad collaborations identified low levels of trust, communication and shared values. In good collaborations, trust proved a vital contributor to collaborative success, such that leaders gave trust the time and attention needed to develop it. In good collaborations, trust was invariably expressed in behavioural terms such that leaders acted consistently in a

trustworthy manner. In contrast, leaders of bad collaborations were frequently observed acting in ways contrary to the development of trust, such as displaying accusation and criticism of fellow interactors. Bad collaborations contained instances of intimidation at senior level, with profound implications for others. Cross-sector collaborations with State interactors were frequently associated in bad collaborations with mistrust and a focus on transactional approaches to collaborating.

Communication surfaced differently across good and bad collaboration narratives, such that good collaborations prioritised timely and clear communication. Good collaborations singled out facilitation, regularised dialogue and the creation of safe dialogical spaces. Additionally, leader's listening surfaced as a chief aspect of communication in good collaborations. In these contexts leaders were also observed paying close attention to their communicative performance across the full suite of leadership activities, such as vision casting and broadcasting. By comparison, leaders in bad collaborations exhibited a mediocrity of communication performance, with recurring emphasis being given to leader's poor listening, which was understood as a major blockage to collaborative success. Bad collaborations invariably failed to prioritise dialogue and, as such left much that was underexposed to ferment. Bad collaborations also displayed poor and infrequent dialogue at the intersection of sub-units within collaborations.

Shared values appeared differently across good and bad collaborations. Leaders in good collaborations surfaced as exemplars as well as curators of organisational and collaborative values. Good collaborations provided the necessary dialogical practice to ensure that value alignment was frequently discussed. Additionally, good collaborations were observed operationalising shared values such that they became the touchstone to guide strategic decision making. In contrast, bad collaborations failed to create adequate dialogical opportunities to surface the state of value alignment. As such, assumed alignment concealed divergent value portfolios, which invariably slowed the pace

of collaborative output. Bad collaborations were also observed losing touch with their espoused values, which were invariably sacrificed for pragmatic gains. Bad collaborations surfaced the recurring trend of mismatched values such that, for example, the lead interactor possessed values which in critical terms diverged from the rest of the senior team.

Table 6. 3 – Theme three – relationship features: a comparative review

Good collaborations	Bad collaborations
• Relationship sufficiency o Trust o Communication o Shared values	• Relationship deficiency o Lack of trust o Poor communication o Lack of shared values

This comparative analysis is importantly summarised in Table 6.4. This table presents the reader with the study's main findings across good and bad collaborations, drawing these together under the three themes of leader's competency, multiple accountabilities, and relationship features. In this way the table presents 1st order concepts, concise thematic descriptions, illustrative informant extracts, and additional 1st order concept details. For the first time in the study this Table 6.4 brings all this analysis together and therefore represents a crucial aspect of the findings chapter.

Table 6. 4 – Summary of thematic findings comparatively presented

GOOD COLLABORATIONS	BAD COLLABORATIONS
LEADER'S COMPETENCY KEY: **1st ORDER CONCEPTS** / Description / *'Illustrative informant extract'* / **additional 1st order concept details**	
COMPETENCE SWITCHING Competence switching based on the specificity of contextual contingencies *'INFORMANT: [You] hand pick your competencies to fit the situation. [...] Really good charity leaders do this almost instinctively, right. The good ones change the way they lead and play for the audience. RESEARCHER: So, competencies are contextually contingent? INFORMANT: Yeah. [...] good leaders' step between competencies as the situation changes.* (Inf_06, M, 42)	**POOR COMPETENCE SWITCHING** Over-reliance on generic and single-organisation competencies *'I think it came as a complete surprise that we challenged him. I don't think he thought, I don't think it crossed his mind for a minute that he wasn't in [organisation name] now [...] and ought to scroll through those competencies and choose a more collegiate way to lead.'* (Inf_18, M, 42)
Competence updating Competence is dynamic, developmental and requires frequent updating *'Then no leader is in the privileged position of being static. So, you can't just say well I'll develop three skills […] because tomorrow the world will be different. So, your competency very quickly runs out.'* (Inf_01, F, 63)	**Poor competence updating** Over-reliance on established competencies observed negating competence updating and undermining collaborative outcomes *'[When a] collaboration is going through a bad period [...] it's usually because of weak systems and a lack of core leadership competencies. [...] [Just] because the person is an inspiring, articulate social justice warrior who set up this NGO and has created something, you can't not talk about basic competencies around leadership [...] because in the absence of them [...] there is a risk of failure'* (Inf_07, M, 42)
Organisation-based vs collaboration-based competencies Derivative organisational competencies are observed to be insufficient in collaborative settings *'They don't tell you this on the [name of leadership course], but you can't lead an alliance like you would your own organisation; you've got to listen more, you've got to be collegiate, play well with others, work more behind the scenes, and use those influencing and communication skills [...]'* (Inf_14, F, 48)	**POOR QUALITY LEADERSHIP** Bad collaborations were associated with poor quality leadership, and were frequently expressed in terms of - a paucity of sector specific leadership development opportunities and a lack of sector specific leadership theory building - resulting in a lack of leadership confidence

GOOD COLLABORATIONS

SOCIAL SECTOR SALIENCE

Collaborative competency was observed containing an aspect of social sector salience such that sectoral distinctiveness, intrinsic sector motivations, and prosocial ethicality were all emphasised

The distinctive character of social sector leadership

Informants perceived the social sector and its leadership as substantively and sectorally distinct from other sectors

'That's our job, we're delivering a social mission, we're not making money for shareholders or meeting the public duty. We're doing something quite different. So, the positions that we occupy as leaders in that is different and we have to recognize that it's different.' (Inf_08, F, 54)

Intrinsic social sector motivation

Social sector leader's competency conceptualised in association with sector specific intrinsic motivation – particularly sector passion

'But I think that passion is a really important thing because if there is something about our sector which kind of hangs it together it's like generally everybody who works here cares about their role in it. So, if you're the leader in that context you have to be alongside them as somebody who cares equally [...] It's hard to be seen like competent if you're leading without that [passion]' (Inf_05, M, 50)

Prosocial ethicality

Social sector ethicality (values) and competency were observed tautologically such that competency acquired a prosocial dimension

'I think in our sector the values have to be, are expected by our donors and our beneficiaries and our funders to be much more rooted in social justice and equality.' (Inf_13, F, 59)

BAD COLLABORATIONS

Paucity of leadership development opportunities

Lack of affordable high quality leadership development opportunities within the sector

'I think that I would identify a lack of training, capacity building and development on [leadership] skills [...]. I don't think many of the individuals had received significant impactful, high-quality training [...] I think that was one of the reasons we were seeing some of this failure.' (Inf_07, M, 42)

Paucity of sector specific theory building

Social sector leaders are left to lead through the utility of non-SS theories with the consequence of social sector leaders leading in sectorally under-theorised spaces

'At the moment there are two particular challenges around leadership. The first is there is very little investment in professional development within the sector. [...] The second is there's very little measurements around what leadership looks like outside of US market models. There's not much that I've really seen that has been well evidenced and that's a good example of what leadership means in the sector.' (Inf_30, M, NS)

Low levels of social sector leadership confidence

Under-theorised social sector leadership was associated with consequentially low levels of social sector leadership confidence

'[This] is very much from where I sit and the people I mix with in terms of senior [social sector] leadership, there's quite a lot of anxiety or lack of confidence.' (Inf_12, F, 61)

GOOD COLLABORATIONS	BAD COLLABORATIONS

MULTIPLE ACCOUNTABILITIES

KEY**: 1ST ORDER CONCEPTS** / Description / *'Illustrative informant extract'* / **additional 1st order concept details**

GOOD COLLABORATIONS

MANAGED ACCOUNTABILITIES

Leader's collaborative competency contains an accountability feature concerned with securing an optimal balance of organisation, collaboration, and mission-based accountabilities/priorities. Optimality was characterised by parity between these multiple accountabilities with primacy (in good collaborations) given to mission priorities.

'You've got to hold the position and the well-being of your organisation while managing the expectations and broader outcomes of the purpose of the collaboration. So that's hard. That's a really fine balancing act I think.' (Inf_22, F, 52)

'So, a charity's legal purpose is not to sustain the organisation, right. It's written down somewhere in their Memorandum and Articles that they exist on behalf of a [...] defined charitable purpose, [...] so actually I think fundamentally social sector leadership to me […] means putting the delivery of their mission before the organisation's delivery of the mission. […] They would think about the organisation

as a necessary but temporary vehicle for organising work that needs to be done for the benefit of people that they're there to serve' (Inf_06, M, 42)

RESISTED OPPORTUNISTIC BEHAVIOURS

Optimality is supported via the resisting of opportunism and self-interest. (Financial and reputational advantage typical social sector sources of opportunism which undermine collective relations and effort.)

'I think competent leaders forcing themselves into some sort of meaningful accountability, that's not very visible, but I think it's what you kind of need to do otherwise it's just too much to expect yourself to act perfectly when you get

BAD COLLABORATIONS

ORGANISATIONAL PRIORITISATION

Favouring organisational accountabilities/priorities, leader's collaborative competency is compromised by a suboptimal balance of organisation, collaboration, and mission-based accountabilities. This suboptimality was expressed via the privileging of organisational accountability over other accountabilities/priorities

'I think there is a real risk in the social sector that people become concerned with the organisation rather than the cause [mission]. [...] They become driven by the interests of the organisation rather than the cause itself.' (Inf_04, M, 57)

OPPORTUNISTIC BEHAVIOURS

Leader's opportunistic behaviours were expressed in terms of a violation of typical collaborative role expectations – in favour of organisational and/or professional advantage

'So, people came around that for the purpose of the funding opportunity not because they wanted to change the world. [...] it means that they'll work together in that way for the length of time that the funding is available and no longer.' (Inf_30, M, NS)

GOOD COLLABORATIONS	BAD COLLABORATIONS
privileged access to a funding conversation or a policy conversation' (Inf_06, M, 42)	

RELATIONSHIP FEATURES

KEY: **1ST ORDER CONCEPTS** / Description / *'Illustrative informant extract'* / **additional 1st order concept details**

GOOD COLLABORATIONS

TRUST
Trust appeared the sine qua non of leader's collaborative competency.

'I would describe collaborations like this, it doesn't happen without trust. You know collaboration is about a group of people with diverse opinions and views and backgrounds coming together to create something [...] for that to happen effectively there needs to be trust' (Inf_10, M, 46)

COMMUNICATION
Amongst the communication competencies facilitation, safe dialogical spaces, listening, and vision casting/broadcasting were singled out as key to leader's collaborative competency

Facilitation
'[Being] able to facilitate collaborative dialogue and unleash the creative potential of an organisation for me is now a core leadership skill [...] We want to make collaborations more effective. [...] And you know the skills of a leader to be able to facilitate those conversations for me is now core business (Inf_10, M, 46)

The strategic use of safe dialogical spaces
'We were partners who kind of recognized that there were organisational tensions involved. We made the tension between the organisational and the collective interests visible, and acknowledged that and said, "look this stuff's going to happen, let's make sure we talk about it".' (Inf_06, M, 42)

BAD COLLABORATIONS

LACK OF TRUST
Contrariness, criticism/accusation, and poor executive behaviours all eroded trust between interactors.

Contrariness
'And we had a bunch of people that were saying all the right things. But the behaviours that were happening behind the scenes and outside of the meetings were completely opposite to what was happening in the meetings.

It doesn't matter what we were collaborating about it was being derailed. (Inf_10, M, 46)

Accusation
'[Perhaps] this is maybe where it went wrong, who would do what was captured in a pretty extensive document, and then that kept on getting waved about at various periods during the thing, "Ah-ha, you haven't done that".' (Inf_05, M, 50)

Poor behaviours
'[...] at the senior level [...] there was swearing and shouting and snarky emails [...] And there were standards of behaviour that you should not be seeing in the workplace' (Inf_07, M, 42)

POOR COMMUNICATION
Leaders expressed mediocre communication performativity – with poor listening and collaborative dialogue singled out

GOOD COLLABORATIONS	BAD COLLABORATIONS

GOOD COLLABORATIONS

Listening
'[We] were speeding through organisational development and fast forwarding through stuff that should have taken us two or three years to make happen. And that all came down to the quality of the listening really.' (Inf_08, F, 54)

SHARED VALUES
Shared values were observed a key feature of leader's competency, which was dialogically enabled and given operational & strategic significance.

Values – a constituent of social sector leadership
'[For] me something that is really key is that any social leadership role is values based.' (Inf_13, F, 59)

Shared values required dialogic action
'Yes, there is a shared sense of the values. So, one of the values that we have discussed at length [...] was about equitable partnerships, and so we spent time unpacking what we meant by equitable partnerships, and we took time to talk about generous leadership.' (Inf_09, M, 60)

Shared values are given operational/strategic significance
'So, actually in the set-up of [name of collaboration] we went through a big process of consultation and design to develop some shared values [...]. These shared values are engaged with by every new partner who comes on board with this. Every new partner then signs up for these values if they want to become part of this growing network. What I would say is we put a lot of effort on this onboarding process. We help them understand what they're trying to get from the collaboration. And by doing that we introduce them to the values and talk them through, so they become more meaningful than just some words on a page.' (Inf_30, M, NS)

BAD COLLABORATIONS

Poor listening
And it is one of the things that I know is going to be high on the agenda for this piece of [collaborative] work, because it's probably the single most obvious blocker to us making progress, because actually what happens is you don't hear from some of the best voices in the room' (Inf_13, F, 59)

Low priority given to collaborative dialogue
And I do believe that it is a big role for leaders to put the elephant in the room onto the table and talk about it and to be explicit. It went so wrong and ended in a cul-de-sac because no one wanted to talk about things [...] we had endless meetings but failed to lift the lid and talk about where things were going wrong. (Inf_02, M, NS)

LACK OF SHARED VALUES
Values frequently failed to be adequately discussed dyadically or collaboratively. Differences between espoused and in-use values emerged, as did the frequent subordination of values to pragmatic concerns and possible gains. Additionally, a mismatch of values was also highlighted.

Failure to discuss values
'There's sort of an assumption that you're all in the sector so you're all kind of starting from the same value-base, which tends to be the assumption that people make [...] We would probably be much more effective if we examined our values and identified where the differences are and were honest about those differences' (Inf_13, F, 59)

Difference between espoused values and those in actual use
'Everyone talked about compassion as if it was a real value [of the collaboration]. It was on all the official bumf, but no one thought to ask how present it really was. [...] It was present, but low down in the culture because other values were negating it, things like bureaucracy, competition, all those kinds of things.' (Inf_03, F, 53)

GOOD COLLABORATIONS	BAD COLLABORATIONS
	Values sacrificed for pragmatic ends *'I have to be careful what I say here, because it's, it's rather exposing, but you can sometimes sacrifice honesty and truth and those things because you are cutting corners and you think you know which is the greater evil; I've got to achieve my goal and so many more people will live because of it, and I tell a little lie here or whatever. And I just think that that is very specific to the social sector.'* (Inf_01, F, 63) **Mismatch of interactor values** '*I think it's pretty hard to get past values that aren't the same. That's not to say it's impossible it's just very hard to do, and we didn't do it at all well.'* (Inf_11, F, 41)

In summary, the findings illustrate that good and bad collaborations are different in ways directly related to the study's three main themes of leader's competency, multiple accountabilities, and relationship features. The next section (Section 6.6) introduces the aggregate dimensions that have been theoretically abstracted from the data and captured in Figures 6.14 and 6.15. The chapter ends with a chapter summary (Section 6.7).

6.6 Aggregate dimensions

As has previously been stated, good and bad collaborations were described by informants differently in ways directly related to the three main themes of the study. Building on this evidence, the current section introduces two aggregate dimensions which have been theoretically abstracted from the data and are presented in Figures 6.14 and 6.15. The aggregate dimensions parsimoniously distil the data to two distinct leadership-in-collaboration approaches and are referred to here as mission-preferencing and organisation-preferencing. These will now be considered in turn.

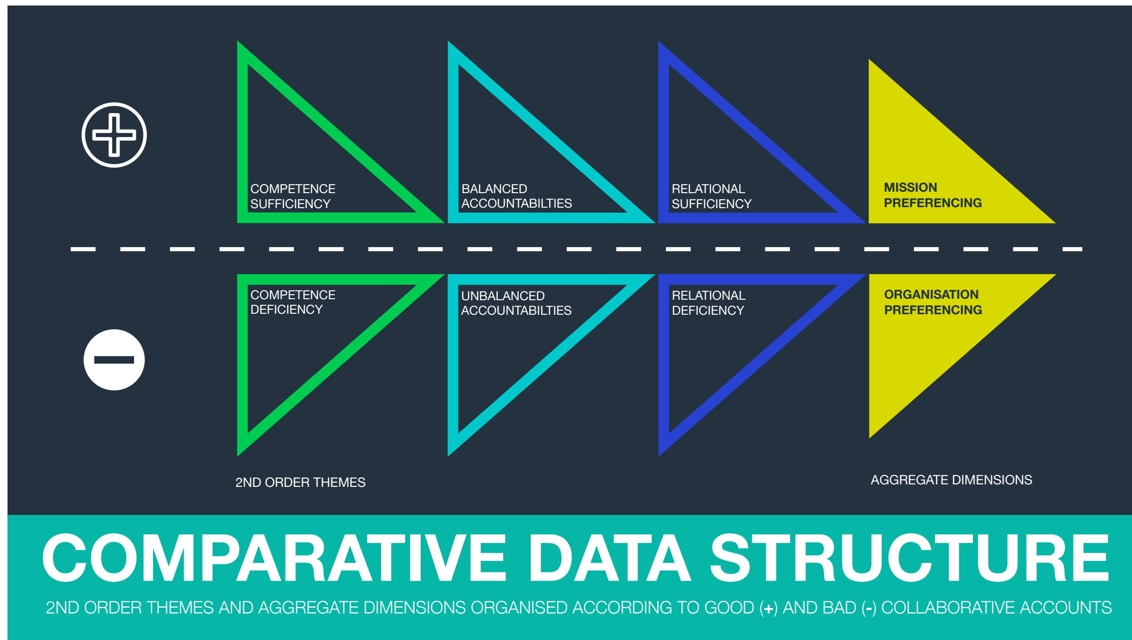

Figure 6. 14 – Summative thematic data structure: illustrating 2nd order themes and aggregate dimensions organised according to good (+) and bad (-) collaboration accounts

6.6.1 Introducing preferencing

The study's analysis surfaced a conceptual diptych at the centre of collaborations ascribing a critical role to leader's preferencing behaviours. Preferencing, as conceptualised here, parsimoniously describes the activation and subsequent interplay of the study's three main themes and asserts this accounts for differences between good and bad collaborations (see Figure 6.15).

Structurally, this section will provide the reader with a brief statement describing mission- or organisation-preferencing in relation to the study's three main themes, accompanied by a sample quote to illustrate this relationality.

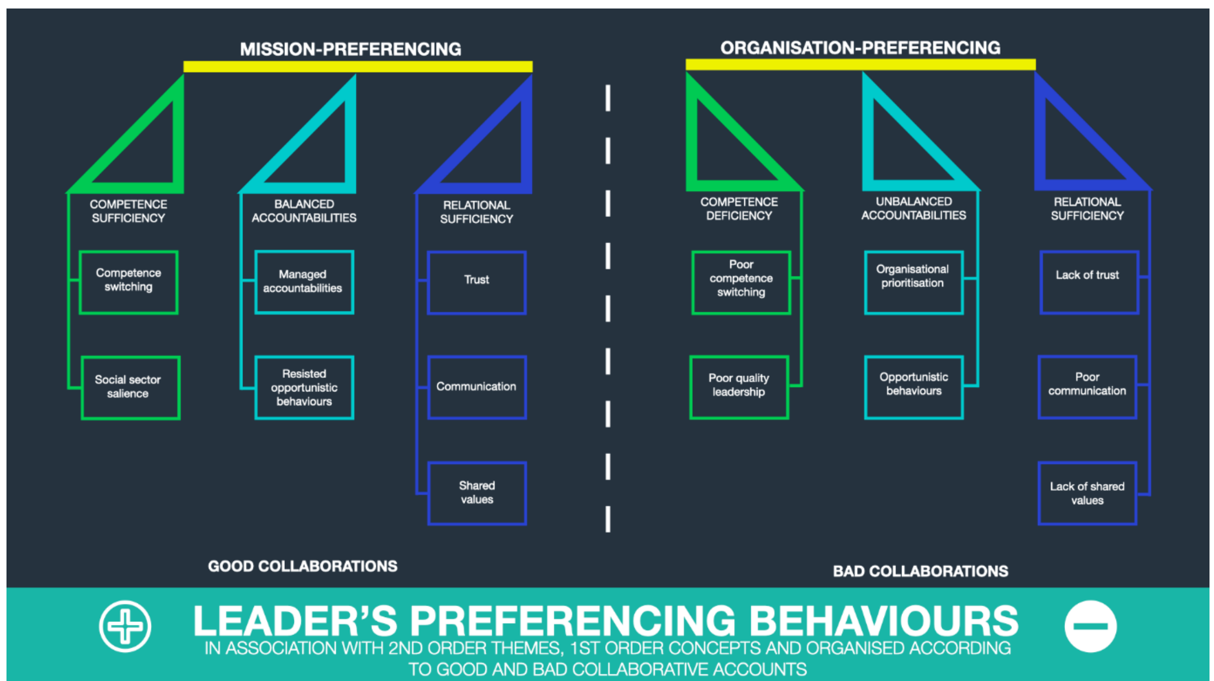

Figure 6. 15 – Aggregate dimensions: leader's preferencing behaviours in association with 2nd order themes and 1st order concepts and organised according to good and bad collaborative accounts

6.6.2 Mission-preferencing and the three themes

6.6.2.1 Mission-preferencing and leader's competency

The leader's competency theme identified competence switching as a general operational feature of collaborative competency. According to the data, collaborative competency is predicated on the switching of individual competencies in response to changing institutional contexts (i.e., intraorganisational and interorganisational). Mission-preferencing therefore rests on: a) the importance of competency's essential adaptive contingency; b) the situated switching of organisational and collaborative competencies as one steps between organisational and collaborative fields of practice; c) the distinct and essential character of the social sector and its leadership; and d) the relevance of leader's intrinsic motivation expressed in terms of a passion for the social sector, set alongside an appreciation of the social sector's essential prosociality.

Sample quote

‘They don’t tell you this on the [name of leadership course], but **you can’t lead an alliance like you would your own organisation**; you’ve got to listen more, you’ve got to be collegiate, play well with others, work more behind the scenes, and use those influencing and communication skills [...]’ (Inf_14, F, 48)

6.6.2.2 Mission-preferencing and multiple accountabilities

A striking feature of good collaborations to emerge from the data concerned the management of multiple accountabilities. Social sector leadership in collaborations was observed exercised at the intersection of organisational and collaborative accountabilities, with mission-based thinking playing a deterministic role in managing this intersectionality toward an optimal balance of accountabilities.

In short, mission-preferencing appears responsive to the multiple accountabilities challenge facing social sector leaders and prioritises the role of mission in optimally establishing and maintaining organisation-and-collaboration accountabilities. Inter alia, good collaborations surfaced a dynamic institutional concomitancy – organisational and collaborative – in which the accountabilities tension was mitigated through a direct appeal to the synergies coalescing around jointly held mission-centred objectives, thereby dinting the pull of short-term organisational opportunism. In this way, mission-based priorities (often expressed in client-centred terms) were observed mediating good collaborations (and collaborative competency) and kept self- and organisational-interests in check.

Sample quote

‘I'm always amazed when I look at people within the sector **how you balance the collective social impact** that they’ve collaboratively striving towards **with organisational impact and sustainability**, because those two things often don't fit very well together. And **the very best and competent leaders they handle that really well**.’ (Inf_30, M, NS)

6.6.2.3 Mission-preferencing and relationship features

Utilising aspects of the KMV model, the study takes account of three relationship features which were identified in informant’s perceptions of good collaborations. In this way the study offers a series of relational annotations which expand our understanding of good collaborations from a relational social sector perspective.

Sample quotes

Trust
‘I would describe collaborations like this, it doesn't happen without trust.’ (Inf_10, M, 46)

Communication
‘I’ve had many many of these conversations with senior leaders of big [charitable] brands during the time that I've done that sort of work, that **being able to facilitate collaborative dialogue and unleash the creative potential of an organisation for me is now a core leadership skill’** (Inf_10, M, 46)

Shared values
‘I think all the essential values were strongly the same I think in terms of what the senior [leaders] in the partnership brought to the collaboration. I think they are out putting the beneficiaries first and wanting to provide quality services for individuals that make real difference to them’ (Inf_14, F, 48)

In short, mission-preferencing parsimoniously describes the activation of the study's main themes. Mission-preferencing highlights collaboration competency's adaptive contingency. It affirms the significance of mission priorities for managing an optimal balance of organisation and collaboration accountabilities. Mission-preferencing also affirms the interrelationality of collaborations such that trust, communication and shared values plays a deterministic role in the development of good collaborations. The next section will present organisation-preferencing and complete collaboration competency's conceptual diptych.

6.6.3 Organisation-preferencing and the three themes

As already stated, this study has surfaced a conceptual diptych at the centre of collaborations (both good and bad), ascribing a central role to leader's preferencing behaviours that parsimoniously describes the activation of the study's three main themes and accounts for the development of good and bad collaborations.

Structurally, this section will provide a brief statement describing the interface between organisation-preferencing and each of the study's three main themes and will be accompanied by sample-quote(s) to illustrate this relationality.

6.6.3.1 Organisation-preferencing and leader's competency

Leader's collaborative competency surfaced in the data in ways which revealed a surprising role for competence switching. Organisation-preferencing describes poor competence switching in terms of an over-reliance on intraorganisational and generic non-social sector competencies that were de-contextually applied to collaborative settings. Leader's over-reliance on intraorganisational competencies were accompanied by the presence of competence stasis i.e., poor and infrequent competence updating. These features revealed an aprioristic

isomorphic fixation with the organisational and the generic when conceptualising collaborative competency.

Sample quote

Poor competence switching
'I think it came as a complete surprise that we challenged him. I don't think he thought, **I don't think it crossed his mind for a minute that he wasn't in [organisation name] now [...] and he ought to scroll through those competencies and choose a more collegiate way to lead**.' (Inf_18, M, 42)

Organisation-preferencing was associated with a lack of social sector-specific leadership development and theorising. As a direct result of this, social sector leaders were expressed low levels of leadership confidence. If mission-preferencing described the adaptive and contingent stepping between organisational and collaborative fields of practice with switched competencies, organisation-preferencing obfuscated and concealed this vital heuristic, normatively privileging the application of organisational competencies irrespective of institutional settings.

Sample quote

Poor quality leadership
'I think that I would identify a lack of training, capacity building and development on [leadership] skills across the board and at senior leadership as being an issue that immediately strikes you. I don't think many of the individuals had received significant impactful, high-quality training or other support in running an NGO. I think that was one of the reasons we were seeing some of this failure.' (Inf_07, M, 42)

6.6.3.2 Organisation-preferencing and multiple accountabilities

An interesting feature of bad collaborations to emerge from the data concerned the failure to manage the balance of multiple accountabilities. Leadership was exercised at the intersection of organisational and collaborative accountability systems with organisation-based thinking playing a deterministic role in managing this intersectionality toward a suboptimal balance of accountabilities. Suboptimality revealed a critical preferential selection of organisational priorities. As such, organisation-preferencing describes an organisation-first rationale which downgraded mission priorities. Organisation-preferencing also surfaced in terms of opportunistic behaviours, such that interactors were observed collaborating primarily as a means to secure organisational benefits such as reputational advantage or resource gains.

Sample quotes

Organisational prioritisation

'I think there is a real risk in the social sector that people become concerned with the organisation rather than the cause [mission]. [...] They become driven by the interests of the organisation rather than the cause itself.' (Inf_04, M, 57)

Organisational prioritisation

'I think they're still coming at it from a point of view of you know, I'm a leader of my own organisation and my power is embedded in that, and my responsibility is to my organisation not to the collaboration.' (Inf_13, F, 59)

Opportunistic behaviours

'So, people came around that for the purpose of the funding opportunity not because they wanted to change the world.' (Inf_30, M, NS)

6.6.3.3 Organisation-preferencing and relationship features

Organisation-preferencing was observed forestalling collaboration as interactors exhibited low levels of trust, communication and shared values. It transpired that organisational prioritisation inhibited collaborative interaction and, as such, deterministically frustrated collaboration and its relationality. Motivated by organisation-first thinking, interactors were observed displaying contrariness and levelling blame such that trust, and collaboration commitment was undermined. The mediocrity of interactor's communicative performativity further obstructed collaboration such that, for example, mediocre listening was considered an inhibitor to collaborative progress as interactor's failed to 'hear from some of the best voices in the room' (Inf_13, F, 59). Concerning shared values, organisation-preferencing described accounts of misaligned values, which created a critical dissonance that invariably went unchallenged, particularly when organisational advantage was at stake.

Sample quotes

Lack of trust
'There was no trust, nobody trusted anybody to either do what they said they were going to do or their ability to do what they said they were going to do.' (Inf_10, M, 46)

Poor communication
'It wasn't that we didn't talk, discussions just didn't go anywhere [...] we had endless meetings but failed to lift the lid and talk about where things were going wrong.' (Inf_02, M, NS)

Sample quotes

Lack of shared values
'There's sort of an assumption that you're all in the sector so you're all kind of starting from the same value-base, which tends to be the assumption that people make [...] **We would probably be much more effective if we examined our values and identified where the differences are and were honest about those differences'** (Inf_13, F, 59)

In summary, organisation-preferencing completes the conceptual diptych at the heart of this study's presentation of bad collaborations. As such, organisation-preferencing parsimoniously describes the activation of the study's three main themes, asserting a deterministic role for organisational interests in the development of bad collaborations. Organisation-preferencing captured poor competence switching, the suboptimal management of multiple accountabilities, and relational deficiencies which all contributed to bad collaborative experiences.

Next, the chapter will emphasise the way these themes work in tandem, for good and ill. This will be followed with a chapter summary (Section 6.7) and a presentation of the study's findings (Figure 6.16).

6.6.4 Preferencing and themes working in tandem

Building on the findings already presented, preferencing additively and orthogonally captures the equivocal activation of the study's three main themes (and their constituent elements), ascribing to preferencing a dynamic organising function in which the three themes interact one with another in development of good collaborations or bad. This tandem function works in service to either mission-actualising- or organisation-actualising-priorities.

6.6.4.1 Good collaborations: mission-preferencing and the activation of the three themes acting in tandem

Preferencing, inter alia presents good collaborations as a mix of themes. The following quote illustrates the dynamic interaction of themes. In this example communication is used in service of enculturating particular collaborative values as part of an onboarding process.

> 'These shared values are engaged with by every new partner who comes on board with this. Every new partner then signs up for these values [...] What I would say is we put a lot of effort on this onboarding process. We help them understand what they're trying to get from the collaboration. And by doing that we introduce them to the values and talk them through, so they become more meaningful than just some words on a page.' (Inf_30, M, NS)

6.6.4.2 Bad collaborations: organisation-preferencing and the activation of the three themes acting in tandem

Organisation-preferencing captured the dynamic interplay of themes such that organisational fixatures and priorities undermined collaborative practice and shared goals. To illustrate, the first quote observes a lack of trust acting in-tandem with a lack of communication and transparency in service to self- or organisational-interests. The second quote illustrates how a missing relational feature (shared values) appeared to undermine and negate competency despite the presence of communication competence. Here as elsewhere social justice (prosociality) was deemed a critical feature of collaborative competency.

> 'There was a lack of trust as well as too many elephants in the room. So, budgets, people, and project stuff were all discussed behind closed doors to the satisfaction [only] of those [organisations] present.' (Inf_02, M, NS)

> '[F]or me the commercial values of the Chair clashed with the network's so the collaboration suffered a bit [...] and made it tougher than it needed to be.' (Inf_17, M, 60)

In summary, preferencing acts to parsimoniously delimit collaborative development along two trajectories (good and bad), each representing a distinct fixature based on mission- or organisation-priorities. Informant's accounts invariably described collaborations in terms of the three themes acting in tandem under the direction of leader's preferencing orientations. The next section summarises the study's findings as presented within this chapter.

6.7. Chapter summary

This chapter has presented the study's findings following the analysis of 30 semi structured interviews with social sector Chief Executive Officers who have each drawn upon their own lived experience of good and bad cross-sector collaborations. By way of eliciting this lived experience informants were given the freedom to define the key concepts on their own terms. With the assistance of NVivo 12, these interviews were qualitatively analysed utilising Gioia's thematic analysis. The findings have surfaced a conceptual diptych at the heart of informant's collaborative accounts which has enabled a parsimonious understanding of good and bad collaborations along two preferencing trajectories. Preferencing theoretically emerged from the data at the third and final stage of the study's thematic analysis. Preferencing has revealed good and bad collaborations to consist of a dynamic institutional concomitancy – organisational and collaborative – in which organisation- and mission-interests were observed playing a deterministic role in the development of good and bad collaborations.

Collaborative competency was revealed to be an essential contingency, involving the switching of individual competencies in response to

contextual contingencies, and which foregrounded the relevance and fit of interorganisational competencies for interorganisational settings. Intrinsic motivational states expressed as a passion for the sector, an acknowledgement of social sector leadership's distinct character, and a taken-for-granted prosociality also surfaced as important aspects of good collaborations.

Collaborations were also described transpiring at the intersection of organisational and collaborative accountability systems, with organisational-and-collaborative missions and interests playing a deterministic role in the management of this intersectionality toward either an optimal or suboptimal balance of accountabilities. As such, the multiple accountabilities challenge represented an aspect of the socio-structural landscape within which collaboration was exercised.

Collaborations also surfaced relational features such that levels of trust, communication and shared values played a deterministic role in the formation or frustration of good (and bad) collaborations. Inter alia, good collaborations contained aspects of trustworthiness, articulate performativity, relational dialogism and aligned values discursively enacted and routinely revisited.

Preferencing parsimoniously describes collaboration in terms of the dynamic activation and interplay of three themes. These and other features identified throughout the chapter are presented in Figure 6. 16, which consolidates the findings into a single 3 x 3 matrix that functions to provide a summative portrait of the study's themes set against leader's preferencing choices, as these emerged within good and bad collaboration accounts.

Having provided a wide-ranging review of the data, the study has arrived at a vital contingency within which competence switching, the optimality of

managed multiple accountabilities, and the criticality of relational features coalesce to shed new light on good and bad collaborations and represents a fecundity within and at the intersection of several literatures. The next chapter will provide the reader with a discussion of the findings as these are linked to the extant literature.

	LEADER'S COMPETENCY	MULTIPLE ACCOUNTABILITIES	RELATIONSHIP FEATURES	
MISSION PREFERENCING	• Individual competencies switched in response to contextual contingencies i.e., intraorganisational competencies switched in favour of interorganisational competencies • Competence switching supported by on-going competence updating • Social sector collaborative competency emphasizes sectoral, motivational & ethical characteristics	• Good collaboration is achieved and maintained by a balancing of organisation, mission, and collaboration priorities • Mission priorities receive privileged operational significance when balance is threatened • Good collaboration requires the active resistance of self-interested opportunistic behaviours and the privileging of mission priorities	• Trust surfaced as an essential feature of collaborative success • Communication considered an essential feature of good collaboration. Critical aspects included: listening and the strategic use of safe dialogical spaces • Organisational and collaborative values vitalised and given collective operational significance in good collaborations	GOOD COLLABORATIONS
ORGANISATION PREFERENCING	• Bad collaborations associated with poor competence switching i.e., intraorganisational competencies used indiscriminately in collaborations • Bad collaborations assocated with competence stasis i.e., fixed rather than updated competencies • Bad collaborations associated with social sector competency systematically undermined by paucity of social sector leadership development opportunities and lack of social sector theorising impacting leader's confidence	• Bad collaboration is achieved as accountabilities fail to achieve a balance of organisation, mission, and collaboration priorities • Collaborative failure transpires in consequence of organisational prioritisation • Collaborative failure is reinforced by opportunistic behaviours i.e., hoarding reputational gains or resource advantages	• Collaboration failure associated with a lack of trust including leaders' untrustworthy behaviour • Collaboration failure associated with communication mediocrity e.g., poor listening and insufficient collective dialogue • Values alignment is assumed rather than actual. Mismatching values are rarely discussed. Values and goal setting are decoupling	BAD COLLABORATIONS

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS

Figure 6. 16 – Summary of the main findings organised according to mission-preferencing and organisation-preferencing in association with good and bad collaborations

CHAPTER 7. DISCUSSION

This chapter discusses the findings and its implications for the theories of collaboration and collaboration competency, paying particular attention to the study's UK social sector grounding. Specifically, Section 7.1 describes the study's contribution to knowledge, while Section 7.1.1 draws attention to the study's abductive approach. The remainder of the chapter discusses the findings in relation to the study's main research questions (Section 7.2 – 7.5). The chapter ends with a number of summary remarks (Section 7.6).

7.1 Introduction

This thesis makes a number of conceptual contributions to the UK social sector literature, not least it responds to calls for comparative research into collaboration. In this respect, the study explores collaboration against good and bad collaborative conditions. As such, this study suggests that good collaborations can be characterised as mission-preferencing, i.e., they privilege mission ahead of organisational interests; while bad collaborations can be characterised as organisation-preferencing, i.e., setting organisational interests ahead of mission priorities. Therefore, the case is made that a mission focus, as opposed to other criterion, such as an organisational efficiency focus, is critical to collaborative success for social sector leaders. Additionally, for the first time (to the best of my knowledge), the study establishes good collaborations and mission-preferencing to be a function of competence sufficiency, balanced accountabilities and relationship sufficiency; and bad collaborations and organisation-preferencing, on the other hand, to be a function of competence deficiency, unbalanced accountabilities and relationship deficiency. In this way, the PhD contributes to knowledge by providing much needed insights into key aspects associated with collaborative success and failure and contributes to the study and knowledge of social sector leadership competencies. On this last point, the study provides a critical addition to the collaboration competence literature by responding to calls for more research into how competencies are activated. The

study's findings and contributions will be discussed in relation to the extant literature following a comment on the study's abduction.

7.1.1 Abduction

Saetre and Van de Ven (2021) acknowledge that the time to generate and expand on management theories that address anomalies of organisational or social contexts (such as social sector leadership in cross-sector collaborations) has never been greater. In order to meet this challenge, Saetre and Van de Ven (2021) commend theory generated via abduction, arguing that as the world becomes more interconnected and dynamic so the need for abduction becomes even more pressing (ibid). However, despite abduction's generative capabilities, abductive research still appears to be caught in a 'dilemmatic space' (Jonsen et al., 2018: 58), that Jonsen and colleagues describe as transpiring between increased interest in qualitative research on the one hand, and the positivistic hegemony of the academic world on the other. Notwithstanding this, the current study's abductive approach finds support in Jonsen's et al.'s (2018) analysis of methodological issues associated with writing up qualitative research, with lessons distilled from leading academic journals. These authors contend that 'convincing' and 'persuasive' research rests, in part, on bold leaps of abduction that provide the reader with fresh ways of seeing and systematizing the world, generated via disarming conceptual analysis of social experience (Jonsen et al., 2018). In this way, and for the current study, data emerges out of the inspiration of critical dialogues between the study's theoretical and empirical observations (Alvesson and Karreman, 2007). Within the pages that follow a dialogical exchange between the study's findings and the literature will take place and will be presented in direct relation to the study's main research questions.

7.2 RQ1. How do social sector leaders associate with leadership competence?

7.2.1 Competence switching

The study's findings revealed that leader's collaboration competency emerged differently across good and bad collaborations, such that good collaborations surfaced competence sufficiency, while bad collaborations revealed competence deficiency. A key feature of competency as it was observed in the current study, concerned the switching of competences in anticipation (or direct response) of the changing contextual contingencies confronting leaders as they moved from organisational to collaborative fields of practice. Good collaborations provided accounts of proficient competence switching. In contrast, bad collaborations observed leader's competencies decoupled from their contextual moorings such that intraorganisational competencies were indiscriminately deployed across interorganisational settings. The present findings are consistent with, and lend support, to other research that asserts that leadership in collaborations is different from leadership in single-agency settings (Feyerherm, 1994; Provan and Milward, 1995; Agranoff, 2007; Silvia and McGuire, 2010). Silvia and McGuire, (2010) study, for example, empirically examined leader's behaviours across single agency and network settings to reveal differences across both settings for public sector emergency managers. The current study therefore confirms and supports Silvia and McGuire's assertion that managerial competence (authors do not use this term) is contextually rendered and expressed differently in multi-actor settings. The present study adds to this earlier finding and applies it to a social sector leadership collaborative setting.

One of the surprising findings to emerge from the current study concerned leaders' emphasis on competence switching. Competence switching in part describes competency's incorporation of operational and contextual elements within its conceptualisation. This incorporation appears novel compared to the extant collaboration competency literature which typically treats the operational

and the contextual as exogenic to conceptualisations of competency per se. This study however internalises operationality and contingency such that it becomes part of the very DNA of the competency construct (and present within any expression of competence). It is hardly surprising therefore that this emphasis on operational pragmatics (expressed through competence switching) has captured thick descriptions of competency's activation and leader's contingent operational acuity and agency. This study's strong emphasis on contingency for the conceptualisation of competency, represents a new direction for the collaboration competency literature, which largely overlooks the interplay of competencies with contextual specificities. To illustrate the tentative (weak) association made in the collaboration competence literature between context and the actual competence construct, Getha-Taylor (2008) highlights a link between context and competency only at the point they describe scoping the organisational and sector wide environment for suitable competencies.

This study's focus on competence switching emphasises the adaptive application of competencies. This lends support to Sullivan and colleagues (2012) theory of 'leadership for collaboration' (LfC), which places a premium on leader's adaptability, in response to collaborations dynamic complexity and innate instability. Sullivan et al. (2012) used situated agency theory to suggest that 'context' and 'competence' (authors preferred the term 'skills') are dynamically combined to influence leadership behaviours and outcomes. The current study corroborates Sullivan's et al. (2012) findings, whilst making additional discoveries. The current study's findings reveal that 'context' and leader's 'competence' also influence collaborative outcomes vis-à-vis the development of good and bad collaborations. This study therefore refines collaboration competency theory by signalling the saliency of competency's contingent nature. Sullivan et al.'s (2012) insightful focus on leaders' adaptability is elaborated and concretised in the current study with reference to leaders' competence switching and competence updating. Collaborative competency as it is conceptualised in the current study distinguishes between intraorganisational and interorganisational competence use and emphasises leaders competence

switching as they move between organisational and collaborative fields of practice. This study's focus on leaders adaptive competence use adds to previous research, justifying earlier findings that placed particular emphasis on leaders' flexible performativity (e.g., Crosby and Bryson, 2005; 2015; Thach and Thompson, 2007; O'Leary and Choi, 2012; Lindberg and Rantatalo, 2015). This study for example aligns with Lindberg and Rantatalo (2015) who explored 'professional competence' across two public sector professions (police and medical). Their analysis signalled the importance of flexibility across these different settings. The current study therefore builds on Lindberg and Rantatalo's findings by providing a level of detail and operational specificity as to the role flexibility plays in social sector leader's competent performance across diverse institutional domains (intraorganisational and interorganisational).

This study's focus on competence switching and its essential contingency aligns with Boyatzis's (2008; 2009) 'theory of action and job performance,' in which Boyatzis establishes a *'best fit'* principle such that competence can be understood as the best fit between aspects of individual competence, job demands, and importantly for this study, institutional contingencies. The current study is consistent with Boyatzis's focus on institutional specificities but elevates its importance for social sector leaders engaged in cross-sector collaborations, offering greater insights into competency's adaptive situated operationality. While Sullivan and colleagues signal the importance (for LfC) of adaptability, and in so doing identify (among other things) the significance of 'trust', 'negotiation' and 'tactics over strategy,' they stop short of describing *how* these competencies interact with each other or with the local environment. Competence switching adds weight to these earlier studies by describing in dynamic fashion leaders' adaptive and situated selection and deployment decisions, which this study asserts are guided by mission or organisational considerations that have until now gone largely undocumented in the literature.

Additionally, the current study extends Sullivan and colleagues 'negotiating dynamic complexity' feature of LfC, by identifying a secondary source of

collaborative instability i.e., leaders' poor competence switching, such that bad collaborations were frustrated by leaders' indiscriminate use of intraorganisational competencies. Good collaborations, on the other hand, displayed leaders' adaptive competence switching as they stepped between intraorganisational and interorganisational settings.

This study's emphasis on local and contextual contingencies (for competence switching), corroborates an aspect of Getha-Taylor's (2008) US study. Getha-Taylor sought to test the applicability of Spencer et al. (1993) and Boyatzis (1982) generic managerial competencies for use by US federal managers engaged in collaboration. Getha-Taylor (2008) found that only 3 of the 19 generic managerial competencies were transferable to a collaborative context. This finding was further confirmed by Getha-Taylor et al. (2016), who set out to assess collaboration competency's universal (rather than situational) applicability. While some evidence was found to suggest that a small number of competencies may be applicable across intra- and inter-organisational settings, on the whole the findings supported a situational view of collaboration competencies. The current study builds on these findings and draws deeper insights to suggest that for UK social sector leaders, competency in interorganisational settings requires an active and appreciative situational acuity, which ought to be hardwired into the very conceptualisation of collaboration competency.

7.2.2 Prosociality

For this study, informant's accounts of competency and good collaborations contained the view that the social sector is founded on a formative prosociality once held to be unique to the social sector. This prosociality signalled a paradigmatic mimetic such that the social sector's prosociality substantively delimited collaboration competence. This is to say there can be no social sector collaborative competence if this is deployed in contravariance to the social sector's essential prosocial ethic. With for-profit organisations frequently driven to collaborate on the strength of concordant prosocial and commercial interests

(Yin, 2017; Graddy-Reed, 2018), prosociality provides an interstice where agreement can be forged between sectors. In this way good collaborations provided evidence of shared prosocial goals, while bad collaborations invariably surfaced accounts of contested interstices and the presence of internal conflict and competition.

7.2.3 Leadership development

A surprising feature to emerge within bad collaborations that was largely absent within good collaborations concerned the perceived systemic lack of quality social sector leadership development, and the lack of sector specific leadership theorising. With few readily visible social sector leadership theories or exemplars to easily draw on, bad collaborations revealed descriptions of social sector leaders leading in under-theorised sectoral spaces. This finding adds weigh to Cantrell-Bruce and Blankenberger, (2015) study which found that while social sector managers face distinct leadership challenges - signalling the need for specific sectorally sensitive educational provision - the majority of accredited social sector management education is typically delivered through public management programs, which the present study suggests is problematic on the grounds that this leaves a sectoral translation gap largely ignored.

Additionally, this study adds to Cantrell-Bruce and Blankenberger's (2015) identification of four new social sector managerial skills (leadership, collaboration, capacity, and innovation), by providing an empirical UK study which concentrates attention on collaboration and the differences across good and bad collaborative conditions as understood by senior leaders. The lack of accessible, high quality, social sector leadership development opportunities left leaders in bad collaborations feeling ill-prepared to confront the challenges collaboration presents. As a consequence of this, bad collaborations revealed leaders' reliance on non-social sector leadership models that were described hastening or solidifying collaborative failure.

In summary, the study's findings build on previous research by providing vivid accounts of competence use (e.g., competence switching), which confirm the importance for collaboration and collaborative leadership, of adaptability and incorporates an essential contingency into the competence construct, such that interorganisational competency requires interorganisational (as opposed to intraorganisational) competence use. This study confirms calls for more sector specific leadership development and adds to the growing evidence that social sector leaders continue to lead in undertheorized spaces. The current study provides new insights that suggest leaders in bad collaborations are adversely affected by this critical shortage, which in turn undermine leadership and collaborative performativity.

7.3 RQ2. How do social sector leaders understand (good and bad) collaborations?

The study's findings indicated that collaborations were influenced by equivocal responses to multiple accountabilities, such that leaders in good collaborations exhibited an optimal balance of organisational, collaborative, and mission priorities; while leaders in bad collaborations presided over an unbalanced and suboptimal tension between organisational, collaborative, and mission priorities. Additionally, good collaborations provided evidence of leaders prioritising mission-based matters ahead of organisational interests. As such, accountability optimality became a critical component of good collaborations and collaborative competency. In contrast, bad collaborations saw collaborative success undermined and collaborative competence frustrated by organisational interests eclipsing collective efforts to achieve mission-based targets. In bad collaborations accountabilities suboptimality invariably signalled the presence of organisational mortality anxieties associated with the P-N and NPM and funding themes identified in the initial literature review (Chapter 2). In response to these and other challenges associated with public managerial reforms and funding pressures, good collaborations provided accounts of leaders resisting the pull of

organisational interests, while bad collaborations provided evidence of interactors privileging organisational interests to the detriment of mission's primacy. Drawing upon earlier studies that identify P-N & NPM's high accountability demands (Hwang and Powell, 2009; AbouAssi and Bies, 2018), and the injection of marketized relations with the State vis-à-vis competitive tendering, contracting, and payment-for-results (Weerawardena et al., 2010; Harris, 2018; Smith, 2018; Pape et al., 2019), the current study provides evidence to suggest a link between this 'accountability quagmire' (Bishop, 2007: 150) and the development of collaborations along good or bad trajectories. As such this study provides further evidence to support the claim that P-N and NPM still impacts the social sector today (Lodge and Gill, 2011; Bode and Brandsen, 2014).

Additionally, the current study's multiple accountabilities dilemma reifies the initial literature review's 'funding' theme. This study for instance provides leaders accounts that mirror Pape's et al. (2019) finding that as funding levels have dropped in the UK, funding has become more demanding with complex accountability requirements. This study confirms Weereawardena et al. (2010); and Smith, (2018), who found that organisational sustainability concerns have become a top strategic and operational priority for social sector leaders. The current study also provides evidence as to how this priority impacts leaders' actions vis-à-vis through the activation of specific leadership preferences, which favour either organisational or mission priorities. This study therefore corroborates AbouAssi et al. (2016); Brinkerhoff, (2002); and O'Brien et al. (2019), who showed that sources of funding can impact social sector management practices.

The current study adds to previous accountability research by providing rich descriptions of leaders' multiple accountabilities, which supports Gazley (2017) who describes social sector accountability in terms of a 'triple bottom line' incorporating for illustrative purposes prosocial, financial, and wider social accountabilities (ibid). Similarly, the current thesis provides support to Ebrahim's

(2016) relational multi-directional theorising of accountability in which social sector leaders are obliged to pay heed to accountability relationships ‘upward to funders,’ ‘downward to clients’ and ‘internally’ to staff and volunteers (Ebrahim, 2016: 104). Building on Ebrahim’s insightful work, the current study highlights that leaders’ actions are caught up in a contested array of mixed accountabilities, with collaborative success and failure often coming down to how leaders resolved these tensions i.e., through balanced accountabilities (via mission-preferencing) or unbalanced accountabilities (via organisation-preferencing).

The current study has provided evidence to demonstrate that leaders preferencing decisions directly impact collaborative behaviours and outcomes. For example, the study has shown that leaders funding and mortality anxieties have influenced engagement decisions via the framing of collaboration as an organisational recovery strategy. In this way the present study’s focus on leader’s organisation-preferencing adds weight to Sowa (2009), who found that social sector leaders were motivated to collaborate because of organisational survival needs, legitimacy needs, and competitive advantage needs (as well as service delivery motivations i.e., improving client outcomes). The current study while drawing clear parallels with Sowa (2009), provides evidence of organisational interests influence on leaders’ decisions throughout the lifecycle of the collaboration (i.e., beyond the engagement decision).

The current study builds on Koppell’s (2005) notion of ‘multiple accountabilities disorder’ which for Koppell is the result of a failure to distinguish between different accountability demands. In this way the multiple accountabilities disorder describes leaders oscillating between ‘conflicting notions of accountability’ (2005: 95). This study while driving to different conclusions (and applying multiple accountabilities in different ways) supports Koppell at several junctures, a) Koppell claims that different accountabilities are not always compatible with each other. The current study provided evidence to suggest that multiple accountabilities can be aligned, but not without concerted effort and competence. Additionally, the current study highlights the role of mission accountabilities in

maintaining balance when this is threatened; b) for Koppell, accountability approaches reflected relational beliefs and assumptions about fellow interactors. The current study's focus on leader's opportunistic behaviours (and their resistance) appeared consistent with Koppell here and provided rich descriptions of leader's actions along mission- or organisation-preferencing lines; and c) accountabilities (and their relational beliefs) are never static. The current study corroborates these findings, providing evidence in good collaboration of continued dialogical action to support the ongoing reflection of multiple accountabilities, and the lack thereof in bad collaborations which invariably precipitated the instability of accountability balance. Therefore, the current study provides new insights into the multiple accountabilities literature and provides a vivid UK social sector account.

The findings revealed a strong association between leader's mission-preferencing behaviours and accounts of good collaborations, such that leader's choosing to react to situated challenges by asserting the primacy of charitable *mission* objectives (hence mission-preferencing) i.e., 'the relief of poverty' or 'the advancement of education', supported positive collective efforts and the achievement of shared goals that were taken up by leaders as signs of good, as opposed to bad collaboration accounts. Mission-preferencing corroborates De Dreu's (2006) 'other orientation' perspective, which when applied to the current study identifies: the primacy of mission (ahead of short-term organisational returns), supports joint actions that improve client outcomes, and champions field changes ahead of securing reputational advantage (De Dreu's 'self-interest' orientation). As such, mission-preferencing is observed positively associated with improved systems diagnostics, enhanced responsiveness, collective innovation, with sharing information freely, and with inward and outward-facing communications such as telling compelling and morally affective stories (Banks et al., 2020).

According to this study, good collaborations evidenced frequent descriptions of leader's ethicality, expressed variously in a concern for people, for social justice,

for society's advantage, and for the advancement of mission objectives. This ethicality mirrors in large part Eisenbeiss's (2012) ethical leadership orientations (humane, justice, social responsibility and moderation orientations). The study's findings suggest a strong link between the detailing of bad collaborations and organisation-preferencing behaviours, which provides a way of understanding the countervailing phenomenon of leader's organisation-first behaviours. Organisation-preferencing is similar to De Dreu's 'self-interest' dimension and Schwartz's (1994) 'self-enhancing' value type. When applied institutionally to collaborations, self-interest can be understood as the application and privileging of organisational interests in collective exchanges where one would most obviously expect (in conventional terms) collaborative enhancing behaviours to prevail. None more so was this evident than in collaborative decision-making contexts. These organisation-preferencing behaviours were variously described as either covert i.e., 'happening behind closed doors' or overt i.e., happening out in the open, as in the open scramble to lay claim to the 'lion's share' of available funding. Whilst opportunistic behaviours have been widely reported in the literature and were present across both good and bad collaborations, they were met in both accounts with counter-preferencing behavioural orientations that helped explain collaborations good and bad status. Whereas good collaborations found strength and strategic capital in collective action enabled through mission-preferencing, bad collaborations found response to asymmetrical positionalities, internal competition and funding anxieties through organisation-preferencing reactions, which in many cases perpetuated such conditions.

In summary, the current study has surfaced a prominent role for multiple accountabilities which situates social sector leaders at the crosscurrents of organisational and collaborative accountabilities. This study has confirmed the often-documented P-N & NPM and funding anxiety effects on leaders performativity and has built on these earlier findings to help explain social sector leaders multiple accountabilities dilemma. It has been observed that leader's response to this accountability bifurcation directly

influences the development of collaborations along good or bad trajectories.

7.4 RQ3. How do social sector leaders describe the relational issues related to collaboration?

Theoretically influenced by Morgan and Hunt's (1994) KMV model (Figure 7.1), this study revealed that relationship features surfaced differently across good and bad collaborations. As such, good collaborations provided evidence of high levels of trust, communication and shared values; while bad collaborations identified low levels of trust, communication and shared values. In terms of relational factors, many of those found in the business-to-business for-profit literature (Blois, 1999; Anderen and Kumar, 2006; Murphy and Sashi, 2018; Franklin and Marshall, 2019) also held out as true for cross-sector collaborations.

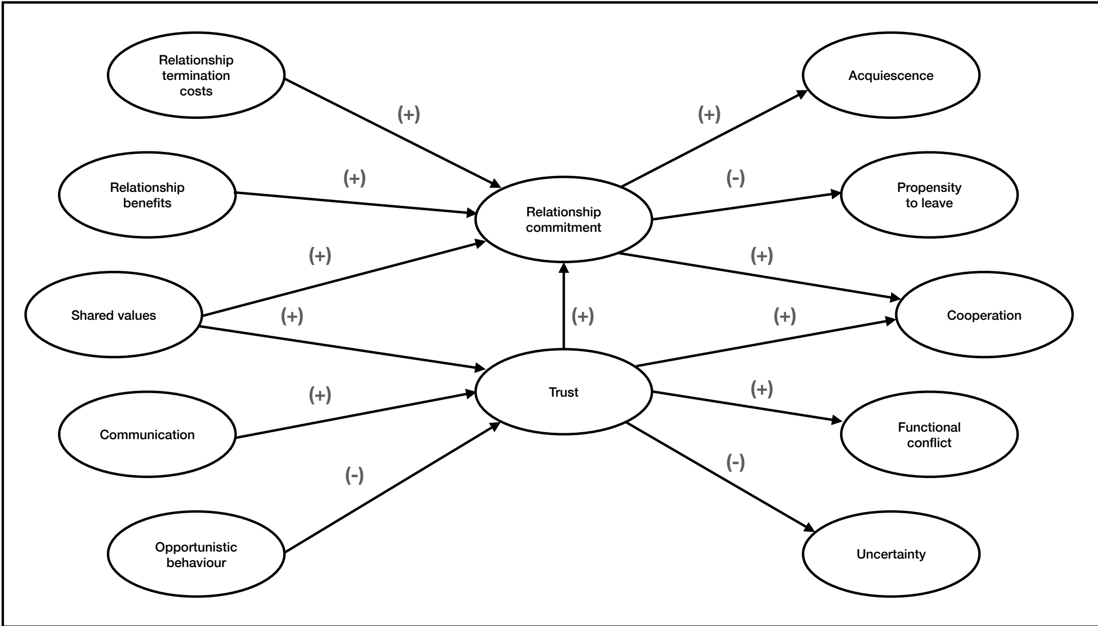

Figure 7.1 - Morgan and Hunt's (1994) 'Key Mediating Variable' (KMV) model

The study's findings suggest a strong link between the detailing of good collaborations and mission-preferencing leadership, around which a constellation

of associated elements orientate. These include (non-exhaustively) relational dialogic agency, inclusive of communication competencies such as listening and affective storytelling; trust; relationship commitment; working with the motivational states of others; and leader ethicality.

The evidence from this study suggests a strong association between mission-preferencing and what Cunliffe and Eriksen (2011) refer to as 'relationally-responsive dialogical practice'. Good collaborations (and mission-preferencing) was enacted through a wide-range of relational dialogical action, and included competencies consistent with Banks et al.'s (2020) 'moral emotions,' which for the current study synergised motivational energies and reframed problematic issues through vision crafting (which matched goal design to felt motivational states) resulting in reports of united collaborative action. The current study also demonstrates that leader's conversational competence, similar to Kramer and Crespy's (2011) communication behaviours, surfaced the use of questions in conversational exchanges together with expressions of openness to the ideas of others, and the ability to hold difficult conversations without loss of nerve, self-regulation, empathy or value congruence.

Bad collaborations (and organisation-preferencing) was strongly associated in the findings with interactor opportunistic behaviours and included reports of hoarding relational and reputational advantage (i.e., relations with funders), and knowledge exchange (i.e., asymmetrical knowledge, expertise and competence sharing). The current findings provide evidence of an erosion of motivational states with strong negative association for relationship commitment and trust. The findings also provided evidence of other features of Morgan and Hunt's KMV model such that acquiescence, propensity to leave, cooperation, conflict and uncertainty contained significant deficits and dysfunctions, which were strongly associated with organisation-preferencing (see Appendix 8). The present study also found 'functional cooperation' a modification of Morgan and Hunt's (1994) original outcome element. Bad collaborations marked by low levels of trust enabled functional cooperation, that is the outward visage of cooperative

behaviours that masked competing organisation preferencing strategies, oppositional hostilities and historic rivalries.

Morgan and Hunt's (1994) functional conflict also required modification when applied to organisation-preferencing behaviour. Unresolved and poorly managed conflict was a common feature of bad collaborations. Sources of such conflict included opportunistic behaviours, such as State nepotism; communication deficits, such as a systematic lack of regularised relational dialogue; poor values alignment and the presence of prioritisation-wars; and poor goal setting, such as pre-defined, ill-defined, narrowly defined goals, and ill-fitting evaluation metrics. The findings offer a further modification to the KMV model. Despite the presence of State organisation-preferencing in cross-sector collaborations, which placed social sector leaders at a distinct disadvantage, these leaders frequently described actively acquiescing to State preferences even when such actions threatened to inhibit their agency. The findings suggest that the rationale for such surprising acquiescence (in the face of agentic loss) is found in high relationship termination costs combined with high relationship benefits, (these being chiefly resource-based). These factors help explain why no bad collaboration reported prematurely terminating, despite high levels of frustration and internal conflict (see Appendix 7 and 8 for more details).

This study's findings have consistently emphasised sectoral and geographic differences and made the case for a UK and social sector specific theorisation. However, in terms of relationship features i.e., trust, communication, and shared values, these features the evidence suggests that there is broad agreement between the business-to-business for-profit literature and this study's social sector findings. As such the saliency of trust, communication, and shared values holds true across different sectors and different regions.

7.5 RQ4. What competencies do leaders associate with collaboration?

This study shows that competent leaders were able to ascribe competence to each aspect of collaboration captured by the study's three main themes i.e., leader's competency, multiple accountabilities and relationship features. In light of the above, it would seem beneficial for policy entrepreneurs and leadership developers if leader's collaborative competency was to be developed along these lines, rather than duplicate the standard generic practitioner and academic models (e.g., Boyatzis, 1982; 2008; 2009; Yukl, 2008; 2012; Callanan et al., 2015; Clore Social Leadership, 2016; Cortes and Ferrer, 2018). The study's three main themes provide alternative jumping off points (to standard models). For example, leader's competency suggests paying particular attention to competence's contingency and adaptive application – a feature almost completely overlooked in the collaborative competency literature (Getha-Taylor, 2006; 2008; Morse, 2008; Morse and Stephens, 2012; Getha-Taylor et al., 2016). Concerning multiple accountabilities, while competence models identify discreet behavioural competences of relevance (i.e., managing complexity, planning and monitoring), their specificity and contextual decoupling (Boyatzis, 2008; 2009 provide notable exceptions) provide little help given leader's actual predicament of managing between the crosscurrents of competing accountability systems.

This thesis does not claim to present a model of collaborative competencies suitable for UK social sector consumption. Rather the study focuses on the activation and animation of said collaborative competencies. As such, what is most striking in the findings is the focus on competence switching, on contingency, adaptability and on competence updating, as opposed to competence stasis. While good collaborations are characterised by leaders' situational acuity and adaptive deployment of switched competencies, bad collaborations are characterised by the over-reliance on generic, derivative intraorganisational competencies, which are decoupled from their contextual moorings and utilised inappropriately within interorganisational settings. While

the findings surfaced a wide number of competencies suitable for collaborative practice, this study suggests that future social sector competence theorists would be wise to focus on understanding this dynamic than define a set of fixed competencies.

7.6 Summary remarks

Today's social sector leadership context is increasingly interorganisational. Given that collaborative leadership is often beset with a blistering array of competing interests, this shift from intraorganisational leadership towards interorganisational leadership functions suggests the need for researchers to pay heed to collaborative competency, if leaders are to succeed in this new collaborative landscape.

It has been observed that social sector leaders continue to rely on leadership theories conceptualised outside of the social sector. Similarly, it has been found that social sector leaders continue to apply intraorganisational leadership approaches to interorganisational settings. While leadership is considered critical to collaborative success, research aimed at understanding leader's collaborative competency remains in a state of underdeveloped stasis. Given the importance and complication of collaborative competencies, it is critical that they be scrutinised within a collaborative setting that pays specific attention to UK social sector contingencies. With the majority of collaborative competency literature comprising of US public administration scholarship, this problematises the transferability of theory developed outside the UK and outside the social sector for practice to be applied within it.

This picture revealed the need for further research into the challenges facing UK social sector leaders engaged in collaboration, and the need to better understand the strategic utility of leaders' collaborative competency. Specifically, social sector theory has yet to adequately respond to the theoretical and practical challenges presented by leadership in cross-sector collaborative settings (Sullivan et al., 2012; Bryson et al., 2015). Competence scholarship and the

organisational relationships literature has provided a useful lens through which to assist this critical challenge. While collaboration requires leadership, the jury is still out concerning the precise nature of leader's collaborative competency, with no UK social sector study published to date to move this debate forward. This study therefore makes a valued theoretical contribution by presenting the UKs first social sector study of collaboration competencies.

The study has presented a conceptual diptych at the centre of collaboration, ascribing a critical role to leader's preferencing behaviours which describes the multimodal development of interorganisational relations toward good or bad trajectories, influenced by leader's competency, multiple accountabilities, and relationship features. In short, the study emphasises competency's adaptability and contingency expressed most fully through competence switching as opposed to competency scholars developing fixed competencies decoupled from contextual contingencies. Additionally, the study has emphasised the importance for good collaborations of balancing organisational, mission, and collaborative priorities, while suboptimal tensions leading to the unbalanced state of organisational, mission, and collaborative priorities appear to explain, better than managerial controls, collaboration's high failure rate. Finally, the differences between good and bad collaborations can be better understood through a concerted investigation and application of relationship features which appear stable across forprofit and social sector collaborative projects.

This study has answered calls in the literature for more research into the conditions associated with good and bad collaborations (Gazley and Guo, 2020). This study has suggested that it is mission priorities as opposed to organisational interests that are critical to the development of successful collaborations. As such for the first time this study has established successful (good) collaborations as a function of competence sufficiency, balanced accountabilities, and relationship sufficiency; as well as establishing failing (bad) collaborations as a function of competence deficiency, unbalanced accountabilities, and relationship deficiency. This study therefore extends knowledge of collaborative success and failure through the application of a comparative research design. This research seeks to

make a practical, theoretical, and empirical contribution by providing a comparative study which takes account of leader's lived experiences of collaborative success and failure set against good and bad collaboration narratives.

This chapter has presented a discussion of the study's key findings to have emerged in relation to the collaboration and competency literatures, paying particular attention to the study's UK social sector grounding. Chapter 8 will offer a conclusion to this thesis and outline the study's contributions to knowledge, limitations, as well as making suggestions concerning future research.

CHAPTER 8. CONCLUSION, RECOMMENDATIONS, LIMITATIONS AND DIRECTION FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This chapter presents the conclusion of the current study. Following an introduction (Section 8.1) the study's conceptual contributions are outlined (Section 1.2). Next, recommendations for practice are identified (Section 8.3), before the limitations of the study are discussed (Section 8.4). This is followed by suggestions for future research (Section 8.5). The chapter ends by making a number of concluding remarks (Section 8.6).

8.1 Introduction

This abductive study began with the aim of exploring the challenges influencing UK social sector leadership, now and into the near future. As part of the study's grounding process three themes were selected for an initial thematic literature review: P-N & NPM, funding, and collaboration (Chapter 2). These themes were then sense-checked against the views of senior social sector leaders in an exploratory study (Chapter 3). The exploratory study validated these themes and placed particular warranty on collaboration and collaborative competency. Acknowledging the saliency of collaboration, a secondary literature review was undertaken (Chapter 4) thereby completing the study's grounding and clarifying the main study's research questions. Having collected and analysed the data in accordance with the study's methodological commitments (Chapter 5), the research results were presented (Chapter 6) and discussed in relation to the literature (Chapter7). Table 8.1 provides a summary of the research findings set against the study's RQs.

RQ1. The findings revealed that social sector leaders' conceptualised competency in ways that emphasised its operationality. In particular, social sector leaders highlighted competence switching i.e., the selection and deployment of

competencies in response to contextual contingencies. Having placed a premium on adaptability and contingency, competence switching describes leaders' interchanging of intraorganisational and interorganisational competencies depending on which institutional field one is operating in. The findings indicated that good collaborations were associated with competence switching, while bad collaborations evidenced leader's indiscriminate use of intraorganisational competencies in interorganisational settings. Good collaborations also observed leaders engaged in competence updating, while bad collaborations identified competence stasis i.e., the over-reliance on a number of static (intraorganisational) competencies. In short, social sector leaders perceived collaboration competency as situated and contingent, thereby hardwiring adaptability into the collaboration competency construct.

RQ2. The findings revealed the saliency of multiple accountabilities for social sector leaders understanding of collaboration (and competency). As such good collaborations were associated with a balance of organisational, mission, and collaborative priorities, while bad collaborations were not. In addition, when tensions arose and balance was threatened, good collaborations provided evidence of leaders privileging mission ahead of organisational interests, while bad collaborations exposed a state of suboptimality, expressed as organisational interests taking precedence over mission and collaboration priorities. Further to this, good collaborations were described in terms of leaders resisting self-interested opportunism, while bad collaborations captured leaders' opportunistic behaviours, which further undermined the prospect of securing an optimal balance of accountabilities moving forward.

RQ3. Throughout this study the findings have consistently highlighted a critical sectoral difference, whereby a premium has been placed on the social sector's distinctive characteristics. RQ3 however bucks this trend to reveal findings that corroborate social sector and for-profit research concerning organisational relationalities. Specifically, the study revealed that good collaborations are associated with high levels of trust, communication, and shared values, while bad

collaborations are associated with low levels of trust, communication, and shared values.

RQ4. This thesis did not set out to present a model of collaborative competencies. However, this study has provided evidence to illustrate that social sector leader's collaborative competency is different across good and bad collaborations in ways directly related to the study's three main themes of leader's competency, multiple accountabilities, and relationship features. Surprisingly, the leader's competency theme is not enough in itself to describe collaborative competency, neither is it enough to explain the development of good and bad collaborations. Rather, leaders understanding of collaboration and competency rests on the activation and interplay of the study's three main themes.

This PhD has distilled a conceptual diptych at the centre of collaboration (leaders preferencing behaviours) that helps explain the development of good and bad collaborations. Preferencing reveals features which when activated together have been shown to influence the development of good or bad collaborative outcomes. In this way good collaborations can be parsimoniously described as mission-preferencing, while bad collaborations can be described as organisation-preferencing. In short, mission and organisation preferencing, more than other criterion, help explain collaborative success and failure.

TABLE 8. 1 – Summary of findings in relation to the RQs

Research questions	Findings
RQ1. How do social sector leaders associate with leadership competence?	Competency is conceived as a set of individual competencies which are switched in response to interorganisational contingencies. Good collaborations are characterised by competence switching and competence updating. Bad collaborations are characterised by poor competence switching and by competence stasis. Additionally, bad collaborations emphasised the undertheorized nature of social sector leadership

Research questions	Findings
	i.e., paucity of specific sectoral theorising or development opportunities.
RQ2. How do social sector leaders understand collaboration?	Good collaborations are characterised by mission-preferencing i.e., prioritising the mission ahead of the organisation, while bad collaborations are characterised by organisation-preferencing i.e., placing the organisation ahead of the mission. Good collaborations (and mission-preferencing) are a function of competency sufficiency, balanced accountabilities, and relationship sufficiency. Bad collaborations (and organisation-preferencing) are a function of competency deficiency, unbalanced accountabilities, and relationship deficiency.
RQ3. How do social sector leaders describe the relational issues related to collaboration?	Relationship features surfaced differently across good and bad collaborations. Good collaborations provided evidence of high levels of trust, communication, and shared values; while bad collaborations revealed low levels of trust, communication, and shared values. This evidence broadly corresponds to business-to-business for-profit literature, revealing for the only time in this study, findings which do not emphasise a sectoral difference.
RQ4. What competencies do leaders associate with collaboration?	The study did not set out to develop a collaboration competency model, but rather to respond to calls for more knowledge concerning how competencies are enacted by social sector leaders when engaged in collaborative practice. This study revealed the importance of leader's adaptability and competency's contingency over static or fixed competencies.

8.2 Conceptual contributions

The social sector and collaboration literatures are beset with a 'normatively positive tone' (Gazley and Guo, 2020: 228) that has contributed to a shortfall in collaboration failure research. Gazley and Guo (2020) put this down, in part, to a possible sample selection bias, such that researchers choose, for expediency, collaborations that have survived and (to varying degrees) considered to be 'successful' collaborations. Neglecting collaboration failure cases carries the risk that success factors might differ substantively from factors that explain collaboration failure but go unreported (Gazley and Guo, 2020). What is needed, but frequently missing from the literature, is comparative research that explores the various conditions associated with good and bad collaborations. This study contributes to knowledge by answering calls for more research into good and bad collaborations and for the first time suggests that good collaborations are characterised by mission-preferencing and can be seen as a function of competence sufficiency, balanced accountabilities, and relationship sufficiency; while bad collaborations are characterised by organisation-preferencing and can be seen as a function of competence deficiency, unbalanced accountabilities, and relationship deficiency. These findings challenge the hegemony of resource dependence, institutional economics or strategic management theories that have been overused to explain collaboration outcomes (Gray and Wood, 1991; Guo and Acar, 2005).

Despite the ubiquity of collaboration and regardless of an extensive collaborative leadership literature, surprisingly little is known about how leadership transpires in these contexts, with even less known about what constitutes as collaborative competency (Bryson et al., 2015; Kramer et al., 2019). In short, while collaboration requires leadership, the jury is still out concerning the precise nature of leader's collaborative competency, with no UK social sector study published to date to move this debate forward. This study responds to calls for more purposeful work to understand competencies associated with leading in collaborative settings (Bryson et al., 2015). With collaboration competency

research not travelling as well as once assumed (Getha-Taylor, 2016), this study challenges the dominant use made by UK social sector researchers (and leaders themselves) of leadership and competency theories developed outside the UK, outside the social sector, and outside of collaborative settings, for application within a UK social sector collaborative context. This study provides an integrative model of competency which incorporates US elements that emphasize contingency, without losing the UK's constructivist view of learning or attention to individual development (see Table 2.6).

With UK scholarship representative of only 4% of global social sector research (Ma and Konrath, 2018), and with US scholarship dominating social sector and collaboration research, the current study's UK focus provides a boost to UK scholarship in these fields. Additionally, the collaboration literature favours an 'organisation' units of analysis (Gazley and Guo, 2020), with individual leader's views rarely the main focus of attention (Boyer et al., 2019). This study privileges the views of individual leaders placing a premium on senior leaders lived experiences of collaborations. Added to this, social sector research appears to systematically under-represent social sector practitioner research (Gazley and Guo, 2020) thereby overlooking practitioner concerns whilst foregrounding an academic agenda. The present study responds to these research coverage shortfalls through its UK focus, qualitative research design which facilitates storytelling and honours leaders lived experiences and practice concerns.

8.3 Recommendations for practice

In addition to the conceptual contributions outlined above, the current study holds out particular promise for practitioners, policy entrepreneurs, and leadership developers. This study's findings suggest - to the degree that social sector theorists and leadership developers have yet to catch up with the challenge collaboration presents - that social sector leaders are invariably leading in undertheorised sectoral spaces. This section will highlight a number of

recommendations suitable for practice set against the study's three themes (of competence sufficiency, multiple accountabilities, and relationship features).

8.3.1 Competence sufficiency

The saliency of competence switching, as it surfaced in this study, emphasises competence's adaptive and contingent operational essentialism, when exercised across intra- and inter-organisational boundaries. This is to say, that competences are expressed differently in multi-actor contexts (Silvia and McGuire, 2010), requiring a contingent synergy between leaders' performance and the institutional setting within which such performances transpire (Boyatzis, 2008; 2009). This finding makes fresh demands of leadership developers, practitioners and policy makers, such that more attention ought to be paid to the impact of institutional context when conceptualising, mandating or developing leader's competency in cross-sector collaborations. In this way, this study operationalises competence switching's 'meta' significance for intra- and inter-organisational leadership, with implications for social sector leadership training and cross-sector collaboration policy development. For the former, this study encourages the development of new social sector curriculum elements that emphasize leader's contextual adaptability and switching competence. For the latter, policy makers who insist on cross-sector collaboration's utilitarian ubiquity, must do more than mandate collaboration, they ought to acknowledge collaboration's institutional difference, and in so doing, invest in leadership development initiatives that take such difference to heart if the pattern of cross-sector collaboration underperformance is to be reversed. In short, the thesis recommends that collaborative mandates ought to be accompanied by investments in social sector leadership training that affirms collaborations institutional difference alongside the development of leader's competence switching.

In addition, this study's findings signal the importance of providing social sector specific leadership development (both accredited and informal). This study

shines a light on the translation problem inherent in leadership solutions that reflect an over reliance on public and for-profit leadership theories (Cantrell-Bruce and Blankenberger, 2015). This study once again highlights the importance (for practitioners, developers and policy makers) of investing in sector specific training. Models, case studies, coaching and classroom interventions should all speak back to the social sector's specificities.

8.3.2 Multiple accountabilities

This study found that leaders who engage in cross-sector collaborations must balance competing organisational and collaborative priorities. The degree of balance was observed to be predictive for a collaboration's success or failure. The study also found that mission priorities rather than organisational interests (or efficiencies) were instrumental in securing 'good' collaborations, while a fixation on organisational priorities underwrote 'bad' collaborations. The importance of organisational interests also surfaced in relation to opportunistic behaviours, that were resisted in good collaborations but pursued in bad collaborations. From these surprising accountability findings, a number of recommendations can be made. Firstly, the tripartite of practitioners, developers and policy makers must interrogate the often-hidden multiple accountabilities tensions. Secondly, exposing these tensions requires relationally responsive dialogical competence (Cunliffe and Eriksen, 2011) and processual acuity, such that safe dialogical spaces are forged amidst the groundswell of collaborative actions. Here collaboration designers, champions and policy makers need to work hard to normalise and standardise these processual and structural solutions as well as invest in leader's dialogical competence. At present accountability tensions are routinely overlooked and undertheorized.

8.3.3 Relationship features

This study provides evidence to suggests that trust, communication and shared values play a pivotal role in the outcome of cross-sector collaborations. These

findings corroborate much of the evidence found in the for-profit B2B literature, and as such signal the suitability of such literature for social sector theorists, practitioners and developers. This study recommends that the tripartite of leadership developers, policy makers and practitioners take greater account of these relational specificities when designing, mandating, or training for collaborative practice. In short, this study corroborates the importance of trust, communication, and shared values for collaborative practice and suggest that these relationship features are incorporated into cross-sector collaboration interventions and leadership practices.

8.4 Limitations

Today's UK social sector leadership context is increasingly interorganisational. By way of better understanding the challenges collaboration presents UK social sector leaders the current study has prioritised a UK social sector perspective and consequently canvassed the lived experiences of UK social sector leaders. This approach and other methodological decisions contain a number of limitations which will be outlined below

8.4.1 Contextual limitation

Theoretical and empirical studies exploring collaborations have increased in recent years. Despite this the literature has continued to be dominated by US scholarship driven largely by public administration interests. This study confronts this geographical distribution imbalance by offering a UK (one country) study. While this one country approach limits the study's generalisability, it does however respond to calls to redress the geographical imbalance and provide a study which shines a light on the UK social sector. It is worth noting that the study's social constructionist epistemology excluded generalisability ambitions in favour of descriptive depth.

8.4.2 Method and sampling limitations

In order to better understand collaboration and the challenge it presents to UK social sector leaders this study followed a qualitative research approach, collecting data through the use of semi-structured interviews. This particular data collection technique is widely used in qualitative studies and considered suitable for working with people's perceptions, opinions, and partially formed thinking on complex issues (Kallio et al., 2016), as well as managing complexity and depth (Galletta, 2013). Semi-structured interviews are also well placed to capture personal experience and privileged information (Silverman, 2013). Despite this, a number of limitations associated with this approach are detailed below.

Semi-structured interviews have been used in this study to better understand leaders lived experience and perceptions of collaboration, competency, and relationality. Throughout the interview process informants were provided with the narrative controls to define key concepts on their own terms. Concepts such as 'collaboration,' 'competence,' 'competencies,' and 'competency.' While it could be said that relinquishing definitional controls perpetuates the state of conceptual fuzziness that pervades the collaboration literature, the aim of qualitative research is to arrive at a *rich* understanding of phenomenon (Polit and Beck, 2010 in Kallio et al., 2016), which involves accommodating the kind of fuzziness that quantitative research would seek to preclude. In other words, what is lost in terms of the study's generalisability is more than made up for in the privileging of a UK social sector grounding that relishes the often-overlooked sectoral specificities that become available as informant's make use of narrative controls.

To better understand the challenge collaboration presents UK social sector leadership a purposive sampling strategy was used. Purposive sampling represents a 'non-random sample strategy' (Robinson, 2014: 32) and is typically selected on the basis that a particular group of individuals possess an 'important perspective on the phenomenon in question' (ibid). Believing leadership is a key role in general management (Amedu and Dulewicz, 2018), and that social sector leaders hold *important insights* into the state of the social sector as well as cross-

sector collaboration a purposive sample of experienced senior leaders (i.e., Chief Executive Officers, or Directors) with at least 6 years of experience in post were selected. Additionally, leaders were purposively selected by organisational income band range using NCVO's (2018) income range classification. The income band range for this study's sample extended from £100,000 (medium social sector organisations) to more than £200m (major social sector organisations). According to NCVO (2018) this sample represents 17% of social sector organisations but accounts for 76% of the social sector's annual income. It cannot be assumed that the current sample is representative of the views of leaders of this income range or that if representative of this range that these views would be representative of leader's views from larger or smaller social sector organisations.

This study's findings emerged from an exploratory study involving 18 group participants and a main study consisting of 30 participants. Compared with quantitative research this appears a small sample size. However, these sample sizes are consistent with standard qualitative organisational and management research protocols. Saunders and Townsend, (2016) for example, set the norm between 15 and 60, while thematic analysis (i.e., thematic content analysis) sampling guidance suggests a sample size ranging from 6 to 16 (Braun and Clarke, 2019).

8.5 Suggestions for future research

This study has identified the salience of relationality for understanding collaborative success and failure. This study has used Morgan and Hunt's (1994) KMV model to assist with this aspect of the analysis. The KMV model has been used elsewhere within social sector research (MacMillan et al., 2005; Goo and Huang, 2008; Paulraj et al., 2008; Sanzo et al., 2015; Mironska and Zaborek, 2019) and could be used in full to better understand the phenomenon of cross-sector collaboration. For example, collaborations are frequently associated with internal conflict. The application of KMV could expose these tensions and track

their implication on trust and relationship commitment, as well as other elements (such as the propensity to leave a collaboration).

Future studies could address the limitations associated with the study's sampling strategy and incorporate other social sector interactors within the sample such as mid-level project managers and frontline staff. This would build on the current study's findings and contribute comparatively to this nascent but often neglected area of research. Additionally, future studies could purposively sample interactors from larger or smaller social sector organisations. This could provide insight, for example, into informal collaborative arrangements frequently adopted by smaller social sector organisations, which are considered more challenging than cross-sector collaborations (Harris, 2018).

With interorganisational practice a growing feature of social sector leadership and with leadership developers yet to catch up to this, more work is needed to develop sector solutions that build leaders' collaborative competency. To this end, future research could incorporate the behavioural event interview (Boyatzis, 1982) within its research design to facilitate the discovery of relevant contingently defined sectoral competencies (Boyatzis and Ratti, 2009) of relevance to cross-sector collaborative practice.

With preferencing playing such a key role within the current study, providing parsimonious explanation of collaborative success, failure, this conceptual diptych could be applied to other social sector collaborative scenarios such as intraorganisational collaborations, or within particular policy fields such as contemporary cultural policy which 'in the UK is dominated by the encouragement of enhanced collaborative working' (Wilson, 2018: 518). This would advance understanding of collaboration's impact on social sector leadership within an evolving UK social sector context.

A State or for-profit comparative study would provide a clearer understanding of collaborative competency and of the similarities and differences associated with good and bad collaborations as understood by sectoral interactors. This may

flush out competing conceptualisations and help collaboration designers to safeguard or mitigate these features.

Acknowledging the importance of mission preferencing and the dangers associated with organisation-preferencing for the success or failure of collaborative outcomes, more so than other criteria (such as enhanced managerial controls or organisational efficiencies), these lessons – drawn from the social sector literature and the findings of this UK social sector study – could be applied to for-profit collaborations. The importance of mission and purpose for for-profit collaboration appears timely given the evolution and mainstreaming of for-profit's corporate social responsibility ethic.

8.6 Concluding remarks

With collaboration a growing feature of social sector practice in the UK, research aimed at better understanding the conditions associated with collaborative success and failure could provide practitioners, policy entrepreneurs, and researchers with much needed knowledge that could challenge the predictability of underwhelming performance that befalls the majority of UK collaborations. This study presents a novel contribution to the social sector collaboration (and collaboration competence) literature by presenting a conceptual diptych that parsimoniously describes the development of good and bad collaborations. This parsimony describes the activation and exchange of the study's three main themes and establishes good collaborations (and collaborative competency) to be a function of leader's competence sufficiency, balanced accountabilities, and relationship sufficiency. Bad collaborations (and poor collaborative competency), on the other hand, are considered a function of leader's competence deficiency, unbalanced accountabilities, and relationship deficiency.

Mission priorities are validated within the study as the touchstone for collaborative success, alongside competence switching, accountabilities optimality, and high levels of trust, communication, and shared values, which together provide a north star to guide future research. Similarly, organisation priorities are validated as a

source of diminish collaborative returns and predictable collaborative failure as poor competence switching, competence stasis, accountabilities suboptimalit, underwritten by self-interested opportunism, and low levels of trust, communication, and shared values, hollow out mission's primacy.

While this study identifies a number of themes that describe collaborative development and collaborative competency these elements are not exhaustive. Future research could unpack the data to reveal more 1st order concepts and 2nd order themes that would garner a fuller understanding of collaboration and collaboration competency. On this last point, while Boyatzis (1982) understands competence as 'an underlying characteristic of a person that may be a motive, trait, skill, aspect of one's self-image or social role, or a body of knowledge which he or she uses (p. 23), the current study extends this understanding to include leader's preferencing which foregrounds how competencies are animated.

Over the last 6 years I have developed a leadership development agency which works predominantly within the social sector, serving the developmental needs and aspirations of senior leaders. This thesis has given me a greater understanding of the challenges social sector leaders face when engaged in cross-sector collaborations. Throughout this time, I have utilised leadership and competence models developed outside of the social sector and failed to spot the translation problem this has presented. The discovery of leader's preferencing decisions and behaviours will markedly enrich my practice and provide a granularity and precision to my practice that had eluded me up till now. As I look back with hindsight, I now see social sector leaders whose everyday practice is blighted by preferencing dilemmas and decisions such as managing multiple accountability systems or choosing how or where to strike the optimal balance in favour of mission or organisational priorities. With leaders (and clients) invariably espousing the primacy of mission (after all who would openly privilege organisational self-interest ahead of mission), the preferencing construct has given me and my consultancy fresh purchase on the real-world dilemma facing social sector leaders. With mission and organisational preferencing explaining

such profound variance vis collaborative outcomes, this construct provides a valuable development tool that will serve my clients and I hope to inform wider social sector leadership reform.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Interview guide

Appendix 2 – Example interview transcript

Appendix 3 – Sample interview coding (using NVIVO 12)

Appendix 4 – Example of mid-point node mapping: good collaboration dataset

Appendix 5 – Main study sample demographics

Appendix 6 – Focus groups and individual interviews: information sheet and consent Form

Appendix 7 – Snapshot of KMV analysis: good collaborations

Appendix 8 – Snapshot of KMV analysis: bad collaborations

APPENDIX 1 – INTERVIEW GUIDE

INTRODUCTION

Briefly explain area of research – MAKE SURE I HAVE CONSENT FORMS SENT AND SIGNED.

WARM UP QUESTIONS (PROFILING)

- Could you please start by telling me a bit about the organisation you are working for?
- What is your current role, and how did you come to be in this position?

RQ 1: HOW DO SOCIAL SECTOR LEADERS ASSOCIATE WITH LEADERSHIP COMPETENCE

- Can you tell me how you understand leadership competence?
- I am interested in understanding leadership competence - can you describe a competent social sector leader? (i.e., what does this leader do or say that demonstrates of competence)
- Do you consider yourself a competent leader, why so?

RQ 2: HOW DO SOCIAL SECTOR LEADERS UNDERSTAND COLLABORATION

- How would you describe the concept of collaboration between organisations?
- Do you think collaboration between organisations (within and across sectors) is important, why so?

RQ 3: HOW DO SOCIAL SECTOR LEADERS DESCRIBE THE RELATIONAL ISSUES RELATED TO COLLABORATION

- Can you tell me a story of when you took part in a '***good'*** (as opposed to a bad) collaboration between two or more organisations?

Researcher probe: a) what benefits do you think organisations get by collaborating? b) did the organisations share values? c) what was the quality of communication like d) ...the quality of trust e) how was conflict dealt with? f) what of the motivations behind the collaboration (extrinsic/intrinsic)? g) how do you feel about the collaboration?

RQ 4: WHAT COMPETENCIES DO LEADERS ASSOCIATE WITH COLLABORATION

- Thinking of the collaboration's successes, what leadership competences helped make this happen?

RQ 3: HOW DO SOCIAL SECTOR LEADERS DESCRIBE THE RELATIONAL ISSUES RELATED TO COLLABORATION

- Can you tell me a story of when you took part in a ***'bad'*** (as opposed to a good) collaboration between two or more organisations?

Researcher probe: a) what benefits do you think organisations get by collaborating? b) did the organisations share values? c) quality of communication d) quality of trust e) how was conflict dealt with? f) motivation for the collaboration (extrinsic/intrinsic)? g) how do you feel about the collaboration?

RQ 4: WHAT COMPETENCIES DO LEADERS ASSOCIATE WITH COLLABORATION

- Thinking of the collaboration's failures, what leadership competences, actions/inactions were lacking or contributed to this?

Have I missed anything? Do you want to add anything? Have you got any questions for me?

APPENDIX 2 – EXAMPLE INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT

Interview One: Inf_01, F, 63

Researcher

My first question is, could you please start by telling me a bit about the organisation you are working for?

Inf_01, F, 63

OK. I work for (organisation name). It is a leadership development provider and it's focused on the social sector. It provides leadership training and leadership products for people who work for charities, social enterprises, freelancers who work in the charitable sector. Anybody who might think about themselves as a social leader.

Researcher

Thank you. What is your current role, and how did you come to be in this position?

Inf_01, F, 63

I'm Chief Executive of (organisation name), and how did I come to be in this position? I applied for the job about five years ago now, so my history is that I ran quite a large charity, which is where I I did that for 10 years and took it through quite a period of repositioning and transition and change management. So, I guess that's where I cut my teeth as a leader. [Job details deleted] So, I had a background of doing leadership things in the social sector. And when I got to about, I guess it was 57, 58, I had the opportunity to retire. And I did. And I dug my garden for a couple of years. After I'd recovered my energy, I was pretty burnt out at that stage I have to say, so. But once I recovered my energy [pause]. And so, when I knew what I did not want was to run another big management enterprise or another big organisation. So, I wanted to work in a more focused way and doing something which was a contribution to the social sector. And just as I was thinking this is what I wanted to do, as these serendipitous things

happen, this job was advertised and it was just made for me. So that's the history of how I got here.

Researcher

Thank you. Can you tell me how you understand leadership competence?

Inf_01, F, 63

Leadership competence? How do I understand leadership competence? I have to say I'm not very sure what the question means. Ask me the question using different words.

Researcher

What comes to mind when you think of someone others would describe as a competent leader?

Inf_01, F, 63

I guess competency is the skill sets that you need to do leadership. And the more of those skills that you have, and the more diverse, I guess, diversity is a big thing here. The more diverse that skill set the more you are able to flex that skill set, the more competent you are to lead in different situations. And I think I would say that because the world is changing so fast. And every year that I live, it seems to be changing faster, and some of that is just me growing old. But some of it, I think, is for real. Then no leader is in the privileged position of being static. So, you can't just say, well, I'll develop three skills and I'll do it, because tomorrow the world will be different. So, your competency very quickly runs out. Unless you have a diverse range of skills, which is why I say a skill set rather than a skill. So, leadership is a set of skills.

Researcher

Thank you. Would you like to add anything else about your understanding of a competent leader?

Inf_01, F, 63

I think that. It isn't one thing. For the reasons that I just gave. I think a monochrome single dimensional skill thing that a leader does would just not give them the right, I use that term very vaguely, to call themselves a leader. So, I think that there are probably some essentials that a leader needs to have. And then there are the nice to haves, which are a thousand different skills. And I think probably the two skills that I would say are completely and absolutely core would be something about relationships and something about situations and context. So, I think, let me start with relationships. I think leadership is a fundamentally relational activity. If you have a leader, then you have to have a follower. Otherwise, the word doesn't make any sense. So different followership sort of seemed to me although nowadays, people don't like to use the word follower because we're all a bit more egalitarian these days. And leaders of course grow leaders not followers. And all of that. It is about an individual's relationship with other individuals. So, the skills set that you need around building trust, relating to other people, empathy is part of it, but only part of it. It's empathy, its sympathy, it's mind-reading, it's body language stuff. That whole set of skills, which as herd animals we have because we [short pause]. You know, right from the time when we come out of the womb, we are attached to other human beings and how we communicate. So, it's a communication, I suppose, it's communication. Verbal and nonverbal. So, I think that is essential. Without that, you can't have leadership.

Researcher

And these two qualities are particular to the social sector?

Inf_01, F, 63

Universal. I would say. You know they talk about and you and I also talked about thought leadership and all of that. I'm not sure I quite get it. I think it is. Well, I suppose maybe thought leadership is a kind of communication, but I think these are the two skill sets that all leaders have to have. And then I think social leaders need some additional ones. Business leaders need some additional ones, and

political leaders need some additional ones. Military leaders need some additional ones.

Researcher

So, thinking about the social sector, what do you think some of those additional ones might be?

Inf_01, F, 63

Socially? [pause]. Well I think there's something about, not uniquely, but there's something about morality and decision making in a context which very often presents you with good and good. And how do you choose about bad and bad options? You know, bad and worst options, that sort of thing. So, I think those kinds of, it's on a pinhead, it's on a razor blade, those are the skills. I think not all aspects of the social sector, because that's the other thing, the social sector is everything and nothing. But the majority of the social sector is about people. Whether it's beneficiaries or whether it's staff or whether it's just the way that you know we are, then your people skills have to be really particularly well-honed and. And it's, I mean, I don't really fully understand what authentic leadership is but I have a sense that if you are a social leader, honesty and truth sort of becomes a bit bound up in that. And that's quite a tricky place for a leader because as a leader you're very often having to make decisions which are about achievement and reaching a goal and all of those things. So, you can very easily, I have to be careful what I say here because it's, it's rather exposing, but you can sometimes sacrifice honesty and truth because you are cutting corners and you think you know which is the greater evil and you think I've got to achieve my goal and so many more people will live because of it, and if I tell a little lie here or whatever. And I just think that that is very specific to the social sector. I think some, I think some public sector leaders probably also have those dilemmas. I think the thing for me about social leadership, which is really important is that the social sector as I define it is made up of 800,000 paid staff and 20,000,000 volunteers. Basically, what you are saying is if you take the sector as a whole. Each one of us paid staff is responsible for 22, if I've got the math right volunteers. The

management of volunteers is a deeply complex psychological, motivational activity, whether those people are your trustees or whether they come in to serve the homeless or whether they're doing admin in the back office or whether they're out rattling a tin, they're all volunteers. And we're very used to it in our world, and I know that our world is a construct, but [its] transactional you know, you do for me and I pay you, right. But in this amazing sector of ours, half the nation is volunteering for our amazing community sector. And the leadership that we provide for the sector is highly complex and has to my knowledge not been defined. What are the amazing ways in which we have to lead in order to motivate that incredible army of good folk?

Researcher

Thank you. Do you consider yourself to be a competent leader, and why so?

Inf_01, F, 63

Yes, I do consider myself to be I mean a competent leader. What I want more than anything else is to be involved with strengthening the voluntary sector. I love and am passionate and a total believer in the voluntary sector. And I think if I didn't think of myself as a competent leader, I mean how do I know? Because I'm full of doubt, like most leaders. Absolutely riddled with doubt. And my leadership flaws are much bigger for me than my leadership skills and competency. I'm constantly plagued with doubt, but then I think, I don't need to be here. I don't need to work anymore. I've got a lovely house. It's paid for. I've got a pension. I've got a garden. And yet I think I have something to give, and yet I think I have a job to do, and I must believe in myself otherwise I wouldn't be here. Does that answer the question?

Researcher

Yeah. That's great. Thank you. How would you describe the concept of collaboration between organisations?

Inf_01, F, 63

Organisation to organisation you're interested in rather than person to person, right?

Researcher

I'm interested in however you want to frame it.

Inf_01, F, 63

Well, you know, it's all so artificial, isn't it, because organisations are normally headed up by a leader. And then it becomes leader to leader, so at some point two people have to get on and make that. So, for me I suppose collaboration is the activity of doing something jointly with another organisation. It can have many reasons for wanting to do it. And therefore, it can have many forms and shapes and sizes. And is very difficult to define as something in a sentence. But if you keep it at its most basic, it's about two organisations or two or more organisations acting jointly.

Researcher

Do you think collaboration between organisations is important, why so?

Inf_01, F, 63

I do think it is important, and I can tell you why I think it's important, but I don't think it's important at any cost. And I don't think it is always important. So, I think that we are very often shamed into believing that we are these individualistic, egoistic leaders who just want to do things our own way and we're so bad that we don't collaborate, and so then we kind of go overboard and say at all costs I must collaborate, I must partner with others. And I think collaboration and partnership is really hard. And it is expensive. And it is uhm. Yeah. So, I think before you do collaborate, it is really important to just think about the costs and the benefits. And every situation is different. So, you've got to be clear about why you want to collaborate, what you want to get out of it, what kind of organisations you work best with in which situations. I think there is a whole kind of [pause]. It

would be nice to stop thinking about it as a hierarchy, you know, you asked this question. You don't move on to the next question unless the answer is yes. Then you don't move on to the next question unless the answer is yes, and you stop trying the whole time to collaborate at all cost. So, there are many reasons for collaboration, which is that you know in the longer term it can probably save costs as well, it can bring additional benefits if you do it well. If you manage not to fall out with other people. All of those things. But for me, the overwhelming reason [pause]. So, there's a professor at London Business School who does a lot of work on Boards and getting individuals on Boards to collaborate, to be whole Board, and has a lot of good theory about it. And so, we asked him what's the best thing that he has ever read on collaboration. And he recommended this book I read the book at high speed because it's a bit academic. But, in the very first chapter she makes a very powerful point, which I mean, I know it anyway, but because she'd articulated it so well I really got it at a deep level, which is this thing about no matter how smart you are, no matter how right and brilliant you are, the world is a complex place and no problem can be solved by one amazing, brilliant, fabulous super-human being. And therefore, you need collaboration. Because in this world, increasingly, everything is interlinked and complex and moving at high speed. So, the more you collaborate, the better the result is likely to be. And so, then that was in the beginning of her book, and then she sets out to demonstrate that's her hypothesis. So, then the book does that.

Researcher

Is there anything else you would like to add?

Inf_01, F, 63

Erm, I think it's easier to collaborate with people whom you share, you have a shared set of values with just because trust is achieved very, very quickly and so therefore, I think if I had to choose erm, private sector or public sector, or political sector, or academic sector or social sector, I would go for social sector. Having said that, because I spent more than a few years in the city I also do like the honesty, in one sense of the word, of commercial players. If it doesn't make

financial sense, it doesn't make sense. And that's very refreshing as well. So, you go to them saying you want to collaborate, so, you go to the social sector and say you want to collaborate, oh yes, you know, hugs and kisses and you know whatever, let's buy some cakes, and let's drink some champagne. And then a few months later you haven't really done the hard work and you fall out. In the commercial sector the chances are, well, you're too different, or let's look at the bottom line. If the bottom line makes sense, then we'll put resources in. Because everything is a financial calculation. Oh, OK it makes financial sense for us to do it therefore we will resource it up front. So sometimes the commercial sector can be better at doing these things because they take a much more unemotional approach.

Researcher

Can you tell me a story of when you took part in a good as opposed to a bad collaboration between two or more organisations?

Inf_01, F, 63

I think if I had to pick the most incredible collaboration that I've had the privilege of witnessing, it would be the foundation that I was the first Chief Executive. And it was a collaboration between 12 individuals, really, but let's say 12 companies because each of them was the head honcho of a private equity firm. Actually, between 40 and 50 private equity companies coming together to pool their charitable giving and therefore to achieve more. Each of them very generous and every year wanting to put more and more and more of their wealth into charity. But each of them feeling frustrated that the world's problems are so huge, even though I have a few million, it doesn't solve anything, but if each of our 50 companies put in a million a year, with 50 million you can really start to shift stuff. That was the collaborative idea. And so, then these 50 companies appointed 12 of their group to form the foundation, so they became the first members of the foundation, as it were. And they then did their first round of fundraising themselves. And then they realized, and then they ran into trouble because they realized they were very good at raising the money but they didn't understand the

social sector. And they didn't understand social change, and they didn't understand you know that actually if you want to do good, you have to start changing the world and so at that point I was brought in to be their first Chief Executive. Wonderful job, you know here is 50 million, you decide how you want to spend it. You bring us the strategy, and so on. And I served them for X years until completely unemotionally they decided they were going to close and give the money to somebody else and I got given a fantastic pay-out and let go. And it was all done with this complete, yeah, I mean just unemotional. But very, very powerful collaboration.

Researcher

So, I'm interested in that experience of the unemotional decision to terminate. You mentioned a little bit about the values of that collaboration. Were the values generally shared or was there any kind of conflict between the various parts of the collaboration?

Inf_01, F, 63

Erm, there was always conflict as in tensions, different views, they just had a very powerful way of resolving their conflicts.

Researcher

And how did they do that?

Inf_01, F, 63

By talking about things. And being super bright. That was the first thing. I mean, these guys were exceptionally brilliant, exceptionally brilliant. And they were to a man, and they were all men, erm, the same class, age. Some were more successful than others. Some were like super billionaire; others were just millionaire. But between them, you know, so very very homogeneous, if that's the right word, group who were all alpha males. So, you never saw any need for anybody to be you know dominating, they [were] able to resolve conflict between themselves by just sort of you know. I used to witness these sorts of locking horns

playfully and then backing off and you know that's how I would describe it. So, I think the answer to your question really is there is a deep underpinning set of values, which is, we want to change the world, we want to do good. We have been fortunate; we have a lot of wealth. We want to spend a small portion of that wealth on doing good. That was completely shared, completely shared. No question. Then came this thing about some wanted to do good in the children, and others preferred teenagers, and others were worried about old people. And some wanted to kind of spend their money on hospitals. Some wanted to go to Africa. So, my job was to say to them, if you want to make social change, you can spread yourself thin and achieve nothing, or you can choose one thing and then within that one thing to choose one thing, and then within that one thing to choose one thing, and then you really go for it. And they got that. So, the conflict in the early days and there was conflict was all about, oh, you know, I've been supporting this wonderful little charity in Africa, and you've got 50 million can't we just give half of it into this charity? And then the others saying, oh well if you are giving his charity half a million, then what about my charity. So, having to take them through a process of strategy and clarity, and focus, and then getting them all really committed to one cause was an important part of how we resolved those conflicts.

Researcher

What was the quality of listening like within the collaboration?

Inf_01, F, 63

I would say exceptional, exceptional, except it was all done at high speed. So, like, I was like, what have we just decided? Because they were so fast, such a homogeneous group. So super bright. So, they would say to me, this word you keep using social justice, can you just explain that. And I just sort of opened my mouth and start to kind of go well social justice, blah blah blah. But they got it [click of fingers]. So, it was an exceptional group of 12 incredibly brilliant Harvard educated you know top notch players who were very good at listening, but they didn't take a lot of time over it.

Researcher

And what about the quality of communication?

Inf_01, F, 63

Exceptional. Fast. They were you know top brass, articulate performers.

Researcher

So, what did that mean for you in your leadership role?

Inf_01, F, 63

It meant I just sat there with my mouth open in complete awe. It was a great privilege to be there and to see how 12 great minds can come together. Erm. I guess my role was as their servant really, as the person who did their bidding. And in doing their bidding, which is helping them to understand social change, helping them to arrive and agree on a strategy everything had to be well argued through because they would shred anything that was not of the highest standard. They expected incredible amounts of research and evidence based. Which, you know would take me months to do and then they would go, OK fine, agreed, you know, because if you gave them the evidence and you gave it to them in the right sort of way, they were so bright they just got it. So, my role is really to listen and understand them and then run away and get the help that I needed, because I was not their intellectual equal by any means. So, but they had loads of money, right! So, it's just like, pay a researcher to do it for you don't worry about it.

Researcher

How long did that collaboration last?

Inf_01, F, 63

7 years.

Researcher

And when a decision was made who owned that decision or owned that process?

Inf_01, F, 63

Which decision?

Researcher

Any decisions. So, decisions to commit X amount of money to project A as opposed to project B.

Inf_01, F, 63

Well, they met monthly, which I've never known a Charity Board that meets monthly. Ever. But they were fast decision makers, and they were fast actors and they couldn't understand why you wouldn't just make a decision. Meetings would be fast [clicking fingers]. There was a Chair who was more than first amongst equals. He was the youngest of all of them and the brightest. And I think he had. He was chosen, not that they chose you know, because they talked about something and a decision would appear. But I think he had the, he was [nationality specified]. So, at some point in his past he had been a refugee, and so he came from, I mean his father was a doctor and his mother was a teacher, so he was not exactly like a working-class kid, but he came from a position of, to use the controversial phrase, lived experience. And probably in time he will be the richest of all of them. But because he was young, he hadn't, he hadn't quite made as much money as some of the others in the group who quite liked to sort of slightly patronize him, but he was their bright shining star. And he and I spoke, I think, probably twice a week. Asked, conversations, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah down the phone. And so whatever decision was made by the group he then owned at least as much as me, if not more than me, and he then saw it as his job to make sure that I had the support that I needed to carry out, to implement that decision.

Researcher

What about the quality of the trust between all the collaborators, what was that like?

Inf_01, F, 63

Amazing. Amazing, and I say amazing, truly amazing, because in their day jobs they were absolutely red in tooth and claw capitalists, aggressive competitors. Private equity companies buying and selling companies and stabbing each other in the back and full of financial kind of wheeler dealer in their day jobs, but when they were around our Board table there was incredible trust. And it's back to this thing about, you know, it's an, it's a deeply emotional thing for them to give to charity. Deeply emotional, because you are full of guilt about how much money you earn and all of that, and here you want to change the world and you're giving your hard-earned wealth to a cause, and before they wouldn't give to anything you know that cause had to really bite them hard. So, it was a deeply emotional thing and yet around that table it was really quite unemotional. Because it was so, well I trust you, that's fine, you make the decision, whatever you say, I'll be behind you, and I'll back you and I'll never stab you in the back. Yeah, it was incredible, a lot of which you know I just keep coming back to this thing about how samey they were. I think of the 12 of them, 10 of them were born in 1965. 10 years younger than me, well 8 years younger than me. And they all went to Harvard. And they all had MBAs, and they all worked in the City of London. Most of them were American.

Researcher

Thinking of the collaboration's successes that you've described, what leadership actions or leadership competencies helped make that collaboration a success?

Inf_01, F, 63

Are you asking about mine?

Researcher

The collaboration's. So, that could be yours or it could be those you observed.

Inf_01, F, 63

I think the intellectual quality of each of the players. I think the homogeneity of the players. Of their ability to use the resources, the skills, the tools, the people in the right way for the right thing. The leadership of the Chair, he had all of those skills, but maybe probably a whole load of emotional intelligence on top of that, whereas some of the others you had to dig a bit to find the emotional intelligence. It was there, it was there for sure but you know, I was an outsider to the group and you know, they were alpha male businesspeople, they were not going to show their soft side very often. Whereas the Chair, you had no doubt that he was able to move from rational to emotional and back again, you know have a good balance of those things.

Researcher

Would you like to say a little bit more about the quality of intelligence, which you have mentioned on a number of occasions now?

Inf_01, F, 63

Intelligence as in intellectual intelligence?

Researcher

I am interested in your framing here. Would another word for these intelligent men be smart, or is there something else here?

Inf_01, F, 63

I suppose when I use the word intelligence, I'm using it more as superior, superior skill set. Then I think there's emotional intelligence. And I think there's intellectual intelligence, and there's probably other sorts of technical intelligence and lots of other stuff. So, if I were to describe that group, I would describe each one of them as having an intellectual ability. Intellectual ability, so the ability to process, analyse, think, apply knowledge, the cognitive sort of thing, of the kind of 10 out of 10 for the whole group. Emotional intelligence I would say probably varied

between 5 and 10. And as I say, you know, the ones I would give 5 out of 10 too had it but not on show the whole time.

Researcher

Thanks. Are there any other competencies that come to mind when you think of those collaborators?

Inf_01, F, 63

No, I think money. But that's not a competence, is it?

Researcher

Tell me more about that.

Inf_01, F, 63

Well, they were able to do fantastic things because they have no shortage of money. They would know, for example, like I do believe in this book that I mentioned earlier, she makes a very strong case for diversity. And collaboration and diversity, and you know this was not a diverse group, which gets me thinking, well, actually, did they lack something because they were not diverse? I don't know. Without doing the whole counterfactual kind of analysis I don't know if they would have done so much better than they did if they had been more diverse, they couldn't have been more diverse because those people don't exist. But if you have money you can buy diversity can't you. They had me. Presumably somewhere along the way they thought you know actually most of the UK's poor people are black and brown so we better have a black and brown person selling us and doing our work for us I don't know. I'm making it up, but. If you have money and are really able you can find ways of compensating for your weakness.

Researcher

Let's now move on and think about a bad example of a collaboration. Can you tell me a story about a bad example of a collaboration that you have been involved in?

Inf_01, F, 63

Is all this going to be anonymous?

Researcher

Yes. So, the research will be stripped of all its biographical data that could be used to point back to you.

Inf_01, F, 63

So, my bad example would be again not a partnership but a group of people who I brought together in my early days of [organisation name]. So, the background to this is that I arrive at [organisation name] and what is clear to me is that we are very elitist. We run a very elitist leadership program. Very expensive, gold plated leadership development opportunity for people who are mainly Oxbridge high, high-flyers. And we spend most of the year scouting incredible talent in the charity sector. Selecting those people and then putting them through a program so that one day they will be our future leaders. It was also clear to me when I arrived that the organisation was bankrupt, it had no money. But it was also intellectually a bit bankrupt, not in a bad way, but just, you know, it had run out of steam. And the third thing that was very clear to me was that leadership development was not something that the sector wanted. But it was something that the funders wanted because the funders were after excellence in leadership. People working in social sector didn't care about excellence in leadership [pause] their concerns were driven by sustainability goals and being able to prove your worth. So, the first thing that I did was I brought together about 20 people, organisations really, the top person from 20 different organisations who were key to solving this problem. And my proposition to them was this is not about [organisation name], this is about the sector, and you know like I said to you, I'm here to grow leaders in the sector and I need your help with doing this. Some of them are funders, some of them were organisations like [organisation name] and key umbrella bodies. And then there were a couple of key players, government was there, the Charity Commission. You know, all big important players. And. Yeah. To start with everybody said absolutely, this is the really key issue we have to really raise

the tide here. There's no point in just having a few good leaders we need the whole sector to be you know raising the whole sector by 5 or 10 percent would be so much better than just, you know all the rhetoric was there at the early days, which gave me a lot of encouragement. So together with a couple of other people, we set up some working parties and we had some meetings and then we had a two-day residential to get everybody together and work through the issues. And then as soon as that was done, it started to fall apart. And it just never got off the ground. And on one occasion, it resulted in me actually being for the first and only time in my life actually thrown out of somebody's office.

Researcher

Would you like to share more?

Inf_01, F, 63

In no uncertain terms and well, this was the Chief Executive of [organisation name]. And what had happened was I think, I think I was naïve, and I was too young. I hadn't been in the job long enough. So, when I arrived at [organisation name] I didn't really know what leadership was. And you know, I would listen to conversations about leadership and think, oh, now I've understood what leadership is, and then I'd have another conversation and think, I've lost it again, what was leadership again? So that was mistake number one. I should have just left it for a year or two years until I was more established in my own ability to grasp the issues. It goes back to you know, intellectually I don't think I had it at that point.

Researcher

Was this simply a matter of misjudging the timing i.e., would it have been better a year down the line?

Inf_01, F, 63

Yes, but I don't think that was a misjudgement of timing because if I was not going to do it straight away [pause]. So, [organisation name] needed to be rebuilt. I had

a decision to make about do I sink [organisation name] and just you know. we'll have a few thousand pounds left in the bank and I just hand it over to the Charity Commission and close the doors, or do I start to rebuild? Everybody said you can't rebuild by yourself, you need others to do that, because leadership is a thing that the whole sector has to share, you can't just, [organisation name] decides it's going to rebuild, set up a university or whatever. Fine, OK, we'll do it with others. The moment was right. But I think it was understanding the politics. So, it's party timing and partly misreading the politics. So, in fact, I think, let me give you the example of the guy who threw me out of his office. What happened without me realizing was I was used as a pawn in a political game where people wanted to criticize him for poor leadership of the sector. He leads the sector, goes in to negotiate with the Minister, speaks on the radio and on television for the social sector. I'm not interested in leading the sector. I'm interested in his leadership skills for people who work in the sector. But I was not sharp enough to realize that what was happening was we were all saying how terrible leadership is. Right. I was saying that, meaning people like you and me, we don't have the right leadership skills to do the job. What they were meaning was [name] isn't doing his job. So anyway, I got maneuverer into this situation where I then started to, he was starting to feel threatened by me. So basically, ordering me out of his office was you know, take your tanks off my lawn now! That was what was going on.

Researcher

So how long did this collaboration last?

Inf_01, F, 63

Erm probably about 6 months.

Researcher

Can you say a little bit about the shared values and motivations of those in this collaboration?

Inf_01, F, 63

So, I wouldn't describe it as shared values. I would describe it as a shared agenda. I think we all share the same values, continue to share the same values even now. We are all passionate advocates for the social sector. You know, it's vital to the lifeblood of the country. All of those things. But I think three quarters of the people there were talking about the poor leadership of the sector, as in we don't have good enough leaders at the top. And we were using the same language, we've got poor leadership, said I. We've got terrible leadership, said they. They were talking about [name]; I was talking about you and me. So somehow we kind of didn't, I didn't spend enough time clarifying what the purpose was. It was about mission and purpose group. And I found myself out gunned because I didn't have authority in the group. At some point I realized this, and I tried to say hang on a minute, this is, I don't care whether [name] is a good leader or a bad leader really, I just want more training, and then they weren't interest. Exactly what they wanted was to attack that guy.

Researcher

When you realized that the agendas were not shared, was the dissolution of the collaboration swift or did it happen slowly?

Inf_01, F, 63

I was very decisive when I realized it wasn't working. I was putting in you know 10 days a week into this. When I realized it wasn't working I just thought, oh, shit! You know I'm a Chief Executive of a charity that's going under and I'm running around playing politics and I don't, I don't, I can't see the route to winning here. I'm not going to get anything out of this. So, I killed it. Hard thing to do because a lot of credibility, a lot of my own credibility, a lot of [organisation name] credibility hung on that. Erm, but people have amazingly short memories you know. And everybody thought, oh thank God I don't have to go to those bloody meetings anymore, let's get on with life.

Researcher

So, there was a reputational risk for you as a leader but also for [organisation name] that you seemed to mitigate, how so?

Inf_01, F, 63

Simply because it was early enough in the process. Nobody else had invested that much. The cost was mine and the cost was [organisation name]. Erm, I was the fall guy as well. So, I was the guy who was ordered out of [name] office. Nobody else knows that happened. You know that now. Erm [pause]. So, nobody else got hurt in it. Had they got hurt I suppose there would have been a bit of blame for this. Erm, the cost is the opportunity cost. Imagine if we had built a university for leadership skills for social leadership.

Researcher

And that was the ambition motivating you?

Inf_01, F, 63

To get this group of people to combine their resources and create something more than a leadership program for 20 Oxbridge graduates, which is what we were doing at the time [at organisation level].

Researcher

Were there any obvious or maybe less obvious actions or competencies that weren't present that had they been would have made a significant difference?

Inf_01, F, 63

Well, I mean, I'm picking up your point now. It's making me think. If the two things are indeed connected in my mind subconsciously, maybe because it [pause]. I had a two-year break in between and had this rather incredible experience with the foundation. Although the last year that was also pretty horrible because we did a big merger that was hard. Nonetheless, a great example. And then almost the first thing I did when I got to [organisation name] was to say, we can't do this

alone. We have to do it in partnership. So, let me gather the obvious players. In that example, in the foundation example, I had a fantastic partner in the Chair. So that Chair-Chief Executive partnership was incredibly powerful and rewarding and fun and all of those things. This other one. This bad one, I didn't have an obvious partner. I had some people who I thought would be my partners but as soon as they kind of realized [inaudible] they were off. Whereas my partner at the foundation he would never have walked away. Ever. But in this other situation I was out of my depth.

Researcher

What would you do differently if you were back in that situation today?

Inf_01, F, 63

I would [pause] yeah, I think the only thing is. I would be a bit clearer about what I wanted, and therefore probably a bit more manipulative. I was literally there with [pause]. I felt like a fool now, go in there with a completely open agenda. We ate something together with people. And then not be smart enough to realize that you know there was a political game going on. Erm, so I think, think what you want. Choosing the right people to help you to you know it’s back to your very first questions to me. You think you have to. You're going into a collaboration, just collecting a bunch of people around you isn't the answer. You have to be clear about what you want and then you have to think about who are the collaborators who will help you to deliver that thing? And then you have to lead them there, I know it sounds manipulative, but in as smarter way as you can persuasion and cajoling and whatever else.

Researcher

Is there anything else that you want to say or add, anything we might have missed that you want to return too?

Inf_01, F, 63

No, just that you've given me food [chuckle], you've given me some food for thought, and in particular I'm quite interested in why in answering your questions, why I chose the two examples that I chose. Erm, because when you first told me that I was going to have to think of a good example and a bad example, I was quickly scrolling through in my mind, what am I going to talk about here? I would have expected to talk about, so in [place name], for example, you've probably heard about some work we did in [place name], and I would probably have talked about that. So, yeah, I mean, I don't know why I chose those examples rather than examples of kind of harder partnerships that we've worked within, or struggled within, or thrived within.

Researcher

Well, the great thing is, is there are no wrong answers here. You have given me two full accounts for which I am very grateful.

Inf_01, F, 63

I don't actually think about the bad collaboration example at all really. I don't actually think about it anymore, erm, it's long forgotten. But, as it happens at this very moment, sitting in [place name] our Fundraising Manager who is writing a fundraising proposal for an online leadership university for the social sector. So that idea, which at that stage I wasn't smart enough to have formulated, that idea has never me. It's kind of what I was sent to [organisation name] to do, and I'm bloody well going to do it before I leave. Erm, so it could be that's the connection, that actually at the back of my brain I'm thinking I hope [name] is doing a good job with that, because it's important to me. You know with lockdown we've just got an amazing opportunity to reinvent ourselves on the 1st of January 2021. What are we going to be? So that could be why I chose that example, because actually in my mind, those buggers didn't allow me to do it I'm bloody well going to do it myself now. And the foundation? Oh well I have no idea why I choose that one.

APPENDIX 3 – SAMPLE INTERVIEW CODING (USING NVIVO 12)

organisation that believes in its goals and is not undermined by any other conflicts of interest.' To her credit she just went 'you're right' and withdrew from the Board. But it was a massive risk to speak that, you know, and to challenge that because if it had backfired, their kind of wrath is not to be, you know, brought upon us, basically. But what you realize is if you don't stand up for yourselves, then the respect is not there. But it's a really difficult balance and your constantly between those.

Researcher
So, although that particular collaboration came to an end, the relationship is still there?

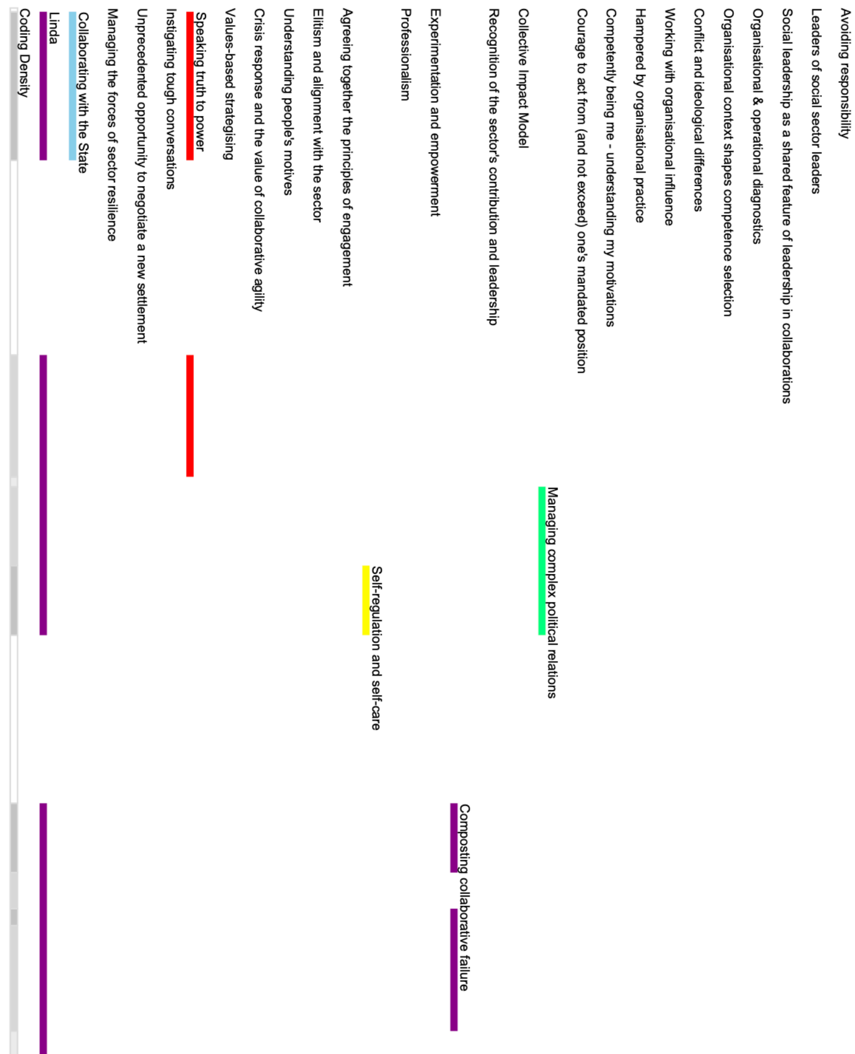
Inf_03, F, 53

Yeah. And it strengthened our power base because people could see then that we were authentic in our management of that process and that we had challenged it and that we did do things differently and we continued to manage to function and didn't do what happened a lot before, which was to polarize and become like an adversary of them. So that actually then became a strength for us, not just with people that were in this building, but with other statutory and senior strategic people. We have a weird situation where we've got the city council and the county council in the same city. And one's Labour and one's Tory. So, they're just ideologically different in every way. Sometimes we get in the middle of that and so it's like being strong enough to say we have our own borders and we'll work with both of you. We're not going to be assigned to either one of those sides. But it's you know, it's exhausting.

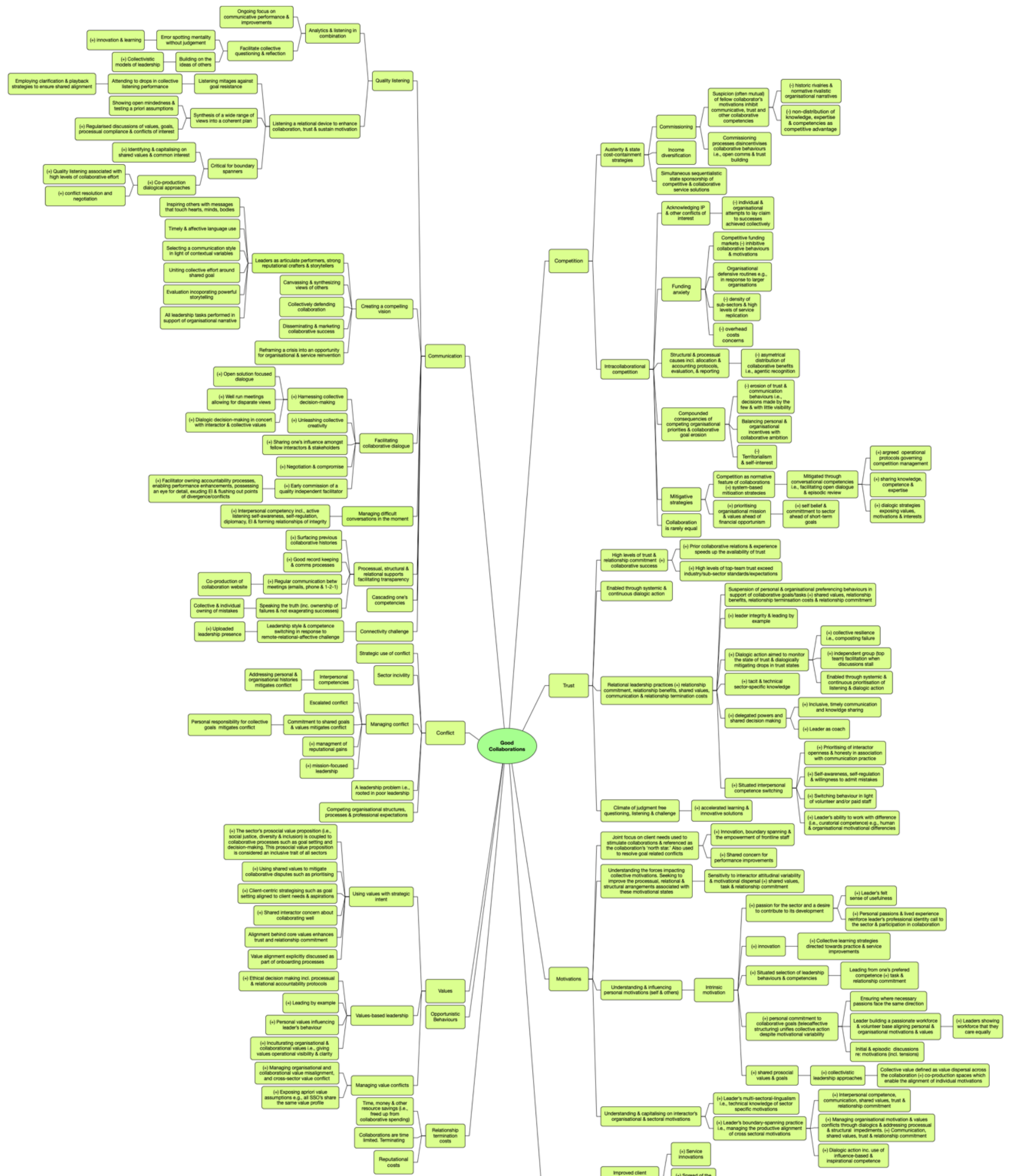
Researcher
I wonder if you could say something about the quality of the communication during that particular collaboration?

Inf_03, F, 53

I think there was highs and lows of it. I think it was. What was so disappointing about it was that people had really shown up and participated and created something and fed into that. And when they believed and it's bitten, bitten back, and they've been shown to be [ ] the kind of suggestion is that you don't trust again. Then you're coming further back than you were in some ways. So I think what we tried to do was to draw upon the real strengths of that, so there were some amazing things that were created, like a big, colourful map of the whole territory of joint work and some of the relationships were there that we built on. So, what we tried to do was to work with the 'haves' and not the 'have nots,' even though at the beginning there were only a couple of things that we could connect too.



APPENDIX 4 – EXAMPLE OF MID-POINT NODE MAPPING: GOOD COLLABORATION DATASET



APPENDIX 5 – MAIN STUDY SAMPLE DEMOGRAPHICS

Inf#	Gender	Age (as of 2020)	Ethnicity	Formal leadership training	Highest leadership award	Sub-sector	Role	Org income (last available accounts)
Inf_01	Female	63	Not specified	Not specified	Not specified	Infrastructure	CEO	1,210,007
Inf_02	Male	Not specified	White British (Irish)	Yes	MBA	Education	CEO	2,043,282
Inf_03	Female	53	White British	Yes	MBA	Community development	CEO	1,035,189
Inf_04	Male	57	White British (Scottish)	Yes	CMI Level 6	Foundation	Director	est. 200,000,000
Inf_05	Male	50	White British	Yes	MBA	Community development	CEO	7,860,000
Inf_06	Male	42	White British	Yes	MA	Infrastructure	Director of Innovation & Development	3,224,921
Inf_07	Male	42	White British	Yes	MBA	Advocacy	CEO	913,358
Inf_08	Female	54	Scottish	Yes	Post Grad Cert. in leadership	Social services (homelessness)	CEO	7,088,353
Inf_09	Male	60	White British	No	Not applicable	Culture & the arts	CEO	661,286
Inf_10	Male	46	White British	Not specified	Not specified	Infrastructure	CEO	2,507,392
Inf_11	Female	41	White British (Scottish)	No	Not applicable	Culture & the arts	CEO	653,684
Inf_12	Female	61	White British	Not specified	Not specified	Infrastructure	Director	264,911
Inf_13	Female	59	White British	Yes	Post Grad Cert. in leadership	Community development	CEO	287,281
Inf_14	Female	48	White British	Yes	L6 apprenticeship	Health	CEO	3,658,696
Inf_15	Female	57	White British	Not specified	Not specified	Social services (women's health)	Director	199,146
Inf_16	Male	44	White British	Not specified	Not specified	Infrastructure	COO	263,653
Inf_17	Male	60	White British	No	Not applicable	Social secrives (forces & veteran support)	CEO	189,376
Inf_18	Male	42	White British	Not specified	Not specified	Research	CEO	2,275,832
Inf_19	Female	36	White British	No	Not applicable	Infrastructure	CEO	150,000
Inf_20	Female	58	White British	No	Not applicable	Community development	CEO	355,642
Inf_21	Male	48	White British	No	Not applicable	Advocacy	CEO	2,592,168
Inf_22	Female	52	White British	No	Not applicable	Social services (youth - prevention services)	CEO	1,273,992
Inf_23	Male	Not specified	White British	Not specified	Not specified	Mental health	CEO	863,102
Inf_24	Female	36	White British	Yes	Not specified	Community development	Director	1,077,406
Inf_25	Female	60	White British	Yes	MSC	Social services (youth homelessness)	CEO	680,219
Inf_26	Male	35	White British	Yes	ILM & CMI Level 7	Education (employment training)	CEO	2,654,508
Inf_27	Female	52	White British	Not specified	Not specified	Health	CEO	281,676
Inf_28	Female	53	White British	No	Not applicable	Social services	CEO	345,661
Inf_29	Female	47	White British	Not specified	Not specified	Housing	Deputy CEO	1,379,706
Inf_30	Male	Not specified	White British	Not specified	Not specified	Infrastructure	Director	1,160,536

APPENDIX 6 – FOCUS GROUP AND INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW: INFORMATION SHEET AND CONSENT FORM

Information Sheet

The title of the research project

The future of leadership in the social sector: the role of collaboration

Invitation

You are being invited to take part in this research because of your experience as a senior leader within the social sector. Before you decide it is important for you to understand why the research is being carried out and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully. If there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information don't hesitate to contact Tim Groves (see contact details below).

What is the purpose of the project?

The aim of this study is to gain an executive perspective on future social sector leadership skills and competencies.

Why have I been chosen?

You have been chosen because of your experience of leadership within the social sector. As such you are well placed to offer an informed view on the state of the sector, and importantly can speak to the future of the sector and the requisite leadership that the future sector deserves.

Do I have to take part?

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep (and be asked to sign a consent form). You can withdraw at any point until the end of the interview. You do not have to give a reason in the case of a withdrawal. You can contact Tim Groves

at any time to ask questions about participation. All the data you provide will be held securely and treated confidentially (see below).

What do I have to do?
Stay on with us for an hour at the end of your Experienced Leaders Learning Day. It's not compulsory for you to attend, but we'd love your thoughts and insights as senior leaders in the social sector.

Focus group: The focus group will last 60 minutes. Participants of focus groups will not exceed 7 in number. Discussions will centre on current and future sector trends, and the requisite leadership competencies needed under such conditions.

Interview: The interview will last between 60 minutes – occasionally and with your consent this may be extended. Interviews will take place at Reading University. Interviews will be conversational in style and provide an in-depth focus on current and future sector trends and leadership competencies.

Will I be recorded, and how will the recorded media be used?
With your permission, the focus group and/or interview you attend will be recorded. Material collected will only be used for the purpose of transcribing, summarising and analysing by the researcher. Data collected will be password protected by the researcher and destroyed within three years of the project's end. The audio recordings of your activities made during this research will be used only for analysis, with transcribed direct quotes used for illustration in Tim Groves' PhD thesis, and subsequent academic and conference papers, and practitioner journals. In all cases any information that might reveal the identity of the organisation, or the participant, will be removed. No other use will be made of the data without your written permission, and no one other than the researcher will be allowed access to the original recordings.

What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?

There are no reasonably foreseeable discomforts, disadvantages, or risks to participation.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

You will play an important part in informing understanding of the future shape of leadership within the social sector. Your input will make a significant contribution to knowledge in this area and will inform leadership development debate and practice within the sector.

Will my taking part in this project be kept confidential?

All the information that we collect about you during the course of the research will be kept strictly confidential. You will not be able to be identified in any reports or publications. Results will form the bases of a PhD thesis, and may be used subsequently in academic articles. Should you wish to be notified about these outputs, please contact Tim Groves.

What type of information will be sought from me and why is the collection of this information relevant for achieving the research project's objectives?

The data collected is important in achieving the research objectives as it offers the possibility to understand your experiences and understandings of social sector leadership in detail. This project has been reviewed by the University Research Ethics Committee and has been given a favourable ethical opinion for conduct. You will be given a copy of the information sheet and a signed consent form to keep.

Contact for further information

Tim Groves, Henley Business School, Marketing and Reputation,
E: timothyandrew.groves@pgr.reading.ac.uk

Consent form

1. I have read and had explained to me by

   ……………………………………………………………………………………
   ……………………………………………….

   the accompanying Information Sheet relating to the project on the future of leadership within the social sector.

2. I have had explained to me the purposes of the project and what will be required of me, and any questions I have had have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to the arrangements described in the Information Sheet in so far as they relate to my participation.

3. I understand that participation is entirely voluntary and that I have the right to withdraw from the project any time, and that this will be without detriment.

4. This project has been reviewed by the University Research Ethics Committee and has been given a favourable ethical opinion for conduct.

5. I have received a copy of this Consent Form and the accompanying Information Sheet.

   Name:
   Date of birth:
   Signed:
   Date:

APPENDIX 7 – SNAPSHOT OF KMV ANALYSIS: GOOD COLLABORATIONS

- High RTC & RB influence the quality of relationship exchanges
- RTC *felt* particularly high for interactors of lead agencies possibly with more invested & at stake

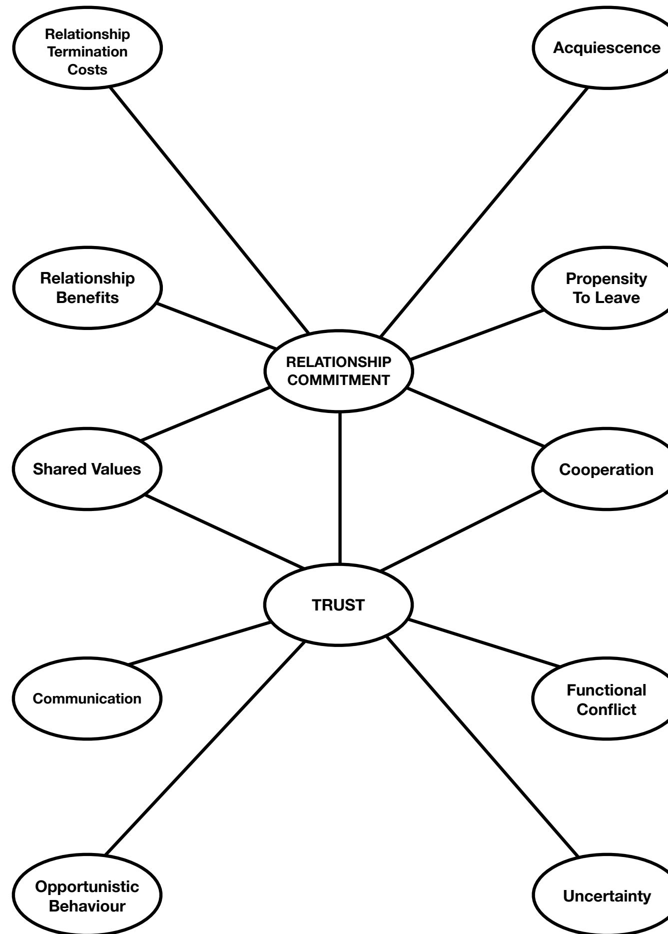
Interactors readily offer coherent arguments in support of their engagement in collaborations. Compelling rationalisations included:

- Improved client outcomes (present & future); sharing of knowledge, expertise & competence; raising standards and aspirations; & enabling service, organisation, & field innovations
- Spreading of economic & reputational risk, & sharing in associated gains
- Speed, strength & protection in numbers, particularly collaborations operating in political cross-sectoral spaces.
- Collaboration deemed particularly prescient post COVID 19pandemic

- Shared prosocial values (i.e., social justice, inclusion, client-centredness) proved instrumental in establishing & maintaining collaboration
- Shared values used to mitigate collaborative disputes and set/review collective purpose & goals
- Shared values explicitly discussed as part of onboarding and regularly thereafter
- Ethical considerations formed a structural & processual feature of collective decision-making
- Interactors led by example, giving values operational visibility.
- Interactors' worked with the personal passions of others to reinforce attachment to shared goals

- Consistent high quality listening, particularly within cross-sectoral exchanges. Combined with analytical competence listening was associated with innovation gains, the mitigation of goal disputes & the capitalisation of shared values and common interests
- Communication performativity included the use of storytelling to create a compelling vision & inspire collective action; the reframing of crisis or failure; the harnessing of collective decision-making; resolving difficult conversations; negotiation; showing empathy, diplomacy, self-awareness & self-regulation

- Mutual respect; regular dialogical action; the affirmation of values informed decision-making; formal & informal accountability processes; a climate of judgment free error spotting & resolution; individual responsibility for collective actions; and the expectation of trustworthiness, all acted to limit opportunism in favour of mission priorities



- Relationship commitment directly influenced acquiescence, in association with high RB
- Acquiescence was influenced by *perceived* interactor trustworthiness
- High levels of trust between those with prior collaborative histories with positive consequence for acquiescence

- High levels of RC, RB & to a lesser extent RTC influenced collective stability & interactor-dependence thereby mitigating propensity to leave.
- Most good collaborations lasted longer than their bad counterparts, with many reporting re-collaborating with the same interactors

- RC, trust, RB, shared values, & communication influenced cooperation
- Whilst good collaboration accounts reported tensions, conflict, & competition these were mitigated dialogically by interactors with high levels of interpersonal competence
- Relational & processual assistance to address competition without loss of cooperation

- Strategic use made of conflict enhancing collective problem diagnostics & facilitating innovative solutions
- Conversational dexterity & communication style switching (to accommodate contextual features), and high levels of interpersonal competency (i.e., self-awareness & self-regulation) influenced conflict management
- Collective commitment to shared values was used strategically to reassert consensus & ameliorate conflict

- Operational, strategic, resource & reputational decisions made transparently & communicated efficiently
- Decision-making uncertainty mitigated by interactor trustworthiness; questioning as part of the decision-making process

APPENDIX 8 – SNAPSHOT OF KMV ANAYLSIS: BAD COLLABORATIONS

- Termination is resisted as long as RTC remains high (e.g., no alternative funding available), and RB is intact (e.g., the promise of ongoing funding).

- Mixed collaborative motivations: the State's welfare retrenchment; funder's mandating of collaboration; SS seeking competitive & legitimacy advantages. These motivations prioritise: organisational satiatedness ahead of mission; & short-term strategising over long-term impacts & client-outcomes
- Bad collaborations are characterised by the slow materialisation of promised RB and accompanied by drops in RC
- Structural & processual arrangements (e.g., state commissioning) impede RB

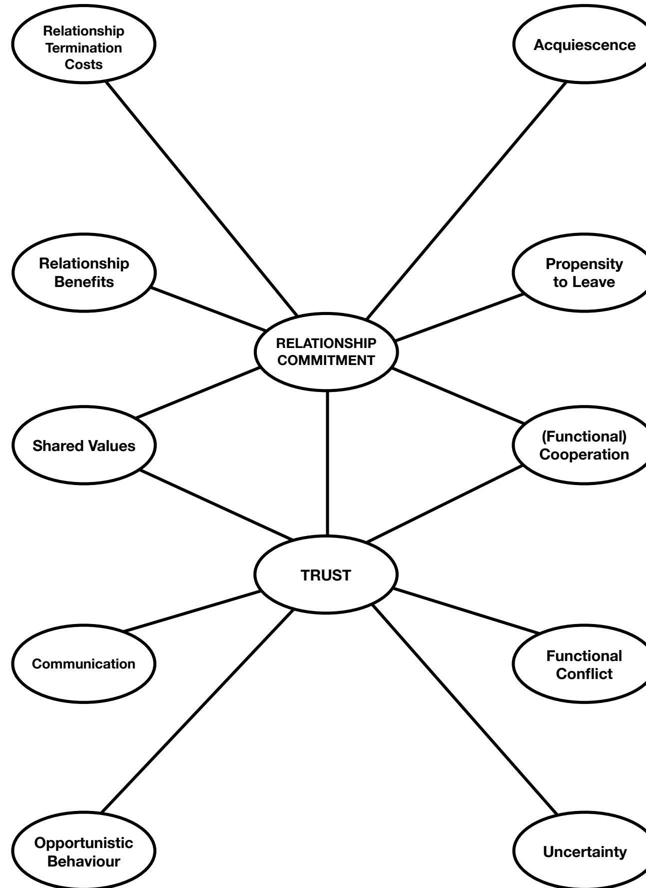
Lack of shared values undermine trust. Examples include:

- Slow leader response to values turf wars including drops in processual or relational performativity that contravene shared values
- Failure to discuss values alignment (e.g., as part of onboarding processes, & failure to regularly review alignment thereafter)
- Values decoupled from goal setting & decision making processes (priority given over to what works)
-

Poor communication across the majority of bad collaboration accounts. Examples included:

- State listening employed to affirm pre-determined policy interests
- Failure to attend to drops in collective listening performance (i.e., failure to listen for diagnostic refinement)
- Failure to manage difficult conversations in the heart of the moment.
- Poor application of accountability and transparency protocols

- Hoarding relational, reputational & knowledge-based exchanges with the consequence of seizing processual control in support of organisational or personal preferences
- Competitive funding design disincentivize collaborative behaviours & result in OB, defensive routines, income diversifications, mission-drift, & the employment of optics to mask OB



- Despite the presence of State preferencing behaviours (i.e., collaboration design & goals aligned principally to State interests), SS interactors describe acquiescing to State interests, even when this threatened to inhibit SS agency. High RTC (i.e., contracted service agreements)

- Bad collaborations do not contain a strong propensity to leave. This picture masks power asymmetries
- High RTC indirectly mitigate against the propensity to leave
- Propensity to leave is replaced with passive aggression & compliance rather than commitment

- Low levels of trust and RC enable a variant of cooperation - 'Functional cooperation' i.e., cooperative behaviours that mask competing organisational preferencing strategies, oppositional hostilities, historic rivalries, and organisational culture clashes
- Functional cooperation limits collective learning and undermines innovations as interactors frustrate information & competence exchange
- Functional cooperation is associated with leader insincerity, the sidestepping of collective responsibility, and poorly executed accountability processes

Unresolved or poorly managed conflict is a common feature. Sources of conflict include:

- Opportunistic behaviour: i.e., state nepotism involved in service commissioning processes
- Communication deficits: i.e., systemic lack of regular open & honest discussions
- Shared values: i.e., poor matching & prioritisation Poor goal setting: i.e., goals pre-defined, ill-defined, narrowly defined, accompanied with ill-fitting evaluation processes & metrics
- Disputes over reputation and innovation gains
- Failure to address personal & organisational histories & rivalries
- Covert contests for control of resources & processes

- Decision-making opacity i.e., decisions made outside of formal meetings (by the few). Uncertainty is amplified by a double bind of discouraging error spotting and an intimidating blame culture.
- Mistrust between interactors, role overlaps, territorialism, historic opportunism, weak collective strategising, and financial controls all increase uncertainty