NONPROFIT-BUSINESS PARTNERSHIP: THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF VALUE

KATHRYN ELIZABETH WING

Thesis submitted to the University of Nottingham for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

April 2018

Abstract

The recent burgeoning of academic and practitioner interest in nonprofit-business partnership and other forms of cross-sector social partnership (CSSP) reflects their perceived importance as mechanisms for creating value, by addressing intractable social, economic and environmental problems (Austin & Seitanidi, 2012a; Le Ber & Branzei, 2010a; Porter & Kramer, 2011; Selsky & Parker, 2005). The literature identifies an emerging trend over the past few decades towards strategic nonprofit-business dyadic partnerships, whose stated aim is, at least in part, the creation of social value, alongside organizational value for the participating organizations (Seitanidi & Crane, 2009; Vock, Van Dolen & Kolk, 2013; Waddock, 1988).

This research reconceptualizes value as a socially constructed, discursively constituted concept. It tracks the evolution of a time-limited dyadic nonprofit-business partnership between a credit card company and a young people's charity in the United Kingdom, in real time. The empirical work commenced at the very outset of the PhD, progressing in tandem with the exploration of relevant literatures. The initial research question was intentionally broad, with sub-questions emerging inductively from the data analysis. The overarching research question is: *"How do partners involved in nonprofit-business partnership construct value through their discourse?".* This positions the thesis to investigate how partnership talk functions, which is identified as an under-researched aspect of nonprofit-business partnership and other forms of CSSP.

The particular perspective on discourse theory adopted for this thesis draws on the work of discursive psychologists, such as Potter and Wetherall (1987), but is also sensitized by post-structuralist ideas. It therefore recognizes the multiplicity of possible interpretations and questions conceptions of value which treat it as an objective concept, existing outside of discourse. It combines ethnographic techniques with discourse analysis, taking full advantage of the high level of pre-negotiated access to this case. This enables the detailed analysis of partnership talk to be integrated with an ethnographic sensitivity to context.

This research opens up the 'black box' of partnership talk to reveal the micro-level discursive practices through which the partners deploy their communicative skills to construct the value of the partnership. In this thesis, partnership talk is found to be characteristically both collaborative (as opposed to competitive) and asymmetrical (in terms of its structure). However, where the partners engage in joint planning activity and the funding relationship is not salient, the talk becomes more symmetrical, with both partners contributing to the dialogue on a more equal basis, thus more conducive to the co-creation of value.

The findings capture discursive practices involved in aligning for value, building value and affirming value in collaborative partnership talk. Where the partnership talk becomes misaligned, for example, where tensions or sensitivities arise, the partners employ various discursive practices to defend and repair the value of the partnership and to avoid overt conflict. A key contribution of this research is a multi-level Value Construction Model, which is grounded in the close analysis of partnership talk. This is not a positivistic or prescriptive model, but rather a descriptive and explanatory model, based on

patterns discovered inductively in partnership talk data and recognising the diversity of cases and research settings and the complexity of multi-party partnership talk.

Acknowledgements & dedication

This research was made possible by means of a studentship from the International Centre for Corporate Social Responsibility (ICCSR) at Nottingham University Business School (NUBS). This included a financial contribution from the business involved in the research, for which I am sincerely grateful. I should like to express my gratitude to everyone who participated in the research, both from the business and from the charity, for being so generous with their time and for allowing me access to the goings-on within their partnership.

I should also like to thank everyone at NUBS who has supported me on this journey, especially my supervisors. Wendy Chapple has been with me throughout and has borne with me through all the ups and downs. Thanks also to Daniel Nyberg, who helped me in the early stages; to Judy Muthuri for her support through the first half of the journey; and to Rob Caruana, who helped me over the finishing line. I am also grateful to Andy Crane from the University of Bath and to Isobel O'Neil from NUBS for their constructive and insightful comments during my viva voce examination.

Special thanks go to my mother and sister for their unfailing love and support. Finally and most importantly, huge thanks go to Garry for his love, patience and understanding. I dedicate this thesis to him, a fellow sufferer.

Epigraph

"There will be time, there will be time
To prepare a face to meet the faces that you meet;
There will be time to murder and create,
And time for all the works and days of hands
That lift and drop a question on your plate;
Time for you and time for me,
And time yet for a hundred indecisions,
And for a hundred visions and revisions,
Before the taking of a toast and tea."

The Lovesong of J. Alfred Prufrock – T.S. Eliot

Table of contents

Contents	Page
Chapter 1: Introduction	**1**
1.1 Setting the scene	1
1.2 The case	3
1.3 Scope & aims of the thesis	6
1.4 Research question & sub-questions	8
1.5 Thesis outline	9
Chapter 2: Discourses of value	**15**
2.1 Setting the scene	15
2.2 Defining nonprofit-business partnership	17
2.3 The shared value debate	23
2.4 Problematizing value	26
2.5 Use value and exchange value	30
2.6 Business value perspectives	33
2.7 Social value perspectives	37
2.8 Critical perspectives	41
2.9 Value creation as a social practice	45
2.10 Rationale for a discursive perspective on value	48
Chapter 3: Research design	**55**
3.1 Setting the scene	55
3.2 The social construction of nonprofit-business partnership	55
3.3 Discursive approach	59
3.3.1 Discourse as social interaction	*59*
3.3.2 Institutional talk	*60*
3.3.3 Discourse and the construction of context	*63*

3.4 Approaches to data collection 67
3.4.1 Case study design 67
3.4.2 Case selection & access 70
3.4.3 Reflexivity 71
3.4.4 Ethical considerations 74
3.5 Sources of data & sampling strategy 76
3.5.1 Participant observation & ethnographic techniques 77
3.5.2 Interviews 79
3.5.3 Treatment of field notes & audio-recorded data 83
3.5.4 Documents 85
3.6 Data analysis techniques 87
3.6.1 Multilevel & multiperspectival analysis 87
3.6.2 Process of analysis 90

Chapter 4: Portrait of a partnership 96

4.1 Setting the scene 96
4.2 Introduction to DigiGen 97
4.2.1 Arrival at DigiGen's offices 97
4.2.2 Constructing commonalities between partners 99
4.2.3 Constructing social and organizational value 100
4.2.4 Sustainability 101
4.2.5 Holistic approach, peer support & co-creation 102
4.2.6 Innovation & entrepreneurialism 105
4.2.7 Informal, friendly workplace 106
4.3 Introduction to CrediCo 108
4.3.1 Arrival at CrediCo's offices 108

4.3.2 Tour of CrediCo's offices *109*
4.3.3 Vision to "Make Lives Better" *111*
4.3.4 A "Great place to work" *113*
4.3.5 CSR strategy & the partnership *115*
4.3.6 Focus on "High Street" customers *117*
4.3.7 The business update *119*
4.3.8 Ongoing access to the field *122*
4.4 Summary of emergent themes 123
4.4.1 Higher priority of the partnership for DigiGen *123*
4.4.2 Perceptions of CrediCo's culture & workplace fun *125*
4.4.3 Chapter summary *130*

Chapter 5: Value building in collaborative talk 133

5.1 Setting the scene 133
5.1.1 Conceptual model of value construction processes *133*
5.1.2 Chapter overview *136*
5.1.3 How the data extracts were selected *138*
5.1.4 Summary of data coding processes *138*
5.2 Value aligning practices 141
5.2.1 Constructing commonalities *141*
5.2.2 Mimesis – partner's language *143*
5.3 Value building – strengthening relationships 148
5.3.1 Behaviours engendering rapport or trust *148*
5.3.2 Compliments or flattery *151*
5.3.3 Enthusiastic endorsement *156*
5.3.4 Affliiative humour *159*
5.3.5 Collaborative language *162*

5.4 Value building - establishing credibility 165
5.4.1 Mimesis – business language 165
5.4.2 Mimesis – young people's language 168
5.4.3 Reported speech 171
5.4.4 Invoking third parties / name-dropping 174
5.4.5 Citing research / claiming knowledge or expertise 178
5.4.6 Establishing personal credibility 180
5.5 Value affirmation and symmetrical talk 181
5.5.1 Building on one another's ideas 181
5.5.2 Mirroring 184
5.5.3 Positive assessments and decision-making 186
5.6 Chapter summary 188

Chapter 6: Value preservation & repair in asymmetrical talk 191

6.1 Setting the scene 191
6.1.1 Chapter overview 191
6.1.2 Summary of data coding processes 194
6.2 Value realignment – reformulating & summarizing 196
6.3 Value misalignment & preservation 199
6.3.1 Limited use of directive questioning 199
6.3.2 Evading the question 204
6.3.3 Mitigated interruptions & changes of subject 206
6.3.4 Mitigated or veiled criticism 210
6.3.5 Withholding of endorsement – minimally aligning 214
6.3.6 Withholding of endorsement – silence 223

6.4 Asymmetrical forms of humour 230
6.4.1 Humour at expense of own organization 230
6.4.2 Other-deprecating humour 233
6.4.3 Self-deprecating humour 237
6.5 Value conflict & repair 240
6.6 Chapter summary 248

Chapter 7: Framing the social, business & mutual value of the partnership 251

7.1 Setting the scene 251
7.1.1 Chaper overview 251
7.1.2 Summary of data coding processes 253
7.2 Constructing social value 255
7.2.1 Value alignment – social value 256
7.2.2 Value building – social value 264
7.2.3 Value misalignment – social value 268
7.3 Constructing business value 276
7.3.1 Value alignment – business value 276
7.3.2 Value building – business value 283
7.3.3 Value misalignment – business value 287
7.4 Constructing mutual value / win-wins 296
7.4.1 Value alignment – mutual value 296
7.4.2 Value building – mutual value 301
7.4.3 Value misalignment – mutual value 306
7.5 Chapter summary 311

Chapter 8: Discussion 313

8.1 Setting the scene 313
8.1.1 Summary of findings 313
8.1.2 Summary of points for discussion 314

8.2 Methodological contributions 316
8.3 Micro-level constructions of value 318
8.3.1 Contributions to research on interpersonal skills & competencies 318
8.3.2 Contributions to discursive research on CSSPs & interorganizational collaboration 323
8.3.3 Contributions to discursive research in other empirical settings 330
8.4 Meso & macro-level constructions of value 337
8.4.1 Revisiting shared value 337
8.4.2 Contributions to the CVC 341
8.5 Chapter summary 347

Chapter 9: Conclusions 349

9.1 Setting the scene 349
9.2 Implications for academics 350
9.2.1 Methodological implications 350
9.2.2 Implications for discourse studies 351
9.2.3 Implications for partnership theory 352
9.3 Implications for practitioners 354
9.3.1 Implications for business practitioners 356
9.3.2 Implications for nonprofit practitioners 357
9.3.3 Developing collaborative skills 358
9.4 Limitations & mitigations 361
9.5 Directions for future research 363
9.6 Final remarks 367

Figures

Fig. 5.1 Value Construction Model 134
Fig. 5.2 Value building processes 141

Fig. 6.1 Value preservation & repair processes 193
Fig. 7.1 Value Construction Model: the meso-level 252

Tables

Table 2.1 Summary of perspectives in the nonprofit-business and cross-sector partnership literature 53
Table 5.1 Value building processes in collaborative talk 140
Table 6.1 Value preserving & repairing processes in asymmetrical talk 195
Table 7.1 Sources of value in relation to value Processes 254

References 368

Appendices 380

Appendix A Information for participants 380
Appendix B Initial interviews - topic guide 383
Appendix C Transcription symbols 384
Appendix D Observations log 385
Appendix E Interviews log 388
Appendix F Timeline of the partnership 391

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Setting the scene

Is nonprofit-business partnership worth investing the necessary time and resources - and is it unequivocally a force for social good? The social, economic and other forms of value created by nonprofit-business partnerships have received considerable attention from scholars in recent years (Austin & Seitanidi, 2012a; 2012b; 2014; Irmak, Sen & Bhattacharya, 2015; Sanzo, Álvarez, Rey & García, 2015; Shumate, Hsieh & O'Connor, 2016; Shwom, 2015; Tsarenko & Simpson, 2017). Yet value has seldom been examined through a discursive lens, as a socially and rhetorically constructed concept. Discursive approaches explore the capacity of meaning-making resources (i.e. language and images) to constitute social reality. This research therefore treats the concept of value as constituted by discourse and the analysis of partnership talk as necessary to our understanding of value creation processes. While concepts such as identity and power tend to be a major focus in discursive studies, since these are ubiquitous dimensions of social interaction, other concepts, such as value, remain relatively underexplored (Van Dijk, 2011).

This thesis offers a fresh approach, advancing our understanding of how value is co-constructed through nonprofit-business partnership talk. It contends that we cannot hope to understand fully how value is created in nonprofit-business partnerships and what makes them succeed or fail, without paying close attention to the dynamics of partnership talk.

Over the past few decades, nonprofit-business partnerships have grown in number and importance, to become a well-established feature of business' corporate social responsibility (CSR) programmes, as well as forming a key part of the fundraising and capacity-building strategies of many nonprofit organizations (Austin, 2000; Berger, Cunningham & Drumwright, 2004; Loza, 2004). Nonprofit-business partnerships have also gained increasing attention from academics (Austin, 2000; Austin & Seitanidi, 2012a; 2012b; Docherty & Hibbert, 2003; Marx, 1999; Seitanidi & Crane, 2009; Wymer & Samu, 2003). Yet, despite scholars predominantly extolling the potential or actual value of these collaborations, the micro-processes through which value is discursively constructed and sustained remain something of a mystery. This thesis aims to uncover how partnership talk works and to demonstrate that a close analysis of partnership talk offers a fruitful approach to the study of cross-sector social interaction (CSSI).

Nonprofit-business dyadic partnerships encompass more than simply corporate philanthropy, in that they imply the aim of working together towards a shared objective, or for mutual benefit (Waddock, 1988; Seitanidi & Crane, 2009). Given the social value missions of nonprofit organisations, the objectives of these partnerships also necessarily involve the creation of social (or environmental) value and they are therefore regarded as a particular form of cross-sector social partnership (CSSP) (Selsky & Parker, 2005). However, these collaborations have been characterised in various ways, depending on the perspectives of scholars (see Chapter 2, section 2.2 for a detailed discussion of definitional issues). As far as this thesis is concerned, dyadic nonprofit business partnerships are taken to be voluntary, co-operative arrangements involving one private sector and one

nonprofit organization; they are also relatively long-term and intensive associations (not merely one-off interactions); and whilst other motivations may be present, their stated purpose includes creating social or environmental value.

As with CSSPs, dyadic nonprofit-business partnerships often focus on addressing "wicked" problems (Rittel & Webber, 1973) with complex and interdependent causes, such as entrenched social inequalities, which individual organizations or sectors may be incapable of tackling effectively on their own (Googins & Rochlin, 2000; Selsky & Parker, 2005). This adds additional complexity to the study of how value is constructed in these kinds of partnerships and research settings, since there are multiple potential sources of value and multiple intended beneficiaries, potentially with conflicting, rather than complementary, interests.

1.2 The case

This thesis offers an in-depth study of a single case of nonprofit-business partnership, between a young people's charity and a credit card company in the UK. It traces the evolution of this partnership in real time, from the early stages of implementation through to the final six months of the partnership, with the fieldwork spanning more than two years.

Dyadic nonprofit-business partnerships aim to solve a wide array of social and environmental problems, which may be more or less aligned to the nonprofit and/or the business partner's core activities (see e.g. Austin & Seitanidi, 2014 for examples of cases). In this particular case, the stated aim of the partnership was principally to invest in and support young people, aged

between 16 and 25, with a particular emphasis on skills development, including employability, work and study and financial education.

However, in practice much of the funding provided by the corporation was used to build the capacity of the nonprofit organization. This enabled it to reach and engage with many more young people, so as to meet their needs in a user-led and sustainable way - in other words, it increased the nonprofit partner's capacity to expand and deepen the involvement of young people in the development and running of its services. The holistic approach adopted by the partnership was in keeping with the ethos of the nonprofit organization, which recognized that young people face multiple, interrelated pressures and challenges, including around employment opportunities, education, debt, family and relationship problems, depression and anxiety and a lack of decent, affordable housing.

The implementation stage of the partnership effectively began in December 2012, with the first payment from the business to the nonprofit partner - although the contractual agreement between the partners was not formally signed until June 2013 (see Appendix F). The formation stage of the partnership involved a prolonged period of discussion and negotiation, commencing in April 2011, with the first approach by the business to the nonprofit organization. The fieldwork for this study commenced in October 2013, when the partnership was still at an early stage of development. The fieldwork concluded in December 2015, by which time the partnership activity was winding down, with approximately six months to run before its formal termination, in June 2016 (see Appendix F).

'DigiGen', the voluntary sector organization in this case, already had a significant track record of partnering with private sector organizations, prior to being approached by the business, 'CrediCo', with a view to entering into a partnership arrangement. (N.B. both partner organizations have been given pseudonyms to protect their anonymity.) However, this was CrediCo's first strategic partnership with a national nonprofit organization. The business employed the services of a consultant to review its CSR programme, which led to a recommendation to adopt a more strategic approach, by entering into a relatively long term and more impactful partnership with a national UK charity, instead of restricting its community engagement to local organizations and relatively small scale investments.

From a UK nonprofit perspective, since the 2008 financial crisis, austerity has resulted in cuts to statutory provision, alongside a trend of reduced local authority financial assistance to voluntary and community organizations, which has presented a growing challenge for nonprofits to meet the needs of their beneficiaries (Clifford, 2017). Whilst funding from the private sector continues to make up a small percentage of the voluntary sector's overall income (NCVO, 2017), in a tough funding climate, growing numbers of voluntary sector organizations are cultivating partnerships with the private sector as a significant income stream, continuing a long trend of intensification in the relationships between these sectors, in a UK context (Seitanidi, 2010).

Another aspect of the context for this case is the blurring of traditional boundaries between sectors: many nonprofits are becoming more businesslike in their approach and seeking to generate income streams by selling goods and services, while

private sector organizations are increasingly looking to take CSR more seriously and to promote the role of social and environmental values in the way they do business (Bromley & Meyer, 2014; Moon, 2002). The values and motivations driving these two partner organizations proved important, both as a potential source of common ground and as a potential source of conflict. In particular, the business partner recognised that there was a tension between its Vision to 'Make Lives Better' (and its later Mission) and the real world outcomes of its core business activity, which targeted the 'subprime' market. This research identifies the discursive and rhetorical strategies through which the partners built common ground, managed tensions, avoided overt conflict and ultimately constructed (or failed to construct) value for their two organizations and for young people.

By December 2015, when the fieldwork concluded, the nonprofit partner (DigiGen) was predominantly positive concerning the outcomes achieved through the partnership. However, the business partner (CrediCo) had significant reservations as to whether it had achieved value for money, hence the partnership was not renewed at the end of its approximately four year term. This thesis will explore how the the value of the partnership was constructed by participants over time, both in terms of how partnership outcomes were framed discursively and in terms of how evaluations and decisions were made at a micro level, through a close analysis of live partnership talk.

1.3 Scope & aims of the thesis

Whilst this research will focus on the phenomenon of nonprofit-business partnership, many of the findings will also be relevant to the wider CSR and CSSP fields, as well as other collaborative

institutional settings. This thesis examines value in nonprofit-business partnership through the lens of discursive psychology, thus the findings will also be relevant to scholars adopting related discursive approaches, particularly those interested in studying institutional talk in collaborative settings. Practitioners of nonprofit-business partnership and other social partnerships are another key audience for this research, which aims to present findings that will yield insights for practitioners into how partnership talk works and how their own partnerships can be made more effective.

The key argument of this thesis is that the main purpose of nonprofit-business partnership is to create value for the partner organizations and for society, but value is a socially constructed concept, hence the need to investigate in detail how the partners construct value through their discourse. This thesis develops a theoretical model of value construction in nonprofit-business partnership: a multilevel Value Construction Model, which is grounded in the realities of authentic partnership talk.

The specific case of nonprofit-business partnership investigated by this project was a given, since this doctoral research arose from a partnership agreement between the University of Nottingham and the two partner organizations. However, the specific aims of the research were kept open, allowing the flexibility to focus on what was interesting about this particular case and enabling the research questions to emerge organically, as the fieldwork progressed in tandem with the literature review.

1.4 Research question & sub-questions

The initial, guiding research question was intentionally broad, allowing a more focused research question and sub-questions to emerge, as the literature review and empirical work progressed. This initial research question was: "How do partners involved in nonprofit-business partnership co-create value?". However, by the end of the first year of my doctoral studies, the research question had been refined as follows:

RQ: "How do partners involved in nonprofit-business partnership construct value through their discourse?".

This overarching research question positioned the thesis to investigate in detail how partnership communication works, which, based on my exploration of the literature (see Chapter 2), I identifed as an under-researched aspect of nonprofit-business partnership and CSSPs. Research sub-questions were derived inductively from the data, only emerging from the intensive data analysis undertaken during the third year of my doctoral research.

As the data analysis proceeded, it was identified that many features of partnership talk related to how the partners were building or maintaining the relationships, credibility or trust that enabled the construction of value through their discourse. Patterns emerged concerning how the partners influenced one another, controlled the floor, negotiated and exerted control over the meanings of value that got to be taken up, hence over the decisions that were made. The significance of more asymmetrical patterns of talk became evident, along with the identification of various discursive resources, deployed by partners in aligning for

and building value, as well as in defending value and avoiding conflict when tensions emerged or when partnership talk became misaligned.

The following sub-research questions emerged inductively from the data analysis:

Sub-RQ 1: How is collaborative talk constructed and deployed (i.e. using what interpersonal skills and rhetorical strategies) so as to co-construct value?

Sub-RQ 2: How are misalignments in asymmetrical talk managed so as to preserve or repair value and avoid overt conflict?

Sub-RQ 3: How do discursive constructions of value change over the lifecycle of the partnership and across sectors?

An empirical chapter is devoted to addressing each of these sub-research questions. An overview of the structure of the thesis as a whole is provided below.

1.5 Thesis outline

The following chapter, entitled 'Discourses of value', will review the nonprofit-business partnership literature (including relevant CSSP and CSR literature), building the case that value in social partnerships is a socially constructed concept and that there is a need to investigate how value is discursively constructed through partnership talk. The chapter deals with definitional issues and explores the evolution of the concept of value, relating this to

current debates on shared value (Porter & Kramer, 2006; 2011). Three broad and interrelated strands are delineated in the extant literature: business value perspectives, social value perspectives and critical perspectives. The chapter locates this doctoral thesis within these three strands and proposes the overarching research question: 'How do partners involved in nonprofit-business partnership construct value through their discourse?'.

Chapter 3 goes on to explain and justify the rationale for the mixed qualitative methods utilised in this research. It elucidates the social constructionist orientation, which underpins the use of ethnographic and discourse analytic techniques. The chapter clarifies how the ethnographic fieldwork complements the close analysis of partners' talk. The particular perspective on discourse theory, in the tradition of discursive psychology, is explained, along with the role of researcher reflexivity and ethical considerations.

Chapters 4 through to 7 comprise the empirical chapters of this thesis. Chapter 4 serves as a bridging chapter between the research design chapter and the chapters presenting findings. It is an ethnographic account of the early stages of fieldwork, which aims to sensitize the reader to the cultural context of the two partner organizations. This chapter also presents key themes, which began to emerge in the early stages of the fieldwork. It offers a reflexive, first person account, which aims to give the reader a sense of what it was like to enter the field. It also provides contextual information, which helps to justify the interpretations made in subsequent empirical chapters. Whilst these interpretations are grounded in a close analysis of the data, they also draw on ethnographic knowledge of the case. Thus an important rationale for including the ethnographic

account is to substantiate inferences made in subsequent empirical chapters, based on an in-depth understanding of the cultures of the two partner organisations - interpretations which could not have been justified based on the analysis of partnership talk data in isolation.

Chapter 5 deals with sub-RQ 1 (see section 1.4) and is the first of two chapters presenting findings on the close analysis of features of partnership talk, principally from audio-recordings of partnership meetings. It presents the Value Construction Model, which is grounded in a micro-level analysis of how value is constructed through partnership discourse. The chapter presents findings concerning how value is aligned, built and affirmed at the micro-level of partnership talk. It elucidates various discursive strategies for building common ground; for constructing and maintaining relationships (incuding trust and credibility); and how value is affirmed (which often occurs at decision-making points). The chapter explains how features such as reported speech and affiliative humour were used as discursive resources in constructing the value of the partnership. It identifies that, in exchanges where partners' talk was orientated towards building upon one another's ideas on an equal basis, the partnership talk followed more symmetrical patterns.

Chapter 6 is the second of the two chapters presenting findings principally from the analysis of live partnership talk and deals with sub-RQ 2 (see section 1.4). It presents findings concerning the other aspects of the Value Construction Model, i.e. how partners preserve and repair value when their talk becomes misaligned (i.e. where sensitivities, tensions or differences arise between partners' values, priorities or interpretations) and how

they avoid overt conflict. Partnership talk was found to be more *a*symmetrical when the partners were not operating in a value-building mode (e.g. when they were not engaged in joint planning activities). The most asymmetrical patterns of talk tended to occur when the different roles of the partners, as funding body and funded organization, were most salient, as well as when the partnership talk became misaligned. Misalignments were mostly handled through value preserving strategies, including the use of heavily mitigated controlling moves, such as limited use of directive questioning, interruptions, changes of subject, the evading of questions, mitigated criticism and the withholding of endorsement of a partner, through silence or minimally aligning responses. The chapter posits that the preference for value preserving strategies and the avoidance of overt conflict may have prevented the partners from tackling tensions and challenges head on and may therefore have been an obstacle to deeper integration between the partners.

Chapter 7 takes advantage of the longitudinal nature of this research to identify how discursive constructions of value changed over the lifecycle of the partnership and across sectors, dealing with sub-RQ 3 (see section 1.4). The chapter zooms back out from a focus on the micro-level features of talk, drawing on framing analysis to compare and contrast how the partners framed different sources of value (social value, business value and mutual value) and how this changed as the partnership evolved. These findings are based principally on a series of individual interviews which took place with research participants at various stages in the development of the partnership. The Value Construction Model is used as a theoretical framework to make sense of the multiple and at times conflicting accounts of the value created through the partnership. It is demonstrated

that the Value Construction Model can be used at the meso (or partnership) level to account for the different constructions of social, business and mutual value by the business and nonprofit research participants. The model is used to explain the partnership's relative success in creating social value and organizational value for the nonprofit partner, as well as its failure to deliver significant business value.

Chapter 8 discusses these findings, positioning them in relation to the relevant nonprofit-business and wider partnership literature, as well as drawing comparisons with findings from discursive studies employing a similar methodological approach, but in different research settings. It clarifies the key contributions of this study, highlighting that the Value Construction Model offers a new, multilevel theory, which is grounded in the close analysis of partnership talk. The chapter explains how the conceptualization of value as socially constructed led to the development of a research question and of a methodological approach that generated new knowledge about how value is discursively constructed in partnership talk.

The Discussion chapter clarifies contributions relating to the micro-level features of partnership interaction in symmetrical and asymmetrical talk, relating these to other findings concerning personal skills and competencies and to other studies of CSSPs - particularly Hardy, Lawrence and Grant (2005) and Le Ber and Branzei (2010a, 2010b; 2010c). These micro-level contributions are also discussed in relation to findings from methodologically comparable studies in other empirical settings. The findings from this thesis are then positioned in relation to previous meso and macro level theories, in particular shared

value (Porter & Kramer, 2006; 2011) and Austin and Seitanidi's (2012a; 2012b) collaborative value creation (CVC) framework.

Chapter 9 draws conclusions from this research project. It summarizes the significance of the findings both for scholars interested in social partnerships and for discourse analysts interested in the study of language and social interaction in collaborative institutional settings. This concluding chapter explains the relevance of the findings for practitioners of nonprofit-business partnership and social partnerships more generally. Limitations of the study are discussed and recommendations are made for promising avenues of future research.

The purpose of this introductory chapter has been to provide a brief overview of this doctoral thesis, including: the significance of the phenomenon of nonprofit-business partnership; the nature of the particular case under investigation; the scope and aims of the study; and an outline of the key contributions of the research. With the scene now set, the next chapter will appraise the relevant literature, with a view to locating my own perspective and research project within the current academic conversation and justifying the need for this study of the social construction of value in nonprofit-business partnership.

Chapter 2. Discourses of value

2.1 Setting the scene

Despite the prevalence of scholarly discussion concerning the creation of value through social partnerships, both the cross-sector partnership literature and related literatures tend to treat the concept of value as taken for granted, therefore it is seldom considered necessary to define or scrutinize (Austin & Seitanidi, 2012a; Cousins, Swan & Buirski, 2002). Yet the recent burgeoning of academic and practitioner interest in nonprofit-business partnership and other cross-sector collaborations reflects their perceived importance as mechanisms for creating value, by addressing complex and intractable social, economic and environmental problems (Austin & Seitanidi, 2012a; Gray, 2000; Koschmann, Kuhn & Pfarrer, 2012; Le Ber & Branzei, 2010; Porter & Kramer, 2011; Seitanidi & Crane, 2014; Selsky & Parker, 2005; van Tulder, Seitanidi, Crane & Brammer, 2016). The literature identifies an emerging trend over the past few decades towards strategic nonprofit-business dyadic partnerships, whose stated purpose is, at least in part, the creation of social value, alongside business value for the participating organizations (Seitanidi & Crane, 2009; Vock, Van Dolen & Kolk, 2013; Waddock, 1988).

Researchers attribute this trend towards strategic nonprofit-business partnerships to different combinations of economic, social and political drivers operating at the macro level, including globalization, the diminishing role of government and the emergence of multifaceted and interdependent social, economic

and environmental issues (Austin, 2000). At the meso or partnership level, the phenomenon is explained in terms of diverse rationales for partnering, including creating organizational value, via access to knowledge and expertise and/or by enhancing reputation and credibility (Austin & Seitanidi, 2012b). In addition, in the case of nonprofit organizations, access to financial resources is taken to be a key incentive, to build capacity in furtherance of their social missions (Berger, Cunningham & Drumwright, 2004).

This literature review situates my research within the nonprofit-business partnership literature and relevant cross-sector, interorganizational collaboration and corporate social responsibility (CSR) scholarship, identifying how it engages with current academic debates and how it can build on previous studies. However, the wider cross-sector social partnership (CSSP) and CSR literatures will not be surveyed comprehensively, since they are less relevant to this research. The chapter first considers terminology and definitional issues, before problematizing the concept of value and tracing its historical evolution. Alternative approaches to theorizing value are then identified, so as to illuminate how value has been treated in the focal nonprofit-business partnership literature.

I differentiate between perspectives within this literature, in terms of the degree to which researchers concern themselves with the creation of business value for the partnering organizations, or the creation of wider societal value. I also discuss critical approaches, which are more sceptical concerning the potential for win-win scenarios. The uses and limitations of these perspectives are then evalutated, exploring the relationships between methodological assumptions and different

theoretical approaches (summarized in Table 2.1, at the end of this chapter). This analysis is used to substantiate the claim that a theoretical lacuna remains in our understanding of how value is constructed through partnering processes and to justify my conceptualization of these partnerships as contextual, dynamic social interactions, constituted by discourse (as opposed to treating partnership as an objective phenomenon). Finally, I clarify the potential contributions of my research, deriving a research question aimed at building on existing partnership theory, by deepening our theoretical knowledge of value creation processes in a nonprofit-business partnership setting.

2.2 Defining nonprofit-business partnership

I adopt the term "nonprofit" to refer to organizations that exist for social and ethical purposes, that are not statutory bodies and do not operate for private profit (Alcock, 2010; Milbourne, 2013). However, scholars, politicians and practitioners have employed a wide variety of terms to refer to this diverse sector, including: voluntary organizations, or voluntary and community organizations (VCOs) (e.g. Osborne, 1998); non-governmental organizations (NGOs) (e.g. Waddell, 2000); civil society organizations (CSOs) (e.g. Ashman, 2001); not-for-profits (NFPs) (e.g. MacMillan et al, 2005); third sector organizations (TSOs) (e.g. Carmel & Harlock, 2008); nonprofits or non-profit organizations (NPOs) (e.g. Seitanidi & Crane, 2009) and the plural sector (Mintzberg, 2015).

Over time, different overlapping and contested definitions and uses of these terms have emerged, reflecting the influence of the shifting policy landscape, the emphasis placed on different sub-

sectors and different views on the role of the sector in relation to both the state and the market (Alcock, 2010; Alcock & Kendall, 2011; Milbourne, 2013). For example, in the UK, the change from a Labour government to a Conservative-led coalition in May 2010 heralded a different political discourse, with the 'Office of the Third Sector' being retitled the 'Office for Civil Society'. The previous emphasis on the "third sector" as an alternative deliverer of public services (Carmel & Harlock, 2008) was replaced with the rhetoric of the 'Big Society' and a shift in government policy towards promoting volunteering and community engagement, arguably seeking to reposition the sector not merely as an alternative provider, but as a substitute for diminishing statutory provision in an age of austerity. This illustrates how political discourse becomes embedded within both academic and practitioner discourse (see Alcock, 2010 for a history of this complex and contested conceptual field).

Despite the heterogeneity of nonprofit organizations, the literature identifies several distinguishing features which are taken to be characteristic, including Salamon and Anheier's "structural/operational" definition of the sector as comprising formally constituted, nongovernmental, self-governing organizations, which are non-profit distributing and "voluntary to some meaningful extent" (1992, p.268). However, this somewhat thin and negative definition (largely defining the sector by what it is not) fails to capture the richness, diversity and complex historical evolution of the voluntary sector in the UK, where nonprofit organizations often identify with particular sub-sectors and develop multiple networks and collaborations with those with similar missions and values (Alcock, 2010). Therefore, in employing the term "nonprofit", I adopt a pragmatic approach, acknowledging the heterogeneity of the

sector and the definitional challenges, but using a conceptual language which appears suited to the academic discourse with which I am engaging.

In the nonprofit literature, the blurring of boundaries between the private and nonprofit sectors has been attributed to drivers such as the public policy and funding environment, including the need to diversify funding streams through trading and the influence of the hegemonic discourses of the market and managerialism on the operation and professionalization of nonprofit organizations (Bromley & Meyer, 2014; Milbourne, 2013). Billis (2010) explores the increasing hybridity of organizations, which encompass characteristics that straddle traditional sectoral boundaries. This is reflected in the growth of organizations identifying themselves as social enterprises, which, in combining trading activity with the creation of social value, are often taken as bridging the nonprofit and private sectors (Cornforth & Spear, 2010; Nyssens, 2006).

In the CSR literature, the growing engagement of businesses in non-profit activities is attributed to a combination of social and political drivers, including globalization, new governance and changing perceptions and expectations of the role of business in society (Moon, 2002). The growing institutionalization of CSR and the emphasis by businesses on creating social value through community and stakeholder engagement and ethical business practices (Freeman, Wicks & Parmar, 2004) can therefore be seen as setting the stage for greater collaboration between the two sectors.

The emergence of nonprofit-business dyadic partnerships is a relatively recent phenomenon, which has been attracting increasing attention from academics since the 1990s (Googins &

Rochlin, 2000; Seitanidi, 2010). There is no single agreed definition, as attempts at clarification are imbued with conflicting assumptions concerning motivations (e.g. business value or social value) and the perceived role of business in society. As with other cross-sector and multi-sector collaborations, nonprofit-business partnerships often seek to address "wicked" problems (Rittel & Webber, 1973), with complex and interdependent causes, such as poverty, mental illness, or teenage pregnancy, which are capable of being framed in multiple ways and from diverse perspectives (Le Ber & Branzei, 2010b; Williams, 2002). Therefore nonprofit-business partnerships are variously conceptualized as a form of "cross-sector social partnership" (CSSP) (e.g. Selsky & Parker, 2005), a form of "cross-sector social interaction" (CSSI) (e.g. Seitanidi & Lindgreen, 2010) or "corporate community involvement" (CCI) (e.g. Seitanidi & Ryan, 2007), or as "social alliances" and "corporate societal marketing" (CSM) initiatives (e.g. Berger, Cunningham & Drumwright, 2006).

Reflecting the wider multidisciplinary field of the CSR literature, the nonprofit-business partnership literature is value-laden and lacking a coherent set of theoretical assumptions (Okoye, 2009). In their critical review of the literature, Laasonen, Fougère and Kourula comment on the "often normative articles on partnership" (2012, p.528), together with the lack of "deep questioning of the dominant win-win-win (i.e. that companies win, NGOs win and society wins) bias in the partnership literature" (*ibid*. p.531). A particular challenge of reviewing this literature is the diversity of research disciplines and academic journals in which relevant articles appear, including organizational studies, marketing, business ethics, economics, sociology, political science, nonprofit management, health,

education and environmental studies (Huxham & Vangen, 2005, p.10; Selsky & Parker, 2005, p.2). This necessitated conducting searches of databases covering a wide range of subject disciplines, such as Google Scholar and Web of Science, employing multiple keyword search terms and using Boolean operators (where available) to identify relevant articles. However, as the literature review progressed, relevant journal articles provided useful references to further sources, extending and deepening the search well beyond the focal nonprofit-business partnership literature.

Despite differences in terminology and the contested, shifting nature of the concept of nonprofit-business partnership, a working definition can be proposed, which is not contradicted by any of the aforementioned researchers. Drawing partly on Waddock's (1988) definition of social partnerships and also on Hardy, Lawrence and Grant's (2005) definition of interorganizational collaborations, I take dyadic nonprofit-business partnerships to be voluntary, co-operative arrangements (not merely contractual purchaser-supplier relationships), involving one private sector and one nonprofit sector partner; ongoing, relatively long-term and intensive associations (not merely one-off interactions); and, whilst economic or other motivations may well be present, their stated purpose includes creating social or environmental value.

This complex definitional landscape is mirrored in the diverse disciplinary, methodological and theoretical perspectives on value in the nonprofit-business partnership and wider literatures, which are discussed in the following sections. There are many possible ways of carving up the focal partnership literature. However, for the purposes of this literature review and its focus

on value creation processes, I have divided the literature into three broad and overlapping perspectives. I extend Scherer and Palazzo's distinction between the "dominant economic or instrumental approaches to CSR" and "political CSR" (2011, pp.901-904), so as to differentiate between perspectives that focus predominantly on business value; those that place greater emphasis the value created for wider society; and those that are more sceptical about the potential for value creation and win-win scenarios. I thereby delineate three broad perspectives within the focal nonprofit-business partnership and related cross-sector collaboration literature. I term these 'business value', 'social value' and 'critical', according to their central concerns, but also their methodological commitments and theoretical approaches, acknowledging that these perspectives overlap and accommodate many more nuanced positions. They are therefore better construed in terms of interrelated strands, or positions along a continuum, rather than opposing paradigmatic camps, the intention being to make sense of the literature, rather than to pigeonhole scholars, whose approaches may blend, straddle, or shift between perspectives.

A summary of these three perspectives, together with examples of articles typifying each, is given in Table 2.1, at the end of this chapter. In the following sections, I also discuss the key contributions and limitations of each of these perspectives, with a view to clarifying the rationale for my own research design. A recent debate on the concept of "shared value" (Porter & Kramer, 2006; 2011) is used as a starting point for introducing the three perspectives.

2.3 The shared value debate

Porter and Kramer (2006) first proposed the term "shared value" as a tool for aligning the creation of profits for businesses with the creation of social value. Shared value has been claimed as a powerful theoretical concept, capable of redressing the problem of diminishing trust in corporations (Dembek, Singh & Bhakoo, 2016). As such, it has been endorsed by Bosch-Badia, Montllor-Serrats and Terrazon (2013) and by Moon, Pare, Yim and Park (2011). However, its usefulness has been contested, most notably in a debate on "creating shared value" (CSV) between Crane, Palazzo, Spence and Matten (on one side of the argument) and Porter and Kramer (on the other) (Crane et al., 2014).

There are no definitions of "value" per se in the Crane et al. (2014) debate on the concept of CSV, except for Porter and Kramer's earlier definition of shared value as: "policies and operating practices that enhance the competitiveness of a company while simultaneously advancing the economic and social conditions in the communities in which it operates" (2011, p.66). Crane et al. impute a particular understanding of value to Porter and Kramer, as "benefits relative to cost, not benefits accrued alone" (2014, p.131). Whilst this is not ostensibly a debate about what value is, at a meta-theoretical level, there are nevertheless differing views about value and for whom it should be created at the heart of this debate.

The Crane et al. (2014) article and debate provides a useful précis of what I term business value perspectives, social value perspectives and critical perspectives within the wider CSR literature. One of the criticisms levelled at the CSV concept is its

unoriginality, with Crane et al. describing it as little more than "a nice new label and a re-brand" (2014, p.151-2). The systematic literature review on shared value by Dembek, Singh and Bhakoo (2016) endorses the contention that CSV has been applied vaguely and inconsistently, concluding that it is more of a management buzzword than a substantive theoretical concept. A literature review exploring the origins of CSV also broadly endorses the view that it overlaps with previous CSR concepts (Camarena-Martinez, Ochoa-Silva & Wendlandt-Amezaga, 2016).

However, a more challenging criticism, which illuminates the contested discourses of value at the heart of this debate, is that CSV glosses over inherent tensions between business and social value, thereby underplaying both the negative impacts on some stakeholders and the contingencies, complexities and challenges for businesses in acting responsibly and sustainably. Crane at al. argue that this leads to "naïve proselytising about the viability of win-win scenarios" (2014, p.135-6), or what Mintzberg terms a "win-win wonderland" (2015, p.50).

Crane et al. view CSV as "a symptom of an approach to management scholarship that is itself endemic to the current failings of the capitalist system" (2014, p.134). Thus the CSV concept provides corporations with a rhetorical tool for constructing complex problems as win-win scenarios (2014, p.137). Related criticisms are that CSV presupposes business compliance with legal requirements and ethical norms (although Porter and Kramer rebut this by claiming that CSV just moves beyond this) and that CSV motivates companies to pursue relatively easy win-win projects.

A related key criticism of CSV is that it is based on a conservative conception of the role of business in society, in

other words, it does not depart radically from the business-centric logic of pursuing competitive advantage and from conceiving the primary purpose of the firm as economic, rather than also social (Crane et al., 2014). Thus CSV does not advocate business participation in multi-stakeholder initiatives, CSSPs, etc., which are focused unambiguously on tackling a shared social or environmental concern. Porter and Kramer's rebuttal is that CSV works in practice because it is "grounded in the reality of competition and prevailing corporate practice" (2014, p.150), hence effectively conceding that CSV is not a radical departure from the status quo – or, as Crane et al. state, CSV is "a reactionary rather than transformational response to the crisis of capitalism" (2014, p.131). This debate can therefore be distilled to fundamental political differences concerning the role of business in society, whether businesses should be regarded more narrowly as economic actors (hence the current capitalist system does not need radical reform), or whether they should be regarded more holistically as social actors, hence with a more extensive responsibility to address social and environmental problems at their core. From a critical perspective, CSV fails to identify how the current system of global capitalism needs to change, in order to tackle entrenched social inequalities and environmental challenges (for example, through reform of financial markets) (Crane et al., 2014). Thus the debate boils down to a political dispute between perspectives emphasizing business value, social value perspectives emphasizing benefits for society and critical perspectives emphasizing the need for more radical change.

Underlying tensions between different constructions of value can therefore be seen as underpinning key debates in the partnership and CSR literatures, although these are seldom

acknowledged and discussed as explicitly as in the Crane et al. (2014) dispute. I would propose that these debates are not winnable, in the sense that they depend upon different conceptions of the desired role of business within society, hence the perceived value of different states of affairs in the world. The following sections will therefore delve deeper into the concept of value and review the wider literature on value theory, outside of a partnership and CSR context, with a view to illuminating how value has been, and could usefully be, researched in a nonprofit-business partnership setting.

2.4 Problematizing value

Whilst implicit and explicit notions of value are ubiquitous in the organizational studies, CSR and partnership literatures, the fundamental question, "What is value?", is seldom explored, hence value tends to be treated as an unproblematic, taken-for-granted concept (Austin & Seitanidi, 2012a; Cousins et al., 2002). This is perhaps surprising, given that the word "value" is polysemous, having multiple, interrelated meanings, thus creating scope for ambiguity and confusion (Vatin, 2013). However, despite extensive discussion of the "social", "economic" and "shared" value, which is claimed to be created by organizations and partnerships (for recent literature reviews, see Austin & Seitanidi, 2012a; 2012b), the concept of value is seldom investigated or problematized (Sánchez-Fernández & Iniesta-Bonillo, 2007). This section aims to redress this deficit by challenging the assumption in much of the organizational studies and partnership literature that conceptions of value are relatively stable, unproblematic and capable of being analyzed

independently of the situated contexts in which they are produced.

Consequently, I do not aim to provide a definitive, essentialist meaning for the term "value": instead, my objective is to unpack diverse understandings of the term, so as to propose a preferred approach to studying conceptions of value, in the context of this research. I argue, with Cousins et al. (2002) that the meanings of "value" are multiple and context dependent, acknowledging the existence of alternative, competing definitions and perspectives. Therefore the preferred approach to studying "value" arrived at in this chapter, is not only derived from my analysis of the literature, but also reflects my particular theoretical orientation and objectives for this thesis.

The scarcity of definitions or explorations of the concept of value in the business and organizational studies literature reinforces the contention that value tends to be treated as a taken-for-granted concept (Austin & Seitanidi, 2012a; Cousins et al., 2002). Definitions of value are typically implicit, elusive, assumed or employ the term "value" as part of the definition, for example: "Given that a firm must have a single objective that tells us what is better and what is worse, we then must face the issue of what that definition of better is. Even though the single objective will always be a complicated function of many different goods or bads, the short answer to the question is that 200 years' worth of work in economics and finance indicate that social welfare is maximized when all firms in an economy attempt to maximize their own total firm value. The intuition behind this criterion is simple: that value is created - and when I say "value" I mean "social" value - whenever a firm produces an output, or set of outputs, that is valued by its customers at more

than the value of the inputs it consumes (as valued by their suppliers) in the production of the outputs." (Jensen, 2001, p.11). In contrast, Carroll and Shabana recognise that the business case for CSR is dependant on "*underlying assumptions* about how value is created and defined" (emphasis in original) (2010, p.92). In the CSR literature, firms are often seen as creating value by "connecting stakeholder interests, and creating pluralistic definitions of value for multiple stakeholders simultaneously" (Kurucz, Colbert & Wheeler, 2008, p.91). Thus value is often recognized as a subjective construct and there is no standard, accepted definition.

However, there are several different dictionary definitions of value, reflecting different senses of the term (Rutner & Langley, 2000, p.75). The particular sense of value which this literature review explores is value as worth, or the perception of worth. This will be treated as incorporating business value, economic value, monetary value (price) as well as wider social value. However, this meaning of value will be treated as distinct from values as ethical principles - although these are taken to be interrelated, since ethical principles imply judgements concerning the worth of states of affairs, or of people's actions or predispositions. Nevertheless, I will confine the discussion to selected theories on the nature of value as worth, also touching on the metaphysical question of "intrinsic" value (i.e. value as an inherent property of things), with a view to illuminating points of contrast in the target partnership literature and arriving at a preferred way of researching value for this study. Thus broader consideration of values as ethical principles, or the full range of moral theories, or the entire philosophical branch of axiology, are outside the scope of this literature review.

According to the Oxford English Dictionary (OED Online, 2014), the etymology of the word "value" is from the Anglo-Norman and Old French, meaning "material worth, price", which was in turn derived from the classical Latin verb "valere". This derivation is corroborated by the online etymology dictionary, www.etymonline.com, which states that it was used to refer to the "price equal to the intrinsic worth of a thing". The meaning "fair equivalent" appeared circa 1210 and, by the 13th century, its meaning had expanded to include "reputation, (personal) merit", i.e. the degree to which something, or someone, has social standing or importance (OED Online, 2014).

Various different senses and applications of the word "value" proliferated between the 14th and 19th centuries, including subjective notions involving relative worth based on esteem, usefulness, importance and desirability (OED Online, 2014). This includes the use of distinguishing words preceding "value", to refer to "the quality of a thing considered in respect of its ability to serve a specified purpose or cause a particular effect", as in "medicinal value" (OED Online, 2014), or indeed "social value", "business value", "economic value", etc. However, the use of the word to mean "principle or moral standard" emerged as recently as the 19th century (OED Online, 2014). According to Ramirez (1999), the idea that the value of things is the result of subjective assessments arose in the 18th century and thrived in the 19th century. Indeed, according to the Oxford Dictionary for the Business World (1993), in neoclassical economic terms, value is usually treated as subjective, in the sense that it is dependent on scarcity relative to desirability at a particular time.

This brief foray into the historical evolution of various different senses of value serves to demonstrate how the meanings of

words are dynamic constructions, emerging over time and that these meanings therefore ought not to be treated as static and universal. It follows that value needs to be researched as a socially constructed, polysemous and continuously evolving concept. Discourses of value are also embedded in different theoretical traditions and schools of thought. The following section elucidates how different schools of thought have constructed the category "value", introducing classical economic theories of value as worth, which have had a major influence on contemporary theoretical perspectives within the relevant academic literature.

2.5 Use-value and exchange-value

Western economic ideas about value as worth long predate the origins of the word in the English language - or, indeed, the existence of the English language. Theories concerning value can be traced as far back as classical Greece and the writings of Aristotle, in particular *Politics* and *Nicomachean Ethics*. Van Staveren (2013) explains how Aristotle's economic thought is subsumed within his conception of the good life and human flourishing. Therefore Aristotle relates the concept of economic exchange to notions of justice and social value. Money is conceived as a universal means of exchange, which renders diverse products commensurable and therefore has only instrumental value, not intrinsic value. Owing to the mutual agreement between buyer and seller, Aristotle viewed money as mediating fair exchanges of the products of labour, to meet societal needs. The exchange-value (price) of a product is therefore seen as an abstract, universal way of representing its use-value (conceived as its intrinsic value in contributing to

human flourishing). Therefore Aristotle's theory of value emphasizes that things only have value insofar as they meet a human need or contribute to human flourishing, thus value can only be assessed in the context of good living. This raises the fundamental question of whether conceptions of value should be understood relative to human needs and the contribution to human flourishing.

Aristotle's ideas concerning value not only had a profound influence on medieval thinking concerning commerce, but also on the emerging discipline of "political economy", i.e. the social science of economics, which coincided with the start of the industrial revolution and the birth of modern capitalist economies. The political economist, Adam Smith, modified the Aristotelian notion of exchange-value as abstracted use-value, by conceptualising value in terms of labour (Smith, 2001[1776]). Thus Smith viewed the "real price" of a product as equating to the quantity of "toil and trouble" involved in acquiring it and viewed value as being created through productive human activity (2001[1776], p.50). Whilst products are ultimately only worth investing effort to acquire them because they have some utility, or use-value, Smith viewed the duration and intensity of labour involved in producing goods as constituting their "real", or intrinsic, value, which may differ from their notional price, since the latter fluctuates according to supply and demand. Smith's labour theory of value was further developed by Ricardo (2001[1817]), providing a foundation for economic theory and coinciding with the development of quantitative approaches in economics, emulating the natural sciences.

Marx challenged the political economists' assumption that capitalist relations of production are law-like and inevitable,

arguing instead that they are historically contingent (2001[1867]). Marx's labour theory of value critiqued the capitalist economic system on the basis that the "surplus-value" created from labour was not returned in wages, rendering the relationship systematically exploitative (2001[1867]). In Marx's time, a large class of workers was obliged to sell its capacity to labour ("labour-power") as a commodity in order to survive, receiving minimal, subsistence wages from the owners of capital, who thereby accumulated great wealth (2001[1867]). The use-value (productivity) of labour increased through the division of labour and technological advances, which was not reflected in the exchange-value (price) of labour: thus the worker benefitted only from the exchange-value of labour (wages), whilst the capitalist benefitted from the surplus use-value created through increasing productivity. Marx acknowledges his intellectual debt to Aristotle, whilst arguing that Aristotle was unable to perceive this economic exchange as unjust, since he lived in a society founded on slave labour (Marx, 2001[1867], p.85). Thus, in *Capital*, the use-value of commodities is equated with the "labour-time socially necessary" for their production, under prevailing social conditions (Marx, 2001[1867], p.79). Subsequent scholars have reinterpreted and reconstructed Marx's theory of value, from both modernist and postmodernist perspectives, incorporating elements from other intellectual traditions (e.g. critical theory and the Frankfurt School) and these ideas have influenced many of the critical perspectives found in the focal partnership literature (see Le Ber and Branzei, 2010a). These critical perspectives share an interest in refocusing on disadvantaged groups, in terms of who creates value, by whom it is appropriated and with what societal implications.

As Graeber argues, whilst economics began by theorising the nature of value within society, neoclassical economics divorced the concept of value from the historical and social interactions and relationships inherent in markets and in the production and sale of goods and services (2005, p.457). Hence the neoclassical economic concept of value relates principally to profit for firms and utility for consumers, who are understood as rationally self-interested maximisers of individual subjective preferences. Van Staveren (2013) argues that there are nevertheless implicit normative assumptions underpinning the neoclassical concept of value, since it relies on a particular essentialist conception of human beings as narrowly rational, self-interested agents. Thus, in its quest for objectivity, the dominant economic model can be seen as offering a reductionist conception of value as profit/utility, no longer conceptualizing it in terms of wider societal needs, or as socially, historically and culturally embedded. Similarly, the economic model of value creation processes tends to be conceptionalised in terms of resources and their transformations, or inputs and outputs along an industrial production line, rather than in terms of the co-creation of ideas through human interaction (Ramirez, 1999). This neoclassical economic discourse of value creation tends to correspond with more business-centric, or what I term "business value" perspectives found in the partnership literature.

2.6 Business value perspectives

"Business value" perspectives tend to focus on the business case for collaboration and comprise the dominant approach within management and organizational research (Le Ber & Branzei, 2010a). These perspectives investigate nonprofit-business

partnership principally from a meso-level, organizational viewpoint (Williams, 2002), exploring the implications of partnerships for the partner organizations, sometimes with particular emphasis on the creation of economic value for the corporation (Dahan, Doh, Oetzel & Yaziji, 2010; Vock, Van Dolen & Kolk, 2013). These studies include: explorations of reputational benefits and enhanced legitimacy or credibility (LaFrance & Lehmann, 2005; Waddell, 2000); impacts on employee motivation, identification and loyalty (Berger et al., 2006); and impacts on markets, consumer perceptions and behaviour (Vock et al., 2013).

This business value approach tends to view partnerships as driven principally by the need to acquire complementary resources and capabilities (Dahan et al., 2010), although a variety of management, organizational and marketing theories are employed to illuminate different aspects of the phenomenon (see Vock et al., 2013). For example, LaFrance and Lehmann (2005) draw on instrumental stakeholder theory to explain partnerships as a means for corporations to manage competing stakeholder demands. In addition to resource complementarity, there is also recognition of the importance of some degree of organizational compatibility to the success of partnerships, including shared or complementary goals and trust (Dahan et al., 2010).

The emphasis on the business, rather than the nonprofit or societal viewpoint is sometimes explicitly acknowledged (e.g. den Hond, de Bakker & Doh, 2012; Waddell, 2000) and sometimes more implicit (e.g. Dahan et al., 2010). Le Ber and Branzei describe these as "mainstream" approaches, which often draw on concepts from resource dependency theory and the

resource-based view of the firm (RBV), such as capabilities, competitive advantage and optimizing value creation (2010a, p.601). This perspective also corresponds with what Selsky and Parker term the "Resource Dependence Platform" for analysing cross-sector partnerships (2005, p.851).

An influential example of this predominantly resource-based approach is Austin's conceptual framework, incorporating the "collaboration continuum" (CC), whereby partnerships are conceptualised as evolving through three stages, from "philanthropic" (a one-way transfer of resources from the business to the nonprofit partner) to "transactional" (a 2-way exchange of complementary resources) to "integrative", the latter being the "highest strategic level", involving the co-creation of value and collaborative action to address shared goals (2000, p.71). The Collaboration Value Construct (CVC) forms another part of Austin's analytical framework, comprising "value definition", whereby partners clarify anticipated benefits before the collaboration, and "value creation, balance and renewal", which take place during the collaboration (Austin, 2000, p.76). However, despite the recognition that "value is in the eyes of each beholder" (ibid. p.77), there is an implicit assumption that the "value variable" can, at least in theory, be identified objectively and quantified by the partners (ibid. p.76).

Austin's (2000) framework is based on structured interviews with five partnerships and surveys with a further ten. Whilst the small sample size is suggestive of an interpretivist orientation, the use of surveys and structured (as opposed to semi-structured or open-ended) interviews implies more positivistic underpinnings, with researcher assumptions and categories imposed a priori. This reflects the modernist tendencies characteristic of the

business value perspective, which is aimed at developing objective, universal theory. Thus Austin identifies a set of "drivers", which are viewed as "determining" how partnerships operate (2000, p.69) and, in building on previous interorganizational research, draws on resource dependency and social exchange theories, whose theoretical foundations are based on assumptions of instrumental rationality.

However, Austin recognises that not all nonprofit-business collaborations will move through the three proposed stages in a linear way (2000, p.72), thus acknowledging that the complex, shifting and unpredictable contexts in which nonprofit-business partnership processes unfold may problematize the notion of universal, ordered stages. Austin's (2000) article nevertheless provides an influential conceptual contribution within what was previously a muddy conceptual field and, as an example of 'soft' theory-building, it does not lay claim to the same standards of validity and generalizability as 'hard' theory (Eckstein, 1975). As Williams (2002) states, the complex, situated societal problems often tackled by CSSPs are less amenable to establishing causal relationships between variables. This may, in part, account for the rarity of quantitative methods within the CSSP literature, in contrast with the wider literature on inter-firm collaboration (see, for example, Oliver & Ebers' 1998 literature review on interorganizational relations).

There are surprisingly few empirical papers on nonprofit-business partnerships and, as with Austin's (2000) study, cases are often selected on the basis of their perceived strategic importance, potentially skewing the findings in favour of more successful partnerships. Furthermore, partner organizations have a vested interest in presenting their partnerships in the most

favourable light, particularly where cases are not anonymized (see studies by Austin, 2000 and Seitanidi, 2010). As suggested somewhat tentatively by Seitanidi (2010, p.35), this problem may be exacerbated if researchers have positivistic tendencies, since researchers with realist ontological and objectivist epistemological positions will tend to treat the stated responses to interview questions and surveys at face value. I would contend that this illustrates the need to recognize and analyze the rhetorical nature of partnership language - a consideration which is at least equally applicable to the 'social value' perspective, discussed below.

2.7 Social value perspectives

Researchers adopting a 'social value' approach, tend to place greater emphasis on the wider impacts of nonprofit-business partnership on society, rather than focusing principally on implications for the business or the partner organizations (Waddock, 1998; Googins & Rochlin, 2000; Selsky & Parker 2005; Seitanidi, 2010; Austin & Seitanidi, 2012a; Austin & Seitanidi, 2012b). Social value perspectives therefore have more in common with the Aristotelian theory of value as contributing to the good life, in contrast with business value approaches, based on neoclassical economic theories. However, whilst emphasizing the social purpose of partnerships, the aforementioned scholars also acknowledge that a business case of some sort is usually needed at the outset, in order for the partnership to be taken seriously by the private sector partner, either with the partnership offering the potential for some substantive business benefit, or the social issue itself being recognized as of strategic importance to their business objectives or reputations. There is therefore considerable overlap between

the business value and social value perspectives in the partnership literature. However, the social value approach shifts the emphasis from narrow business benefits, or the mutual 'win-win' for the business and nonprofit organization, to a 'win-win-win' scenario, which also seeks to benefit wider society (Elkington, 1994; Googins & Rochlin, 2000).

Nevertheless, within this social value perspective, nonprofit-business partnership is often assumed (rather than demonstrated) to be a positive force for social change and, as argued by Laasonen, Fougère and Kourula (2012), much of this literature is normative in tone. A further criticism is that the stated motivations of partners are often accepted at face value (see Macdonald & Chrisp, 2005) and that the achievement of wider social value for beneficiaries is largely assumed, rather than evidenced (see Le Ber & Branzei, 2010a). This normative tone may be partly attributable to researchers' need to demonstrate the importance of their topic and its relevance for practitioners, for example, Austin and Seitanidi propose that scholars of nonprofit-business collaboration should ask themselves: "How will my research or action contribute to the co-creation of value to make a better world?" (2012a, p.745). However, it could be argued that, particularly in the absence of researcher reflexivity, such normative ambitions may risk influencing the research design and processes, thus overstating benefits, understating challenges and contributing to the over-representation of more inspirational, transformative cases in the literature (Laasonen et al., 2012).

The business value and social value perspectives are prominent theoretical orientations in the partnership literature and both these strands can be delineated in the two comprehensive

literature reviews by Austin and Seitanidi (2012a; 2012b). These articles synthesize previous nonprofit-business partnership research into a single overarching "Collaborative Value Creation (CVC)" framework, building on Austin's (2000) earlier framework and conceptualizing partnerships as progressively moving through philanthropic, transactional, integrative and transformative stages. As partnerships move to more "advanced" stages, interactions between partners become more intensive and the partnership becomes more strategically important, with the potential to co-create social value and effect more transformational societal change (Austin & Seitanidi, 2012a, p.736*)*. The later stages of the CVC correspond with what Selsky and Parker (2005) term the "Societal Sector Platform" for CSSPs, whereby traditional sectoral roles become blurred, such that, in the case of nonprofit-business partnerships, businesses are no longer construed solely as economic actors, but also as social and political actors.

Austin and Seitandi (2012a; 2012b) propose a highly complex and sophisticated conceptual framework, adopting what Shepherd and Sutcliffe (2011) term an "inductive top-down", approach and outlining many directions for future research. However, they acknowledge that many of their asserted benefits for nonprofit-business partnership have not been sufficiently evidenced, since there is a deficit of in-depth empirical studies on which to draw (Austin & Seitanidi, 2012a, p.744).

The social value perspective comprises more macro-level, theoretical papers than in-depth empirical studies and these tend towards more subjectivist epistemological positions, their theoretical perspectives owing more to the fields of sociology and political science than economics and management theory (Selsky

& Parker, 2005; Bendell, 2000). Where the methodological approaches of empirical studies are elucidated, these are frequently interview-based, sometimes supplemented by the analysis of organizational documents (e.g. Seitanidi, 2010). However, this reliance on interviews means that findings are largely dependent upon partners' own retrospective accounts. There are few studies of nonprofit-business partnership employing observation as a principal data collection method, or using ethnographic techniques, yet this could counter some of the limitations of interview-based studies. However, exceptions can be found in the wider field of interorganizational collaboration, for example, Huxham and Vangen's (2005) action research methodology shares some similarities with ethnographies, in that their theory of "collaborative advantage" is derived principally from naturally occurring data and the study of partnerships as they evolve.

I would claim that a consequence of the rarity of direct observation of nonprofit-business partnership processes is the emphasis on static partnership characteristics, issues or factors, with the dynamic human interactions of partnership processes remaining largely under-theorised. For example, Parker & Selsky (2004) note that power in partnerships tends to be construed in terms of structural asymmetries and dependencies, rather than exploring the ongoing social interactions through which partners exert influence. Similarly, establishing common goals, or a shared vision, and building trust are sometimes cited as important process issues (e.g. Rondinelli & London, 2003), without exploring the communicative practices through which these are (or are not) achieved. I would concur with Selsky and Parker (2005) and Millar, Choi and Chen (2004), who point to the need for more in-depth, longitudinal case studies, tracing the

evolution of partnerships in real time, to provide a holistic analysis of the dynamics of partnership processes.

Notwithstanding their predominantly benign view of the phenomenon of nonprofit-business partnership, social value perspectives often contain critical elements and concepts, such as an interest in differences between the sectors, tensions, conflict and power (e.g. Seitanidi, 2010; Crane, 2000). There are therefore significant overlaps between social value and critical perspectives, which also tend to share subjectivist epistemological commitments, an inductive approach to theory-building and a recognition that nonprofit-business partnership cannot be studied apart from its complex cultural, historical, political and institutional contexts.

2.8 Critical perspectives

Critical perspectives are more likely to focus on empowering marginalized stakeholders, or disadvantaged groups in society, who may be the intended beneficiaries of nonprofit-business partnerships (Le Ber & Branzei, 2010a). Hence there is also an overlap with social value perspectives in terms of a shared focus on societal impacts. Also, the formulation of propositions based on interpretations of empirical findings in some critical papers reflects an inductive, theory-building approach shared with social value perspectives (e.g. Hardy et al., 2005).

However, there are also significant differences between critical perspectives, associated with their different theoretical foundations. Le Ber and Branzei (2010a) delineate several critical perspectives, based on the Marxist, pragmatist and Frankfurt school traditions. They illustrate how critical concepts,

such as tensions, power imbalances and other asymmetries, are incorporated into more mainstream approaches, but argue that critical theorizing on value creation in partnerships remains "under-specified" (Le Ber & Branzei, 2010a, p.617). Their key contribution is to draw on critical theories to illuminate the potential for "voice-receiving", "voice-making" and "voice-taking" roles played by beneficiaries in the value creation process (Le Ber & Branzei, 2010a).

Whilst this is an important theoretical contribution, aiming to bring together mainstream management theory and critical theory perspectives, Le Ber and Branzei (2010a) do not draw out the methodological implications of post-structuralist theories. In particular, the distinctive contribution of discursive approaches is not discussed. They do not describe their empirical study of nonprofit-business partnerships as a discursive approach (Le Ber & Branzei, 2010b), nevertheless they draw on frame analysis (Goffman, 1974) to analyze how partners reconcile divergent value creation logics and frame value, so as to co-construct social value. This involves partners iteratively revising their partners' value creation frames, with Le Ber and Branzei proposing a four stage grounded model of "frame negotiation, elasticity, plasticity and fusion" (2010b, p.163). This dynamic and relational model of value frame fusion extends Austin's (2000) Collaboration Continuum by illuminating how partners discursively construct their value frames. However, a limitation of this study is that findings are still based on partners' retrospective accounts, together with documentary sources – and not on live partnership interaction. A further article, based on the same empirical study, models how partners' intentionally undertake "role (re)calibrations" and adapt their expectations to sustain partnership success and counter failure, via three

"relational factors", namely "relational attachment", "partner complacency" and "partner disillusionment" (Le Ber and Branzei, 2010c). My own research responds to Le Ber and Branzei's call for finer grained analysis and a better understanding of how partners overcome friction through their social interaction.

A small body of literature is emerging that focuses explicitly on the role of language in interorganizational collaboration and employs discourse analysis and critical discourse analysis methods (e.g., Hardy, Lawrence & Phillips, 2006; Hardy, Lawrence & Grant, 2005; Lawrence, Phillips & Hardy, 1999; Hardy & Phillips, 1998). My own approach can be located within this critical perspective, sharing methodological underpinnings with the aforementioned scholars. I would argue that discursive approaches can potentially counter some of the limitations in the extant nonprofit-business partnership literature and contribute a deeper theoretical understanding of partnership processes, by illuminating the complex interrelationships between multiple layers of context and levels of analysis. These approaches are characterised by an explicit subjectivist ontology and interpretivist epistemology, whereby the partnership phenomenon is socially and discursively constructed (Hardy et al. 2005). The subjective meanings ascribed to partnership are taken to be constitutive of the phenomenon, or, as Hardy et al. explain, partners "produce a social reality consisting of discursively constituted objects and ideas" (2005, p.60).

Hardy et al. claim several advantages for discursive approaches, including the focus on the directly observable discursive practices (talk and text) that are taken as constituting the phenomenon under investigation (2005, p.59). The dynamic processes and the evolution of partnerships over time can be traced by studying the development of discursive practices and the

creation of discursive "resources", such as collective identities and relationships (Hardy et al., 2005, p.65). Therefore discursive approaches can be seen as lending themselves to longitudinal studies of partnership processes. They can illuminate relationships between multiple levels (micro, meso and macro), by analyzing discourse between partners and how they also draw on wider societal discourses (Hardy et al., 2005, p.59). In contrast, what I have termed social value perspectives tend to focus on either macro or meso level influences and on the effects of partnership interactions, rather than empirically investigating the discursive processes themselves (see Section 2.7 and Table 2.1).

Discursive approaches can therefore complement existing partnership theory, by illuminating how partnership processes operate. For example, Hastings uses critical discourse analysis to investigate power relationships and transformations in how partners construct the "problem" being addressed by a cross-sector partnership, observing that power relations are rarely explored in the partnership literature (1999, p.91). This study illustrates the value of discourse analysis in providing tools for analysing rhetoric in the context of cross-sector collaboration, where positive presentations of partnerships are of vital importance to partners' reputations (Hastings, 1999, p.104). Discursive approaches can therefore be particularly effective in getting beneath the surface of stated rationales and motivations, taking the analysis to a deeper level than research participants' own interpretations of how the partnership works. Yet few scholars have focused on the role played by language in the social construction of nonprofit-business dyadic partnerships to illuminate how this discourse works.

A major criticism of critical approaches (and the interpretivist paradigm more generally) is their subjectivist philosophical position, which appears to undermine any basis for objective knowledge claims. However, as exemplified by Hardy et al. (2005), discursive approaches can provide a rigorous, in-depth, empirically grounded analysis, yielding theoretical insights into the discursive processes involved in collaboration. My critique of the normative agenda often found in social value perspectives can also be levelled at critical approaches. However, whilst some critical perspectives are unapologetically ideological, or employ emotive language (e.g. Macdonald & Chrisp, 2005), others strive for balance (though not 'neutrality') and show reflexivity concerning how the researcher's own experiences and beliefs may have influenced the research.

The aforementioned critical approaches have tended to focus on power and identity, but have largely neglected to investigate the concept of value and how it is socially and discursively constructed through partnership interaction (Le Ber & Branzei, 2010b, being a notable exception). Social value and business value approaches, whilst focusing on the claimed value created by these partnerships, have nevertheless also neglected to explore value creation as an embedded social practice, instead tending to treat value as a taken for granted concept.

2.9 Value creation as a social practice

Outside the partnership literature, the decontextualised neoclassical economic model of value creation has been critiqued by contemporary sociologists, anthropologists as well as some marketing, management and organizational studies scholars, who perceive value as socially embedded, or constructed

through social interaction. Ramirez argues for an anti-essentialist conceptualization of value, such that value is not conceived as a property inhering in products themselves, which can be "added" along an industrial production line, but instead treating value creation as contingent on human activity, being mutually created and re-created through human interaction (1999, pp.50-51). Vargo, Maglio and Akaka (2008) re-conceptualize value by moving the locus of value creation from production to use, reflecting a "service-dominant" (S-D) logic, as opposed to a "goods-dominant" logic, whereby firms can only create value *propositions*, value itself being co-created and ultimately determined by service-users. Building on the emerging S-D logic literature within marketing and management, Edvardsson, Tronvoll and Gruber (2010) propose recognition of the social context of value co-creation, contending that value is a social construction. This shift in the locus of value creation from producers to service users aligns with Le Ber and Branzei's (2010a) call for a renewed focus on the intended beneficiaries of social partnerships.

Anthropologists have sought to theorise about value creation in the context of human cultures, also critiquing reductionist economic concepts of value (Carrier, 2005). For example, Graeber treats value as a social construct, recasting value creation in terms of human action and meaning-making: "value is the way actors represent the importance of their own actions to themselves as part of some larger whole" (2005, p.468). Also from an anthropological perspective, Alexander highlights how neoclassical economic valuation has come to occupy a hegemonic, privileged position, encompassing non-economic spheres of social life, including the commodification of the environment, and how these economic valuations have come to

be "accorded an objective truth" (2005, p.468). Reaching a similar conclusion from a sociological perspective, Fourcade (2011) challenges the idea of economic valuation as an objective, universal measure of worth, highlighting how discourses of value encompass entire systems of social relations.

The sociology of valuation and evaluation (SVE) is concerned with how people attribute and assess value (Lamont, 2012). This literature has been influenced by Boltanski and Thevenot's *On Justification* (2006), which explores how people justify their actions by drawing on competing underlying principles of evaluation, logics, or "orders of worth" and how they compromise between these to create agreement. In this context, Porter and Kramer's "shared value" and the construction of win-win claims characteristic of the social value perspective in the partnership literature, could be viewed as examples of fragile compromises between conflicting orders of worth. In the same vein, for Lamont, the process of establishing value involves "legitimation dynamics", including negotiation and intersubjective agreement (2012, p.205). This is achieved through discursive and rhetorical practices, yet the analysis of discourse in constructing value has been largely neglected by researchers interested in social partnerships: discourse analysts have tended to focus on concepts such as power and identity, whilst neglecting the discursive construction of value.

From a socioeconomic viewpoint, Vatin (2013) draws on the French language to distinguish between "evaluating", i.e. assessing value, and "valorizing", i.e. creating value. Vatin makes the case that evaluation processes are embedded in the valorization of products, hence the value of products cannot be captured solely by the theory of the market, but must also take

into account the social conditions and relations that make the market possible (2013, pp.35-36). From a social constructivist perspective, I would propose that discursive acts of evaluation (assessments) can be simultaneously acts of valorization (value creation). Thus the discursive construction of value can be seen as involving two sets of social processes: "evaluating" (assessing) things as valuable; and "valorizing", which is the reification or objectification of value as being created out there in the world. For example, if value is taken to be discursively constituted, a claim such as "This partnership is going from strength to strength" is not merely an act of evaluation: it is also, at the same time, an act of valorization, since it rhetorically constructs the partnership as being of value.

I would concur with Cottrell (1981), who proposes that the essentialism characteristic of classical and neo-classical theories of value can be critiqued, whilst still acknowledging their usefulness and relevance as conceptual frameworks and as discourses of value. Taking this further, Kristjanson-Gural argues for a postmodern perspective on value theory, claiming that "It is possible to write and rewrite value discursively", but this involves relinquishing claims to a singular truth and acknowledging the inevitability of disagreement concerning what is of value (2011, p.213).

2.10 Rationale for taking a discursive perspective on value

I follow Hardy et al. (2005) in adopting a discursive perspective for studying interorganizational collaboration, applying this approach to the more specific research setting of nonprofit-business dyadic partnerships. This perspective treats value as

socially constructed rather than objectively created, recognizing that what counts as being of value is contingent on, and a product of, current discursive practices. Therefore my approach to researching value in nonprofit-business partnership is to analyze how the social interaction between the partners constructs value. The setting of nonproft-business partnership is particularly interesting, owing to the potential complexity and multiplicity of constructions of value, which can clash, compete and coexist; and the opportunity to investigate processes through which partners (re)negotiate value, gloss over differences and compromise between competing constructions of value (Le Ber & Branzei, 2010b; Boltanski & Thevenot, 2006). How these conversations play out, how constructions of value circulate within the partnership and evolve over time, as well as the constraints within which the discourse operates, have important implications for the intended beneficiaries of these partnerships, as well as for the partner organisations themselves.

This chapter has argued that whilst "value" receives a lot of attention within business and organizational studies, it is treated predominantly as a taken-for-granted concept. Whilst theories of value and valuation can be found outside this literature, there are few studies of how value is discursively constructed within organisations and, more particularly, between nonprofit and business partner organizations. My approach treats value as embedded within particular discursive contexts, the aim being to identify how partners draw upon different discursive resources and strategies to construct value in various ways, whether for their own organisations, for one another, for beneficiaries (in this case, young people) or for the partnership itself. This is contingent upon the demands of the particular discursive

situation and what the partners are trying to achieve through that interaction. Therefore the aim of my research is not to produce findings concerning a set of factors which determine the amount of objectively quantifiable value that can be produced by these kinds of partnerships. Instead, it is to understand the processes through which the partners construct value, with all its complexities, ambiguities and contradictions, and the purposes for which they produce these differing accounts. This accommodates the rhetorical nature of partnership discourse as well as acknowledging the multiplicity of meanings of "value" within the partnership context.

I have suggested that exploring value as a discursively constituted concept can yield new insights into how nonprofit-business partnership interaction operates and how these conversations translate into outcomes for the intended beneficiaries. I adopt a dynamic, context sensitive approach, by treating partnerships as settings within which various interactional challenges are embedded. This fills a research gap by focusing on the detail of live human interactions in partnership conversations.

I have aimed to map the nonprofit-business partnership literature and wider literature on cross-sector and interorganizational collaboration in terms of researchers' methodological and theoretical assumptions, so as to explain how value in nonprofit-business partnership has been understood and researched to date and to justify my own research approach. I have argued that the business value approach, characteristic of mainstream management studies, treats nonprofit-business partnership as a relatively predictable phenomenon, focusing on the business case and access to

complementary resources and capacities, drawing on neo-classical economic theories of value creation. In contrast, approaches placing greater emphasis on social value are more oriented towards integration, synthesis and win-win scenarios and are characteristically optimistic about the transformative potential of nonprofit-business partnership. These approaches treat processes of value creation as socially and politically embedded. On the other hand, critical perspectives tend to be more sceptical about the motives of business and the potential for win-win scenarios that can transform the status quo, emphasizing difference, tensions, conflict, power dynamics and, in the case of discursive approaches, the mechanics of partnership discourse (see Table 2.1).

I have identified the lack of detailed empirical studies as a limitation of the extant literature. In particular, there have been few process studies that offer a dynamic, holistic analysis of the evolution of nonprofit-business partnerships, involving direct observation of those processes as they unfold over time. My own research therefore responds to calls for more in-depth, longitudinal case studies and is unusual in employing ethnographic techniques, with participant observation as a principal research strategy.

I have argued that contextual research approaches are best suited to capturing how and why the complex, dynamic processes of nonprofit-business partnership occur. Hence my own approach is data-led, rather than theory-led - although it is also informed by the literature in an iterative way. Hence I did not attempt to specify a detailed research question at the outset. However, on the basis of my exploration of the literature and preliminary analysis of data gathered from the fieldwork, I

devised the following overarching research question (with further sub-questions emerging as the partnership and the data analysis progressed):

'How do partners involved in nonprofit-business partnership construct value through their discourse?'

This research aims to derive new theoretical insights into how nonprofit-business partnership discourse works, by analysing the social interactions involved in the evolution of this case. My aim is to complement existing partnership and interorganizational collaboration theory, for example, concerning how tensions are managed between partners and among competing constructions of value. A particular contribution of my discursive approach is the potential for multilevel analysis, which illuminates how the partnership discourse operates at the micro and meso levels, but also how it interacts with and embeds wider, macro-level political and socio-economic discourses. The following chapter further explains the rationale for my methodological approach and research design.

Table 2.1: Summary of perspectives in the nonprofit-business and cross-sector partnership literature

Perspective / discipline / field	***Methodological assumptions***	***Theoretical orientations***	***Levels of analysis***	***Approaches to partnership processes / how they operate***	***Examples of proponents in partnership literature***
Business value *Business-centric approaches (management, organization studies and marketing)*	*Positivist tendencies and realist ontology - the social world and social phenomena are assumed to exist objectively. Objectivist epistemology.*	*Partnerships treated as objective phenomena, which are quantifiable / predictable. Agents motivated principally by rational self-interest. Business case seen as main motive.*	*Principally meso (organisation / partnership) level. Some attention to macro-level drivers. Little attention to the micro-level.*	*Partnership processes construed in terms of ordered stages, whereby static sets of factors, issues or characteristics of partners drive, enable or constrain their operation.*	*Vock, Van Dolen & Kolk (2013). Dahan et al. (2010). Austin (2000). Waddell (2000).*
Social value *Emphasize wider societal impacts, go beyond the business case rationale for partnership.*	*Mostly realist ontology, but interpretivist epistemology – claims to truth & knowledge are viewed as mediated by our subjective perceptions.*	*Oriented towards integration, synthesis, win-win scenarios. Optimism about the transformative potential for nonprofit-business partnerships.*	*Principally macro-level and / or meso level analysis, but little attention to how these levels interact. Little attention to the micro-level.*	*Partnership processes seen as dynamic and contextual, but with generalizable characteristics, indicating best practice; limited attention to agency.*	*Waddock (1998). Seitanidi (2010). Austin & Seitanidi (2012a; 2012b) Selsky & Parker (2005).*

Perspective / discipline / field	***Methodological assumptions***	***Theoretical orientations***	***Levels of analysis***	***Approaches to partnership processes / how they operate***	***Examples of proponents in partnership literature***
Critical discursive approaches (NB other critical approaches differ in their methodological assumptions)	*Subjectivist ontology, partnership socially constructed, language constitutive. Interpretivist epistemology - knowledge socially constructed, plural; emphasis on cultural & historical difference.*	*Sceptical about the motives of business and the potential for win-win-win scenarios that can transform the status quo. Focus on difference, tensions, the mechanics of language, conflict and power dynamics.*	*Lend themselves to multiple levels of analysis, since partners interweave macro-level and organisational discourses into their communicative practices.*	*Partnership processes tend to be viewed as dynamic, unstable, unpredictable and embedded in multiple shifting contexts.*	*Hardy et al. (2005). Hastings (1999). Le Ber & Branzei (2010a; 2010b; 2010c).*

Chapter 3. Research design

3.1 Setting the scene

This chapter aims to describe and justify the methodological approach adopted for this study, which combines ethnographic and discourse analytic techniques, within a longitudinal case study design. I first set out how my theoretical orientation emerges from deeper philosophical and social constructionist roots, to shape my approach as a social science researcher. I then clarify the particular perspective on discourse theory adopted in this thesis, situating it within a range of related discursive approaches and justifying its appropriateness for addressing the main research question. The key assumptions of this theoretical framework are discussed, drawing on the work of influential discourse theorists and researchers, in particular discursive psychologists. I elucidate how this theoretical framework has shaped the design of this study and the approach to data collection, including the rationale for researcher reflexivity, the ethical considerations to which this study gives rise and the selection of data collection methods. The chapter concludes with a description of the data analysis techniques employed, clarifying how the ethnographic fieldwork complements the close analysis of partners' talk, by enabling the analysis of multiple levels of context (Clarke, Kwon & Wodak, 2012).

3.2 The social construction of nonprofit-business partnership

Berger and Luckmann's (1967) ground-breaking work on 'The Social Construction of Reality' provides a theoretical basis for a

variety of social constructionist approaches, whereby the role of the social science researcher is to investigate the intersubjective processes through which social realities, including phenomena such as nonprofit-business partnerships, are created and sustained. Berger and Luckmann (1967) argue that the everyday, taken for granted reality of the social world is only made meaningful through ongoing processes of social interaction, through which "*any* body of 'knowledge' comes to be socially esablished as 'reality'" (1967, p.15) (emphasis in the original).

Since language is "the most important sign system of human society" (Berger & Luckmann, 1967, p.51), it enables "the ongoing objectification" (*ibid.* p.53) of meaning, which is intersubjectively shared, thereby becoming institutionalized and experienced as objective. However, as Berger and Luckmann assert, despite this reification of meaning, the social world "does not thereby acquire an ontological status apart from the human activity that produced it" (1967, p.78). Therefore language does not merely represent objects and ideas, which have an independent extra-linguistic existence: instead, it is constitutive of meaning and therefore also of what we take to be social reality. As Watson states, the social world is constructed "through language-based processes of historical knowledge-creation, cultural interpretation and sense-making" (2008, p.270). However, there are multiple positions within the social constructionist tradition, reflecting differing philosophical underpinnings, and these differences have implications for how phenomena such as nonprofit-business partnership are investigated.

As a social constructionist, my research is grounded in an interpretivist epistemology, whereby claims to knowledge about the social world are mediated by human interactions, under the influence of cultural, historical and discursive practices. Van Dijk defines knowledge of the social world as a belief which is justified by the agreed criteria of an epistemic community and, in that sense, it is "always relative and contextual" (2011, p.385). In keeping with this intersubjective view of knowledge acquisition, I place particular emphasis on how the partners construct meaning and value for themselves, for their own and one another's organizations, for the partnership and for young people (the intended beneficiaries), through their discursive social practices.

Many social constructionist researchers are more explicit concerning questions of epistemology than ontology (Watson 2008, p.270). Indeed, Fairclough (2010) argues that strong social constructionists tend to conflate ontology with epistemology. I will therefore clarify my position concerning the ontological status of the phenomena under investigation, so as to refute a common criticism of strong social constructionist approaches, that such researchers adhere to a form of idealism, believing that nothing exists outside of discourse (Phillips & Hardy, 2002). However, as Hall points out, Foucault's (1972) assertion that nothing has meaning outside of discourse, is not synonymous with the claim that there is nothing in existence outside of discourse (Hall, 2001). Laclau and Mouffe make a similar point: "The fact that every object is constituted as an object of discourse has nothing to do with whether there is a world external to thought, or with the realism/idealism opposition" (1985, p108). My research is therefore grounded in a subjectivist ontology, in that I adhere to the view that social

phenomena and concepts only aquire meaning through discourse and, in that sense, are dependent for their existence on human cognitive and intersubjective processes. I therefore treat nonprofit-business partnerships as (inter)subjective, socially constructed phenomena, not as objective entities existing independently of our human conceptions of them.

Therefore my philosophical position does not repudiate the material existence of the physical world. However, the focus of my research is on the discursive processes that constitute nonprofit-business partnership, treating these as intersubjective, dynamic and contingent, rather than objective, static and universal. It follows from this ontological position that our knowledge of nonprofit-business partnership should not be treated as objective truth, but as a product of socially, politically and historically contingent discursive practices.

Notwithstanding the range of different approaches to discourse analysis, the understanding of language as constitutive of meaning, rather than merely representing objects and ideas, is a key theoretical assumption shared by researchers identifying themselves as discourse analysts. I would therefore concur with Jonathan Potter's claim regarding discursive psychology (DP) and discourse analysis more broadly, that it is not a "free-standing" method, since it is "embedded in a web of theoretical and metatheoretical assumptions" (Potter, 2003, pp.784-5). This is not to claim that different methods and sources of data should never be mixed. However, in order for research to be coherent, I would argue, with Silverman (2013), that a consistent approach needs to be taken regarding ontological and epistemological orientations and that methodologies need to be justifiable, both in terms of their suitability for addressing research questions,

and in terms of their compatibility with stated philosophical underpinnings.

3.3 Discursive approach

3.3.1 Discourse as social interaction

Whilst the term "discourse" has been defined and employed in numerous ways (Alvesson & Karreman, 2000; Gee, 2014; Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002; Potter & Wetherell, 1987), I adopt a broad definition of discourse as the communicative social practices through which we make sense of the world. Influenced by postmodernist perspectives, this expansive view of discourse as social interaction encompasses not only conversation and written texts, but also images, gestures and semiotic or "human meaning-making processes in general" (Wetherell, 2001, p.390). This conceptualisation of discourse does not draw a hard ontological distinction between discursive and extra-discursive phenomena, instead treating discourse as embedded within all social practices. In this particular respect, my approach can be seen as more closely aligned with Laclau and Mouffe's (1985) discourse theory than, for example, the critical discourse analysis (CDA) perspective exemplified by Fairclough (1992; 2010), who distinguishes between discursive and non-discursive elements of social practices (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002). An advantage of this inclusive characterization of discourse is that it enables a discourse analytic approach to be applied to a range of different data sources, thereby giving multiple perspectives on the case of nonprofit-business partnership under investigation.

This view of discourse as social interaction also emphasizes its performative nature: the social practices which constitute

nonprofit-business partnership are enacted principally through communication, therefore "our talk and writing do not live in some purely conceptual realm, but are mediums for action" (Potter & Wetherell, 1987, p.9). The emphasis on discourse as an action-oriented social practice is a feature of discursive psychology (DP), which has roots in ethnomethodological conversation analysis (CA) and has also been influenced by rhetorical analysis and post-structuralist ideas (Billig, 1996; Potter & Wetherell, 1987, Chapter 1; Potter, 1998; 1999). This action-oriented approach is appropriate for analysing the interactions between partners and how they construct the partnership through their talk, focusing on what the partners are actually trying to achieve in that social interaction. The terms "rhetorical function", "rhetorical strategy" and "rhetorical effect" are used in the empirical chapters to refer to how the partners' talk is constructed so as to influence or convey their perspectives more powerfully, thereby achieving their objectives. The term "partnership discourse" should be understood as encompassing nonverbal behaviour, partnership documentation and other texts, as well as partnership talk. However, the terms "partnership talk", "partnership interaction" and "partnership dialogue" are used interchangeably to refer more specifically to the partners' verbal communication.

3.3.2 Institutional talk

Agreement concerning the value or desirability of particular partnership activities and outcomes is reached principally through the exchange of talk between the participating organizations. Thus institutions and institutional roles and identities, including those pertaining to partnerships, are constructed and performed through talk (Liddicoat, 2011).

Institutional contexts and the roles participants adopt within those settings influence how the partnership talk is organised (*ibid*.). Therefore, in social partnerships, the interaction is shaped, but also constrained, by participants' orientations to the organizations involved in the partnership and by their particular roles and organizational objectives (Drew & Heritage, 1992; Liddicoat, 2011).

Dialogue comprises a series of conversational "initiatives" and "responses" and institutional talk tends to be characterized both by co-operation and "asymmetry", owing to inequalities of status and/or knowledge between the parties (Linell, 1990). Thus partnership talk, "as the *interplay of participants' initiatives and responses*, quite apart from the discourse itself, generates a web of social relations, commitments and responsibilities, and possibly also shared knowledge, attitudes and perspectives" (emphasis in original) (Linell, 1990, p.147).

The transition from one speaker to the next is termed "turn-taking" by conversation analysts (Liddicoat, 2011). Turn-taking can operate in distinctive ways in institutional settings, as opposed to in ordinary everyday conversation. For example, in formally chaired meetings, the person acting as the chair manages the allocation of turns, with requests to speak being channelled through the chair. However, in this research, the partnership meetings were informal, with talk being managed more locally by participants. This meant that more than one speaker might sometimes self-select, potentially resulting in overlapping talk, which would then need to be repaired by participants, so that only one speaker held the floor.

Partnership talk could be structured around partners' institutional requirements, for example, taking a question and answer format where the business was holding the nonprofit to account for its use of funding. However, the informality of the partnership meetings was such that the talk was only very loosely structured around a vague, often unwritten agenda and the organization of talk was locally managed.

Condor and Antaki conceive of discourse "as a social event which is in some sense *action* in its own right, and in either talk or text: for example, the co-operative joint construction of utterances in adjacent turns, the formulation of decisions in group talk, the maintenance of belief structures through their public negotiation, and so on" (1997, p.344). This CA-oriented approach "promises to identify how discourse is jointly occasioned and jointly formulated, and promises to uncover what local and institutional ends that discourse serves" (*ibid*).

The application of ideas from conversation analysis, such as "turn-taking" and "repairs" yielded insights into how partnership interaction was structured, including how partners exercised control over the partnership talk (Liddicoat, 2011; Linell, 1990). My approach seeks to emulate CA's attention to the fine-grained details of naturally occurring talk. However, whilst sharing CA's interest in the use of language in society, this research does not employ a pure CA method (Ten Have, 2007). A significant disadvantage of using CA *per se* for this thesis would have been its lack of contextualisation, in that CA emphasizes the situated context of talk to the exclusion of the wider context. The use of ethnographic techniques in this research justified drawing inferences beyond what could be discerned from the analysis of partners' talk alone. However, as Drew and Heritage state, "this

form of research [i.e. CA-oriented] may be regarded as a complement to more traditional observational and participant ethnographic methods", so as to get inside the "black box" of social institutions (1992, p.5).

Another reason for rejecting a pure CA method was the aspiration to contribute to the theoretical coherence and cumulativeness of research within the CSSP field – and non-CA researchers tend to be unfamiliar with very detailed CA transcription protocols. Thus, whilst my discursive approach has been influenced by CA's approach to institutional talk, I do not claim to employ a conversation analytic method *per se*.

3.3.3 Discourse and the construction of context

Most discourse analytic perspectives tend to share a focus on investigating systems of language use, embedded within social contexts (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002). Whilst the importance of context is emphasized in many forms of discourse analysis, it is treated differently depending on the particular theoretical orientations of researchers. For van Dijk, "discourse is no longer just conceived of as verbal talk and text, but also encompasses the nature of contexts as models of communicative events" (2011, p.xvii). This treatment of context as subjective mental models encompasses both the "proximate" context, pertaining to the particular communicative situation, and the "distal", or wider, macro-level societal context (Wetherell, 2001, p.388). Van Dijk (2013) emphasizes the cognitive interface between the micro-level language-in-use and macro-level social structures, conceptualising context in terms of dynamic mental models, which play a key role in the production and interpretation of discourse. Thus context is itself socially constructed, both in

terms of how we make sense of the distal, macro-level context and how we understand the proximate, communicative situation.

Contextual mental models are necessarily partial, since context is "indefinitely large" (Gee, 2014, p.67) and not every aspect of context can be taken into account simultaneously, therefore people focus on what appear to be the most salient aspects of context at any given moment. Proximate aspects of context include the time and place of the interaction, the different participants, their roles, identities and interests and what they are assumed to think and believe. Distal aspects of context include, for example, the social and political climate within which the interaction takes place. Different aspects of context become salient during the course of a communicative interaction. During face to face talk between partners, instantaneous judgements have to be made concerning which aspects of complex contexts are significant and relevant, so misjudgements can sometimes arise concerning what is appropriate at a given moment, within that social situation. Therefore partners make reversals, or other attempts to remedy the situation, for example, to save face for themselves or others (see Goffman, 1955, on "face-work"). Therefore, in analysing partnership discourse, recognition is needed that the partners systematically make presuppositions concerning what is already understood: partnership discourse takes a great deal for granted and partners continually adapt their talk to adjust to what they think others believe.

Phillips and Hardy also apply the distinction between "proximate" and "distal" context, in categorizing different styles of discursive research, along a "text-context" continuum, according to the extent to which the local situated context or the wider social context are the main focus of analysis (2002, pp.19-20).

However, this is a question of degree, for example, critical discourse analysts tend to emphasize the wider societal context, but treat this as dialectically related to particular texts or language-in-use (Fairclough, 2010). In contrast, discursive psychologists tend to emphasize the proximate context, often focusing on a close analysis of situated, naturally occuring talk (Potter & Wetherell, 1987). For discursive psychologists, since the meaning of partners' discourse needs to be understood in terms of what they are trying to achieve through that social interaction, the emphasis is on analysing their discourse in relation to the specific, localised social context in which it is produced (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002). However, discursive psychologists are also interested in the empirical study of discourse as part of wider social practices, which are discursive, dynamic and multiple. This approach emphasizes the processes through which partners selectively draw on aspects of these wider contexts as "discursive resources", using them to construct different versions of the "reality" of their partnership (Potter & Wetherell, 1987).

This treatment of context as discursive also anticipates that partners will construct multiple and sometimes conflicting versions of the partnership, drawing on different "interpretive repertoires", depending on the particular demands of the discursive situation and what there are trying to achieve in constructing their accounts (Potter & Wetherell, p.138). Whilst discursive psychologists often analyse naturally occuring talk, interview data can also be analysed using DP, with interviews treated as conversational interactions between the interviewer and interviewee, hence the analysis is sensitive to the proximate context of the interview situation (Potter 1998). Similarly, DP can used to analyse texts of various kinds, paying particular

attention to the contexts in which they were produced and the audiences and purposes for which they were written (Potter, 1998).

I also draw on framing analysis as a broad theoretical approach with which to interpret interview data (Goffman, 1974), drawing on Kuypers' (2009) method of using framing analysis as rhetorical criticism, by identifying how themes of value are framed by the partners. Le Ber and Branzei's (2010b) use of framing analysis is a further justification for drawing on this theoretical approach, together with Gray, Purdy & Asari's (2015) theoretical paper on microprocesses of framing and the potential of this approach for multi-level analysis, bridging micro-level interactions and the meso / macro levels of analysis.

According to Kuypers, frames "filter our perceptions of the world in particular ways, essentially making some aspects of our multi-dimensional reality more noticeable than other aspects", thus having the rhetorical effect of making certain information, or aspects of context more salient (2006, p.181). Context is therefore not fixed: partners actively construct frames in their interview accounts, whether consciously or unconsciously, so as to construct a perspective that encourages the partnership to be interpreted by the interviewer in a particular way. The concept of framing therefore helps to explain how partners define problems, identify causes, make judgments, and propose solutions.

The other continuum used by Phillips and Hardy (2002) to categorise styles of discursive research is a "constructive-critical" continuum. This refers to the extent to which researchers are interested in the dynamics of power, as in CDA, as opposed to the processes of social construction. As Phillips and Hardy

explain, not all discourse analytic approaches take power as a central focus and the treatment of power depends partly on researchers' theoretical orientation, but also on the particular topic and research questions (2002). My research does not treat power as a focal concept, but it is nevertheless sensitive both to the power asymmetries between the partner organizations and to the dynamic processes through which partners exercise power through their discourse, for example, by drawing on discursive resources and employing rhetorical strategies to influence, persuade, negotiate and achieve their partnership objectives. However, the principal focus of my research is at the "constructivist" end of Phillips and Hardy's (2002) "constructivist-critical" continuum: that is, on how the partners construct "reality" and "value" for the partnership. This approach is closely aligned with discursive psychology's social constructionist form of discourse analysis (Potter, 1998).

3.4 Approaches to data collection

3.4.1 Case study design

This is a longitudinal case study in the idiographic tradition, involving repeated observations of similar phenomena over more than a two year period. It traces the evolution of a single case of nonprofit-business partnership in real time, so as to derive an in-depth understanding of the case. This responds to Pettigrew, Woodman and Cameron's call for researchers to "catch reality in flight", by studying longitudinal change processes in context (2001, p698). I am therefore adopting a data-led, theory-building approach, as opposed to a deductive, hypothesis-testing approach (Eisenhardt, 1989), employing interpretive rather than causal explanations of this social phenomenon, thus accepting

the relevance of "verstehen", as opposed to "erklaren" (Gill & Johnson, 2010, pp.225-227). This approach also makes use of abductive reasoning, since interpretations are not based purely on inductive inferences from the data, but also on an iterative engagement with the extant theory (Fann, 1970; Locke, Golden-Biddle, & Feldman, 2008).

There is no single accepted typology for case studies in social science research. As with many case studies, my research design involves the flexible and opportunistic use of multiple data sources and multiple qualitative methods (Eisenhardt, 1989). I gathered data from participant observation of partnership meetings, workshops and informal interactions; several rounds of open-ended interviews; and numerous formal and informal documentary sources.

Stake (2000) describes three categories of case studies. An "intrinsic" case study takes the case itself as the focus and does not aim at generalization or theoretical revision (Stake, 2000, p.437). This is distinguished from "instrumental" case studies, where a central concern is to revise a theory or enable generalization concerning a wider issue. However, Stake does not regard this as a hard distinction, as the researcher of the instrumental case study is interested both in the particular case and in the light it sheds on wider issues. Stake's third category, "collective" case studies, involves studying several individual cases to enable comparisons to be made. I regard this research as an example of an instrumental case study, since it aims to produce findings which are relevant to, and illuminate, other cases of nonprofit-business partnership and on the basis that the detailed, "thick description" characteristic of intrinsic case

studies can also be found in instrumental case studies (Stake, 2000, p.439).

Yin's typology has some similarities, dividing case studies into three types: "descriptive", "exploratory", and "explanatory" (2012, p.xxii). Descriptive case studies aim for a rich, contextual description of the case; exploratory case studies aim to define research questions for future studies; whilst explanatory case studies aim to test theory. However, I do not regard these as mutually exclusive categories and I would argue that this case study contains elements of all three. This case study has been designed so as to yield rich descriptive detail, through the use of ethnographic techniques. This may also be viewed as an exploratory case, since it aims to assist in the development of future research questions. Relevance for future research is facilitated through analysis of the social and political context and how partners draw on wider societal discourses, together with the iterative process of developing theoretical ideas alongside the fieldwork. Also, whilst this research does not aim to test theory in a hypothetico-deductive sense, it could nevertheless be regarded as explanatory, in that a single case can be sufficient to provide new theoretical insights, as well as accumulating knowledge through comparison with other cases - and even enabling the falsification of an existing theory's claims to universality (Flyvbjerg, 2006).

As argued by Langley, Smallman, Tsoukas and Van de Ven, longitudinal and process studies should not be viewed as "samples of one", since "the sample size for a process study is the number of *temporal observations*" (2013, p.7) (emphasis in the original). In a similar vein, the sample size of a study of micro-level features of talk is also much larger than one,

enabling comparisons of instances across multiple participants, different sectors, episodes and contexts. Sensitivity to context can also assist in identifying relevantly similar cases and drawing inferences to other cases of nonprofit-business partnership.

3.4.2 Case selection and access

The selection of this case was opportunistic, arising from a collaborative PhD studentship agreement between Nottingham University Business School's International Centre for Corporate Social Responsibility (ICCSR), a credit card company and a young people's charity. It would therefore be misleading to claim a post-hoc theoretical justification for selecting this particular nonprofit-business partnership, for example, as a "critical" or "extreme" case (Flyvbjerg, 2006). Nevertheless, the high level of negotiated access and the opportunity to trace the evolution of a partnership in real time, provided a rare oppportunity for gathering new insights into business-nonprofit partnership processes.

I entered the field at the very beginning of the research, therefore my initial research question was intentionally very broad in the early stages. As the fieldwork progressed, concurrently with my exploration of the literature, I was able to focus my research on those aspects of the case that appeared most interesting and under-explored. This approach provided a means of increasing the likelihood of new theoretical insights emerging from the case, since I was able to exercise flexibility concerning the specific focus of the research.

Although the pre-negotiated nature of the studentship agreement circumvented any initial difficulties with access,

ongoing access still needed to be sustained and negotiated with key contacts in both partner organizations. I was therefore conscious of the need to build and maintain relationships, especially with gatekeepers, and this necessitated reflexivity concerning how I conducted myself in the field as a researcher - and particularly as a participant observer.

3.4.3 Reflexivity

The concept of reflexivity has evolved over several decades within different academic disciplines to become a central feature of qualitative social science research (Cunliffe 2003; Finlay & Gough, 2008; Haynes, 2012). Whilst there is no single agreed definition of reflexivity, the proliferation of different theoretical approaches and perspectives reflects a growing recognition of its importance within qualitative research (Cunliffe, 2003). Scholars have conceptualized reflexivity in different ways, placing different emphases on particular types of reflexivity and their implications for researchers.

Along with Cunliffe (2003), I treat reflexivity as arising from questioning how knowledge and reality are constituted, linking reflexivity with the apprehension that knowledge is socially constructed. In contrast, Bourdieu (2004) views reflexivity as a tool for enhancing the objectivity of scientific knowledge, by enabling it to examine the conditions of its own production, rather than embracing the idea of multiple subjective realities. Thus reflexivity can be constructed by drawing on perspectives ranging from neopositivism through to postmodernism (Johnson & Duberley, 2003). Others have bypassed the philosophical debates and focused on reflexivity as a practical tool for introspection and self-challenge (e.g. Golombisky, 2006). Whilst

this kind of researcher self-critique can contribute useful insights and increase methodological rigour, I would concur with Silverman in rejecting a narrow definition of reflexivity as no more than "self-questioning by the researcher", preferring definitions which recognise the "self-organizing character of all interaction so that any action provides for its own context" (2013, p.447).

Whilst Johnson and Duberley (2003) reject "hyper-reflexivity" and associate this with postmodernism, I would concur with Cunliffe in arguing that researchers influenced by postmodernism need not be imprisoned within an infinite regress form of reflexivity, but can nevertheless embrace a "radical-reflexivity" (2003, p.985), which acknowledges researcher subjectivity and achieves transparency by "accounting for its own theorizing" (Hardy & Clegg, 1997, S13). I would also argue that meta-theoretical commitments are not the sole determinants of approaches to reflexivity and that the aims, methods and challenges specific to a particular research project can be at least as important as meta-theoretical commitments in influencing researchers' approaches to reflexivity.

As Silverman (2013) observes, biographical events often influence the direction of researchers. My own attraction to interpretivism and discourse analysis can, in part, be explained by my prior academic background, my first degree in English Literature and Philosophy having required detailed analysis of the mechanics of language and interpretation of concepts and meanings. Producing genuinely reflexive research also required me to recognize the influence of my own prior work experience in the nonprofit sector and how my own experiences of partnership working may have influenced how I generated and interpreted my research data.

On entering the field in October 2013, I was aware of the need for reflexivity concerning my role and background and I was conscious that the influence of my prior work experience in the nonprofit sector and my own experiences of partnership working would inevitably influence how I generated and interpreted my research data. Hence I sought to avoid the unconscious "blunders" described by Golombinsky (2006), in particular, given my professional background of working principally for and with nonprofit organisations, I was conscious of the risk of over-identification with the charity.

I was also conscious that research participants' knowledge of my work background might have influenced how they framed their discourse. Acknowledging the impact of my presence in the field on the process of the research therefore required recognition of how participants' awareness of the research and the presence of the researcher may have influenced their behaviour, including their interactions with one another. This includes the fact that they were aware that their interactions were being observed and that their communications were being recorded and would be analysed.

I began keeping a reflexive research diary from the outset of the study, since this is an important tool for fostering reflexive practice (Nadin & Cassell, 2006), enabling me to track the evolution of my thoughts, feelings and emerging insights. This facilitated reflection on my participant observer role, which included questioning whether I should make my research more collaborative and enter into more of a reflexive dialogue with my research participants, or whether (on other occasions) I participated and influenced the partners' interaction too much.

However, I am not engaging in action research and, only to a limited extent, in "reflexivity through collaboration" (Finlay & Gough, p.161). Whilst I am engaging research participants in a reflexive dialogue about the partnership, as a means of incorporating practitioner voices, I am not engaging them in a reflexive dialogue about my research per se. I considered, but rejected the idea of seeking to engage my research participants as co-researchers, by involving them in a collaborative dialogue to co-produce the research findings. I concluded that the political and sensitive nature of the research setting meant there was a high risk of research participants seeking to neutralise any critical interpretations, thus compromising the academic independence of the research. I was also conscious of the need to reflect on emerging issues arising from the fieldwork, including any practical or ethical issues, which I might not have anticipated at the outset.

3.4.4 Ethical considerations

I obtained research ethics approval from Nottingham University Business School's Research Ethics Committee prior to entering the field. This protocol has been adapted from the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) Framework for Research Ethics, incorporating the key principles of ethical research which the ESRC expects to be followed. In accordance with this guidance, an 'Information for Participants' form was sent to all research participants prior to conducting observations and interviews (see Appendix A). This aimed to be clear and explicit concerning the subject, aims and processes of my research and how participants would be involved.

In the case of the nonprofit partner, it was easier to ensure that all employees were aware of the research, since the organization only comprised approximately 40 employees. However, in the case of the corporate partner, my key contact considered it inappropriate and impractical to attempt to inform all employees individually, since these numbered approximately one thousand. Therefore, it was agreed that only those individuals and members of teams most likely to come into contact with me during the course of the research would be informed at the outset. Others were asked for their informed consent to participate in the research only as and when they became directly involved.

I considered it important to ask permission in advance whenever I wanted to use a digital recorder and to explain that this was needed to facilitate detailed analysis. This avoided any surprise or discomfort which participants may otherwise have felt from an on-the-spot request and allowed them time to consider the request properly. However, in practice, there were occasions when I was not aware in advance which individuals would be involved in meetings, or where there was no opportunity to provide information in advance. On these occasions, I had to obtain consent immediately prior to recording.

A key ethical consideration was the need to protect the confidentiality both of individual research participants and their organizations. I therefore considered it important to reassure research participants that their names and other personal data, as well as the names of their employers and any other individuals, projects or organizations, would be made anonymous. Pseudonyms are therefore used for the names of participants and only generic job titles are mentioned, to ensure

anonymity (see Appendix E). I was also conscious that, given the nature of corporate and nonprofit networks, individuals and organizations could potentially be identifiable from the wider context. Therefore I have ensured that there are no explicit references to specific geographical locations.

I was conscious that I could be exposed to confidential information regarding individuals, organizations and the partnership during the course of the research. The potential for sensitivities and tensions both between and within organizations were particular considerations. When engaging in observation over a sustained period of time, there is greater potential for unguarded comments, since research participants are likely to overlook the fact that they are being observed. However, provided research participants had previously given their informed consent to be observed, I considered it legitimate to include this data in the analysis, provided it was suitably anonymised and relevant to the aims of the research.

3.5 Sources of data and sampling strategy

Whilst the single case used in this research was a given (see section 3.4.2), choices nevertheless needed to be made concerning which individuals to interview and the emphasis to be placed on different sources of data. The selection of individuals to be interviewed could be viewed principally as a convenience sample, in that it was driven by access to and the circumstances of the case (Silverman, 2013, p.148). However, since relatively few research participants from either organization had a significant level of involvement with the partnership, it was feasible to interview them all. The sample of interviewees was to some extent purposive (Silverman, 2013, p.148), in that it was

based on a criterion of close involvement with the partnership and because a decision was taken to include a senior member of staff from each partner organization, who was not involved in the day to day activities, but who had overarching responsibility for the partnership.

Similarly, decisions were taken as to which sources of data to prioritise, with partnership meeting data and interview data being treated as principal sources, since these would be the most useful for understanding how the partnership talk functioned to construct value. A substantial volume of field notes was also gathered, along with documentary data, but whilst these were not wholly neglected, they primarily contributed to an ethnographic understanding of the case.

3.5.1 Participant observation and ethnographic techniques

Part of the rationale for employing participant observation as a principal research strategy was to take full advantage of the pre-negotiated access, by observing the partnership processes as they unfolded. I was conscious of the need to build rapport with research participants, particularly in the early stages, so as gain a sufficient level of trust to get close to the phenomenon under investigation. However, I was also careful to avoid total immersion in the setting as a full participant, since this can prevent the maintenance of critical distance, or the adoption of what Hammersley and Atkinson describe as the "analytic gaze" (2007, p.189). I was also conscious that more active participation in the partnership processes would influence how the partnership evolved and make it more difficult to analyse how my presence in the field may have influenced the phenomenon under investigation. This acknowledges that the

presence of the researcher always influences the research to some degree.

The intermittent nature of the partnership activities did not necessitate prolonged, intensive periods in the field and this suited my objective of maintaining critical distance, whilst also allowing me to alternate between reviewing the literature, observing in the field, transcribing and undertaking some initial data analysis. A log was kept of observations in the field, including eight partnership meetings (normally two hour meetings, held on roughly a quarterly basis), all of which were audio recorded (see Appendix D). Field notes were taken before, during and after the partnership meetings, before and after interviews and during other events. These events included workshops involving both partners, often alongside other organizations, as well as co-creation sessions involving young people.

Whilst this intermittent use of participant observation means this study may not be deemed an ethnography per se, it nevertheless makes considerable use of ethnographic techniques. The aim was to emulate more critical approaches to ethnographic studies (Alvesson, 2009; Nyberg & Nicholson, 2014), which question organizational orthodoxies, whilst still aiming to capture the intricacies of everyday life. This requires the maintainenance of a more or less marginal position, a simultaneous "insider-outsider" perspective, to enable access to participants' perspectives, whilst also reducing the risk of over-rapport (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007, pp.110-112). This stance of being a "marginal native", "intellectually poised between familiarity and strangeness", "stranger and friend" (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007, p.111), can be an

uncomfortable position and difficult to sustain. However, in practice, the intermittent nature of the partnership activity made it easier to maintain this "marginal native" position.

Outsiders and insiders have access to different sources of information and both these researcher positions carry different methodological risks. An insider, or "complete participant", totally immersed in the setting, risks "going native", resulting in uncritical or imbalanced analysis (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). In this study, given my professional background of working principally for and with nonprofit organizations, I was conscious of the risk that over-identification with the charity could be a barrier to establishing rapport with the corporation, resulting in defending the perspectives of the nonprofit organization and treating these uncritically. Again, reflexivity concerning my own subject positions and how these could be affecting the research, together with my frequent absence from the field, provided a means of mitigating against unconscious imbalance. This was also aided by the use of multiple methods of data collection, including interviews, which gave insight into different perspectives.

3.5.2 Interviews

Interviews are widely used in qualitative research and were employed as a key research strategy in this case study. Informal one to one meetings were held in October 2013, during induction days with each of the two partner organizations. Field notes were taken, but these initial meetings were not audio recorded, since their purpose was to gain familiarity with the histories, operating practices and cultures of the two partner organizations, rather than to analyse discursive constructions of the partnership.

A few months into the research, in December 2013, a further round of interviews was conducted with the key actors, who had been involved in the early stages of the partnership. Six interviews were carried out and audio-recorded: three with each partner organization and with staff involved at three different levels of each of the partner organizations. The interview participants comprised: an employee without line management responsibilities, a middle-level manager and a senior manager within the corporation; and an employee without line management responsibilities, a middle-level manager and the Chief Executive of the much smaller nonprofit organization. One of the interviews was curtailed, lasting only 20 minutes, owing to an emergency drill, and the rest were between 40 minutes and just over an hour in length. I explained to interviewees that I would like to interview them again at a later stage in the evolution of the partnership. This round of interviews was partly a means of gaining insight into partners' perspectives on how the partnership was initiated and negotiated before the start of the research. They also provided a means of obtaining different perspectives on how the partnership had been operating to date and how it might evolve in the future, so as to allow for a longitudinal study of how these perspectives changed over the lifetime of the partnership.

A total of thirty interviews were conducted (see Appendix E). With the exception of the induction days and one of the final interviews, these were all audio recorded and transcribed. A one-off interview was conducted in May 2014, with the Head of CSR in the business, as she was about to leave the organization. The next round of interviews took place in July 2014, some of which were repeat interviews and others first time interviews, with

employees newly involved in the partnership. Subsequent interviews were conducted as staff either left their organization, or became newly involved in the partnership. A final round of interviews was undertaken in December 2015, by which time the partnership activity was winding down towards its planned end date, in June 2016 (see Appendices E and F).

My social constructionist approach had a strong influence on how the interviews were conducted, aiming to generate accounts, which would facilitate analysis of the work interviewees did in framing the value of this nonprofit-business partnership. The interviews were therefore fairly open-ended, although I did develop a topic guide, so as to ensure certain themes relating to social, business and mutual value were covered (see Appendix B). Therefore, although I aimed to limit the extent to which I guided the flow of interviewees' discourse, I also aimed to ensure that relevant and comparable issues were addressed in each interview, such as how participants framed the motivations of both organizations for partnering with one another and their perspectives on the challenges, opportunities and the success or otherwise of the partnership. Thus, in practice, the topic guide was used as a prompt, to remind me of the broad issues to be covered and the interviews could more accurately be described as semi-structured, rather than completely open-ended. However, my objective was to get as close as possible to naturally occurring talk, despite the artificially constructed context of an interview situation.

The structures of my interviews were therefore "soft-wired" (Rugg & Petre, 2007, p.138), since the questions and precise topics were not predetermined. I was conscious that, as noted by Rugg and Petre, "interviewing is easy to do badly and difficult

to do well" (2007, p.137) and I was aware of my own inexperience in conducting this type of interview. I aimed to keep the interviews as informal and friendly as possible, being conscious of the need to maintain positive relationships with research participants, but also not wanting to waste a valuable opportunity to ask probing questions, where this seemed appropriate and not likely to jeopardise the relationship.

As each interview progressed, I tended to make increased use of ad hoc questions to probe deeper, or to stimulate new trains of thought. I did not consider this problematic, since the subsequent analysis would take into consideration my own preconceptions and role as a co-participant in the dialogue, rather than interpreting the accounts of interviewees in isolation. I also used ad hoc questions to redirect the interview, where I judged this was appropriate, for example, if participants went 'off topic' or ran out of ideas.

The interview techniques employed in this study shared some characteristics with "ethnographic interviewing", in that interviewees were able to "take on the role of expert" and their language was treated as data in constructing the reality of the partnership (Bauman & Adair, 1992, p.12). However, the interviews were not completely "unstructured and nondirective" (*ibid*., p.13), since I was conscious that busy professionals had limited time to spare and there was a need to keep the interviews relevant to the research. The interviews also complemented participant observation, in that they often helped to clarify and provide alternative perspectives on the context of the partnership, thus deepening the ethnographic understanding of the case (Atkinson & Coffey, 2003, p.283).

3.5.3 Treatment of field notes and audio-recorded data

Although interviews and quarterly partnership meetings were audio recorded using a digital recorder, I also took field notes before, during and after these meetings, to capture contemporaneous reflections, observations and behaviours, which would be missed by the audio recordings, such as gestures, body language and the visual appearance and layout of rooms. However, I did not attempt a detailed multimodal discourse analysis along the lines suggested by Baldry and Thibault (2006), who set out a framework demonstrating how visual images and other meaning-making semiotic practices interact and can be integrated with analysis of talk and text. This would have required video recording of partnership meetings and interviews and an in-depth, frame by frame analysis of non-verbal behaviours, alongside verbal communication. Whilst video recording can be extremely useful in conversation analysis, I considered this level of detail unneccesary for my particular discursive approach. I therefore did not seek permission to video record the partnership meetings or interviews, since I judged the disadvantage of the more intrusive video recording outweighed the advantages of capturing detailed non-verbal behaviour.

During some of the informal interactions, workshops and other larger events, where obtaining permission to audio record conversations was inappropriate or impractical, I relied solely on field notes to capture my observations and reflections. These field notes were expanded as soon as possible after the events, so as to capture as much detail and accuracy as possible. Where field notes were taken contemporaneously with audio-recordings, these different sources of data were later integrated, by incorporating the field notes into the initial data analysis, adding

an additional column alongside the verbatim transcription of audio recordings.

The practice of transcribing is itself an interpretive process of converting naturally occurring talk into text. Whilst transcription is a process used to prepare data for analysis, it involves innumerable choices concerning how best to represent oral speech as written text. I adopted standard transcription conventions, based on the Jeffersonian notation system, frequently used by conversation analysts (Jefferson, 1984). These include a dash at the end of a word to indicate an abrupt cut-off, '.hhh' for an audible inbreath and 'hhh' for an outbreath. As I transcribed the audio recordings, I indicated where words were being stressed (for example, spoken more loudly or slowly) by underlining them and I used punctuation to signify intonation where this appeared significant to the meaning (for example, using a question mark where the voice rises in pitch at the end of a clause or sentence) (see Silverman, 2013, Appendix for transcription symbols and Appendix C of this thesis).

Since I intended to use discourse analysis, I regarded it as important to include hesitations and pauses as well as paralinguistic features, such as 'mmm', 'um', 'er' and other indications of dysfluency, which highlight the work people do in constructing their narratives, but can also be indicative of tensions inhibiting the flow of conversation. The constructive nature of language and the skills used in its construction, are normally taken for granted in everyday communication, where we focus on understanding the intended meaning and cease to be aware of the active building and design processes being employed by speakers (Gee, 2011). Including this level of detail in the written transcriptions not only provided a means of

highlighting the processes by which participants formulated their ideas, but was also necessary to interpreting nuanced meanings and enabling a rigorous analysis of the discourse, since these details can function to modify meaning, as well as indicating the strength of feeling being conveyed by the speaker. However, since I would not be using conversation analysis per se, I used a slightly simplified version of the Jeffersonian system, as a compromise between reproducing the finer details of talk and providing easily readable, accessible transcripts (Clayman & Gill, 2004). This also made the extremely time-intensive transcription of partnership meetings slightly more manageable, since the presence of multiple, sometimes overlapping, voices made these far more onerous to transcribe than the one to one interviews.

I undertook some initial analysis as I transcribed to capture preliminary insights (Potter, 2004, p.615) and since, despite the detailed transcription, I was conscious that innumerable subtleties and ambiguities of meaning were inevitably being lost in the written transcripts. This laborious intermediate interpretive process of converting talk into text to facilitate analysis was not required in the case of documentary data sources, which were already in written form (although multi-modal documents containing images can present other interpretive challenges).

3.5.4 Documents

Documents are often mentioned in passing as a supplementary source of data within case study designs. Discourse analysis is equally suitable for analysing documentary data as for transcriptions of partnership meetings and interviews. However, discourse analysis can also be a very intensive process and there

are practical constraints as to the quantity of documentary data that can be subjected to detailed discourse analytic techniques, alongside the analysis of extensive data from other sources. There were a wide variety of documents which could potentially have been analysed for this study, including those in the public domain, such as webpages, strategic plans and reports, as well as those produced by the partners for internal consumption. The latter category included less formal texts, such as email exchanges, as well as the regular performance reports produced by the nonprofit organization for the corporate partner, as a means of accounting for the use of funding provided through the partnership.

Texts, images and multi-modal documents, both for internal consumption and in the public domain, provided useful supplementary sources of data. However, the principal sources of data were derived from the partnership meetings and interviews, since the emphasis of the research was on illuminating how the partners constructed the value of the partnership through their talk. Nevertheless, useful comparisons could still be made between the partnership talk and documents aimed at different audiences and produced at different stages in the evolution of the partnership.

A further source of documentary evidence derived from workshops involving young people, alongside the partner organizations, including events where young people were involved in the co-creation of products and services. These events also produced visual data, such as images and photographs, often incorporated within multi-modal documents. The interpretation of visual images alongside text is also compatible with discourse analytic methods (Kress & Van

Leeuwen, 2001). However, whilst these documents contributed to an ethnographic understanding of the case, they were not subjected to detailed analysis, since they were not directly relevant to addressing the main research question.

3.6 Data analysis techniques

3.6.1 Multilevel and multiperspectival analysis

Discourse analysis can involve both the detailed, micro-level study of linguistic patterns and rhetorical strategies within individuals' everyday talk, as well as analysis of the broader, macro-level "orders of discourse" circulating in wider society (Foucault, 1971). Discourse analytic approaches lend themselves to multilevel studies, since the discourse of individuals incorporates and is constrained by, but also contributes to shaping, wider societal discourses (Foucault, 1971; Fairclough, 1992). In other words, the macro is embedded in the micro.

However, whilst I draw inferences to the macro level, the particular approach to discourse analysis adopted in this thesis focuses on the micro level of analysis, connecting this to the meso level outcomes of the partnership. This is not a Foucauldian perspective, in that it does not emphasize power relationships at the societal level, nor does it focus on the analysis of macro level discourses. However, it does connect to the macro level 'discourses of value' in the literature, delineated in Chapter 2, which are revisited in the discussion chapter, i.e. the 'business value', 'social value' and 'critical' perspectives. The findings also connect to the macro level outcomes of the partnership, in terms of the value claimed to be generated for

young people, at a societal level and the potential for transformative change in the financial services sector.

Athanasopoulou and Selsky (2015) illustrate several ways in which multiple perspectives and levels of analysis can usefully be integrated within CSR studies - and specifically in studies of CSSPs – so as to provide a richer understanding of the social context. This draws on the concept of "cognitive platforms", described as "prospective sense-making devices" (Athanasopoulou & Selsky, 2015), an idea which, I would argue, is comparable to "logics", "frames" and Potter and Wetherell's (1987) notion of "interpretive repertoires", which is employed in discursive psychology. I was also influenced by Clarke et al.'s (2012) "Discourse Historical Approach" (DHA), which integrates four levels of context (immediate text, interdiscursive relationships, institutional frames and socio-political contexts) as a framework for analyzing partners' talk in meetings. However, my approach to data analysis also recognised that the salience of different levels of context was very fluid. Thus my approach was data-led, in that I aimed to be sensitive to these multiple layers of context and to which aspects of context became salient at any given moment, rather than imposing a rigid framework on the data.

My expansive interpretation of discourse also enables the integration of data from multiple sources, including images, and the use of multiple methods of data collection within a single, coherent discourse analytic framework. Indeed, according to Jørgensen and Phillips, such "multiperspectival" studies are "not only permissible but positively valued in most forms of discourse analysis" (2002, p.4), since data from different sources and perspectives can deepen our understanding of the socially

contingent discursive contexts and lend breadth to the researcher's own subject position. Investigating multiple perspectives is important, since researchers are part of the social world they are studying: there can be no neutral observer position, only a more or less comprehensive understanding of the research setting. I therefore regard my interpretivist, discourse theoretical framework as wholly compatible with an in-depth case study methodology employing mulitple qualitative methods.

Discourse analysts employ a wide range of techniques, but these diverse approaches share in common the broad goal of illuminating how language is used to construct different versions of the social world (Potter & Wetherell, 1987). Some approaches to discourse analysis focus on the content of language, identifying salient themes, whilst others place more emphasis on how linguistic features and structures serve to create meaning within particular contexts (Gee, 2011). My own discourse analysis approach employs a combination of these techniques to illuminate not only the "interpretive repertoires" (Potter & Wetherell, 1987) on which research participants draw, but also the discursive resources and strategies being deployed. The aim was to use discourse analysis techniques to derive a deep understanding of how the partners interacted, so as to influence one another, make sense of and construct the value of their partnership. This involved illuminating how the partnership discourse worked, by discerning characteristic styles of talk, rhetorical strategies, patterns of behaviour and other communicative practices that were the building blocks of the partnership.

3.6.2 Process of analysis

Informal coding began in the early stages of fieldwork, as pertinent themes began to emerge (see Chapter 4). I also conducted an initial level of analysis whilst transcribing audio recordings, with a view to identifying what research participants were doing with their talk and how they were constructing and making sense of the partnership, with a particular focus on how they were constructing value. As I progressed deeper into the analysis, I followed Potter's advice to "read transcripts for things that seem odd, or interesting, or confusing" in the data, focusing in particular on any significant exchanges or crisis moments in the partnership interaction (2004, p.615). I used NVivo software as a means of organizing the analysis, attaching analytical notes to recurring patterns in the data.

This is an iterative approach, similar to grounded theory (Charmaz, 2006), in that meaningful categories are derived principally from the data, rather than being superimposed, using a pre-determined conceptual framework. However, this discourse analytical approach differs significantly from coding processes often used in qualitative content analysis (Schreier, 2012), since it neither attempts to develop a rule-guided coding frame, nor to apply validity and reliability criteria to interpretive findings. Instead, this discourse analytic approach remains sensitive to the constructed and locally situated nature of the partnership interaction and to the presence of multiple, sometimes contradictory interpretations. Thus analytical categories are not divorced from the complex discursive contexts in which they are enacted and embedded (Potter, 2004, p.615).

When undertaking data analysis, I treated the nonprofit-business partnership talk as an arena for the construction of value (Potter & Wetherell, 1994). Thus the analysis focused on the social practices through which value was constructed. Whilst analyzing my data, I kept my main research question at the forefront of my mind, asking myself what the partners were trying to do through their talk and how they were achieving this. Since discursive psychology treats all talk as purposive and the overarching purpose of social partnerships is to construct value, I found that all of the data from partnership meetings and interviews could be related in some way to the construction of value. Thus all of the data from partnership meetings and interviews was coded, although some sections were much more densely coded than others.

Notwithstanding the iterative approach, the data analysis process underwent several distinct phases. When the fieldwork ended, I imported my transcripts into NVivo and began the intensive work on the close analysis of data from partnership meetings. I began by identifying specific "features" of talk that appeared to play a role in constructing value (Potter & Wetherell, 1994). These discursive features were often used as resources to achieve particular outcomes or effects, such as securing agreement from a partner on a course of action, or heightening the persuasive force of the partner's talk. Therefore these features were also termed "discursive resources" (following, e.g. Hardy et al., 2005). I also coded for the types of value being discussed, i.e. business value, social value, mutual value and for whom value was being constructed (see the opening sections of Chapters 5, 6 and 7 for details of codes).

In discussing discursive resources, I also employ the term

"strategies" (Clarke et al., 2012), since the partners use discursive resources to operationalize strategies for achieving specific ends through their talk. A strategy in this sense is "a more or less intentional plan of practices (including discursive practices) adopted to achieve a particular goal" (Clarke et al., 2012, p.462). Thus the partners' talk is strategic in the sense that it is goal-oriented, even though specific discursive resources may be employed unconsciously. Nevertheless, practitioners can potentially be made aware of what works and what is ineffective in their communication and use the insights from this type of research to improve their communication skills. For the avoidance of doubt, discursive strategies are not to be confused with the business strategies of organizations, i.e. the sets of guiding principles that govern long-term decision-making.

Once the discursive features (or resources) had been identified, these were then categorized in terms of the wider functions they performed in constructing value. This resulted in the identification of "2nd order" constructs, or value construction processes. The "1st order" discursive features were already analytical, rather than purely descriptive. They were not collapsed into more abstract, "2nd order" contructs, but instead clustered in terms of the broad functions they performed in the construction of value.

I then identified how these value construction processes worked in relation to one another, so as to construct the value of the partnership. I identified what happened when the partnership talk became misaligned and how the partners managed these misalignments. This involved moving from NVivo onto pen and paper and eventually resulted in the Value Construction Model (which is first presented and further explained in Chapter 5, section 5.1.1).

Finally I identified that, whilst the overall style of the partnership talk was strongly collaborative, it was also mostly characterised by structural asymmetries (see Linell, 1990 on dialogue participation structures). However, I also identified that the sections of talk which were most effective in co-constructing value were also the least asymmetrical, in terms of how the dialogue was structured. I was therefore able to associate value construction with collaborative and more symmetrical styles of talk, and value misalignment with talk that was more asymmetrical in structure. As Potter and Wetherell argue, this type of discourse analysis is a "craft skill" (1994, p.55) rather than a "set of codified procedures that can be put into effect and which will lead to another set of entities known as 'the results'" (*ibid.* p.53). The process of moving from the raw data to identifying discursive features and categorizing them in terms of value construction processes and styles of talk, is not a mechanical procedure. Instead, it is the product of interpretations, supported with reference to the data and open to alternative interpretations by other scholars.

Whilst discursive psychology is suitable for the close analysis of talk and text, it is less well suited to the analysis of observational field notes. Therefore, in order to ensure a consistent theoretical framework, I treated field notes as contemporaneous, subjective interpretations of social interactions and contexts, rather than as objective records of events, made by a neutral observer. These field notes also provided reflexive accounts, capturing my interpretations of how the partners interacted with me and I with them, as well as how they interacted with one another. This ensured that my treatment of data from field notes was compatible with my discursive theoretical framework, even

though field notes needed to be subjected to a different type of analysis from verbatim transcripts of interviews and partnership meetings.

Similarly, whilst images cannot be analysed using precisely the same methods as talk and text, they can nevertheless be interpreted by applying a consistent theoretical lens, treating images as discursive phenomena, by focusing on how the image was constructed, by whom, with what audience in mind and, crucially, for what purposes. Visual materials such as photographs are frequently collected in ethnographic studies and subjected to this type of "semiotic analysis", recognising that images are always partial representations, which need to be interpreted in context, alongside observational field notes and other data sources (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007, pp.148-9).

In ethnographic research, data analysis begins to emerge during data collection, as an iterative process, shifting between a growing body of data and the ongoing generation of theoretical ideas. However, as Hammersley and Atkinson explain, there is no prescribed formula for analyzing ethnographic data (2007, p.158). In practice, the intermittent nature of the field work was helpful in enabling me to alternate between data collection and preliminary data analysis - and this also assisted in progressively narrowing the focus of the research, as the fieldwork proceeded. Spencer (1994) explains how the combination of ethnographic and discursive approaches can complement one another, increasing the breadth and depth of empirical studies. In this study, the ethnography sensitizes the discourse analysis to the institutional and cultural contexts of the partners' interaction, while the discourse analysis adds analytical rigour to the rich description of the ethnographic account.

As Hammersley and Atkinson explain, the construction of an ethnographic account is closely related to data analysis, in that it is only through the writing process that we construct particular versions or narratives of the case, or of the social phenomena that are the focus of the research (2007, p.191-2). Ethnographic accounts need to consider the assumed relationship between culture and behaviour (the observed); the experiences of the fieldworker (the observer); the representational style joining observer and observed (the tale); and the role of the reader who will be engaged in the active reconstruction of the tale (the audience) (Van Maanen, 2011, p.xv). Van Maanen argues for "concrete, sharp, complex, empathetic, and politically sensitive portraits" of research settings, which capture "diversity, in an increasingly homogenous world" (1998, p.xiii-xiv).

The following chapter presents an ethnographic account, focusing principally on the early stages of fieldwork. It aims to convey the rich detail of the research setting, whilst also drawing out analytical themes. This recognises that written accounts of research settings are not neutral descriptions by an omnipotent author, but subjective representations, shaped by the stylistic choices and "the narrative and rhetorical conventions assumed by a writer", which "structure a cultural portrait" (Van Maanen, 2011, p.5). Subsequent empirical chapters will present findings from the close analysis of partnership talk, integrating data from multiple sources and drawing on multiple levels of context to address research sub-questions (Clarke et al., 2012).

Chapter 4: Portrait of a partnership

4.1 Setting the scene

The title of this chapter draws inspiration from Van Maanen's description of ethnographies as "portraits of diversity" (2011, p.xvii), the objective being to produce an ethnographic account along the lines of "impressionist tales", or "personalised accounts of fleeting moments of fieldwork cast in dramatic form" (*ibid*., p.7), which highlight "episodic, complex and ambivalent realities" (*ibid*., p.119). A principal aim of this chapter is therefore to re-create a flavour of the life of the two partner organizations and to paint a "cultural portrait" of my early impressions of fieldwork and how these evolved over time (*ibid.*, p.5). This ethnographic account therefore aims to sensitize readers to the institutional and cultural context of the case, in order to provide them with as much access to the research setting as possible.

This chapter also draws out emergent analytical themes, serving as a precursor to the presentation of findings based on discourse analysis of data from partnership meetings and interviews. Informal coding effectively began in the very early stages of fieldwork, as pertinent themes began to emerge. These themes recurred in the subsequent analysis of partnership meeting and interview data (the findings from this close analysis of data are presented later, in Chapters 5-7). The rich, detailed description of the case presented in this chapter is not merely background context for the subsequent analysis: it is vitally important since, in contrast with a pure conversation analysis method, which confines interpretation to what is present in localized utterances,

my approach to discourse analysis draws on the wider context of the research setting to ground my analytic interpretations (Maynard, 2010, p.58). I also aim to demonstrate reflexivity concerning my personal experiences of fieldwork, as a means of increasing transparency concerning how those experiences may have influenced my research (see Chapter 3, section 3.5.3).

This case of nonprofit-business partnership is between a young people's charity, "DigiGen" and a credit card company, "CrediCo". Both of these names are pseudonyms and any resemblance to the names of actual organizations or projects is unintentional. Similarly all names of individuals have been altered, so as to protect confidentiality. I alternate between presenting my own reflections, the perspectives of individuals in the two partner organizations and highlighting themes relevant to the construction of value. This choice of narrative style acknowledges the presence of multiple perspectives, none of which is viewed as an objectively correct account of the life of the partner organizations and the partnership. Instead, the aim is to capture alternative perspectives, so as to allow readers to form their own impressions of the partners and of my interpretations, acknowledging that any account of fieldwork is necessarily selective, partial and subjective. This ethnographic account opens with a reconstruction of my first day in the field.

4.2 Introduction to DigiGen

4.2.1 Arrival at DigiGen's offices

Just ten days after the official start date of my PhD, I find myself approaching a modern office building in an area of London which is home to a large number of charities. I experienced a sense of

excitement this morning, on the train journey down to London, but I had previously been feeling anxious and ill prepared. I feel somewhat relieved that my first induction day is with the nonprofit partner, rather than the business, as I anticipate that this will make for a gentler introduction to fieldwork - that the charity will seem more familiar than the business, given my background of working in and with voluntary sector organizations. I glance up at the office building: it's about six storeys high. There are other organizations occupying the building - I can see from the names outside the main door that they comprise both businesses and other charities.

I use the buzzer, announce who I am and am invited to go up to the first floor. The outside door is open and there is a man on duty in the communal reception area, which is light but very empty, with just a reception desk, a small seating area and a wide corridor, leading to the stairs and lift. I take the stairs up to the first floor and walk into the DigiGen reception. DigiGen occupies half of the first floor and sublets the other half to another charity. This strikes me as a 'young' reception area, with colourful patterns, bunting, photographs and a brightly patterned rug. The receptionist is polite and friendly. She offers me a coffee and takes it straight into the meeting room. Chloe and Liam[1] both arrive within a few minutes - they don't keep me waiting long. This welcome helps me to feel more comfortable. I'm conscious of wanting to manage the impression I make, wanting to seem open, friendly and relaxed and to blend in, but I'm worried that I may seem a bit awkward and self-conscious.

[1] See Appendix E for roles of key staff and pseudonyms.

It’s a fairly small meeting room, with frosted glass walls on two sides, which makes it feel at once open and private. Chloe and Liam give me an introductory talk to the organization. They both seem very open and friendly. Chloe tells me she has emailed staff to prepare them for my arrival, also mentioning my voluntary sector background. She says my role was also announced at a staff meeting. I ask whether DigiGen wants me to sign a confidentiality statement, but Chloe says breezily that she thinks it’s already covered by the agreement with the University. This also makes me feel comfortable - that I am being trusted and that care has been taken to prepare for my arrival.

4.2.2 Contructing commonalities between partners

DigiGen, Chloe tells me, is in a state of flux - at a dynamic, critical time in its development. The organization is only 18 years old - about the same age as their business partner. She draws other analogies between DigiGen and CrediCo, relating this to the notion of “cultural fit”: they have a similar “mindset”, are at a similar stage of development and both partners are described as “taking a leap forward”. Chloe backs up this theory by alluding to a course she attended about partnership, which suggested that the stage of development of partners could be a relevant “success factor”. I reflect that perhaps she is demonstrating to me that she is theoretically informed, or this is just a way of building rapport, by relating to me as a researcher. But perhaps she is also seeking to influence my early interpretations of the partnership by constructing commonalities between the partners.

4.2.3 Constructing social and organizational value

DigiGen was established to help young people find support and was an "early mover" in terms of internet support. I am told it was the first charity in the UK to have exclusively online services. But Chloe explains that DigiGen has fallen behind with technological developments. She sees the partnership with CrediCo as vital in helping DigiGen to get on top of the "digital game". Crucially, they need a funding model which enables them to keep up to date with rapidly changing technology.

DigiGen has been running two core digital services, but one of them relates to volunteering in general, not specifically to young people. Chloe sees the strategic partnership with CrediCo as helping to give the charity the confidence to "float off"[2] this generic volunteering service, since it is less relevant to the charity's mission. This service will be transferred in under two months' time and this will have significant staffing implications for the charity. I decide not to enquire too closely about potential redundancies, thinking it is too early to get into detail about what is potentially a sensitive topic.

Liam tells me about the other core service, which is a website aimed at young people. He emphasizes that young people have been heavily involved in its redesign and an agency was involved to seek young people's views. Liam explains that DigiGen plans to launch a range of mobile services to complement this website. Chloe adds that the website will remain the core service, but DigiGen will create a "family of satellite services". She says they have done a lot of work on their "tone" and "key messages", as

[2] This refers to a nonprofit service separating from the organization and forming, or becoming part of, a separate organization. (As opposed to a private sector company offering shares for sale on the stock market.)

they have struggled in the past to tell a "clear, compelling story" about who they are. Chloe also sees the partnership with CrediCo as helping to strengthen DigiGen's "brand". I reflect that many charities have adopted the hegemonic language of marketing and branding that was once the exclusive province of the corporate world. Chloe frames branding as vital for DigiGen: young people need to know that DigiGen is a "brand they can trust", as there is a lot of misinformation and bad advice on the internet. Whilst the partnership agreement with CrediCo is ostensibly aimed at creating social value for young people, with a particular focus on increasing their employability, DigiGen also views the partnership as important in building the capacity of the charity. DigiGen is aiming to double its reach from 1 million to 2 million instances of support per year, during the lifetime of the partnership with CrediCo. Talk about social value for young people is closely intertwined with talk about organizational value for the charity, but I reflect that this is not surprising, given its nonprofit mission.

4.2.4 Sustainability

Another key objective for DigiGen is sustainability: whilst the volunteering service, which is being floated off, has received a lot of government funding, the core website service has not. In the past, the website had significant financial support from another corporate funder, but this came to an end. However, Chloe explains that the CrediCo partnership has now given other funders the confidence to invest in the service: "money attracts more money". Funding is seen as inextricably linked to branding and profile: DigiGen wants to increase major donors, including "high net worth" individuals. It has a good track record with trusts and foundations and is keen to attract more "corporate

donors". The CrediCo money is effectively treated as match funding for other funders.

4.2.5 Holistic approach, peer support & co-creation

Liam tells me about DigiGen's service ethos: the website aims to offer a holistic service, as young people's problems often come in clusters. He gives an example that a relationship difficulty with a housemate may turn out to be a homelessness issue, where someone has been sleeping on a friend's couch. This holistic approach to service delivery feels familiar to me, owing to my background in the advice sector.

Liam explains that the editorial staff team is responsible for content on the website, but that they are aiming to have more user generated content in future. They have interactive services, including online instant messaging "discussion boards" and "live chats", involving "peer support" with trained volunteer moderators, which include "support chats", focusing on whatever problems are on young people's minds, and "general chats", which encourage young people to get to know one another. DigiGen has built an online community of regular participants and has an ambition to extend the number of live chats offered, but this will require more volunteer moderators and more paid staff time. Whilst their target group is the 16 to 25 age range, Liam explains that younger children also access the services and are signposted elsewhere, if it becomes evident that the service is unsuitable. Liam seems quite relaxed about this: DigiGen makes clear that it is a service for 16 to 25s, but in practice they don't worry about younger people using it, provided they are able to use it appropriately and derive value from it. DigiGen connects young people to other sources of support via an online

search facility, giving access to some 800 local services, voluntary organizations and national helplines.

Liam is line managed by Chloe and both are in the Development Team. Liam regards members of his team as the "visionaries" of the organization, since their fundraising remit is inextricably linked to DigiGen's strategic development. DigiGen currently has 44 paid staff, plus approximately 200 volunteers, almost all of whom are "virtual", in other words, not based at DigiGen's offices, but involved in the delivery of digital services. DigiGen provides interactive e-learning for volunteers, who are trained in online counselling skills, as peer advisors, offering emotional support and encouraging conversations. It is evident that peer-to-peer support is viewed as a key strength. Service users sometimes become volunteers, so there is a "natural progression" from peer support to more formal volunteering roles. Volunteers are debriefed by a paid member of staff after each session. They also have a "leaders programme", which provides work experience opportunities for young people to get involved in co-creating services. They run occasional face-to-face weekends in London and co-creation workshops. I'm told that, in future, the leaders programme may become more focussed on young people's individual interests, so that they only input into projects that are of particular interest or relevance to them.

I wonder to what extent DigiGen could be described as user-led, so I ask whether there are any young people on the Board of Trustees. Liam says he doesn't know[3], but explains that the leaders programme involves 100 young people, who are involved in co-creating services. This involves gathering "insight" from young people and a product development process, based on a

[3] I later discovered that there were no young people on the Trustee Board.

"cycle of innovation", involving young people in workshops to develop new products and services. DigiGen is also adopting "models of co-creation" for its mobile products.

Liam sees DigiGen as taking on the role of a "rebellious older brother". In other words, they don't aim to direct young people as to what they should do, but to give them choices. He emphasizes that they are not judgemental or directive. He says they have policies and procedures around safeguarding and think carefully about what personal information they collect, encouraging young people to think about how much personal information to disclose online. Young people create usernames and "avatars", so that they can remain anonymous. Liam says they often give false information at first, then, as they get more comfortable, they start to disclose real information about themselves and their problems.

Liam differentiates DigiGen from "professional" services by saying that DigiGen is "on the side of the young person": so DigiGen is "one of <u>them</u>", only more experienced and knowledgeable. I ask whether difficulties sometimes arise from the peer support model, such as peers giving bad advice about how to be bulemic. Liam acknowledges that there can be problems, citing the example of explicit descriptions of self-harming. He tells me that young people are very explicit about sex - the 'How to give a hand job' webpage is very popular! Liam explains that young people often just want to know how to "do it", but "this gives DigiGen the opportunity to tell them how to do it <u>safely</u>". I'm struck that, whilst Liam is emphasizing the "rebellious older brother" ethos, this is counter-balanced with talk about safeguarding, which feels much more paternalistic.

4.2.6 Innovation & entrepreneurialism

Liam explains about DigiGen's involvement with other partnerships, working with other voluntary organizations and also with the public and private sectors. For example, there is a partnership project with other charities, researching homelessness. DigiGen also wants to involve technical people from prominent private sector companies, for example, in workshops to help assess the feasibility of planned new digital products. DigiGen is looking to use agencies to develop its mobile products. Liam says that DigiGen wants to be more "like a businesss start-up", more "entrepreneurial", to be able to invest in "innovative ideas", recognizing that only a few of these may actually come to fruition.

I wonder how realistic this is, given the nature of the funding environment and the regulatory framework for charities. Voluntary organizations must be accountable to funders for delivering results - and their trustees have a duty to safeguard the resources of charities. So there are different constraints and accountabilities, compared with the private sector. I wonder whether charities need to have a relatively conservative approach to risk and may forget this in their enthusiasm to be "entrepreneurial"? I suggest to Liam that the funding environment can make risk taking difficult for voluntary organizations. Liam agrees that funding is often closely linked to predetermined outputs and outcomes. He says that DigiGen needs funders and partners who are flexible (like CrediCo) as well as more unrestricted money from donors.

4.2.7 Informal, friendly workplace

Liam shows me round the offices. Most staff are in one open plan office. It has a busy, but friendly, relaxed atmosphere. One wall is painted darkish-blue, there is a purple pillar, bright pink cupboards at the far end of the room and a large plant at the opposite end. There are some A4 size, bright pictures and drawings tacked to the walls by people's desks. People seem very friendly, some just say "hello", but others go out of their way to talk to me and make me feel welcome. There is a separate office for support staff (administrators and a finance officer) with two small meeting rooms at the far end. The administrators are very friendly and encourage me to ask them questions - one even offers to arrange another induction session for me. I feel slightly surprised by the apparent lack of tension or negativity in the office, considering the inevitable staffing implications of one of the two core services being transferred in the next few months. This suggests to me that DigiGen has managed to retain good will and cohesion within the staff team.

Liam invites me to make use of the facilities in the kitchen. It's a fairly spacious, galley shaped kitchen, with a breakfast bar space opposite the sink and units, where people can perch on stools and look out of the large windows. There is free tea and coffee on offer. Liam and Chloe have arranged a meeting schedule for me. I'm meant to be meeting the Head of Editorial for 30 mins, but we are over-running and she has another meeting, so it's just a brief introduction. She seems friendly and we agree to chat another time.

Liam suggests going to get some lunch. There are plenty of modern, trendy eateries nearby. We chat about our work

backgrounds, the area of London, et cetera. Liam seems genuninely excited and enthusiastic about DigiGen as an organization: he thinks it's "dynamic", "entrepreneurial" and at an exciting stage in its development. We take our lunch back to the office and eat at our desks, as the kitchen is busy. They have arranged a desk opposite Chloe for me to use whenever I'm in the office.

Chloe sits opposite me and chats for a few minutes, over lunch. She is busy with back-to-back meetings for most of the afternoon, but she seems relaxed, friendly and positive. She asks how my Masters dissertation went over the summer. I explain that my dissertation progressed in "fits and starts", that I reformulated my research question relatively late, then had to revisit the literature review at the end. I suggest this was good practice for my PhD, which will be "data-led". Again, Chloe makes the effort to chat and make me feel comfortable. I explain a bit about how the PhD might proceed and what my thinking is, emphasizing that I am trying to approach it with an open mind.

That afternoon, I met several members of staff involved in DigiGen's operations, including volunteer training and support. It was easy for me to get a feel for DigiGen as an organization and I felt that I could make relevant comments, ask pertinent questions, and so on, because I knew the world they were invoking so well. It was a world of volunteering, information and advice services and the ethos of those services and the issues that arose for volunteers and services users, felt familiar to me. I had a brief chat with Liam before I left and thanked him for arranging the induction. As I was leaving, someone said "See you tomorrow - oh no, I won't see you tomorrow!". I felt very grateful for the welcome I received from everyone at DigiGen. I

felt that I wanted to reciprocate by being useful to them, instead of just taking up their time and resources.

4.3 Introduction to CrediCo

4.3.1 Arrival at CrediCo's offices

A few days later, I approach the main location of CrediCo's UK operations: a three storey industrial building, which has been fully converted and modernised. The entire building is occupied by CrediCo and its logo is emblazoned on the building. As I expected, the reception area is grander and more formal and sophisticated than DigiGen's. Steps from the entrance lead up to a long reception desk, with two receptionists on duty. There is a bright, cream stone floor and seating areas with sofas on either side of the reception desk. It strikes me as quite an impressive, professional looking reception, in keeping with most financial institutions or other large businesses.

As I approach the reception desk, I realize to my embarrassment that I can't remember Nicola's last name (DigiGen is so small that I only needed first names there). I apologize to the receptionist and sit on a sofa to one side of the reception to look up her full name on my laptop. Frustratingly, I can't seem to find it. Whilst I'm in the process of doing this, Nicola appears. She gives me a friendly welcome and says she "just popped down" to check whether I'd arrived. It's a few minutes past noon by this time, so I'm now slightly late. The security is very different from DigiGen's, where there was an outside buzzer and a man in the foyer of a shared building, who didn't do any kind of check, just directing me to the stairs and lift. Other than this, there were no swipe cards, codes or locked doors. In contrast, at CrediCo, the

doors from the street to reception are open, but the security to get past reception is tight: staff and visitor passes have to be obtained and used to open the sliding glass barriers. There are several sets of glass barriers to the left of the reception desk, enabling CrediCo staff to enter en masse. As a visitor, I have to pass through a different barrier to the right of the reception desk.

4.3.2 Tour of CrediCo's offices

Nicola shows me round the offices. Interestingly, these appear much more comparable to DigiGen's offices, in that they are bright and colourful and far less formal than the reception area. In the large, open plan office where Nicola and the HR team sit, the pillars have been painted in various bright colours. Nicola shows me where her CSR team sit and introduces me to a few people. Eleanor ("Ellie"), Volunteer Coordinator, sits behind Nicola and next to her is Trevor ("Trev"), who works on "CSR in the Community". The next block along is the CrediCo "University", which is their name for the training section. This language interests me, in that it seems a somewhat grandiose term for a training section (which is patently not an academic degree conferring institution). I surmise that the aim may be to magnify CrediCo's commitment to staff development. An employee from CrediCo University approaches us and shakes my hand very enthusiastically. She seems to think I will be able to "advise" her about staff training: I say I don't know whether I can be of any help, but I hope I can. She indicates that I'm expected to be useful, though in a friendly way, and encourages me to ask her questions if there is anything I need to know. I feel anxious that she may have some misconceptions about my role and I wonder what she has been told about my research.

Nicola says that Ellie doesn't work on Thursdays or Fridays, so I could use her desk if I am in the office on those days: otherwise, there is a desk more tucked away, further back in front of a wall. But Nicola suggests I might like to "float around", as there are many breakout areas to choose from. It occurs to me that this provides an ideal setting for informal observation - what Hammersley and Atkinson refer to as "a subtle process of manouevering oneself into a position from which the necessary data can be collected" (2007, p.62). But this makes me feel rather uncomfortable, like an undercover agent, and I remind myself that my research is overt.

CrediCo has much more impressive facilities than DigiGen: attractive, colourful breakout spaces; an innovation room; a gym (this is a free staff perk, but a personal trainer is extra); and a large, bright cafeteria, which is heavily subsidised. I ask Nicola how many staff there are – they are referred to as "associates", a term I assume is adopted from the company's US headquarters. Again I am struck by this language: the term "associate" seems to imply that staff are partners with a stake in the company and also suggests voluntary affiliation. However, it occurs to me that the term "associate" could also be viewed as glossing over the contractual rights and obligations associated with the term "employee". I'm told there are approximately 900 associates in this main office, plus 30-ish based in London. Nicola only comes to this office on Tuesdays and Wednesdays, as she lives in London. She says the small London base provides a means of recruiting people who are not able or willing to relocate from London, thus giving access to a "larger pool of talent".

I'm told that CrediCo has a relatively "young" profile of employees and this appears to be borne out as I look around the offices. I wonder about the demographics of CrediCo's associates - why isn't there a more even spread, why aren't there many older workers? Also, I notice that there appear to be very few non-white employees as I'm shown around the offices. I do not presume from this anecdotal evidence that there are discriminatory practices at work, but I wonder why such a large staff team would be relatively homogenous and whether CrediCo is attracting a less diverse workforce that is not representative of the wider community. I ponder whether homogeneity could contribute to cohesiveness, but whether it might also bring disadvantages.[4]

4.3.3 Vision to "Make Lives Better"

On the floor below Nicola's team, there are big, colourful banners around the walls of another very large open plan office. Nicola explains that the messages about CrediCo's UK "Vision" are in purple and the "corporate" messages are in the colours of the red and blue "external brand". She describes the corporate brand as the "house style from the US office" and says this brand has been strengthened. She explains that the Vision is very much an "internal message" for associates in the UK office: their guiding principle is to "Make Lives Better" for customers. She describes this as inspired by the "personal epiphany" of the former Head of CrediCo UK, Roger. CrediCo has 4 "pillars", underpinned by the belief that "credit can make people's lives better". Nicola says "We <u>believe</u> this", emphasizing associates' belief in, and

[4] I was later told that, as CrediCo trains its associates, its recruitment process focuses on testing aptitude and attitude rather than existing knowledge. A workforce profile confirmed that only 14% of associates were aged 45 or over. However, it contained no data on ethnicity.

commitment to, this Vision and that it has been extremely successful as an internal message. The new 'Head of International', Simon, who only started a few months ago and is responsible for both the UK and Canadian operations of CrediCo, is interested in making this Vision part of the external, public-facing brand. But Nicola indicates that there is some skepticism amongst associates concerning the risk that the public might perceive the Vision as "cheesy". Nicola tells me there is an annual "Vision Day" and a music festival is held the same evening.

I discover that CrediCo's operations are bigger than first appeared, in that most of the call centre operators are offshore: the first tier of call centre operations has been outsourced to India and the Philippines. Nicola says that CrediCo has worked with the offshore company to manage the contract and has sought to "export" CrediCo's Vision – she says CrediCo has "adopted" the Indian call centre operatives, invoking a metaphor of bringing them into the CrediCo "family". Nicola explains that the offshore call centre operatives escalate calls to CrediCo operatives, so it is important to ensure the effectiveness of this first tier response and there are targets for reducing the numbers of calls that need to be escalated. Despite the benign "family" metaphor, I receive the impression that CrediCo exercises a high level of control over its sub-contractors – and it appears that this is not restricted to formal, contractual controls, but also extends to seeking to "export" normative controls, i.e. the CrediCo culture.

4.3.4 A "Great place to work"

The Fraud Team and the Legal Team are also located on this floor. Nicola tells me that the Fraud Team is proactive, not just responding to fraud cases, but undertaking educational work in the community, for example, with older people, to help them minimize the risk of fraud. I'm told that this is seen as integral to how the team does its business: it is not "bolted on separately as CSR". Nicola mentions an intergenerational project, which involves younger volunteers helping older people with using the internet, online shopping and online security. It strikes me that Nicola is framing anti-fraud activity as a service and benefit to customers. However, I am aware that customers are legally protected from financial liability for fraud on their cards - and I presume that at least some of these costs must be borne by CrediCo, so I'm wondering whether it could equally be viewed as a self-serving activity.

I notice in passing that there is a "Fraud Wall", a rogue's gallery, with photographs and brief write-ups of individuals who have been prosecuted as a result of CrediCo's efforts to combat credit card fraud. I feel a slight sense of shock at seeing this. I ponder on my own emotional reaction and acknowledge to myself that CrediCo has a legitimate role in preventing and helping to prosecute fraud. Yet I feel uncomfortable seeing individuals' photographs displayed on the wall, which strikes me as a somewhat gratuitous naming and shaming. They have, of course, broken the law, but I think I would have felt more comfortable if the anti-fraud activity wasn't personalized in this way. But I reflect that the Fraud Wall presumably functions as a motivational tool for those CrediCo associates whose role is to tackle fraud.

We walk towards the cafeteria, passing a "Best People" wall, with two columns underneath: "What's New" and "Who's New", the latter with photographs and brief, personal write-ups about people joining CrediCo, their interests, and so on. I can't help but contrast this with the rogues gallery mug shots and write-ups I have just seen. I note that individuals are singled out as the "best" associates and I ask whether this feels like a competitive work environment. Nicola confirms this and views it positively. She tells me that CrediCo won an award as one of the best places to work in the UK last year and was then put forward for a European competition, which it also won. I enquire as to how this was assessed and Nicola explains that it was based on a process involving external assessors and a staff survey. Nicola tells me that CrediCo staff tend to have a long tenure, which she views very positively, in terms of "good retention" and opportunities for promotion within CrediCo. "Associates" are described as "*so* loyal: they "love working here" and "it's a really cool place to work".

I wonder whether all CrediCo's employees really are "*so* loyal" - and, if so, *why?* How does CrediCo create, or inspire, such loyalty, such a lack of critical resistance amongst its 900 or so employees? Do associates internalize the company rhetoric, or even co-create it, as a means of feeling good about what they do and who they work for? But then, I reflect that perhaps *every* organization does this, to some extent: in my own work experience, I have found it hard to challenge from within, from an 'insider' position. I have found that, even when an organization is tolerant of challenge, people can become exhausted by the stress of workplace conflict. I conclude that,

when employed by any organization, people usually either go with the flow to some extent, or leave.

I comment on all the breakout and "play" areas, suggesting that it must be seen as acceptable for staff to be away from their desks and not working all the time. Nicola confirms this and comments that she thinks CrediCo and DigiGen are a good "fit" culturally because they share this flexibile and "fun" way of working. I am reminded that DigiGen also constructed commonalities between the two partners. Nicola points out that CrediCo differs from most financial services, in that associates dress in a smart-casual style and are not expected to be "suited and booted". She contrasts this with most London based financial services and banks, implying that this different culture may be enabled by being outside "The City". Nicola describes CrediCo's offices as "not a corporate environment", saying it attracts a lot of clever people, who don't like the corporate environment and don't want to wear a suit to work. As a result, CrediCo benefits from having both the "meat" (talent) and the "fluff" (creativity).

4.3.5 CSR strategy & the partnership

Nicola takes me to the cafeteria for lunch and uses a hospitality pass to pay for my meal. We discover that we are both vegetarian. Nicola says she has been working on a three year CSR strategy for CrediCo and the DigiGen partnership forms a key part of this. She explains that CrediCo has always done a lot by way of CSR, but that it hasn't been strategic about its CSR in the past. The high level of employee volunteering is seen as valuable for "associate engagement" and increasing motivation and pride in working for CrediCo, but the approach has been too

"scattergun" in terms of its social impact. The DigiGen partnership is CrediCo's first strategic partnership of this kind, with a national charity and it is already into year two of four. Nicola explains that she and her manager, Naomi, the Head of HR, are the key people involved with the DigiGen partnership. Others have had some involvement, for example, CrediCo had twelve London Marathon runners raising money for DigiGen last year. There has also been contact with the Innovation Team and there is talk of a meeting with the Apps Team – I'm told there is a large IT team within CrediCo. Nicola explains that she is facilitating this meeting, which involves identifying someone who responds positively to the DigiGen partnership and will "run with it". However, I am a little surprised that only two people within CrediCo have direct, ongoing involvement with DigiGen, which makes me wonder whether Nicola is acting more as a gatekeeper than a facilitator for DigiGen's access to CrediCo's associates.

I ask Nicola who she has informed within CrediCo about my role. She says she has just sent an email to the HR team. She tells me she thought it would be preferable to talk to others separately, as and when appropriate. I agree that this makes more sense than trying to inform everyone in a large organisation. However, I'm conscious that I will need to be careful to ensure that I have informed consent to observe individuals. Nicola tells me that Simon, the new Head of International, will be giving his first ever briefing to all staff this afternoon, in the cafeteria and that I will be able to listen to this. She tells me that he has not yet been briefed about the DigiGen partnership, but Nicola has a 25 minute one-to-one meeting booked with him in a few weeks' time, when she will talk about her role as Head of CSR and the partnership with DigiGen. Apparently, the former Head of CrediCo UK, Roger, was very

involved with DigiGen and now sits on their Development Board, which comprises business advisers and is separate from their Board of Trustees.

4.3.6 Focus on "High Street" customers

CrediCo's UK operation focuses only on credit cards, since this is the most profitable service, and it is a top ten credit card provider in the UK (this includes banks that issue credit cards), with circa 3 million customers. The emphasis is on "high street" (a US term), i.e. the "sub-prime market", or people with relatively poor credit records. The term "high street" strikes me as somewhat euphemistic, glossing over the reality that CrediCo targets customers who have had previous problems with debt. They have 2.5 million "high street" customers and only 500,000 "upmarket" customers. But the UK operation is tiny compared to the US, which also offers retail banking, insurance, car leasing services, et cetera. Nicola explains that there was a big "retrenchment" in Europe after the 2008 financial crisis: CrediCo pulled out of other European countries and lost a lot of staff from the UK operation.

Nicola explains that marketing is very important at CrediCo, encompassing "product development from inception", not just "brand and selling". A lot of market research and risk assessment is undertaken. Nicola explains that CrediCo is trying to derive competitive advantage from its brand, by providing "excellent customer service", but this is challenging, because customers tend only to look at the headline interest rate and often transfer credit card balances to providers offering short-term deals (e.g. 0% interest for the first 6 months). Nicola says that CrediCo does not do this and views these offers negatively:

in contrast, she says, CrediCo aims to offer customers a consistently good service.[5]

Nicola explains that CrediCo makes its money in two different ways: from interest charged on balances and from "interchange", which is 0.1% made on every transaction. Most of CrediCo's customers are "high street", who don't tend to pay their bills off in full each month, so most of CrediCo's money is made from charging interest. In contrast, the "upmarket" customers tend to pay off their bills straight away, but spend more on their cards - more transactions and for higher amounts - so CrediCo's profit from these customers comes more from interchange than interest. It seems clear that most of CrediCo's profits are derived from charging relatively high rates of interest (34.9% APR) to people from lower socio-economic backgrounds - and I am only too aware from my professional background in advice work that, notwithstanding the Vision to "Make lives better", credit can also make lives miserable. However, CrediCo does appear to take proactive steps to help its customers manage credit. But I am conscious that the Vision, the internal brand and the CSR activity are vulnerable to the critical interpretation that these operate as mechanisms for generating loyalty, morale and commitment, as means of enabling "associates" to feel good about a business model which, in practice, may fall short of fulfilling the aspiration to "Make lives better".

[5] An article from The Independent confirmed that CrediCo has rejected balance transfer deals. However, it also revealed that CrediCo introduced the concept to the UK, which enabled it to attract its initial customer base.

4.3.7 The business update

The Business Update from the new Head of International takes place after lunch. I sit next to Nicola, on the second row, close to the raised platform where Simon will speak. There are screens projecting a powerpoint presentation located at various points around the cafteria, where the crowd is gathering. Nicola tells me that Simon is nervous and expresses sympathy for him - but I wonder how she could know this. She says the previous Head of CrediCo UK, Roger, is a "very hard act to follow". This will be the first time Simon addresses the full staff team: he is doing it in two consecutive sessions, addressing approximately 450 staff each time.

When Simon started speaking, I noted his US accent. His voice didn't shake or otherwise betray nerves. He opened with a joke – something about not falling down the steps, which generated some laughter from associates. Perhaps this was to help himself relax as much as to build rapport with his audience. Prior to the briefing, I didn't perceive a particularly strong sense of anticipation amongst the staff, but they did seem attentive once he started talking. In the early stages, Simon talked a lot about his children, making it personal, telling the story about them moving to the UK as a family and showing slides of his child's notebook, with a badly spelled list of what they would need on their trip (one list with items such as "guiwlry", i.e. jewellery; another with lots of "love, trust", et cetera, which wasn't as cloying as it sounds and seemed to go down well with his audience). Simon said that he would talk about "people, culture and values". He placed a lot of emphasis on values, on "who we are", "our destination", "how we're doing along the journey"

(with an obvious parallel with the journey of his own family moving to the UK) and "signalling what matters".

Simon said CrediCo was on track to achieve its 2nd best year of profitability, which he described as "an impressive achievement", given the financial climate. He said he wanted associates to be proud of this. He went through some "frequently asked questions", giving information both about his approach to leading the UK operation and some personal information. He highlighted that he particularly liked the Vision that the UK operation had created and said he wasn't going to abandon this. He liked the aim to "Make it easy everywhere" (for customers) and to "Help them succeed with credit", which gave a stronger message than just helping them to manage credit.

Simon went through some specific achievements, such as the creation of a mobile app, congratulating the relevant teams on their achievements. He cited some performance information and customer ratings, saying that CrediCo needs to be "where customers are going to be in the future" in relation to technology. He talked about the Innovation Team learning from other sectors, for example, they visited air traffic control to find out how to avoid errors, in a context where mistakes can have dire consequences. He said that the hallmark of "cool innovation" is where the "scales fall from your eyes": it seems obvious. They had changed how call centre operators were trained, supporting them to take "baby steps", by letting them deal with simple enquiries, then moving on to more complex cases when they were ready. This was effective in reducing mistakes. They had re-thought their "collections letters" (i.e. demands for payment) to make them more customised, more tailored, and to give tips

and offers to customers about how to help them pay, such as by offering payment plans.

There were a few jokes throughout and a lot of personal information and stories. Simon mentioned linking the CrediCo name to a major football tournament, saying that the next goal was to get people to understand what CrediCo is: "The credit card that supports the supporters". He said there had been a focus on "risk events", reducing the number of these and closing them faster and that this had been well managed. He talked about associates' "Vision Day" ideas and using this staff feedback to "change the way we do business", assuring associates that each of their ideas had an "owner". He alluded to a pay day loan company, framing CrediCo as morally superior, since they would not want to charge their customers these kinds of astronomical interest rates, but saying there were other things CrediCo could learn from this "slick" business model.

I noted that Simon made a point of comparing the UK team favourably with the US headquarters, but then adding that he didn't want to "run down" the US operation. He described his mandate as being to "build a great business", to "achieve excellence for customers, associates and owners". He assured associates that the UK operation didn't need permission to do things from the US: "we make our own permission". The response to the FAQ "What do you want to change?" was "Unlocking growth"; "Can we be more nimble?"; "What gets in the way of this?". He said that CrediCo is not nimble in the US, then added (again) that he was not here to "run them down". This was the second time in his speech where he appeared to be seeking to ingratiate himself with associates by comparing the UK operation favourably with the US, each time also claiming

that he did not intend to disparage the US headquarters. Simon ended his speech by saying that the UK Vision isn't changing, that he "loves the Vision", it "resonates with me" and he "will continue to drive the UK mission". He liked that it was focused on people: it got him "really jazzed up".

I thought the applause was quite enthusiastic, but not riotous. I was struck that the crowd seemed fairly quiet and subdued as they filed away to their desks - perhaps disappointed? In contrast, I felt enthused because I was really pleased to have had an early opportunity to see the new Head of International in action. I asked Nicola what she thought and she was positive, but, I thought, not excited by the speech. I wanted to test these impressions, so I asked whether it was similar to the kind of speech that Roger would have given. She thought for a moment, before saying it was similar, but she then said that Roger was very charismatic. I thought she was being careful not to say anything negative about Simon, but the clear implication was that he was not such a charismatic, inspirational speaker as Roger. I thought Simon came across as a fairly competent speaker, engaging and accomplished, but perhaps not as the most inspirational, captivating or charismatic leader.

4.3.8 Ongoing access to the field

Nicola had compiled a folder for me, containing key documents about the partnership. She emphasized that these were confidential documents and seemed reluctant to give me the folder to take away, or to email the documents to me. Nicola suggested that, as she is only around on Tuesdays and Wednesdays, it would be better initially if I only visit on those days, unless there is a particular event taking place. She invited

me to attend the launch day in a few weeks and a session the following day, which the Innovation Team was running with CrediCo's new graduate intake and some DigiGen staff. I accepted both these invitations enthusiastically. As Nicola showed me out, she said that she would be on holiday from the end of that month until the middle of the following month. She suggested it would be better not to visit CrediCo during this time, as it was early days and she would not be around.

I thought my CrediCo induction went well and I seemed to get on fine with Nicola. I wasn't as nervous as I'd expected, but I was glad I did the DigiGen visit first, as the CrediCo induction did feel more daunting. I got that first day at school or work feeling again, just as I had with DigiGen. Nicola seemed relaxed, friendly, outgoing, assertive and confident. She seemed open to me observing the goings-on at CrediCo and in the partnership, but I also received the impression that she wanted to be in control: that she didn't want me to be around whilst she was away from the office. It was interesting and a little surprising to me that she appeared more concerned about the potential for partnership documents going astray than about me observing the inner workings of CrediCo.

4.4 Summary of emergent themes

4.4.1 Higher priority of the partnership for DigiGen

During my time in the field, the partners liaised with one another in organising a number of events and participated in one another's events (see Appendix D). However, the partnership activity did not intensify in a linear way over time, but instead appeared to progress in fits and starts, depending on the level of

priority being given to the partnership at the time and also reflecting changes to key personnel (see Appendix F for a timeline of the partnership). Furthermore, although the partners did participate in one another's events, there was little by way of genuinely joint activity aimed at achieving shared objectives. I attributed this at least partly to the lower priority given to the partnership by CrediCo. DigiGen pushed the idea of meeting more frequently and of developing joint products, but these suggestions were not taken up (this is explored further in Chapters 6 and 7).

A few weeks after I entered the field, a "launch event" was held at CrediCo's offices. The main objective was to promote the partnership amongst CrediCo's associates. As part of this event, DigiGen also prepared and delivered workshops with young people. Liam explained that this was about "bringing what DigiGen does into CrediCo". Three groups of young people competed with one another to design promotional campaigns for DigiGen, around "sex and relationships", "work and studies" and "mental health". Nicola had recruited two CrediCo staff to help facilitate these workshops and it was evident that the partners had shared the task of recruiting young people to participate in the workshops. Nevertheless, I perceived that the partners did not plan or deliver the event in a way that involved intensive joint working.

CrediCo employees had an opportunity to meet DigiGen staff and young people over lunch. I met some CrediCo associates working in IT, finance and risk assessment. But it was evident that some of them had been asked to come down to meet DigiGen and the young people, rather than doing so on their own initiative. I overheard Chloe explaining to CrediCo staff that this was a

"major partnership" for them. I noted that she referred to CrediCo staff as "associates", adopting their language. Chloe said this was an opportunity to tell associates about the partnership and say thank you. She described it as "like meeting the parents for the first time – we've been dating, but –". This seemed to imply that DigiGen had a subordinate role and that Chloe was concerned to make a good impression on senior CrediCo staff. I perceived that Chloe was being deferential towards CrediCo staff. She and two CrediCo associates agreed that CrediCo was a "vibrant" and "fun" place to work. Chloe said that DigiGen and CrediCo had seemed like a good cultural "fit" from the start and that CrediCo "cares about people". A CrediCo associate agreed, contrasting CrediCo with the "dry, corporate environment" where she had previously worked.

Subsequent occasions reinforced the impression that the partnership had a higher priority for DigiGen than for CrediCo. For example, only one CrediCo representative was present both at a DigiGen co-creation session and at a later event, showcasing DigiGen's work to other organizations. Yet, when addressing the invited organizations, DigiGen staff appeared to make a point of mentioning the CrediCo partnership. I surmised that this reflected the perceived importance of the CrediCo partnership and funding for DigiGen.

4.4.2 Perceptions of CrediCo's culture & workplace fun

Observing at events provided opportunities to chat with a wider range of staff from different departments and test my perceptions of the two organizations and the partnership. This was particularly useful in the case of CrediCo, since DigiGen was

a far smaller organization, hence it was easier to get to know staff from different DigiGen teams.

My early impressions of CrediCo were that everyone was very positive about working for the business. For example, I spoke with a Call Centre Manager, who told me, "We are the best company to work for in Europe", as if this were a statement of fact. She was very enthusiastic about the physical work environment - the glass roof, the igloo, beach huts, etc. and about CrediCo's response to winning the "best place to work" award. She explained that CrediCo put all its associates' names on the walls and ceiling and had a big "thank you" banner. The following extract from field notes reflects my reaction to this seemingly unqualified praise of CrediCo:

"This positive construction of CrediCo seems to be institutionalized and shared by all staff - an organizational truth. This lack of internal challenge, this employee loyalty, appears to be a very valuable resource for CrediCo. But could there be a downside to the lack of self-criticism within the company?"

However, I received a slightly different impression some months later, when I attended CrediCo's "Vision Day", the annual away day for associates, held at a big external venue. The main arena was huge, with pop music blaring out, tiered seating and two enormous screens. There must have been several hundred people present - a high proportion of CrediCo's associates. It was quite dark, with stage lighting, creating the feel of a pop concert or other live performance. The screens showed close-up images of people's faces, moving fast, so that the air flow distorted their features. I interpreted this as a metaphor for a rollercoaster ride, or some other high adrenalin activity, conveying the idea that the day would be an exciting journey - a rush. An introductory

voice and slide show gave some key messages: that CrediCo was "helping more people to succeed with credit", "retaining customers", "agile", that they had "accelerated" their "digital journey" and that "we don't 'Build to Last': we 'Design to Change'". This ended with the motivational "Let's do it!".

Two presenters, a man and a woman, then gave a very high energy, comedic introduction to the day. A lot of metaphorical language was used: for example, people were encouraged to be "human sponges" and they "were going to be blasted into digital space, like Neil Armstrong". The style of humour was risqué, containing a lot of sexual innuendo and creating an 'anything goes' type atmosphere. This seemed to go down well with the audience. Whilst I was not impervious to the exhilarating atmosphere, neither did I feel totally caught up in the audience's excitement. I reflected that this was partly because I was approaching the day as a researcher, with an analytical mindset. However, there were a number of sexist comments made by the male presenter, which alienated me and had the effect of distancing me emotionally. For example, there was a moment when the male presenter picked on a woman in the audience, saying, "I didn't realize this lady was going to be that much of a bitch", then asking, "What's your favourite sexual position?". She did not respond to this and there was laughter from the crowd. The use of put-downs and other non 'politically correct' humour would later emerge in the analysis of data from partnership meetings. Different forms of humour were found to play a role in constructing, or undermining, the value of the partnership (see Chapter 6, section 6.4.2).

Chloe, from DigiGen, commented that this event was "very tongue-in-cheek - very CrediCo". I thought that perhaps she was trying to persuade me to regard the sexism of the presenters

and the hyped-up atmosphere in a sympathetic light and not to treat it at face value. It also occurred to me that she may be choosing to interpret the sexist humour as ironic, so that she could regard it as acceptable herself and compatible with DigiGen's values.

Listening to some of the comments made by CrediCo staff, it appeared that at least some of them chose to interpret the event ironically. For example, a man was asked, "What's the best thing about working for CrediCo?". He replied, "I get paid for it!". Another was asked, "Why are you here?". He replied, "Because work asked me to come". However, he then acknowledged that it was "quite inspiring" and employed the CrediCo language, "digital journey". I reflected that he was perhaps showing his colleagues that he was not unthinkingly accepting the hype, whilst also demonstrating that he was loyal to the company. A woman was asked, "What's blown you away?". She replied, "Fab to learn stuff behind the buzzwords". This struck me as rather a double-edged response: positive about the event, but at the same time implying a certain amount of cynicism about jargon that aims to impress. Nevertheless, I reflected that the music, the visual stimuli and the comedy performance, were all aimed at influencing staff emotionally. Even if they recognized that it was overdone, they were still, in a sense, obliged to buy into it.

Hints of this cynicism emerged on other occasions. The brightly coloured, theme park style décor at CrediCo fitted with the fostering of a fun culture and there seemed to be something new to see at CrediCo's offices every few months. For example, after a partnership meeting, I asked Trev to explain a new "High Street" mural, which ran along a corridor, depicting a row of shops. CrediCo targets what it terms "high street" customers,

i.e. the sub-prime market, hence the depiction of a "High Street" mural. Trev explained that the name of a music shop front reflected the name given to CrediCo's main credit card. Similarly the "The Book-Ins" bookshop was a pun, as CrediCo refers to its new customer accounts as "bookings". I reflected that the "Chip 'n' Pin" pub on the mural was obviously a reference to the secure method of payment by card. Trev said that further along the "High Street", there were other "cheesy puns". This seemed to me to imply a hint of cynicism, or perhaps a perception of inauthenticity. I interpreted these images as functioning as more than just decoration and a play on words. They appeared to me to construct associations between the workplace and other spheres of associates' lives, such as playing with their children, going to the pub, music and shopping, hence blurring the boundaries between their work and private lives (see Fleming, 2005).

In the early days of field work, I interpreted the construction of a "fun" culture as a resource to increase associate engagement and identification with CrediCo. However, Vision Day in particular helped me to appreciate that CrediCo's culture was somewhat more complex and nuanced than I had at first understood. However, it was evident that CrediCo devoted a great deal of effort towards enthusing, motivating and engaging its staff, thereby increasing their identification with the company. This had important implications for the DigiGen partnership, in that CrediCo's CSR was much more focused on motivating its associates than on enhancing its external brand.

4.4.3 Chapter summary

Many of the overarching themes which emerged during observations of events, workshops and co-creation sessions with young people, later resurfaced during the analysis of data from interviews and partnership meetings. The emphasis on commonalities between the two organizations by both partners was a recurring theme. A cultural commonality which both partners constructed was the idea that they are both "young" organizations, or "teenagers", in terms of their "mindsets", their stage of development, the profiles of their employees, the informality and flexibility of their workplaces and their bright, modern office décor.

As time went on, there was a growing focus by the partners on their shared interest in innovation, creativity and "agile" services. In particular, they identified that their shared emphasis on technology and developing digital services (or what CrediCo termed "Accelerating our digital journey") appeared to offer opportunities to work together.

Both organizations appeared to enjoy good employee relations. The business achieved this by constructing a powerful "internal brand", which was predominantly successful in establishing CrediCo as a "great place to work" in the minds of its associates, increasing their affiliation and identification with the company. CrediCo's CSR strategy reinforced this internal brand, with community activity being viewed as an important employee engagement tool - as opposed to, for example, an external public relations tool. This emerged as an important aspect of the context for understanding how both partners discursively

constructed the value of the partnership for their own organizations and for one another.

Contrasts between the partner organizations were rarely highlighted by the partners themselves. However, in addition to the obvious sectoral differences between their for-profit and not-for-profit objectives, there were significant differences in size, facilities and resources. The asymmetry between the roles of funder and funded organization emerged as another important aspect of the context when analyzing the partnership interaction.

It is noteworthy that DigiGen's commitment to co-creation with its service users was *not* mirrored by a similar commitment by CrediCo to co-creating services with its customers - notwithstanding the latter's emphasis on customer service. Cultural differences between the partners and differing viewpoints, underlying principles or logics sometimes emerged during the partnership interaction but, as Chapter 6 will illustrate, any criticisms or negative assessments tended to be heavily mitigated, veiled or glossed over.

This chapter has sought to give the reader a feel for my experiences of fieldwork and to convey my interpretations of the two partner organizations as context for the subsequent analysis. In presenting my observations, I have aimed for transparency concerning how my prior experiences and affiliations may have influenced my interpretations. This chapter has also identified some overarching themes pertinent to this partnership. However, the principal aim of this thesis is not to identify themes or commonalities and contrasts *per se*, but rather to investigate *how* the partners construct these themes. In particular, my focus is on how the partners discursively and

rhetorically construct the value of the partnership for their own organizations and for one another, as well as for young people. This requires close analysis of the partnership interaction, which will be the focus of the following chapters, identifying the discursive resources employed by the partners to construct these themes, hence revealing *how* the partners construct the value of the partnership, at the micro-level of partnership talk.

Chapter 5: Value building in collaborative talk

5.1 Setting the scene

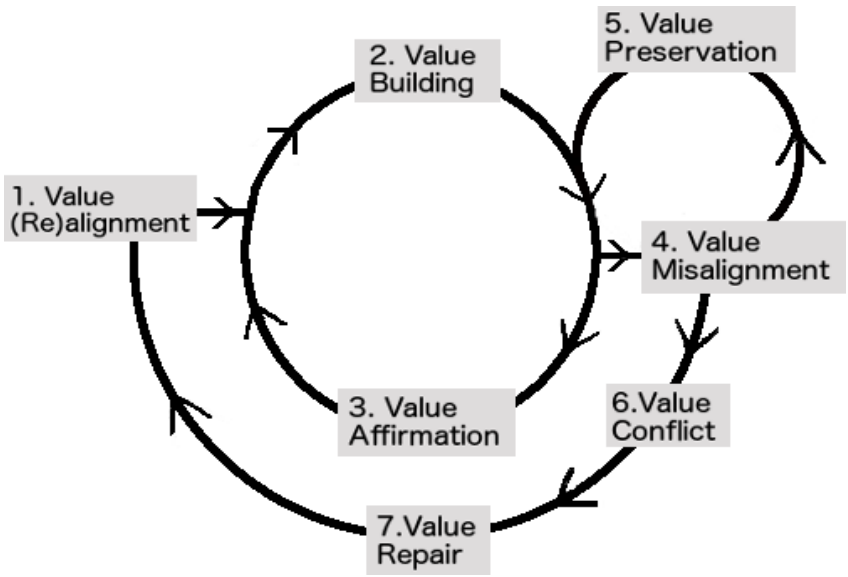
5.1.1 Conceptual model of value construction processes

The micro-analysis of features of partnership talk enabled the components of value construction processes and linkages between them to be identified. These discursive features were observed in partnership meetings attended over approximately a two year period in the field and recurred throughout the lifecycle of the partnership. Chapters 5 and 6 present findings concerning what is inside the 'black boxes' of value construction, i.e. the discursive practices employed, thereby addressing the overarching research question, *'How do partners involved in nonprofit-business partnership construct value through their discourse?'*. Chapter 5 presents findings concerning how value is aligned, constructed and affirmed in collaborative partnership talk. Chapter 6 then presents findings concerning how value is preserved and repaired in asymmetrical partnership talk. The conceptual model overleaf clarifies the high level value construction processes derived inductively from the data and the linkages between them.

Figure 5.1, overleaf, illustrates that partners need to engage in value alignment processes (1.) before they can begin to build value (2.) through their discourse. Various features of talk, set out in sections 5.3 to 5.5 of this chapter, are constitutive of value building practices (fig. 5.1, 2.), which discursively

construct the value of the partnership. Value affirmation practices (*ibid.*, 3.) signal agreement or endorsement and often mark decision-making points, for example, where the value of a particular course of action is affirmed. If value becomes misaligned (fig. 5.1, 4.) during the course of the partnership talk, partners usually engage in value preservation practices (*ibid*. 5.), in order to avoid overt conflict and return to the constructive, value building mode. Alternatively, value misalignment may be indicative of value conflict (fig. 5.1, 6.), which risks undermining the relationship and could potentially threaten the continuation of the partnership. Value conflict requires value repair (fig. 5.1, 7.), i.e. interactional work, to return the relationship to a positive footing, followed by value realignment (*ibid*. 1.), in order to resume the constructive, value building process. It is proposed that, where there is a major value misalignment between partners, value conflict, repair and realignment may be necessary, in order for a partnership to enter a new value building cycle and become genuinely transformative.

Fig. 5.1: Value Construction Model



Definitions of constructs:

1. Value (re/)alignment – creating the conditions for constructing the value of the partnership. This often involves constructing commonalities between the partners or adopting a partner organization's language.
2. Value building – discursively or rhetorically constructing the value of the partnership. This is achieved through strategies aimed at strengthening relationships and trust and establishing credibility.
3. Value affirmation – asserting the value of the partnership, or of a proposed course of action. This often involves building upon one another's ideas, the use of positive assessment and mirroring one another's talk.
4. Value misalignment – where the partners are not in agreement, or do not share the same understanding or viewpoint.
5. Value preservation – where the partners avoid undermining their relationship or the value of the partnership. This often occurs in response to value misalignment and may involve avoiding topics of disagreement, or using heavily mitigated strategies for dealing with differing viewpoints.
6. Value conflict – where disagreements or tensions between the partners become more salient or overt.
7. Value repair – where the partners undertake further interactional work to resolve disagreements or tensions (N.B. this is not to be confused with "repairs" in talk that are false starts or corrections).

Features of these value construction processes are given in Table 5.1 (below); Table 6.1 (Chapter 6); and Table 7.1 (Chapter 7).

These value processes are abstract categories, aimed at making sense of the complexity of partnership talk. However, as with everyday talk, those participating in partnership talk are involved in adapting and applying a wide variety of discursive practices to ever-changing, situated contexts. This Value Construction Model should not therefore be understood as 'hard' theory, whereby value processes mechanistically follow identical pathways and conform to criteria appropriate to quantitative research (repeatability, verifiability, predictability, etc.). Instead, this is 'soft' theory, which intentionally simplifies the complex processes of value construction in order to make sense of them. The model is, nevertheless empirically grounded and can be applied to other research settings. However, these value processes should be understood as fuzzy and organic, rather than hard-edged and mechanistic. This should therefore be understood as a descriptive and explanatory model, derived inductively from the data analysis: it is neither a prescriptive theory about how all partnership talk *should* work, nor a predictive theory about how all partnership talk *must* work.

5.1.2 Chapter overview

This is the first of two chapters based principally on discourse analysis of partnership meeting data. In this chapter I will set out how the partners establish common ground (a value alignment practice, see fig. 5.1, 1.), how they build and maintain ties, trust and credibility through their talk (fig. 5.1, 2.) and how they affirm value (fig. 5.1, 3.), which often functions as a constitutive part of decision-making. This picks up on the theme from Chapter 4 around constructing commonalities, but deepens the analysis. These findings are based principally on a micro-

level, close analysis of the talk in partnership meetings and how the partners draw on discursive resources to construct the value of the partnership. However, I will also draw on interview data and field notes, where appropriate.

The phrase "collaborative talk" in the chapter title is a nod to Austin and Seitanidi's (2012) "Collaborative Value Construct" (CVC) and also to Hardy et al.'s notion of "co-operative talk" (2005, p.69), since it aims to build upon both these models (see Chapter 2, sections 2.6-2.8). This chapter sets out the micro-level features of talk that are constitutive of value building practices, including discursive strategies aimed at constructing commonalities between partner organizations, building relationships and building on one another's ideas, so as to construct social and organizational value for one's own organization and for the partner organization.

In the main sections of this chapter, data extracts will be presented and specific discursive strategies will be highlighted and discussed. Since the focus is on how value is constructed through partnership talk, sufficiently lengthy extracts need to be presented to illustrate the discursive practices at work, in their situated contexts.

The findings in this chapter address the following research sub-question, which was derived inductively from the data analysis:

How is collaborative talk constructed and deployed (i.e. using what interpersonal skills and rhetorical strategies) so as to co-construct value?

5.1.3 How the data extracts were selected

The large volume of data from this research renders it necessary to be highly selective in the presentation of data extracts. Given that the purpose of nonprofit-business partnerships is, broadly speaking, to construct some form of value, there is little within the corpus of data that is not, in some way, pertinent to my main research question. Decisions as to what to include and what to omit were made on the basis of several criteria. Firstly, extracts were selected for their representativeness of distinctive, recurring patterns of talk within the data. Secondly, there was a criterion of conciseness, both in the need for preliminary explanation of the context and in the succinctness with which the relevant features of talk were expressed. Thirdly, extracts were selected which could either be used to illustrate more than one discursive practice at a time, or for their relationship with other discursive practices. I also endeavoured to select data extracts from across the eight partnership meetings observed between 2013 and 2015. Despite a high degree of variation in the construction of these discursive moves, recurring patterns did emerge and it was possible to delineate the key functions which they performed in the partnership talk.

5.1.4 Summary of data coding processes

Table 5.1, below, presents a summary of the data coding processes relating to value aligning, value building and value affirming practices, moving from '1st order' features of partnership talk to '2nd order' value processes to '3rd order' styles of talk. There is some overlap between categories, since the

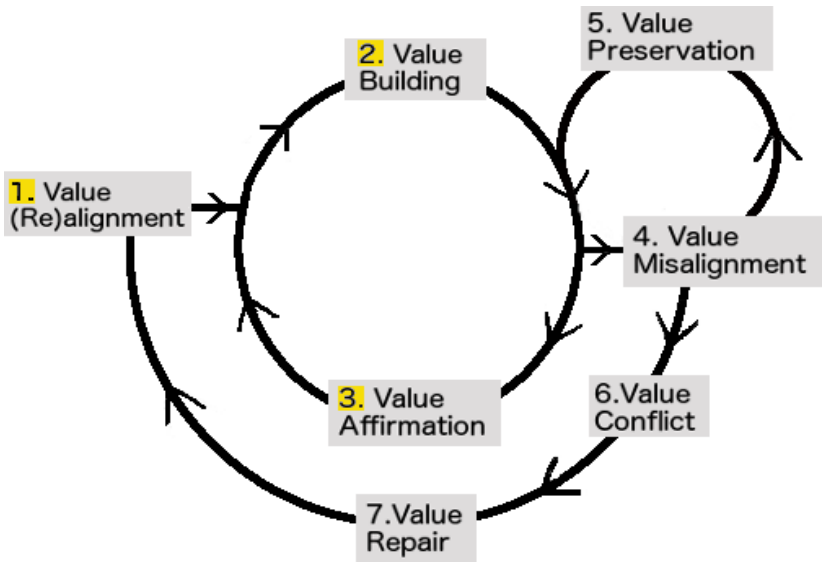
same features of talk can perform slightly different functions, depending on their situated contexts.

Table 5.1 Value building processes in collaborative talk

1st order category: features of talk	2nd order category: value processes	3rd order category: style of talk
• Constructing commonalities (common values, approaches, interests, challenges, etc.) • Mimesis – partner's language • Mirroring (e.g. on greeting)	Value aligning	COLLABORATIVE
• Collaborative language • Behaviours engendering intimacy & trust • Compliments or flattery (strengthens relationships and rhetorically constructs value) • Enthusiastic endorsement (strengthens relationships and rhetorically constructs value) • Affiliative humour (builds rapport)	Value building - relationships	
• Mimesis – business language • Mimesis – young people's language • Reported speech • Invoking 3rd parties / name-dropping • Citing research / claiming expertise • Establishing personal credibility	Value-building - credibility	
• Positive assessment • Enthusiastic endorsement (also value building) • Mirroring (e.g. when agreeing)	Value affirming	

For the sake of clarity, the three value processes associated with value building which are discussed in this chapter are highlighted as numbers 1, 2 and 3 in figure 5.2, below.

Figure 5.2: Value building processes



5.2 Value aligning practices

5.2.1 Constructing commonalities

As described in Chapter 4 (section 4.2.2), an early theme to emerge from the fieldwork was the construction of commonalities between partners. This also played out in the partnership meetings, where the aim was not only to identify commonalities, but to use this as a basis for planning future partnership activities. The fieldwork began at an early stage in the implementation phase of the partnership (see Appendix F). Thus the formation stage of the partnership could not be observed in real time. However, value (re)alignment was found to be an ongoing process and was not confined to the early

stages of the partnership. Commonalities constructed between partners served as resources for building value. The third partnership meeting which I observed was a dedicated planning session, which was strongly characterized by this value alignment, or construction of common approaches, interests and challenges. In the three extracts below, Chloe constructs commonalities as a resource for formulating future partnership plans.

Chloe: But then – 'cos one of my questions was around the broader positioning of the partnership going forward? And actually, um, some sort of key things to say or focus on that deliver against both our strategies.
Nicola: Yeah
Chloe: And so this is really helpful, 'cos for me it feels like there's a really great fit actually with some of the work that we're doing with employability - and the nature of our work generally, being digital.

A further example occurs shortly afterwards:

Chloe: Yeah…'cos innovation is a really big piece for both of us as well, isn't it?
Nicola: Yep
Chloe: And the agility thing you mentioned is a really big thing as well
Nicola: Yeah definitely.

Chloe goes on to visualize the potential for joint products, which the partners could co-create for the mutual advantage of both:

Chloe: Or whether it's about – I don't know, you know, we came together with a common, with common challenges, maybe different stakeholder groups, but common challenges
Nicola: Yeah
Chloe: And we wanted to learn about each other's approach, so we developed actually complementary products that could fit both our -
Nicola: Yep.

[Extracts from 3rd observed partnership meeting.]

Thus the discursive construction of common challenges faced by the partners is used as a basis for the co-creation of products, which could potentially overcome those challenges and provide value to both partners.

5.2.2 Mimesis – partner's language

Another type of commonality constructed between the two organizations was the tendency of partners to imitate one another's terminology. This phenomenon could function as another value alignment practice and was coded as "mimesis - partner's language" in the analysis of the transcripts of partnership meetings. Three different types of mimesis emerged from the data: the first was the adoption of one partner's jargon by the other; the second was the adoption of young people's vocabulary by the nonprofit partner; and the third was the use of business language by the nonprofit partner. I will only deal with the first type in this section, since the latter two forms of mimesis tended to serve a slightly different function in the

partnership talk, which was principally the value building strategy of establishing credibility (see section 5.4, below). It is noteworthy that all three types of mimesis were employed more commonly by the nonprofit partner than by the business.

The following excerpts illustrate the imitation of the business partner's jargon by the nonprofit organization and the extent to which this was used as a conscious strategy to create commonalities between the partners and to construct a shared identity.

Nicola: No, no. Nothing fancy. I have got something that I <u>could</u> show you, which might (0.3) be:: a good thing, so you can actually see it, rather than just me talking about it, but I haven't prepared a <u>deck</u> or anything. ((Laughs))
Chloe: OK. ((Laughs.)) Yeah, well we <u>have</u> prepared a deck.

[Extract from 1st observed partnership meeting.]

The term "deck" is used by the business to refer to presentation slides. I surmised that this was a US term, adopted by CrediCo UK from its US headquarters – although, at a later date, I spoke with a CrediCo employee from the US who considered the term "deck" unusual, even in the US. At the end of my final interview with Nicola, when she was about to leave CrediCo for a new post, she made the following comments:

Nicola: I can't wait to not start – to stop, to <u>stop</u> calling it a "deck"!
Katy: ((Laughs))

Nicola: If you say, if you say a "Powerpoint presentation", people look at you here as if you'd got like 2 heads!
Katy: Really?
Nicola: It's a deck.
Katy: Yeah – is it an American thing?
Nicola: It is an American thing, I think, 'cos it's a slide deck, I think?
Katy: Yeah
Nicola: Which doesn't make any sense to me either. So I can't wait to stop calling it a deck
Katy: ((Laughs))
Nicola: And put together bloody Powerpoint presentations!

[Extract from final interview with Nicola.]

Whilst the above exchange was light-hearted, it nevertheless illustrates the pervasiveness of jargon in organizations and that employees, at least to some extent, consciously adopt this jargon and feel they have little choice but to do so. However, the adoption of the unusual (at least in the UK) term "deck" by the nonprofit partner is indicative of the efforts made to construct commonalities with the business. A further illustration of the nonprofit's conscious use of this type of strategy is given in the following example, where the partners are discussing their objectives.

Liam: Presumably there's one around associate engagement
Chloe: Employee engagement - sorry, associate engagement

Nicola: Externally we talk about employees. But internally we talk about associates - because people don't really know what associates are. It's very American as well - "associates".

[Extract from 3rd observed partnership meeting.]

Here, Liam, who is from DigiGen, adopts CrediCo's term for employees and Chloe (also from DigiGen) corrects herself, first using the term "employees" before reverting to "associates". Nicola's response gives DigiGen permission to continue using the more recognised term "employee", whilst also showing CrediCo's conscious selection between the two terms for inside and outside audiences. However, DigiGen continues to use the adopted term "associates" when referring to CrediCo's employees. By doing so, the nonprofit positions itself strategically as an insider in relation to CrediCo.

Throughout the dataset, the non-profit partner alludes to the business partner's employees as "associates". Use of a partner's internal language or jargon is therefore a conscious strategy used to build ties or construct a common identity. The following extract from a planning meeting, employing the metaphor of "big hairy goals" to refer to ambitious but unspecified objectives, makes this mimetic strategy explicit. In this instance, I make a rare intervention in the partnership dialogue in order to clarify this.

Chloe: Oh cool. It's just quite - it's so hairy!
Nicola: They're quite hairy!
Chloe: "Embed 'hairy goals' into DigiGen's general vocabulary"

((Laughter))

Chloe: Which it already is, by the way!

Nicola: Is it?

Chloe: Yeah

Katy: Is that <u>your</u> phrase originally, or -?

Nicola: It's CrediCo

Katy: It's a CrediCo – it's <u>generically</u> a CrediCo -?

Nicola: "Big, hairy, audacious goals" – or "BHAGs", as someone's started calling them now ((laughs))

Chloe: BHAGs!

Nicola: We were in a meeting the other day talking about BHAGs ((Laughter / snickering))

Nicola: Yes, CrediCo vocab. Last year we were encouraged to set "Big, hairy, audacious goals".

Katy: Mm:

Nicola: We even have a little, little hairy monster as an icon, to go with it!

[Extract from 3rd observed partnership meeting.]

This metaphor is alluded to on several occasions by both partners over the course of this planning session. Unbeknown to the partner organizations (or to myself at the time) the expression "Big Hairy Audacious Goal" and "BHAG" in fact originates from a book by Collins and Porras (2005) and was therefore itself a borrowed term on the part of CrediCo. However, the point remains that, what was considered by both partners to be CrediCo jargon, was consciously adopted by DigiGen, hence functioning as a value alignment strategy.

The mirroring of one another's language also occurred as a more fleeting phenomenon than the adoption of a partner's jargon. Mirroring often operated as a value affirmation practice within the partnership talk (see section 5.5.2). However, the mirroring of partners' language was also sometimes used as a value alignment strategy. For example, it sometimes occurred on greeting, where it provided a means for partners to align with one another (fig. 5.1, 1.). In the extract below, Anna, the Chief Executive of DigiGen, has just met Rosa for the first time. Rosa has recently aquired a CSR remit for CrediCo, along with responsibility for the partnership (see Appendix E). Anna asks Rosa whether CrediCo is very busy, then she reflects back Rosa's "hamster wheel" metaphor.

Rosa: The hamster wheel spins faster, so - yes.
Anna: Generally in CrediCo there's always quite exciting hamster wheel stuff.

[Extract from 5th observed partnership meeting.]

Other strategies used on greeting (and parting) were aimed at building personal relationships. These are described below.

5.3 Value building - strengthening relationships

5.3.1 Behaviours engendering rapport or trust

Behaviours engendering intimacy or building rapport were observed whenever the partners greeted one another and when they parted. This included cheek kissing and embracing - particularly between women but sometimes also involving men. I

was sometimes included in this, as the following extracts from field notes illustrate.

Nicola and Chloe hug each other before they say goodbye.

[Extract from field notes, 1st observed partnership meeting.]

The cheek kissing seems like a slightly artificial token, or an attempt to engender intimacy, rather than a normal custom or a natural expression of intimacy

[Extract from field notes, 2nd observed partnership meeting.]

I notice that Chloe and Rosa kiss one other on the cheek by way of saying farewell….I believe this is only the second time they have met. Is this a slighty forced intimacy, in the cultural context of the UK?

[Extract from field notes, 4th observed partnership meeting.]

Back in the reception, most of the women do cheek kissing by way of taking leave. I don't initiate any of this and there is no cheek kissing between me and Chloe. However, Rosa initiates a kiss on the cheek with me. Trevor then inititates a hug with me – open arms – "Come on". I comply. I interpret this as behaviour aimed at creating and maintaining intimacy and trust.

[Extract from field notes, 7th observed partnership meeting.]

Eva (who is nearest me) embraces me and does an air kiss (x2, one on each side)

[Extract from field notes, 8th observed partnership meeting.]

Many greetings and hugs are exchanged. I get a hand shake from Steve, but hugs from both Eva and Yvonne.

[Extract from field notes, 8th observed partnership meeting.]

Whilst the aforementioned behaviours were evident on greeting and parting, the beginnings and ends of meetings were also characterized by relationship building behaviour, with partners engaging in informal, personal chat. When new individuals became involved in the partnership meetings for the first time, considerably more time and effort was devoted to personal chat, as a means of establishing personal relationships. However, personal chat also occurred periodically during the course of partnership meetings, with the business agenda being temporarily suspended. Diversions into personal chat sometimes marked changes from one topic to the next, but also sometimes functioned as a means of smoothing or repairing the conversation, following some form of misalignment (e.g. after a difference of view, understanding or agenda became apparent - see Chapter 6).

The building of personal ties can therefore be viewed as an ongoing communicative process. Observed nonverbal behaviours

which supported relationship building and effective communication included maintaining a lot of eye contact with one's partners (as opposed to with colleagues from one's own organization) and the use of hand gestures and facial expressions. Below are two extracts from field notes taken during partnership meetings.

Chloe addresses Rosa and Trev ((the 2 business partners)) alternately; lots of eye contact. She occasionally looks at me, but primarily at Rosa and Trev – and not at Steve ((her nonprofit partner)).

He is gesticulating with both hands as he speaks and looking around at everyone, trying to engage them.

[Extracts from field notes, 5th partnership meeting.]

Whilst these behaviours tend to build personal relationships, they also serve a rhetorical function in the partnership talk, helping to enthuse a partner, or to persuade them to agree with a particular viewpoint, or a preferred course of action. They can therefore be viewed principally as value building practices (fig. 5.1, 2.). A similar strategy, aimed at getting a partner onside, is described below.

5.3.2 Compliments or flattery

Partnership talk was strongly characterized by compliments or flattery directed towards the partner organization. Compliments

were more frequently given by the nonprofit partner to the business. For example:

We've found some quite forward thinking funders (obviously you guys are in that category as well).

[Extract from 1st partnership meeting.]

In the following extract from the same meeting, the nonprofit partner is referring to Roger, the very popular previous CEO of the business, who has become a member of the charity's Development Board. Chloe's extravagant praise of Roger is a compliment to Nicola and to CrediCo.

Chloe: He was at the last meeting which I was at and he was brilliant, as always. Amazing just influence and energy in the room, just incredible.
Nicola: Yeah
Chloe: But, um, that's amazing, and he's done that because he just really bought into the new strategy. Um, you know, he's seen what we've been able to do since ((change of tone here – gratitude)) <u>you guys</u> have come on board. ((Slight laugh.)) And he's just really gung-ho about it and he's also, um, doing a lot getting his, like, community and kind of networks to give as well. So that's amazing.

[Extract from 1st observed partnership meeting.]

Compliments are sometimes fished for by a partner, as in the following extract, where the nonprofit has previously given a

positive assessment of some training offered to them by the business, but the business partner requests a further positive assessment, which the nonprofit partner duly supplies.

Nicola: Has Speak the Speech helped in all of that? That was good?
Chloe: I know I keep saying it, but I'm not saying it just because you guys funded us to do it, but, like, it <u>was</u> the best run course I've ever been on.
Nicola: Really?
Chloe: Yep.
Nicola: That's amazing.
Chloe: Yep.
Nicola: That's cool.

[Extract from 1st observed partnership meeting.]

Compliments are therefore frequently used as a value building strategy (fig. 5.1, 2.), as a means of strengthening relationships between partners. Fishing for compliments is also a value building strategy, aimed at securing endorsement from a partner, thereby strengthening the relationship. However, compliments and flattery can also sometimes be used to repair a misalignment (see Chapter 6, Table 6.1). For example, in the following extract, the business partner is using flattery as a strategy to atone for, or increase the acceptability of, deferring a one to one meeting between the nonprofit's CEO and the new CEO of the company.

Nicola: It would be great to showcase what you guys do. In, in that kind of (0.3) 'cos it's gonna be, you guys are gonna be (0.3)

totally on message, on point, slick, amazing. Not that you're not normally, obviously? Um, but as a first impression, or a – then it would be <u>great</u> for him [(the CEO)] to see that, first off. And then see how awesome you guys are in face to face as well.

[Extract from 1st observed partnership meeting.]

In addition to building relationships, compliments are also value building practices in another very important sense: they are used as a rhetorical strategy to persuade a partner of the value of the partnership, or of a particular viewpoint, or to persuade them to agree to a proposed course of action that will bring about a desired outcome. They are therefore also value building in the sense that they help to determine the outcomes of the partnership. For example, below, the nonprofit partner compliments the business by telling them how much their young volunteers enjoy visiting their offices, thereby eliciting an open invitation. The rhetorical effect is enhanced by the stress placed on "always" and "love" and by the repetition of the word "love":

Chloe: And they <u>always</u> love seeing the office - we'd <u>love</u> to do some more of that, 'cos our volunteers love insight into the workplace
Trev: Come on in, come on in.

[Extract from 5th observed partnership meeting.]

The nonprofit partner often uses compliments as a strategy to persuade the business of the value of the partnership. This is sometimes couched in terms of the business' funding having

enabled further match funding to be secured from other sources. Compliments are also used to emphasize the difference which the business partner's funding has made to the charity, in terms of its capacity, sustainability, or the social value it has been able to create. For example, in the following extract, credit for the nonprofit's achievements is assigned to the business partner.

Chloe: But I actually think a lot of the things that the organization has done – and this isn't just to say this because you guys are here
Rosa: ((Slight laugh, cut short))
Chloe: It wouldn't have happened if we'd not kicked off our partnership at that key point.

A few moments later, the nonprofit continues to compliment the business partner by asserting that they have pushed the charity to greater achievements. This is emphasized with the stress and repetition of the word "really".

Chloe: So, um, you know, it's safe to say that this partnership <u>really</u> is a strategic partnership, in that sense, 'cos it's <u>really</u> pushed us. And hopefully we've pushed, I think, the other way as well
Rosa: Yeah
Chloe: Um, in terms of some of your CSR stuff
Trev: Mm-hm

[Both extracts from 5th observed partnership meeting.]

Chloe constructs the value of the partnership by complimenting the business on the role it has played. She fishes for a

compliment in return, by suggesting that the nonprofit partner has influenced the business' CSR strategy. However, in this case, whereas the nonprofit was extravagant in complimenting the business, the brief responses ("Yeah" from Rosa and "Mm-hm" from Trev) are only minimally aligning. Thus, despite the collaborative (as opposed to competitive) nature of the dialogue, there is nevertheless an asymmetry within the partnership talk (see Chapter 6, section 6.3.5).

5.3.3 Enthusiastic endorsement

As with compliments, a function of enthusiastic endorsement of a partner's utterance, was to build value (fig. 5.1, 2.) by strengthening relationships. Enthusiastic endorsement was a stronger form of positive assessment. The latter functioned principally as a value affirming practice (see fig. 5.1, 3. and section 5.5.3), frequently occurring in response to partners' value building utterances. However, enthusiastic endorsement went beyond positive assessment, not merely affirming value, but also functioning as a socio-emotional lever within the partnership talk, to construct value for the partnership. Both the nonprofit and the business could be seen to engage in enthusiastic endorsement of their partner. However, the most salient pattern was for the nonprofit partner to express enthusiasm in describing its work and in accounting for its use of CrediCo's funding (a value building practice) and for the business to respond by endorsing this (a value affirming and potentially also a value building practice).

Whilst an enthusiastic tone of voice cannot easily be captured in a written transcript, the language used, such as extreme case formulations (Pomerantz, 1986), together with the stress on particular words (underlined in transcripts) can help to convey the enthusiasm and persuasive force of an utterance. Value affirming positive assessments were very frequent in the partnership talk, to the extent that their absence was conspicuous (see Chapter 6, sections 6.3.5 and 6.3.6 on the withholding of endorsement). The following example occurs near the beginning of a partnership meeting, where Nicola from CrediCo, proposes an agenda.

Nicola: Start with some updates and then, er, go through the report ((change of tone – conveying interest, excitement)) with your new branding on it - ooooo – exciting!. And then do some more in-depth stuff.

Another example where enthusiastic endorsement is initiated by the business partner occurs later in the same meeting. Nicola's stressed "Yes", together with repetition of "absolutely" and her use of extreme case formulations in the final turn, convey her own enthusiasm and that of her colleague.

Chloe: Maybe we should - do you think he'd be interested in coming to the sessions?
Nicola: *Yes. [=Absolutely]*
Chloe [='Cos it sounds] like he'd have a lot to bring
Nicola: *Oh absolutely. He's so knowledgeable and incredibly (0.3) passionate and very excited about the whole thing*

[Both extracts from 3rd observed partnership meeting]

In the next example, the nonprofit partner's enthusiasm about sponsored runners in the London Marathon is mirrored by the business partners' (Rosa's and Trev's) endorsement.

Chloe: And Marathon. So, obviously, great that you guys are going to have a team this year as well
Trev: Yes.
Rosa: Yeeahh
Chloe: Which is very exciting

[Extract from 5th observed partnership meeting.]

One more example should suffice to illustrate this pattern. In the exchange below, Eva's enthusiasm about DigiGen's work leads Rosa to cut in with an enthusiastic endorsement.

Eva: Gosh, there's so many things that we would love to get really great minds in a room
Rosa: Yeah. Yeah
Eva: And say "How do we deliver this?" Or -[you know]
Rosa: [I think] that's a great idea.

[Extract from 6th observed partnership meeting.]

5.3.4 Affiliative humour

Humour was often used in the partnership talk to build rapport and strengthen ties. When used for this purpose, humour functioned as another socio-emotional lever for building relationships and constructing value (fig. 5.1, 2.). However, it was also sometimes used to repair a conversational hitch, or to gloss over a sensitive topic and sometimes took the form of self-deprecating humour, humour at the expense of one's own organization, teasing or put-down humour (see Chapter 6, section 6.4). However, this section will focus on "affiliative" humour, understood as value building, reciprocal humour, which does not target an individual or an organization, i.e. humour which is used positively, as a strategy for relationship building and as a feature of collaborative talk. The two examples below are from a planning meeting.

Chloe: This is <u>good</u>, this is <u>good</u>!
[(Laughter)]
Chloe: I reckon we should present this at one of our planning sessions
Nicola: My brain hurts, but I'm (0.3) fired up at the same time. Tired, but wired!
((Loud laughter))

Also, a short while later:

Nicola: Cool (0.3). So ((laughs)), so that's, that's the outputs and outcomes thing sort of covered. (0.5) Do we, do we want to talk about vision now – or is that going to work up – close enough?
((Chloe pulls a face: laughter in response))
Chloe: I can't do it! Don't make me do any more!

[Both extracts from 3rd observed partnership meeting.]

My own contributions to the partnership meetings were rare, since I wished to avoid influencing the conversation. However, I would sometimes be included in personal chat and, on occasion, I sought clarification, if I judged that this would not significantly disrupt the flow of conversation. Whilst undertaking the data analysis and coding for affiliative humour, I also noticed that, where partners were joking, I would sometimes join in and venture a contribution of my own. This was not a premeditated strategy, but served the purpose of blending in and building rapport with my research participants. (N.B. I used a similar strategy in interviews, using humour to build rapport and to establish an informal basis for the conversation – see Chapter 3, section 3.5.2.) The example below is from a partnership meeting where Liam uses the term "yoghurt" as a metaphor for a socially-driven business (alluding to a well-known yoghurt producing company).

Liam: So is this also – I think you said yesterday, didn't you, it's starting to get to kind of like yoghurt parts of the (0.3) the triangle
Nicola: Mm-hm

Katy: Sorry Liam. What's the "yoghurt part of the triangle"? [((laughs))]
[((Laughter from others))]
Chloe: Yeah, you're going to have to really supply -
((More laughter))
Katy: That went straight over my head!
Nicola: The yoghurt part of the triangle!
Katy: The yoghurt went straight over my head!

[Extract from 4th observed partnership meeting.]

The nature of DigiGen's work with young people also frequently provided a resource on which partners drew to produce humour and thereby strengthen their relationship, as in the example below.

Trev: I'll always remember ((laughs slightly)) 'cos I remember several occasions, showing people ((name of DigiGen's website)) and then seeing the er, the banner, with all the different types of headlines on it. And I can always guarantee there was some kind of, there was some kind of awkward, inappropriate type headline
Chloe: Bondage, or -!
Rosa: Chlamydia, wasn't it?
Trev: Safe sex at festivals, or something like that!
[((General laughter))]
Trev:[It covers a wide variety of every ( )]
Rosa: Yeah!
Trev: It always made me chuckle!

[Extract from 5th observed partnership meeting.]

5.3.5 Collaborative language

Value-laden terms and expressions were frequently deployed by partners, with connotations of mutuality, equal participation and joint action. This collaborative language was used strategically to build rapport, or to persuade coparticipants that one is a good partner. It can therefore be characterized as a value building practice (fig. 5.1, 2.). However, this linguistic behaviour was more characteristic of the nonprofit partner than the business. For example, the verb "share" was often used, in preference, to terms such as "tell" or "explain" (the latter implying an active informant and a passive listener, thus being less suggestive of mutuality). The following examples are from the beginning of a partnership meeting.

Liam: Cool. Great. Um, yeah, so I thought we'd start with some general updates that we have to share; an opportunity for you to share anything you had…

Then a few moments later:

Chloe: Nicola's got a laptop – I'm really excited about what you're sharing today!

Also, later in the same meeting:

Chloe: So, um, we've just come to the end of that insight piece, I mean we can share that when we've, um, well we're sharing it at the event, but there'll be lots of stuff to share.

This strong preference for collaborative language was also evident in interviews with nonprofit partners. For example, the following extract is from an interview with Anna, DigiGen's CEO, who was not normally present at the partnership meetings. She is talking about the challenge of raising DigiGen's profile within CrediCo. Note the use of the inclusive "we" and "us", hinting at a shared partnership identity.

Anna: I suppose it's how do we help each other, because I suppose it's just - so what can we do more to support us and then Naomi ((CrediCo Senior Manager)) in terms of embedding this partnership.

[Extract from 1st interview with Anna, DigiGen's CEO.]

Collaboration was often emphasized over competition, as in the following extract from a partnership meeting, where Chloe talks about DigiGen's co-creation process, emphasizing its willingness to share this with other nonprofit organizations. Note the repetitions of "really" for emphasis.

Chloe: But that's been, it's been a brilliant project and I think it's another really good example of this co-creation, cycle of innovation -
Nicola: Yeah
Chloe: really coming to fruition. And we feel it's really getting traction across the sector, which is really good.

Also, later in the same meeting:

Chloe: Um, I'm thinking about our aims and objectives, how those things might help deliver on some of those (0.3) targets, like you say, ideas for how we can properly say we're going to work, like, work together, collaborate on those things.

[Extracts from 1st observed partnership meeting.]

Building alliances with other charities, as well as other social partnerships with businesses, was a recurring theme. The following extract is from a later meeting, where Liam seeks to downplay competition between charities and instead emphasizes collaboration.

Liam: And also I think it's, in that competitor analysis we've been doing, it's thinking about actually what are the opportunities with these other organizations as well
Nicola: Yeah
Liam: So we're thinking from a collaboration point of view, rather than a competition point of view.

[Extract from 4th observed partnership meeting.]

In another meeting, Steve describes the referral of young people to DigiGen from another charity as a "warm handover". This collaborative language with respect to other charities is endorsed by the business partner:

Nicola: Work together – absolutely. It's good, it's good that you guys are, you know, thinking along the collaboration lines, rather than just working in isolation. It makes so much more sense.

[Extract from 4th observed partnership meeting.]

The use of collaborative language, along with affiliative humour, compliments, enthusiastic endorsement and other behaviours encouraging rapport, were important practices for building relationships between partners. The use of collaborative language to demonstrate one's effectiveness as a partner also touches upon the notion of credibility, which is discussed in the following section.

5.4 Value building - establishing credibility

In the context of partnership talk, establishing credibility involves demonstrating expertise, knowledgeability or authoritativeness, as well as persuading the partner of one's reliability, integrity and trustworthiness, both at the individual and organizational levels. Strategies used by partners to establish credibility serve as value building practices (fig. 5.1, 2.) and are set out below.

5.4.1 Mimesis – business language

The adoption of business terminology is very common in nonprofit organizations in the UK, therefore this in itself was not a surprising finding, particularly in a nonprofit with experience of

partnering with corporations. DigiGen's use of terms such as "brand" and "marketing" was standard for the organization and not confined to its exchanges with CrediCo, thus inferences could not straightforwardly be drawn as to their strategic deployment in partnership talk. However, the emphasis placed on branding by DigiGen, positioning itself as a "youth brand" and establishing itself as a "digital business" was distinctive. Also, business and marketing jargon could be seen to be used more intensively by DigiGen at strategic points in the partnership dialogue. Interest therefore lay in the implications of DigiGen's adoption of business language, the contexts in which, for example, the language of competition was used, as opposed to the language of collaboration, and the functions this performed in the partnership talk.

One of the posters on a wall in DigiGen's offices was titled "Our brand values", with subheadings such as "Honest", "Empathetic", et cetera. The detail for another poster titled "Our vision and beliefs" was "Coming soon!". The adoption of a set of "brand values" alongside the charity's "vision and beliefs" was indicative of DigiGen's business-friendly language. For example, in the following two extracts, Eva expresses an aspiration to partner with and emulate commercial youth brands.

Eva: - and I just mean that kind of kudos of working with these amazing youth brands. And we know that there's more and more out there that we should be working with, so we're looking at a piece of positioning at the moment in how <u>we</u> become that cool youth brand as well.

Eva: But this is very much our kind of, er, er, corporate face, really. Um, so if you just flick through some of the pages, you

can see what's important to us and what, what's important that we show and how we present ourselves as a brand.

[Extracts from 6th observed partnership meeting.]

Eva views partnerships with high profile youth brands as enhancing DigiGen's credibility. However, despite the business-friendly language, in the second extract, she hesitates to use the term "corporate" to describe DigiGen. There is a lot of hedging ("kind of", "er, er", and "really") around the word "corporate". This reflects a tension between establishing DigiGen's credibility as a business and its credibility as a charity. The use of business jargon became particularly salient where DigiGen sought to establish credibility for its research on young people's use of social media and explained the potential for selling these findings commercially to generate an additional revenue stream. However, in the extract below, Steve displays a similar hesitancy in introducing the potential commercial application of DigiGen's research.

Steve: And thirdly, there's, there's a potentially a commercial a (0.3) er - application of that - of that data - to various key verticals who are interested in just what's going on with young people in socials ((i.e. social media)) 'cos - erm - I imagine CrediCo is as interested as anyone else.

[Extract from 6th partnership meeting.]

The deployment of terms such as "key verticals" and (on other occasions) "youth packaging", "marcoms" and "USP" was indicative of the strategic adoption of marketing language at points where DigiGen was describing its plans to sell findings from its research on young people to corporations for commercial purposes. The objective was to persuade CrediCo of the credibility of this venture and of its potential business value.

5.4.2 Mimesis – young people's language

As with the use of business language, the adoption of young people's talk was not a surprising finding, but the main interest lay in the degree to which this occurred in different contexts, hence in the strategic purposes for which it was employed. Terms such as "cool" and "awesome" were ubiquitous in the partnership talk and reflected the characteristically informal, colloquial conversational style of the partners. The term "cool" was frequently used by both partners, but this expression is by no means exclusive to young people. However, the term "awesome" is more typical of younger age groups in the UK and this was more characteristic of nonprofit employees, with representatives of the business tending to prefer expressions such as "amazing" or "great".

A more salient use of language typical of young people was the insertion of "like" into the narratives of representatives of the nonprofit partner. An example is given below, where two nonprofit employees comment on the ideas they are writing down on post-it notes during a partnership planning meeting.

Liam: Chloe's like zooming! I'm like feeling the pressure!
Chloe: I'm just like bashing –

[Extract from 3rd observed partnership meeting.]

During observation of an innovation day involving DigiGen staff and young graduates employed by CrediCo, I noted that a DigiGen employee was inserting "like" into her narrative very frequently when commenting on a presentation given by one of the young graduates. I had also noticed this the previous day, when the same employee took part in a role play exercise before an audience of young people. However, this mannerism was absent when I spoke with her on a one to one basis. I therefore concluded that, whether consciously done or not, this was a "speak like a young person" strategy, which, in this case, appeared to be used to build rapport with young people.

However, in the context of partnership meetings where young people were not present, the use of redundant "likes" appeared to have a slightly different function: that of presenting DigiGen as close to young people, thereby lending a sense of authenticity and credibility to DigiGen's talk about young people. DigiGen's emphasis on the importance of "using the right tone of voice" for its services and using the language of young people hints at the purpose behind employing this "young" language in its partnership talk with CrediCo. The extracts below illustrate the emphasis placed by DigiGen on using the language of young people.

Steve: Yeah, and authenticity is the absolutely key part. So by allowing young people to express their stories in their own language, in their own way, it, it, it, it's far easier for other young people to interact with that.

Eva: A bit more credible as well, isn't it?
Rosa: Yeah
Eva: You know, because you're actually talking their language.

[Extracts from 8th observed partnership meeting]

DigiGen's adoption of language characteristic of young people in the partnership talk can therefore be viewed as a value building strategy for enhancing credibility and authenticity. In the following excerpt, Chloe begins by imitating the language of young people, to lend credibility to her explanation of young people's viewpoints. However, as she goes on, she switches between the language of young people and more professionalized language, which aims to strike a chord with CrediCo's CSR priorities.

Chloe: This has challenged – well, the young people challenged that. They were like "Peer support? I haven't got any – I can't give peer support"; "I'm really scared of peer support – what the hell? Like, I'm not even qualified to do that – and also, I'm not even interested, quite frankly"; "I'm interested in getting skills, I'm interested in building my employability".
Nicola: Yeah

Chloe: "I'm interested in social currency – I'm interested in looking good to my mates and having something funny to share". We were like "Ah yeah" because we'd really focussed on that, on the therapeutic peer support.

[Extract from 1st observed partnership meeting.]

The colloquial and young people's language ("what the hell?", "like", et cetera) can be contrasted with expressions such as "building employability" and "social currency", which are much more professionalized. Note that the use of anaphora (the repetition of "I'm interested" in successive phrases) and the stresses placed on the word "interested" enhance the rhetorical effect of this dialogue. The incorporation of young people's viewpoints was a frequent feature of nonprofit partners' value building talk. However, incorporating the imagined or remembered speech of third parties (not just of young people) was a strategy adopted by all participants. This is explained further below.

5.4.3 Reported speech

"Reported speech" was one of the most frequently used codes across the partnership meeting dataset and also often occurred in the interview data with representatives from both partner organizations. This strategy often performed more than one function in the partnership talk. It lent authenticity to a narrative by incorporating the words, or imagined words, of a third party or of a past or future event. It also heightened the dramatic

effect of narratives, thereby helping to engage and persuade the audience at an emotional level. The examples given below illustrate this rhetorical effect.

In this first example, Nicola (from CrediCo) is being candid about the position in which she found herself when she was appointed to her post as Head of CSR. Reported speech provides a means of conveying her thoughts and feelings directly, giving a sense of immediacy, so as to enhance credibility, as well as encouraging her listener (in this case me, the interviewer) to empathize with her situation.

Nicola: So when I came in I was sort of like "Right, so you want me to come in and be strategic but yet you've already signed a partnership with a charity for 4 years" – that's quite a long time.

[Extract from 1st interview with Nicola, Head of CSR at CrediCo.]

The use of reported speech is often preceded by expressions such as "I was sort of like…" (as in the example above) or by "said / saying…", or "thought / thinking…". However, it is also identifiable from the use of pronouns. In the following example from an interview with Chloe, she actually draws attention to her use of reported speech, by employing the word "unquote".

Chloe: And at that meeting, I remember Molly saying – it was a big meeting – saying "Look, I've got £800,000 in my CSR budget, a major partnership for us would be, you know, at least half of that" – unquote ((laughs)).

[Extract from 1st interview with Chloe, DigiGen]

In contrast, in the extract below from a partnership meeting, the only clue as to the switch into reported speech is the changes to the pronouns, from "them"/"their" to "my"/"I".

Chloe: And for an app that helps them in a crisis, stressful moments, relieve their anxiety? So "What can my mobile do to help relieve that stress? Whether I'm outside a job interview and I'm freaking out, whether I'm going to a doctor and I'm really scared, whether I'm having an argument with my partner, I'm thinking of leaving home", whatever it might be.

[Extract from 1st observed partnership meeting]

The rhetorical impact of the above section is enhanced through the use of reported speech, conveying the impression of direct insight into young people's own thoughts and feelings. The purpose is to persuade CrediCo of the social value of DigiGen's mobile application, hence it functions as a value building strategy. Reported speech is often used in combination with other strategies to intensify the rhetorical effect. In the above example, Chloe invokes a succession of concrete examples of stressful situations which young people may face and employs the rhetorical device of anaphora (successive clauses starting with the word "whether") to link them together.

For a final example of the use of reported speech, I will return to the interview data. Here. Naomi, the senior manager from CrediCo with responsibility for the DigiGen partnership, is talking about the early stages of the partnership.

Naomi: What we've also done in Year 1 – we can break into these a little bit – is think "OK, but what is DigiGen's vision for the future? As a company that is a great place to work we can help you think through that" - and I can explain why.

[Extract from 1st interview with Naomi, Senior Manager at CrediCo]

In the above interview extract, Naomi enhances the credibility of her narrative for me (her audience) by first presenting the thought processes that took place within CrediCo, then conveying a sense of the actual words used by CrediCo in conversation with DigiGen (revealed by the use of the pronoun "you"). The assertion that CrediCo is a "great place to work", invokes its award-winning credentials (see Chapter 4, section 4.3.4) and also occurs regularly in the partnership meeting data. This strategy of presenting an assessment as an objective fact was coded as "Great place to work a given" and is similar to the strategy described below of invoking third party assessments to establish credibility.

5.4.4 Invoking third parties / name-dropping

Invoking the assessments of third parties provides another means of establishing credibility. Sometimes a named third party with expertise or prestige was mentioned: on other occasions, the opinions of anonymous third parties were invoked in support of the speaker's position. In some cases, where the citing of a high status third party was incidental to the topic of conversation, or evidently done to impress, this was coded as

"name-dropping". A few examples are provided below to illustrate this variety. Examples arose both in the partnership meetings and during interviews. Again, this strategy was often employed in combination with other devices, such as reported speech.

Chloe: But then we said "OK, but people are saying to us 'We really like the process and we really want to get involved in that'".

[Extract from 2nd observed partnership meeting]

In the fragment above, Chloe invokes anonyous third party assessments in order to persuade CrediCo of the value of DigiGen's co-creation process. She embeds this within reported speech, so that her CrediCo partners are simultaneously given two viewpoints: DigiGen's reaction to feedback from third parties and the assessments of the third parties themselves. This is an example of reported speech *within* reported speech, hence the use of both double and single quotation marks in the transcript.

In other cases, the assessments of third parties are slipped into the narrative as asides, to endorse the speaker's own assessment or claim. For example, below, DigiGen's CEO alludes to third party assessments following the handing over of a major DigiGen service to another organization.

Anna: It's a very courageous step, very few people do these kinds of things within the sector – and that's what we've heard back - um, to give things away.

[Extract from 1st interview with Anna, CEO of DigiGen.]

In contrast to the almost incidental citing of anonymous third party assessments, the following example is a case of name-dropping – the citing of high status third parties in order to impress. Anna is explaining that she has an outward facing role for DigiGen and that she is involved in policy work, illustrating this with the following statement.

Anna: I've just been on the phone with a major CEO of a global business who erm has connected me into a group that's led by Gordon Brown's ex-financial key minister, ((Name of Minister))

[Extract from 1st interview with Anna, CEO of DigiGen.]

Another example comes from a partnership meeting, where Chloe seeks to impress by citing high profile politicians, implying that she is on first name terms with a minister who visited DigiGen:

Chloe: We were supposed to have Michael Gove, but, um, he couldn't come in the end
Nicola: Oh
Chloe: But um, Edward was great actually.

Here, the then Secretary of State for Education is named, after which the Minister is mentioned by his first name. Shortly afterwards, Boris Johnson (the then Mayor of London) is also referred to by his first name:

Chloe: Um, and we're doing it in London Technology Week
Nicola: Ooo - cool!
Chloe: Which is backed by Boris' office.

[Extracts from 4th observed partnership meeting.]

This invoking of third parties as a strategy to enhance credibility was used predominantly by DigiGen, but not exclusively so. In the following extract, Trev from CrediCo employs a similar strategy, this time to back up the credibility of his positive assessment of another social partnership with which CrediCo is involved, by citing the winning of an award. He explains how the project uses sports coaches to act as role models in local primary schools.

Trev: …and talk to the children about their experiences, which is a great scheme - it won the Queen's award a couple of years ago.

[Extract from 6th observed partnership meeting.]

It is reasonable to infer that the greater use of this value building strategy by the nonprofit partner reflects its status within the partnership as a funded organization, needing to impress a key corporate funder.

5.4.5 Citing research / claiming knowledge or expertise

This is a similar strategy to invoking third parties, used to construct the value of the partner's own organization, by establishing its expertise or knowledgeability. Again, this was a strategy deployed principally, but not exclusively, by the nonprofit partner. A few examples will suffice to illustrate this value building strategy.

In this first example, Eva cites some research which DigiGen has undertaken with young men, emphasizing its value in terms of the alteration it brought about in DigiGen's understanding of young men's needs.

Eva: But this young men's group had given us so much insight into <u>how</u> they <u>want</u> to communicate and how they want to get that support. Erm it's just been phenomenal. And, and actually some of the things that we <u>thought</u> we knew were wrong?

[Extract from 7th observed partnership meeting.]

The stress placed on "how", "want" and "thought", together with the extreme case forumulation, "phenomenal", adds persuasive force. In the example below, Steve appeals more to reason than emotion when citing another piece of DigiGen research.

Steve: Um, so we're doing a piece of work, you're probably aware, about, around Theory of Change? So, this is, um (0.7) what our theory, based around academic research, is of how our services work, what, how the intervention with young people works. So we just have our first Theory of Change model now.

[Extract from 6th observed partnership meeting.]

Note how Steve mentions as an aside that DigiGen's model is "based around academic research" so as to enhance its credibility. A further example is the naming of a research project as a "lab" and the description of a "methodology" for collating "ethnographic data" from young people about their use of social media. CrediCo can be seen to use a similar strategy internally, in the naming of its training department as "CrediCo University" (see Chapter 4, section 4.3.2). Also, in the partnership meeting extract below, Rosa describes CrediCo's change of IT system to using cloud technology in terms of "building" a "lab". There is not literally a laboratory being built - which is a room or building equipped for scientific experiments - but the term "lab" serves to make CrediCo's database work sound scientific, experimental and cutting-edge. The assertion that CrediCo has "tonnes" of data is also non-literal and enhances the rhetorical impact.

Rosa: Um, so we want to use, um, big data, which has always been one of our strengths, I mean we have tonnes of it, so building this big data lab, um, we've er, we've ripped out kind of the software and technology we use in there and replaced it with something else. So we want to use big data, um, to give us a competitive edge in a digital world. They want to invest in cloud -

[Extract from 6th observed partnership meeting.]

5.4.6 Establishing personal credibility

Alongside strategies aimed at establishing organizational credibility, partners sometimes adopted strategies to establish the credibility of individuals. When new individuals joined the partnership meetings for the first time, extra efforts were sometimes made to establish their personal credibility, by citing their prior experience. Again, this strategy was more characteristic of nonprofit partners. (N.B. See also section 5.3.1 for behaviours aimed at engendering rapport by those newly involved in the partnership.) In the example below, Yvonne introduces herself to the meeting and explains that she is already well informed about the partnership, therefore competent to take over Chloe's role whilst the latter is on maternity leave. However, she hedges, expressing herself rather modestly and hesitantly. Her line manager, Eva, then steps in to reinforce her credibility with their CrediCo partners.

Yvonne: And I'm Yvonne Simons, um, I'm – I think I've met everyone – but I'm - er - Head of Development - Maternity for Chlo. So, um - but I've been at DigiGen for as long as Chlo - four and a half years now. So I've been in that, in the Development Team all that time °sort of° pretty much up to speed °but er - yeah°
Eva: Absolutely
Yvonne: Yeah.

[Extract from 7th observed partnership meeting]

Emily, a latecomer to the partnership, who has recently begun her new role as DigiGen's Commercial Development Mananger,

adopts a similar strategy, below, to establish her credentials with CrediCo.

Emily: Um, for me, I thought it was really interesting. I come from an innovation and commercial development and charity background, so it's quite an interesting mix of all those things.

[Extract from 8th observed partnership meeting]

As well as employing the value building strategy of demonstrating their personal credentials to participate in the partnership, individuals also took care to maintain their personal integrity. However, discursive strategies aimed at demonstrating integrity were employed to avoid undermining trust between partners and were therefore categorised as a value preserving practice (fig 5.1, 5.), rather than a value building practice. There were two strategies aimed at maintaining integrity, which recurred in the partnership talk. One was refraining from participating in put-down humour (see Chapter 6, section 6.4). The other strategy was refraining from overt criticism of competitors or third parties (see Chapter 6, section 6.3.4). Strategies aimed at maintaining integrity reflected asymmetries between the partners, hence examples and their exploration are deferred to Chapter 6.

5.5 Value affirmation and symmetrical talk

5.5.1 Building on one another's ideas

As explained in Chapter 6, asymmetrical talk was found to be the norm in this nonprofit-business partnership and symmetrical talk

was comparatively rare in the partnership meetings. However, this is not an all or nothing distinction, but a question of degree. Exchanges where partners were engaged in joint planning and built upon one another's ideas tended to be more symmetrical, with frequent changes of speaker, a fluent dialogue and each response introducing a new conversational initiative, to which the partner responded positively. In contrast, exchanges in which the funding relationship became salient were characterized by much more asymmetry (e.g. where the nonprofit partner was accounting for funding provided by the business, or seeking to persuade the business of the value of its work).

The following example provides a sequence of partners' conversational initiatives and responses, which illustrate the relatively uncommon symmetrical patterns that sometimes emerged in the partnership meeting data. The first extract is from a planning meeting, where the partners have written down their ideas on post-it notes and are sharing them and jointly trying to make sense of them. Inverted commas are used to denote what is being read from the post-it notes. The roles of questioner and responder shift between partners in a fairly symmetrical way.

Nicola: "Sharing what we learn", "Starting conversations that generate new ideas and innovations". Is that, it that going in there?
Liam: That's going in between the learning and the legacy, isn't it?
Nicola: Yeah
Liam: So it could sit in either, in a way
Chloe: Is this – "Sharing with other charities and corporates"-? ((She puts this post-it note with "Sharing what we learn"))

Nicola: Could you give us more about - yeah. Yeah…does this legacy piece sit in here? Around -
Liam: 'Cos it's reputational -
Nicola: Yeah. "Demonstrating -"
Liam: Partly at least
Nicola: Yeah. "Demonstrating the lega-" sorry - "Demonstrating the wins" and then "Talking about the 'What next?'"

[Extract from 3rd observed partnership meeting.]

This exchange continues, culminating in a jointly agreed framework for a partnership strategy. A further extract, from later on in the same planning session, further illustrates this pattern.

Nicola: That's it really
Chloe: Any context about where – what we've done to date?
Nicola: Yeah. I wonder whether there needs to be –
Chloe: A "Where are we now"?
Nicola: A "Where are we now", kind of thing, like how have things changed from like day one to right now, um – it doesn't want much detail, but -

[Extract from 3rd observed partnership meeting.]

Again, this exchange continues, with each partner alternately responding and making a new conversational initiative, which builds on previous ideas, to co-construct a joint plan. This symmetrical talk is characteristic of the positive feedback loop illustrated at fig. 5.1, where value building (2.) leades to value affirmation (3.), which leads to further value building. In the above example, Chloe's second turn finishes Nicola's sentence

for her and Nicola affirms Chloe's statement by mirroring "Where are we now". This mirroring feature of symmetrical partnership talk is explored in the next section.

5.5.2 Mirroring

In symmetrical talk, partners' objectives and understandings are fully aligned. They sometimes mirror one another's talk, which can serve as a value affirmation practice (fig. 5.1, 3.). This mirroring is a fleeting phenomenon, thus different to adopting one another's jargon (explained in section 5.2.2, above). An example of mirroring is given below, with the repetitions of "build" and "building" affirming the previous statement.

Nicola: Yeah. We could just build out -
Chloe: We could just build, keep building it
Nicola: Build out like a draft. By the end of Q1?

[Extract from 3rd observed partnership meeting.]

In this next example, Chloe's mirroring of the metaphor "meaty" affirms Nicola's statement, whilst also making a new conversational initiative.

Nicola: But it's (0.3) unless there's something, again, unless there's something meaty to say, about how we derive business value from this partnership, in a new and unusual way, then it's not going to be particularly (0.5) of interest.
Chloe: I think the digital piece could be the most meaty

[Extract from 4th observed partnership meeting.]

Mirroring often took place during planning sessions, as a value affirming practice (fig. 5.1, 3.), when partners were participating equally in quick-fire exchanges. The extract below is from a planning meeting and contains multiple examples of mirroring.

Nicola: Maybe. It kind of sits between, doesn't it?
Chloe: I'd say both, it's kind of both, for different reasons
Liam: Different reasons, yep.
Chloe: So it's about direct support and social impact
Nicola: Yep.
Chloe: It's about sustainability and legacy
Nicola: =legacy.

[Extract from 3rd partnership meeting.]

In the above example, Nicola's "kind of" is mirrored by Chloe; Chloe's "different reasons" is mirrored by Liam; Liam's "Yep" is mirrored by Nicola; and finally Chloe's "legacy" is mirrored by Nicola. It is worth noting that mirroring also occurred with partners' non-verbal behaviour. However, since the partnership meetings were not video-recorded, this behaviour could not be analyzed systematically. The use of nonverbal behaviour, such as mirroring body language, expressions and gestures was nevertheless sometimes noted in contemporaneous field notes. In the above example, the accompanying field notes read: *"The partners are all leaning towards one another, using hand gestures to convey enthusiasm"*.

Mirroring also often occurred with positive assessments, where partners demonstrated their agreement, as in the example below.

Rosa: That's good. Cool!
Chloe: Cool!
Rosa: So now we're happily in your hands!
Chloe: All right, cool.

[Extract from 6th partnership meeting]

In the above example, mirroring again occurs as part of value affirmation (fig. 5.1, 3.), where value building processes culminate in an agreement or decision.

5.5.3 Positive assessments and decision-making

Symmetrical partnership talk follows the conversational norm that positive assessments are followed by second positive assessments (Heritage & Raymond 2005). In the following extract, the alignment of the partners is made explicit in the comments "I was just thinking that actually" and "That's what I was going to say as well". The exchange ends with a positive assessment and a positive second assessment.

Chloe: Um (0.5) so, I did wonder whether that could be a really good event to engage some of the people at CrediCo
Nicola: Yeah. I was just thinking that actually. I'm wondering whether our digital guys know that London Technology Week is on, 'cos they might fancy going to some other events as well –
Chloe: That's what I was going to say as well

Nicola: and then swing by the DigiGen event - which would be fantastic
Chloe: Yeah, that would be awesome.

[Extract from 4th observed partnership meeting.]

Positive assessments often take place around decision-making, as in the above extract. Two further examples are given below to illustrate this pattern: the partners are aligned, an agreement has been reached and both partners affirm that they are happy with the decision.

Chloe: I think that's good. It sounds like a plan.
Nicola: Cool.
Chloe: All right. Yeah.
Nicola: Great then!

[Extract from 3rd observed partnership meeting.]

Eva: That shouldn't be a problem for us. It'll probably be Emily co-ordinating that, I imagine, because she's running a, will be running a London event as well
Emily: Yeah
Rosa: Fab!
Steve: Awesome!
Rosa: Cool.

[Extract from 8th observed partnership meeting.]

The succession of positive assessments affirm the value of the proposed course of action (see fig. 5.1, 3.), at the same time confirming that the decision has been agreed by both partners.

This section on symmetrical talk has given an indication of how the partnership dialogue is collectively brought forward to construct the value of the partnership, with each partner responding to the other by commenting on previous contributions and demonstrating their understanding or agreement (value affirmation), whilst in turn, making new conversational initiatives (value building). New understandings of the partnership and of desired outcomes are thereby co-created through discourse. The partnership dialogue is co-produced over time, agreements are reached and decisions are taken. However, this is *not* to imply that the partnership talk is characteristically symmetrical or equal: on the contrary, as will be explained in Chapter 6, it is strongly characterized by asymmetries.

5.6 Chapter summary

This chapter has addressed the research sub-question of how collaborative talk is constructed and deployed so as to co-construct value. It has described the functions of discursive practices found in collaborative partnership talk, explaining how these are strategic and action oriented, playing a critical role in constructing the value of the partnership.

A number of interpersonal skills and rhetorical strategies have been identified as key features of value building in collaborative partnership talk. Section 5.2 presented findings as to how partners aligned with one another, by constructing common approaches, interests and challenges through their talk and through the adoption of the partner organization's jargon. These commonalities functioned as discursive resources for building

value. Section 5.3 presented value building strategies aimed at strengthening relationships and building rapport and trust, including behaviours on greeting and parting which were aimed at engendering intimacy; the use of compliments and flattery; and the use of affiliative humour. Other value building practices involved establishing credibility, including the strategic use of business language and young people's language by the nonprofit partner. Reported speech was identified as a common feature of partnership talk, through which partners enhanced their credibility and the rhetorical effect of their narratives. Other strategies for establishing credibility were invoking third parties and citing research or claiming expertise.

Symmetrical talk was relatively uncommon in the partnership meetings, but this was a question of degree. The most symmetrical passages of talk occurred where partners were building upon one another's ideas on an equal basis, so as to co-create shared understandings of the partnership and jointly plan their activities. Where partners were aligned, they often mirrored one another's language, thereby affirming one another's statements. More symmetrical sections of talk tended to culminate in positive assessments by both partners and shared decision-making.

Before concluding this chapter, a caveat is in order: collaborative talk and asymmetrical talk should *not* be understood either as opposites or as mutually exclusive. On the contrary, partnership talk is characteristically both collaborative (as opposed to competitive) *and* asymmetrical. Many of the discursive features of collaborative talk presented in this chapter also occur within asymmetrical talk. However, the next chapter will present findings concerning features commonly found in more

asymmetrical patterns of partnership talk, which operate as value defending and value repairing processes.

Chapter 6: Value preservation & repair in asymmetrical talk

6.1 Setting the scene

6.1.1 Chapter overview

Whilst the partnership dialogue is co-constructed, it is rarely symmetrical: symmetry and asymmetry in partnership talk is also a question of degree. This chapter explores features characteristic of asymmetrical patterns of talk found in the partnership dialogue, to explore how misalignments, tensions and conflicts are managed, thereby preserving value and avoiding damage to the partnership.

It was observed in the ethnographic account (Chapter 4, section 4.4) that differences between partners tended to be downplayed. This was also evident in the partnership talk. However, the asymmetries between the partners, especially the difference in roles, with the business as the funding body and the nonprofit as the funded organization, formed an important context for interpreting the partnership talk. The stakes were far higher for the nonprofit, owing to the significance of the funding provided by the business. Cultural differences between the partners also occasionally surfaced, but were managed in such a way as to avoid overt conflict.

Asymmetry in talk is associated with forms of interactional dominance (Linell, 1990). However, focusing on asymmetries and on how controlling practices are mitigated in discourse does

not necessitate the investigation of power as an abstract, macro-level concept. As Linell states, "Dimensions of dominance in dialogue can be identified without any *specific* a priori assumptions of social order and social power; instead, dialogue analyses *per se* may lead us to a model of the provisions for and constraints on different sorts of social situations and communicative activities" (1990, p.157) (emphases in original). It is these micro-level interactional constraints and, more importantly, how they are managed so as to preserve value for the partnership, which is the main focus of this chapter.

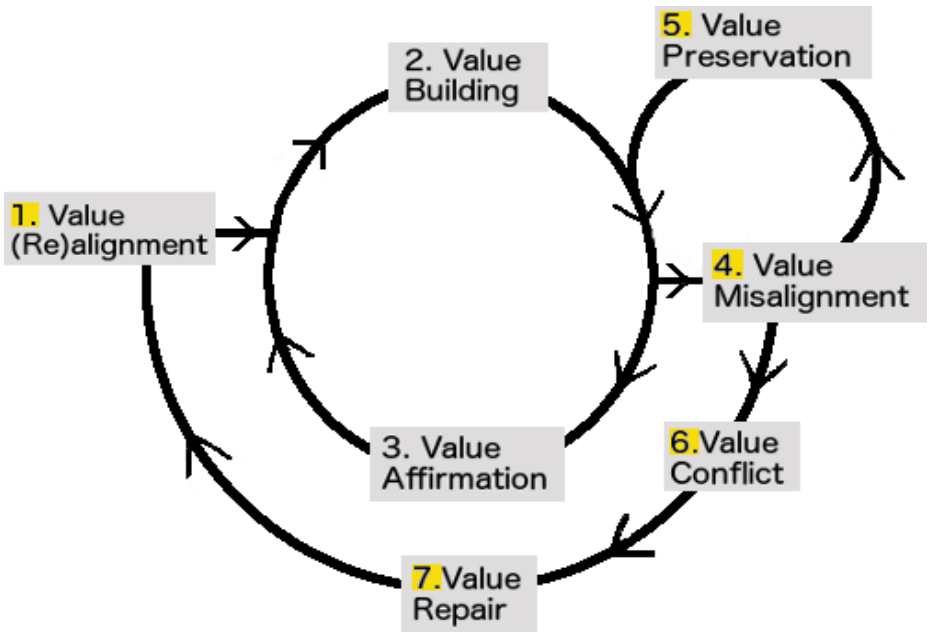
Since micro-contexts cannot be fully understood without some understanding of macro-level frames of reference, the structural power dynamics between the funder and funded organizations were inevitably an important part of the context for interpreting micro-level communication. Nevertheless, interactional dominance, which influences whose ideas and interpretations of value are taken up, was found not to correlate in a straightforward way with structural power. Indeed, the amount the two partner organizations talked and the frequency with which they initiated new topics of conversation had an inverse relationship to their structural power, the nonprofit partner being more dominant, both in terms of the quantity of talk and control of the agenda. This reflects the greater importance of the partnership for DigiGen and its reliance on the CrediCo funding, which gave DigiGen a greater incentive to seek to exert influence and control within the partnership meetings. However, when the business did engage in controlling practices, these were often less heavily mitigated than those of the nonprofit.

This chapter addresses the following sub-research question, which was derived inductively from the data analysis:

How are misalignments in asymmetrical talk managed so as to preserve or repair value and avoid overt conflict?

The value processes discussed in this chapter are highlighted in Figure 6.1, below.

Figure 6.1: Value preservation & repair processes



This chapter focuses principally on the value preservation (fig. 6.1, 5.) and value repair (*ibid*. 7.) processes, which occur when value misalignment (*ibid*. 4.) and / or conflict (*ibid*. 6.) become(s) apparent. This is necessarily a simplified model: in the real life complexity of partnership talk, distinctions between value misalignment and value conflict are not always clear-cut. Although *overt* conflict was avoided by the partners, in certain exchanges, underlying tensions became sufficiently evident for partners to respond by engaging in value repair practices, as well as value preservation practices. However, value conflict (fig. 6.1, 6.) was never tackled head on in such a way as to threaten the relationship, or require a major repair (*ibid*. 7.), leading to a major value realignment (*ibid*. 1). The nonproft sometimes

engaged in one-sided realignments (fig. 6.1, 1.), which reformulated the social value story of the partnership, but this was not a mutual realignment of value and did not transform the partnership as far as business value was concerned.

6.1.2 Summary of data coding processes

As with Chapter 5 (see section 5.1.3), the large volume of data from this research renders it necessary to be highly selective in the presentation of data extracts and examples were selected for their representativeness of distinctive features, their conciseness and their relationship with other discursive practices.

Table 6.1, below, presents a summary of the data coding processes relating principally to value preservation and value repair practices, moving from '1st order' features of partnership talk to '2nd order' value processes to '3rd order' styles of talk. There is overlap between categories, since the same features of talk can be used to perform slightly different functions, depending on their situated contexts.

Table 6.1: Value preserving & repairing processes in asymmetrical talk

1st order category: features of talk	2nd order category: value processes	3rd order category: style of talk
• Reformulating / summarising / reframing (one-sided)	Value realignment	ASYMMETRICAL
• Limited use of directive questioning • Evading the question • Mitigated interruptions / changes of subject • Mitigated or veiled criticism • Withholding of endorsement - minimally aligning • Withholding of endorsement - silence • Humour at expense of own organization • Self-deprecating humour	Value preservation	
• Defending / justifying • Disfluency (reversals, hesitations, hedging, etc.) • Orienting to partner's viewpoint / identifying with partner • Personal chat • Positive assessment / compliments / flattery	Value preservation / repair	

6.2 Value realignment - reformulating & summarizing

Partners sometimes summarized or drew conclusions from what had previously been said or done. These reformulations could potentially be quite powerful, in that they provided a means for participants to present perspectives which supported their own organization's agenda, or which reflected their own viewpoint, thereby reconstructing the value of the partnership. DigiGen tended to use part of the partnership meetings to recap on its previous activity, as well as to plan ahead. This reporting back to the funder provided opportunities to persuade CrediCo of the value of DigiGen's work. A brief example is below.

Chloe: So if year 1 was rebuilding, year 2 was (0.3) transforming, this year is kind of about (0.3) consolidating and growing?

[Extract from 5th observed partnership meeting.]

Chloe frames the story of the partnership in a particular way, but she mitigates this slightly, with "if" and "kind of" and with a questioning, raised intonation at the end of her statement. A further example occurs in the same meeting and is even more heavily mitigated: here Chloe is tentative in reformulating the story of the partnership for CrediCo, with the repetitions of "sort of" and the use of "hopefully" and "a little bit".

Chloe: Just to have a theme of the best of sort of our time so far, on this partnership, this sort of – it's all – hopefully you can see how it's all sort of interlinked a little bit, from the previous stuff

[Extract from 5th partnership meeting.]

This pattern of summarizing became more evident after the Head of CSR left the business (see Appendix F), when a new business lead (Rosa) began attending the partnership meetings and needed to be persuaded of the value of the partnership by DigiGen. Reformulations also tended to become stronger in the later partnership meetings, as DigiGen sought to convince CrediCo that it had delivered good value for money. The following extract comes from the end of a summary by Steve, now DigiGen's new Chief Executive, of the impact of DigiGen's work over the lifetime of the partnership.

Steve: So tha- that's kind of the, the overview of where we've come. And (0.3) it, it means that even in this three year time, we've got a really strong brand, we've got products which are up to date and look good and that's exactly what we needed. We are performing well, on the engagement front, we've got a really strong offering going on You Tube, we've had a co-creation process where we use volunteers, working really well in getting products that work well for young people. And it, and it's, its cons-, it's continued to allow us – the, the more – those things working well allows us a) to leverage more funding and b) to start significant, looking at significant (0.3) <u>trading</u> opportunities
Rosa: Mm:

Steve: Because we've got ( ) with young people, we've got the expertise and we've got the demonstrable skill set

[Extract from 8th observed partnership meeting.]

The above listing of a succession of DigiGen's own positively evaluated achievements serves an important rhetorical purpose. The use of anaphora (repetitions of "we've got") enhances this effect, aiming to impress CrediCo with DigiGen's success and rhetorically reconstructing the value of the partnership (contrast Chapter 5, section 5.3.3, on the use of positive assessment by a *partner*).

However, since these reformulations were one-sided and a feature of asymmetrical exchanges, they were interpreted as attempts at unilateral value realignment, rather than reciprocal value aligning or value building processes. In the above extract, Rosa's minimally aligning "Mm" is indicative of a misalignment between partners (see section 6.3.4., Withholding endorsement - minimally aligning). This turned out to be the final partnership meeting (see Appendix F) and DigiGen did not succeed in persuading CrediCo to renew the funding beyond the agreed term of the partnership. Value misalignment (fig. 6.1, 4.) is further explored below, together with strategies employed to preserve the value of the partnership (fig. 6.1, 5.).

6.3 Value misalignment & preservation

6.3.1 Limited use of directive questioning

Directive questions are those which demand specific answers, therefore they tend to be more controlling than open and reflective questions. (For example, a directive question might be, "Why did you do *X*?", whereas an open, reflective question might be "What do you think?). One of the functions of the quarterly partnership meetings was for the nonprofit to report back on activities carried out using the funding from the business. Therefore it may be expected that, during certain phases of partnership meetings, the business would engage in directive questioning and the nonprofit in responding. However, this form of questioning was actually quite unusual in the data.

In the rare cases where there are a succession of directive questions from the business, this creates an asymmetry in the talk between the partners, in terms of the power dynamic between them, with the business acting as the dominant party, holding the nonprofit to account, and the nonprofit being reactive and justifying or defending what it has been doing. The example below illustrates this pattern. Eleanor and Lauren are both from the business and they put a series of questions to Elliot (from the charity), who is providing responses.

Eleanor: W-what's different about this ((Name of app)) then to last year's? Has it been completely redone, or is it the same?

Elliot: It's bee:::n (0.5) so, I can't remember what we've just seen – it's been °sort of° tweaked, yeah. And so it's sort of been chan-
Eleanor: OK. Is it the same character?
Elliot: The same characters, yeah, the same look and feel. Um, that was just initially a very early prototype model to, to make sure it was working, essentially. Um, it's now in a good place to go (0.5) wider. I think we had to test it with the audience a little bit, so, er, it's - it just works a lot better that it did. Um, a bit clearer and simple to use. Um (0.3) so yeah, it's it's essentially the same, but improved, °I think, yeah°.
Lauren: Do you know what social campaign you'll be doing around it yet?
Elliot: Um, that is what I am, I am doing on my return back this week.

[Extract from 7th observed partnership meeting]

Elliot's initial response is hesitant and he hedges (with "I can't remember" and the repetitions of "sort of") before going on to justify the improvements that have been made to the mobile application over the previous year. Eleanor then interrupts Elliot's response, which is another controlling move (see section 6.3.3), before putting a second question. Elliot continues to hesitate and hedge after Eleanor's second question (with "essentially", "a little bit", "er" and "I think"). Lauren's question then produces another defensive response from Elliot, who avoids replying directly (see section 6.3.2, 'Evading the question', below) and he justifies his lack of a plan for a social media campaign by his having been away on annual leave.

Directive questioning was most evident where the business adopted the role of a funding body, holding the nonprofit to account. Responses were sometimes then demanded, rather than merely solicited or invited, putting the nonprofit partner under an obligation to respond. However, the more usual pattern was for the nonprofit partner to prepare and initiate updates for the business partner, with the business chipping in with supportive comments and positive assessments (see Chapter 5, sections 5.3.2 and 5.3.3). This limited use of directive questioning prevented the partnership talk becoming too asymmetrical and was therefore categorized as a value preserving strategy (fig. 6.1,5.).

The controlling strategy of asking a succession of questions was even more rarely adopted by the nonprofit. However, during the last observed partnership meeting, when there was an urgent need for the nonprofit to push the business concerning the prospects for future funding, the nonprofit partners did engage in some directive questioning behaviour, as in the example below.

Steve: Who do you think would be a good person to start talking to here about that? So (0.5) bearing in mind we've got an opportunity to get to ( ) next year, so we're going to start doing this, we may as well start doing (0.5) something practical –
Rosa: Mm:
Steve: - with C-Co
Rosa: Mm:
Emily: [Is it worth talking to the er-]
Steve: [So, who do you think] would be the person to talk to?

Steve puts his question twice, the second time talking over his subordinate colleague, Emily (which is another controlling move). The word "doing" is emphasized and repeated which, together with the word "practical", forces a decision, putting CrediCo partners into a position where they have to make a definite commitment. This is atypical behaviour from DigiGen, based on their style of talk in previous meetings. However, it occurs again, later in the same meeting, with Eva putting several directive questions to CrediCo, for example:

Eva: Does that meet with your planning expectations?

[Extract from 8th observed partnership meeting.]

This turned out to be the final partnership meeting and DigiGen had already requested and received a final, early instalment of funding from CrediCo. Therefore the charity had, in a sense, little to lose. However, despite adopting this strategy of putting more directive questions to CrediCo, DigiGen still avoided asking directly whether the business would provide them with future funding. Eva approaches the subject in the question below, but she hesitates and hedges with "um", "er", "you know" and "sort of", only hinting at DigiGen's intention of putting a funding proposal to CrediCo for the next four year period.

Eva: And, um, er, you know, would DigiGen still fit into that strategy, if we start thinking about what we're going to propose and for the, sort of four years after that?

[Extract from 8th observed partnership meeting.]

Eva is asking, in a very round about way, whether CrediCo will continue to support DigiGen financially. Trev's response (below) is to avoid injuring the relationship with DigiGen by overcommiting in terms of non-financial support (using the extreme case formulation, "no brainer") so as to mitigate CrediCo's refusal to commit on the financial side. He also uses his senior manager, Naomi, as a resource to avoid committing financially.

Trev: Um (0.5) yeah, from the – support-wise, yeah, it's a no brainer, it's no problem at all.
Rosa: Yeah
Trev: We'll continue supporting with (0.3) advocates around the business, erm, the (0.2) volunteers coming to visit et cetera, that's no problems at all. From the monetary side of things, it's a conversation for Naomi.

[Extract from 8th observed partnership meeting.]

This kind of defensive response to an unwanted question was value preserving (fig. 6.1, 5.), in that it avoided the damage to the relationship which might have arisen from a straight negative reply. Another value preserving strategy was evading the question.

6.3.2 Evading the question

As explained above, the act of asking a question is a conversational initiative, which puts the respondent under an obligation to provide a relevant response (Linell, 1990). Avoiding this obligation by evading a question breaks this conversational rule, enabling the respondent to wrest back control of the dialogue, rather than allowing herself to be controlled, thereby exercising social power at the micro-level. However, in the partnership talk, evading a question was used as a value preserving strategy, for example, to maintain one's integrity and / or to avoid causing offence. In the following example, Chloe makes use of this technique to enable her to avoid belittling her own Chief Executive, Anna, whilst also avoiding offending her key partner, Nicola.

Chloe: And the Development Board are progressing with plans for their 'Cultivation Dinner'. So Roger, I think, is going to, um, hold his own intimate dinner. His role is kind of still being (0.3) talked about. Given where he's at.
Nicola: I think he's going back to the US (0.3) some time next (0.5) spring type time, I think, as far as I'm aware.
Chloe: I think that's what he told Anna as well
Nicola: She would have had a bit of a cry? [((Laughs))]
Chloe: [Um:: you know] I've actually lost track of how many conversations have happened with Roger, to be honest. He was at the last meeting which I was at and he was brilliant, as always. Amazing just influence and energy in the room, just incredible.

[Extract from 1st observed partnership meeting.]

CrediCo's former Chief Executive, Roger had been acting in a voluntary capacity as a member of DigiGen's Development Board and was greatly admired by Nicola and other CrediCo staff. However, Nicola's question as to whether DigiGen's Chief Executive, Anna, would have "had a bit of a cry", whilst a compliment to Roger, is rather disparaging with respect to Anna. Chloe avoids colluding in this by not offering a direct reply, but she mitigates this controlling move by complimenting Roger excessively, thereby also keeping Nicola on side (see also the example in Chapter 5, section 5.3.2, which overlaps with this excerpt).

In the example below, it is Nicola who evades a question from Chloe. DigiGen has been suggesting the idea for co-producing electronic badges, which recognize volunteers' learning experiences. However, the suggestion has not been taken up by CrediCo. Chloe pushes for a response by putting a direct question. However, Nicola still avoids giving a direct reply, apparently not wishing to make a commitment, as she is unconvinced of the value of digital badges (this is made clearer later in the meeting).

Chloe: Or you can do, as I say, joint badges (0.5). So, what do you think about that, actually?
Nicola: Have you got, have you got any links? – I'm just thinking about, you know, it's great to get the badges and great to get the kind of recognition that you've done something. Is there then the next step up after that even. Um, to say, well, if you want to make a career out of this, here's some companies that would, that would, that we've got links with, that would love to offer

you the opportunity, like, you know – do you know what I mean, like-?

[Extract from 1st observed partnership meeting.]

In this example, Nicola evades Chloe's question by responding with another question. However, as in the first extract, her avoidance of the question is mitigated by compliments (repetition of "it's great to…") and by a lot of hedging ("you know" and "like" are both used twice). Nicola takes care to praise the badges, thus avoiding causing offence to Chloe, whilst also suggesting ways in which they could be improved with "a next step up after that, even". However, the idea of co-producing badges was never taken forward.

In both of the above examples, a question gives rise to a value misalignment between partners (fig. 6.1, 4.), but the respondent successfully evades the question, without causing a conversational hitch (i.e. without causing conflict or otherwise disrupting the smooth flow of the conversation).

6.3.3 Mitigated interruptions & changes of subject

Interrupting a partner mid-sentence tends to be a controlling move and can be indicative of a misalignment between partners. However, interruptions need to be interpreted in the situated context of the partnership talk. For example, they may be inadvertent or more a consequence of enthusiasm than an attempt to silence a partner. In the following example, Chloe's

eagerness to put forward a positive proposal causes her to interrupt Nicola.

Nicola: But your challenge is resource. Our challenge is (0.3) people not having a digital mindset, perhaps within the organization and [( )]
Chloe: [Which is] why I think it could be cool to actually do something together

[Extract from 3rd observed partnership meeting.]

Partners sometimes signalled when an interruption was inadvertent by apologising. They also sometimes signalled a sudden change of subject, as in the extract below, which contains an interruption, followed by a change of topic.

Chloe: It was interesting, it was just one of those meetings where there's loads of -
Nicola: =Loads of information, that's awesome
Chloe: Yeah, yeah
Nicola: Um, briefly – just because the ICRS reminds me, did you, have you heard any more from ((name of funder))?

[Extract from 2nd observed partnership meeting.]

Here, Nicola interrupts Chloe and completes her sentence for her, but the positive assessment ("that's awesome") mitigates the controlling move and Chloe shows that she is not offended

("Yeah, yeah"). The interruption creates an opportunity for Nicola to change the subject, but again she mitigates this by indicating that she only intends to diverge from the topic "briefly" and by giving a justification for her intervention ("just because the ICRS reminds me"). This is only a minor misalignment concerning the preferred topic of conversation and Nicola's mitigations of her interruption are value preserving practices (fig. 6.1, 5.).

Another way of mitigating a sudden change of topic is to ask a polite question as to whether one can introduce it, as in the excerpt below.

Chloe: Can I ask a question about the (0.3) brand differentiation (0.3) point?
Nicola: Yep
Chloe: Because one thing that –
Nicola: Oh, can I – what do you want to do about lunch?
Chloe: °Yeah, sorry°

[Extract from 2nd observed partnership meeting.]

In this example, Chloe instigates a new conversational initiative, but she does so in a deferential way, by framing it as a polite question. Nicola initially grants the request, but then interrupts Chloe with a sudden change of topic. Yet it is Chloe who apologises (presumably because they had previously agreed to stop for lunch and she is conscious that Nicola is hungry). Nicola is clearly behaving as the more dominant partner in this exchange, however, she still mitigates her interruption slightly,

with "can I", as though seeking permission for the interruption. Both partners are taking care not to undermine the relationship and are therefore engaged in value preserving behaviour (fig. 6.1, 5.).

In the following example, Rosa interrupts Yvonne to make a negative comment about digital badges, suggesting that they are nothing new. This functions as a mitigated and indirect criticism of DigiGen, which is developing its own digital badge scheme to recognise the learning acquired by its volunteers.

Yvonne: We've also seen, um, Linked-In, apparently, are actually looking at how they can, um, adapt their services to be able to display badges. Um, so people can start to use them as part of [their -]
Rosa: [Yeah.] To me it's quite old school. It's just what they've got at university, they've got a badge next to their name on Linked-In

[Extract from 6th observed partnership meeting.]

Even though in this case Rosa's interruption is not mitigated, for example, with an apology, her criticism of the partner organization is very indirect. Mitigated or veiled criticism of a partner or a third party was another feature of partnership talk and is explored further below.

6.3.4 Mitigated or veiled criticism

Where criticisms of other organizations were made, these were often heavily mitigated, veiled or glossed over. This was therefore categorized as a value preserving stratgegy (fig. 6.1, 5.). Criticisms tended to be more heavily mitigated in the case of DigiGen, which may in part reflect that the nonprofit sector is more strongly collaborative and less competitive than the private sector. Also, in a partnership context, overt criticism of a fellow charity whose mission is to create social value is a strategy that would be likely to backfire. Criticising another company, for example, for being a bad partner, or for putting profit before social responsibility, may also backfire in a nonprofit-business partnership context, where the emphasis is on collaboration rather than competition. However, the stakes were not so high for CrediCo as for DigiGen, since the latter relied upon the funding from CrediCo. The heavier mitigation by DigiGen as compared with CrediCo may therefore reflect the power differential between the partners, with DigiGen needing to take greater care to maintain its integrity.

DigiGen's avoidance of overt criticism of a fellow charity is illustrated in the example below. Rosa has asked Steve to name DigiGen's "key competitors", who offer similar services to young people. Steve responds by emphasizing the difference between DigiGen and other charities, constructing DigiGen's services as more valuable, whilst avoiding direct criticism of other charities.

Steve: The two people we always look at – well I look at – is, is somebody like ((Name of charity)), who is a similar service, but they're actually a routing service, so you go and you have a question -

Rosa: Ah, they point you –
Steve: - they shoot you off. And they don't hold the amount of content that we have
Rosa: Right
Steve: And they don't have the same (0.8) community function that we have
Rosa: Right
Steve: So they <u>don't</u> have the same offering

[Extract from 5th observed partnership meeting.]

CrediCo was sometimes more overtly critical of its competitors, citing their perceived unethical behaviour in contrast to its own. (For example, see the first extract in section 6.3.5, where CrediCo is critical of big business' approach to CSR and the final extract, also of 6.3.5, where CrediCo is critical of pay day lenders.) However, mitigated criticism was also a strategy sometimes employed within CrediCo, for example, see Chapter 4, section 4.3.7, where the new Chief Executive mitigates his criticism of CrediCo's US headquarters, so as to maintain his integrity with CrediCo's UK staff, but is more overt in criticising pay day lenders.

In contrast, CrediCo's criticisms of DigiGen tended to be heavily mitigated, as in the example below.

Nicola: <u>Cool</u>! (1.0) ((laughs)). Just a bit more development, just a little bit more development needed, on that one.
Elliot: ((Laughs))
Chloe: Yep
Nicola: °Just a little bit°

[Extract from 1st observed partnership meeting.]

A further example occurs later in the same meeting, where Nicola is evidently unconvinced about DigiGen's new logo, but she nevertheless identifies aspects on which she can comment positively: she hedges and hesitates, endeavouring to soften the fact that she is unimpressed.

Nicola: Yeah. I like the, I like the tone as well. (0.5) Just I'm not sure about the (0.3) there's something I don't - there's something I'm not sure about and I'm not sure what it is yet. (4.0). But, you know, I do, I do like it. It's strong.

[Extract from 1st observed partnership meeting.]

Unsurprisingly, DigiGen's criticisms of CrediCo tended to be very heavily mitigated. In the following extract, Nicola has been explaining that CrediCo was unclear as to the business case for funding the partnership with DigiGen. (Chloe's eventual response follows on from the 3rd excerpt used in section 6.3.6, below.)

Chloe: I'm not really surprised. I mean, obviously I don't know what was going on internally, but I remember, um, a presentation that we did – and I always remember this slide – we did a slide about, like, business case?
Nicola: Yeah
Chloe: Um, and about, like different stakeholder groups and that kind of thing. I'm not sure about DigiGen, but, you know, about supporting young people, the relevance and how CrediCo could leverage that. And (0.5) I remember thinking, mm: (0.3) there

wasn't really much, like – I think there was only <u>one</u> internally that really kind of - not "got it",
Nicola: Yeah
Chloe: but <u>engaged</u> with it, or that it resonated with. For whatever reason.

[Extract from 1st observed partnership meeting.]

Chloe's implied criticism of CrediCo is heavily mitigated, first by her acknowledgement that she did not know what was "going on internally" in the business, then in her final sentence, where there are two reversals, as she attempts to soften any appearance of criticism that only one CrediCo representative appeared to appreciate the business case for providing financial support for young people. She mitigates this even further by adding "For whatever reason", indicating that she does not know why this was the case, therefore she is not in a position to judge CrediCo.

In this section, I have cross-referred to several examples used in sections 6.3.5 and 6.3.6, below, on withholding endorsement from a partner. This is partly for the sake of conciseness, but also to highlight a recurring pattern in the data. The withholding of endorsement from a partner was sometimes used in response to mitigated criticism. Both parties are intent on avoiding conflict and preserving value: one by mitigating their criticism and the other by withholding their endorsement, either through silence, or through the use of minimally aligning responses.

6.3.5 Withholding of endorsement – minimally aligning

Partners sometimes indicated their disapprobation by giving very minimally aligning responses, or very brief acknowledgements of what their partner was saying, such as "mm-hm", or "mm", rather than positive assessments or endorsements. However, the context was very important when interpreting these exchanges, so as to differentiate between the withholding of endorsement and a partner merely being in listening mode and not wishing to interrupt. It was also necessary to compare these passages with other exchanges where the partners were clearly aligned, so as to identify deviations from the norm.

Where partners were clearly aligned, supportive backchannel cues (such as "Great!" and "Wow!") were frequently given, which do not constitute conversational 'turns' in their own right, but instead serve to demonstrate understanding and endorsement. The absence or minimal use of supportive backchannel cues could sometimes be taken to signify the withholding of endorsement by a partner.

In the example below, Trev qualifies his praise of a business competitor, by making a generalised criticism of big businesses as often insincere about CSR and positioning CrediCo as a comparatively small business, with a more committed approach. Steve, from DigiGen, is noncommittal in his response, neither endorsing nor refuting Trev's generalisation.

Trev: Yeah. I was pretty impressed with them. I just hope they stick at it, 'cos the problem with some of these big businesses is that they do it for a year, they're kind of quite faddy

Steve: Mm.
Trev: You see it quite a lot with ((name of another big business)). They'll, they'll kind of focus on (0.5) primary schools. They'll throw millions of pounds at a primary school programme –
Rosa: =What's kind of hot at the time?
Chloe: Ye- oh, right.
Trev: And then six months later, they're at a conference and they're there selling this "We're focussing on the environment", it's all about the environment. It's a bit "I thought you were doing primary schools"
Chloe: Oh-mm, yeah ((empathising tone))
Trev: I don't think they give themselves time to actually (0.6) focus on something

[Extract from 5th observed partnership meeting.]

In response to Steve's minimally aligning response, Trev cites an example to back up his claim, using the word "throw" as opposed to, for example, "invest", to imply that some big businesses also tend to be ineffective, wasteful, careless and incompetent when it comes to CSR. Rosa chips in to back up Trev, the upward intonation at the end of her turn inviting a response from DigiGen. However, Chloe's endorsement is cut short: she self-corrects with a reversal, "Ye- oh, right", declining either to endorse or refute CrediCo's criticism. Trev continues his criticism, using reported speech to help emphasize his point (see Chapter 5, section 5.4.3). This elicits a sympathetic response from Chloe, but she still withholds endosement of his criticism of big businesses' approach to CSR. Since DigiGen has had several partnerships with big businesses, and aspires to have others in the future, it would have compromised their integrity to endorse

CrediCo's position. However, directly challenging their expressed view would have risked damaging DigiGen's rapport with their partner. Hence the use of minimally aligning responses was a value preservation practice (fig. 6.1, 5.).

The following extract is worth quoting at some length, in order to illustrate a clear pattern whereby DigiGen attempts to persuade CrediCo of the value of one of its projects, but meets with a series of very minimally aligning responses, in the form of quietly spoken "Mm's", which indicate that CrediCo is, in fact, withholding its endorsement and there is a misalignment between the partners.

Yvonne: So they are funding us to develop, um, an employability badge, which is going to be a Mozilla digital badge, um, which is designed to accredit young people's employability skills?
Rosa: °Mm°
Yvonne: So, um, we know from our research that, um, you know, employers say "We want young people with, you know, these sort of soft skills to be work ready" – communication, punctuality, you know, confidence and that. And we know that young people learn those skills through volunteering, but often <u>they</u> tell <u>us</u> that they struggle to communicate those, understand how the skills and things they have °sort of° gained, with us, or with other organizations, can apply to the world of work? And how to explain them. So this badge is about, um, accrediting those skills. Erm, so that young people can demonstrate to employers that they're work ready.
Rosa: °Mm°
Yvonne: Um, we're developing with, um, our partner, ((name of nonprofit partner)), a Danish digital charity, who deliver quite a

lot of similar services to Di- er, DigiGen. They kind of do a lot of online volunteering and peer support services over in Denmark. And they face similar challenges in Denmark – they don't really have these, um, means of accrediting skills and sort of helping their volunteers demonstrate the, you know, things that they've learnt. So, um, the project's going to start on the 1st of March and what we're looking to do is to develop this, um, accreditation system, in partnership with employers?

Rosa: °Mm°

Yvonne: And HR professionals, because we think it's got real potential to help young people kind of, er, access the world of work, but we need employers to obviously make sure that we're accrediting the <u>right</u> skills -

Rosa: °Mm°

Yvonne: - that we're meeting employers' needs. And, crucially, also to really endorse and get behind that badge, so –

Rosa: =°Mm°

Yvonne: - saying "Yes", you know, "young people who have achieved this accreditation, we would consider work ready", and that's a real kind of key piece and part of the sort of engagement, um, work. So, we're going to be doing co-creation sessions in London and in Denmark, um, and we'll be developing the badging system, you know – and with young people and with HR professionals. And we'll be developing that over the next year and putting our volunteers through it. But we've got a <u>big</u> vision for the piece, is that, um, what we really want is not just to be a DigiGen specific and ((name of nonprofit partner)) specific badge, we really see the potential for it to be open to other charities and other organizations. So we want it to become an open source thing that can really become the standard?, in the sector, for so-, you know, for recognizing that. So part of the co- you know, why we're involved with the other charity and things

and the co-creation as well, so that we're actually creating something that's really transferable, so that a young volunteer in the UK, or Denmark, or wherever, can get the skills, but that can be recognized with employers in other countries. And obviously, from the EU's point of view that °sort of° transferability of skills across, you know, er, the EU, is a really, a really key piece of it. So it's a big vision that we wanna, um, but it's an exciting one.
Rosa: °Mm°
Yvonne: And we see that this digital badge, um, agenda's really growing and kind of coming up the priority list for a lot of employers at the minute, so we've seen, you know, ((name of a big business partner)) have been developing one and we've been chatting to them a bit
Rosa: Mm

[Extract from 6th observed partnership meeting.]

In her second turn, above, Yvonne tries using the reported speech of employers (see Chapter 5, section 5.4.3) and emphasizing what young people themselves say, to enhance credibility. She also ends her first and third turns with upward intonation (indicated by question marks), to encourage responses from CrediCo. However, Rosa's responses continue to be very minimalistic. In her lengthy, penultimate turn of this extract, Yvonne uses reported speech again and attempts to elicit enthusiasm from CrediCo by emphasizing that this is a "key piece" of work for which DigiGen has a "big vision". She repeats both these expressions towards the end of the same turn, emphasizing that the project is "exciting". However, Rosa evidently remains unimpressed. The continuation of this passage is cited in section 6.3.1, above, on 'Interrupting and changing

the subject', when Rosa goes on to critique the digital badge scheme, which confirms that her prior, minimally aligning responses were indicative of withholding endorsement for DigiGen's project.

In this final example, it is DigiGen that is withholding endorsement from CrediCo. Rosa acknowledges the tensions between CrediCo's role as a sub-prime lender keen to grow its customer base and its corporate social responsibility towards customers vulnerable to debt problems. Rosa alludes to the tensions facing CrediCo in terms of "balance", which she mentions three times in this extract. As a charity providing information and advice to young people, DigiGen would be expected to adopt the perspective of financially disadvantaged people, who may be burdened by debt. DigiGen's responses are monosyllabic and muted - not challenging CrediCo's position, but withholding positive endorsement. Again, a relatively lengthy extract is needed to demonstrate this strategy of withholding endorsement by giving only minimally aligning responses.

Rosa: So, I think it's, it's getting the balance. So, obviously, in, in the industry we're in, it's ( ) is very much critique. We have a new regulator coming in now, we have a US regulator in as well and they're becoming more and more intrusive? Erm, so it's around getting the balance that we, we, we pride ourselves on being what we call a 'High Street' lender. So that's around, um, offering people credit where they need to rebuild their credit record, to people who wouldn't traditionally get credit elsewhere. And they would need to be going to one of your pay day lenders, or a door step kind of loan shark. We're kind of – we see

ourselves as, we're kind of those last resorts, before you get to that. And we don't want people to get down that route at all.

Eva: °Mm° ((non-committal tone))

Rosa: So it's getting that – we pride ourselves on being that type of lender? But, at the same time, we, you can't say 'yes' to everybody, 'cos then we expose ourselves up to massive amounts of risk

Eva: =°Yeah. Mm:°

Rosa: So we have to, the measures our leadership team will look at is "What does our accept rate look like?". It was traditionally just too low. Erm, "Who, who are we saying 'no' to and why?". And there were groups of people that we would say 'no' to, like people who were over a certain age, erm, silly things, we would kind of rule out. Erm, so it's looking at those and seeing where we could start to tap into those markets. Erm, but then we also need to obviously look at the amount of customers we have that may be falling into collections, where they're missing payments, or they're defaulting

Eva: °Mm°

Rosa: And if we're, if we're defaulting, and we've had to, and we're not able to get back the money that we're owed, then that's where we're – those things need to kind of have a happy balance. Erm, but we're traditionally very, very risk averse. We're the only credit card lender that, for example, when you apply to us for credit, we look at 2 different, um, credit files, not just 1, which is traditionally what a lot of our competitors do, we look at 2.

Eva: °Mm°

Rosa: So we are quite risk averse. So it's, it's getting those things right, that we can open up, erm, credit to more people? But without exposing ourselves to, to too much risk.

Eva: °Mm°

Rosa: And we have to be able to show up to our regulators as a responsible lender
Eva: °Yeah, mm. Yeah°
Rosa: There's so much pressure there, so we, we have to be – like Simon obsesses about having the word "resiliently" on our imperatives, so, not just to grow, we have to kind of (0.5) please our regulators, who give us permission to operate in what we do in this market. So we need to be able to show that we're going after resilient growth, i.e. we lend money, they pay it back, they're not gonna default
Eva: °Yeah°
Rosa: So
Eva: Yeah
Rosa: It's a tricky one. But we, we're doing great there, as Trev said, I think it was about 8 years ago that we grew as much as we are now. So we want to continue to grow, even more
Eva: °Mm:° ((non-committal tone))

[Extract from 8th observed partnership meeting.]

Rosa explains that the financial services industry is subject to a high level of regulatory scrutiny, but the negative connotations of the word "intrusive", suggest that CrediCo views increased regulation as undesirable. Rosa's upward intonation after "intrusive?" invites a response, however, DigiGen does not endorse this view.

Rosa presents CrediCo in a positive light by stating that they provide an alternative to lenders who charge astronomical rates of interest on short term loans. This strategy is commonly

deployed within CrediCo – Nicola previously drew this same comparison (see Chapter 4, section 4.3.6) and it was also made by Simon, the CEO, in his first address to staff (section 4.3.7). Thus CrediCo is constructed as saving people from disreputable lenders and predatory "loan sharks". Again, DigiGen's non-committal responses do not positively endorse this perspective.

The phrase "we pride ourselves" is repeated in the above extract: this is another rhetorical strategy commonly used within CrediCo to encourage staff morale (see Chapter 4, sections 4.3.5 and 4.3.7). However, later in the extract, customers are referred to as markets to be tapped into, rather than people to be saved from loan sharks. Rosa also repeats that CrediCo is "risk averse", thereby emphasizing that they are not an irresponsible lender. However, this too does not draw a positive endorsement from DigiGen.

Between her third and fourth turn, Rosa even shifts pronouns from "they're defaulting" to "we're defaulting", to give the appearance of identifying with customers. The negative social impacts of increased consumer debt potentially conflicts with the aim of growing the company, but Rosa presents this in a positive light as "opening up" opportunities for people to obtain credit, whilst managing the risk of non-repayment of debt. Again, DigiGen's minimally aligning responses avoid either contradicting or positively endorsing this view, thus preserving the value of the partnership.

6.3.6 Withholding of endorsement - silence

There were fewer clear-cut instances of a partner indicating their disagreement through silence: minimally aligning comments or acknowledgements were the more usual pattern. Interpreting these silences also relied upon an ethnographic understanding both of the situated context and of the wider contexts of the partnership discourse.

Borrowing from conversation analysis, there are many different types of silence within talk, including pauses within turns and between turns (Sachs et al., 1974). What I am terming 'conversational hitches' may involve either extended lapses or other kinds of disruptions to the smooth flow of talk. However, the withholding of endorsement does not necessarily create a lengthy silence or disruption. A partner who is not currently holding the floor may simply remain silent and neglect to speak at a transition relevance place (TRP). The speaker may respond by extending their turn. However, great care is needed over the interpretation of silences in multiparty talk, since it is not necessarily evident which individual should be next to take the floor. Also, in a meeting setting, even where meetings are informal, partners may be expected to remain mostly silent whilst a particular agenda item is being addressed.

In the two extracts immediately below, Elliot from DigiGen is explaining his organisation's new logo to CrediCo. The absence of supportive comments from CrediCo is unusual in the data and indicative that they are unconvinced about the new logo. This is recognised by Elliot in his repeated attempts to convince CrediCo of the logo's value. At several points, Elliot pauses, but there is no response from CrediCo, therefore he extends his turn. Elliot's

recognition that he still has work to do to persuade CrediCo of the logo's value becomes more explicit at the end of the second extract, where he acknowledges the need for the logo to "come to life".

Elliot: So this is the new DigiGen logo.
(3.0)
Elliot: The primary logo is actually the top one, the DigiGen, the yes/no, the yin yang. Um, initially it would always appear with a secondary logo, whilst we go through this journey of implementation.
Nicola: OK. °Mm-hm°. ((disappointed tone))
Elliot: Erm, and ideally at some point, this cursor itself will be used on its own, so we hope we'll be in such a strong position that people will be able to recognize that and associate it with DigiGen's qualities, culture and services.
(2.0)
Elliot: Um, I should add to that - I should say, it's evolutionary as well.

Over the next seven turns, Elliot continues to describe the logo. These lines are omitted, for the sake of conciseness, but CrediCo's only contributions are the minimally aligning "Yep", "Yeah" and "Mm-hm" (a further example of the strategy described in section 6.3.5, above). Another instance of CrediCo withholding endorsement through silence then occurs.

Elliot: Erm, and actually we actually want to test it as well. We want to have a go, see what works and what doesn't work. I

think having this (0.3) flexible brand will allow us to do that. Um -

(5.0) ((Sound of Elliot turning pages))

Elliot: So first of all DigiGen.org will be the first thing to start really embodying this, um, which will look something – and this is where it does come to life more –

[Extract from 1st observed partnership meeting.]

In the absense of endorsement from CrediCo, Elliot eventually loses confidence and asks his colleague, Chloe, "Am I saying this right? I'm probably not -", at which point Chloe steps in to endorse the logo as "great" and to offer her support to persuade CrediCo to endorse it.

There are also rare occasions when DigiGen uses silence to withhold its endorsement of CrediCo. The following extract is very unusual, in that it is a lengthy monologue by Nicola, where the DigiGen representatives remain completely silent throughout, even at TRPs, for example, where Nicola's upward intonation invites some form of acknowledgement.

Nicola: Um, so the context for this is that, err, we have, um: (2.0) some great partnerships. We've got a partnership with you guys, we've got, um, some great local links, some great links with schools, we've got ((name of project)), which is our financial capability programme that we run in ((location of CrediCo's UK headquarters)) erm and (2.0) when I joined, back in September, DigiGen had been (0.3) agreed. But (.) there's definitely (0.8) there's definitely still (0.3) some difficulty with, with (.) telling a coherent story about what we do? And why

we've chosen to do certain things, like fund DigiGen and (0.3) show how it all knits together? Um, and when I first started Roger gave me the challenge of saying (0.5) "Right, we've, we've signed this deal with DigiGen", um (.) but he asked me the question, which worried me massively at the time, "Why are we focusing on young people?" (1.0). He asked me that question after he'd signed the deal with you guys. And I was like "Um::: (1.0) let me see ( ) Roger". So, basically he wanted – from what, it seems to me – is that, at CrediCo, they wanted to have actually made a proper, conscious business case, you know, like actual conscious decisions that we are going to put our eggs in the young people's basket.

[Extract from 1st observed partnership meeting.]

In the above excerpt, Nicola casts doubt on the rationale for the financial support which CrediCo is providing to DigiGen. DigiGen's withholding of acknowledgement through its continued silence creates an awkwardness for Nicola. Nicola makes use of reported speech (see Chapter 5, section 5.4.3) to assign the doubts concerning the DigiGen partnership to her former Chief Executive, rather than owning them herself. By saying that Roger's questioning of the legitimacy of the partnership worried her "massively", she aligns herself with DigiGen, even identifying herself with DigiGen rather than CrediCo by referring to her own organisation as "they" (in the 4th line up from the bottom).

The cause of the DigiGen participants' silence in the above extract is their disquiet at CrediCo's doubts concerning the partnership funding. In the final two extracts below, the cause of DigiGen's silence is rather different: there is a misalignment of either personal or organisational values, or both. The

background to the following extract is that Nicola from CrediCo has been telling Chloe from DigiGen about a presentation given by a Canadian business contact. Nicola uses humour at her business contact's expense.

Nicola: A very smarmy Canadian man, but, um - they're not all like that!
Chloe: We won't hold that against him!
Liam: ((Embarrassed laughter))
Nicola: Normally I like Canadians, but he's a little bit (0.5) °a little bit smarmy°. But then he's a salesman, so, you know.
(4.0)
Chloe: Cool.
(1.0)
Nicola: I'll include his company details at the bottom, I think. °You might even want to (0.3) get in touch°.
(3.0)

[Extract from 2nd observed partnership meeting]

Nicola softens the potential offence of her initial comment, by self-correcting from "very smarmy" to "a little bit" and by stating that she is not prejudiced against Canadians in general. Chloe at first reponds to Nicola's humour, but she subsequently uses silence to withhold her endorsement of Nicola's stated view of salesmen, giving rise to a four second pause. After the end of this extract, Chloe changes the topic of conversation (another value preserving strategy, see 6.3.3).

This withholding of endorsement is not an explicit challenge to CrediCo, which would risk undermining the relationship, but it is

nevertheless a strategy for maintaining Chloe's integrity, by refusing to condone a stereotypical view. Whilst this may appear to be merely a personal misalignment, it reflects a difference between the organizational cultures of the two partners. The humour used within CrediCo can be risqué, or not 'politically correct'. DigiGen's humour can be risqué in other ways, but humour involving negative stereotypes of particular groups of people is antithetical to DigiGen's non-judgemental approach and values. This interpretation relies upon an ethnographic knowledge of the partners, derived from the extended period of time spent in the field (see Chapter 4).

A final example, below, illustrates this further. Here the terms used by two different CrediCo staff are antithetical to DigiGen's non-judgemental values. After Trevor's initial turn, Eva's and Yvonne's overlapping "Mm:'s" are the only contributions from the DigiGen participants.

Trev: Um, so by inviting local young people in, into CrediCo, it kind of raises their aspirations about work, hopefully encourages them to get a bit more stuck into and to think more positively about work. And then Ellie does some really cool stuff with local young primary school children in the same situation, they come from families that have got second or third generation unemployment
Eva: [Mm:]
Yvonne: [Mm:]
Trev: The likelihood is that they'll go onto a life of benefits, er, kind of sponging off, er::
Rosa: Sponging off!
Lauren: °Dole bludgers!°

Rosa: Technical term, technical term! ((Laughs))
Trev: I've met them. I've met them, °they're really nice!°.
Rosa: ((Laughs))
Trev: Erm (1.0) so Ellie's doing some really good work with kind of raising aspirations of local primary school children.

[Extract from 7th observed partnership meeting.]

Trev's voice trails off as he recognises that the term "sponging off" implies that recipients of welfare benefits are parasitic on the rest of society, which may be offensive to DigiGen. Rosa recognises this explicitly. Lauren's more offensive term is undoubtedly intended to be humorous, but she compounds the offensive language by invoking another judgemental term. Rosa attempts to make a joke of it. However, none of the DigiGen participants join in with the humour. They withhold their endorsement by maintaining their silence. These are not terms that would be used within charitable organizations, whose missions involve empowering deprived communities.

[Extract from 7th observed partnership meeting]

The last two extracts, above, both involve what I am terming 'asymmetrical' forms of humour, as opposed to more symmetrical, affiliative humour (see Chapter 5, section 5.3.4).

6.4 Asymmetrical forms of humour

Humour plays an important role in the partnership talk in building rapport between partners (see Chapter 5, section 5.3.4). However, in addition to affiliative humour, where there is reciprocity and which does not target an individual or an organization, there were forms of humour, which I am terming 'asymmetrical', since they were at the expense of either a person or an organization. Humour at the expense of the partner organization was almost entirely absent, apart from very gentle teasing or participation in humour initiated by the partner themselves. Evidently it was not worth the risk of damaging relationships. However, humour at the expense of one's own organization was more frequent. Self-deprecating humour was also used quite frequently. Another type of humour was other-deprecating humour, i.e. put-down humour, or teasing, which targeted another individual - although not necessarily someone present in the room. This section summarizes findings related to these asymmetrical forms of humour, which have either a person or an organization as their object.

6.4.1 Humour at the expense of own organization

Humour at the expense of one's own organization, as in the example below, is sometimes used as a veiled criticism (see section 6.3.4). In the following example, Nicola is voicing her frustration with the bureaucracy at CrediCo, as well as strengthening her ties with DigiGen. Nicola has previously expressed frustration with the long delays in updating the partnership pages of CrediCo's website. Chloe's response is as close as participants tend to come to using humour at the

expense of the partner organization, by participating in the humour initiated by Nicola.

Nicola: Are they as, are they as hilariously long and involved as our brand guidelines?
Chloe: No! I can guarantee they won't be anything like that!
((General laughter))
Nicola: They're about 30 pages long - °it's ridiculous°!

[Extract from 2nd observed partnership meeting.]

This is value preserving (fig. 6.1, 5), in that the use of humour softens the criticism, thereby avoiding undermining both Nicola's integrity and CrediCo's credibility. This form of humour is used again by Nicola, later in the same meeting, where she uses humour as a vehicle for voicing criticism of her own organization. She also distances herself from CrediCo by using the pronoun "they", instead of "we".

Nicola: And some of that's done internally and some of it's done externally. And I think it's just the clunkiness between the two that makes it tricky? Um, so what they want to do - and I don't know exactly how this is going to work - but it's being, it's a real buzz topic at the moment at CrediCo, is around this, um, this software lab that they want to build? Which is basically like a, like a padded cell that you basically lock ((laughs)) a bunch of people in for however long it takes to make it happen. So, for example, if we say "We want to update the app, um, this is what we wanna do, er, you guys are staying in that room until it's done", sort of thing. So it's like a digital sweatshop!

[Extract from 2nd observed partnership meeting.]

In the example below, it is DigiGen which uses humour at its own expense. Rosa from CrediCo is attempting to use DigiGen's wifi and Chloe uses humour to avert any awkardness at the delay.

Rosa: Right (1.0) it's thinking about it
Chloe: Come on, wifi!
Rosa: I know
Chloe: We're a digital charity – let's go!
((Laughter))
Chloe: We're in tech city, come on! Work!
((A bit more laughter))

[Extract from 5th observed partnership meeting.]

It is noteworthy that where employees from DigiGen use humour at their own organization's expense, they avoid impugning either the charity's competence or the value of its work: a nonprofit can ill afford to undermine its own credibility with a key funder (see Chapter 5, section 5.4). In this final example, Nicola ventures a mild tease at DigiGen's expense, suggesting that they must have tidied their offices before receiving a visit from a Member of Parliament.

Nicola: I bet you had a bit of a tidy up before then!
Chloe: Yeah
Nicola: I suppose your new office was a mess
Chloe: It was an absolute mess. Well, it was a very charity-looking office, yeah

Liam: It looks even more charity at the moment.
Chloe: It's a mess, it's half done still
Liam: It's all – we've half moved
Nicola: Yeah
Liam: We've got lots of furniture still that we need to get rid of and things
Nicola: °Oh, what a nightmare!°
Chloe: We had some strategically placed plants ((laughs))
Nicola: ((Laughs))

[Extract from 4th observed partnership meeting.]

The DigiGen participants respond by showing that they are not offended by Nicola's remark, using humour at their own organization's expense. However, in acknowledging that the office is untidy, they first construct this as typical of charities and then as a consequence of an office move, thus avoiding the implication that DigiGen is characteristically disorganised. By responding with humour, they build rapport with Nicola, whilst avoiding significantly impugning the charity. A similar strategy is sometimes used in response to the teasing of individuals, or 'other-deprecating' humour, where the person targeted may respond to the teasing with self-deprecating humour, as explained in sections 6.4.2 and 6.4.3, below.

6.4.2 Other-deprecating humour

Negative talk concerning third parties is often avoided, or at least mitigated, since it threatens to undermine the speaker's integrity (see section 6.3.4). However, humour is occasionally

used at the expense of a third party, with the presumed aim of enhancing affiliation with the partner organization, by identifying with them against the third party who is the object of the joke. However, this strategy can backfire, since making fun of others can be disrespectful, therefore risks causing offence and/or the partner may be unwilling to collude with this form of humour.

In the following extract, Nicola and Chloe are discussing a business contact, who was introduced to DigiGen by CrediCo. Chloe avoids being drawn into colluding with Nicola's humour at the expense of the business contact by using self-deprecating humour to turn the joke onto herself. Nicola then teases Chloe, suggesting that she only returned to work to take part in DigiGen's Friday night social 'wine club'. Chloe takes the teasing in good part, but eventually puts an end to it by changing the subject, suggesting that they take a break (see section 6.3.3).

Nicola: She's hilariously posh, isn't she?
Chloe: Yeah
Nicola: She's one of those voices that's like really like properly posh
Chloe: Yeah - and she's one of those people that makes me feel like, she made me feel like I'm just really <u>messy</u> and ((laughs))
Nicola: Yeah, I know, she's really groomed, she's really <u>groomed</u> as well, like, isn't it? Every time I see her, I'm like ((gesture?))
Chloe: And it was Friday afternoon, it was 4.30 on a Friday afternoon, so I felt totally shattered when I talked to her as well. And actually I had to come back to work as well, I had to get a cab back, 'cos I was like really manic that day
Nicola: ((Sympathetic noise))
Chloe: Um, so yeah, she made me feel quite – yeah.

Nicola: But she's so lovely though, so when you first see her you're like, "Frightening lady", but actually she's really nice
Chloe: I'm so glad you said that!
((Laughter))
Chloe: I was obviously wearing jeans
Nicola: Yeah – Friday afternoon, why wouldn't you be? (0.5) Was the reason you had to come back here for the wine club? Be honest!
Chloe: No, it was actually sending a report
Nicola: Oh is that all? ((Teasing tone))
Liam: ((Laughs))
Chloe: But no, it wasn't just that, there was –
((More laughter - Nicola and Liam))
Chloe: Yeah, no, I, um needed to send a report and - there was some other stuff going on. Just a late night.
Nicola: Yep. Good.
Chloe: I didn't actually drink that night, just to – put it out there!
Nicola: Wow – a Friday night off!
Chloe: Yeah, yeah. Shall we have a break?

[Extract from 2nd observed partnership meeting.]

Another value preserving strategy used to counter humour at another person's expense is simply to ignore it, as in the example below, which occurs later in the same meeting.

Nicola: I know, ((name of company's founder)), it's brilliant! And he's, well, I don't know how old he is, but he's got, um, a plastic face. He's had lots of work done. He's a hilarious man. Really straight teeth. Fake - he's had hair plugs, he's had work done. He looks really weird. Very American. Anyway, ((name of

company's founder))'s gone on this sort of, um, journey to create this mission. And that's partly been inspired by a takeover we've had in the US, where we've bought ((name of another a bank)).
Chloe: Oh yeah

[Extract from 3rd observed partnership meeting.]

When spontaneous teasing occurs between partners, it is seldom belittling and is usually taken in good part. However, there can be a fine line between teasing and put-down humour, which could risk undermining relationships. In the extract below, Steve from DigiGen is teased by Rosa, who intimates that he is too old to be referring to the pop group "1D".

Steve: And they were cross mixing it with other things they knew that was going on, so they know (0.5) 1D is playing at Wembley
Rosa: 1D – check you out! ((Loud laugh))
((General laughter))
Rosa: Down with the kids!
[((Laughter))]
Steve: [( )] °maybe at my age° – so Springsteen's playing at Wembley
Rosa: That's better!

[Extract from 5th observed partnership meeting.]

In the above example, Steve takes the teasing in good part, thus the humour appears to be successful in enhancing, rather than undermining the relationship between the partners. Again,

Steve's response to the teasing is to make a joke at his own expense, amending his previous example from One Direction ("1D") to Bruce Springsteen, whose fans are from a much older demographic. Self-deprecating humour was therefore used in a value preserving, affiliative way, as a strategy in response to teasing, so as to maintain a positive rapport and demonstrate that no offence had been taken.

6.4.3 Self-deprecating humour

Self-deprecating humour was also used as a strategy in its own right, not only in response to other-deprecating humour. This form of humour was more prevalent amongst some of the DigiGen participants, although there were also a few examples from CrediCo. It tended to be used in an affiliative manner, by showing that one does not take oneself too seriously and by inviting others to participate in laughter directed at oneself. However, self-deprecating humour is also asymmetrical, in that it can be a submissive move, which, if taken too far, could risk undermining a partner's credibility, by belittling, disparaging or undervaluing oneself.

In this first example, Chloe uses self-deprecating humour to empahisize the value of the input from a partner university and to express modesty concerning her own involvement, so as to preserve her affiliation with Nicola. Reported speech is also used to bring the story to life (see Chapter 5, section 5.4.3).

Chloe: Um, it is quite cool actually, we met some, Steve and I, met a few of the students and like, we read out a dissertation

title and kind of explained it and then Graham, who's the professor - he used to be interested in DigiGen - would then just like completely translate that into like, you know, the course content. You know, you could look at business agility, you could look at, er - I was like - "Yeah, that!".
Nicola: ((Laughing)) "Whatever you're talking about, yeah!"

[Extract from 2nd observed partnership meeting.]

Self-deprecating humour is quite frequently deployed by Chloe. Another brief example is below, where Rosa has just asked Chloe whether she will be running the London Marathon.

Chloe: No, I'm key cheerer, as per usual.
Rosa: Have you run it before?
Chloe: No, I hate running. I can't even run to the bus!
((Laughter))

[Extract from 5th observed partnership meeting.]

Here, Chloe uses self-deprecating humour in a value preserving way, to make light of the fact that she is not raising money for DigiGen by running the Marathon. Steve, also from CrediCo, makes relatively frequent use of self-deprecating humour, as in the brief example, below.

Chloe: So that's ((name of website)). Lot's more to come I think from Steve, obviously on the forward strategy
Steve: I'll bore you on that! ((slight laugh)).

[Extract from 5th observed partnership meeting.]

Owing to the partnership's focus on young people, self-deprecating humour was often used in relation to participants' age. In the following two examples, it is CrediCo participants who use self-deprecating humour, again, in an affiliative manner.

Ellie: Who's ((name of a youth radio station))?
Eva: ((Name)) radio station
Ellie: Oh, OK
Trev: We're so out of touch!
((Laughter))

[Extract from 7th observed partnership meeting 3-16-2015]

Rosa: I'm so not down with the kids!

[Extract from 8th observed partnership meeting.]

In the following final example, Steve narrowly avoids engaging in other-deprecating humour at the expense of another corporate partner, by turning the joke into self-deprecating humour at his own expense. The reversal takes place in the final sentence, where Steve says that *he* (rather than his corporate partner) would look stupid if their partnership project is not progressed.

Steve: ((Name of a corporate partner)) did the key note last year, so they were invited back this year, so the project will be (0.3) that. Um, which is pretty exciting for us, because we know that they've got to get it done by June! ((Laughs)). Or they're

going to be standing on the stage, looking quite - well, I will be standing on the stage looking stupid!

[Extract from 6th observed partnership meeting.]

Other-deprecating humour at the expense of another corporate partner could have undermined DigiGen's integrity with CrediCo and was therefore avoided, instead using self-deprecating humour as a value preserving device. Any form of negativity or criticism of third parties could be viewed as a questionable strategy, since it risked undermining the speaker's integrity. Hence criticisms were usually veiled or mitigated (as explained in section 6.3.4). However, on occasion the partnership talk ran into more serious trouble, which was indicative of an underlying conflict.

6.5 Value conflict and repair

The partnership discourse was usually free flowing. However, at a few, critical points in the dialogue, conversational hitches occurred, which were indicative of more than a minor misalignment (such as a misunderstanding or difference of priorities) and which implied a more serious value conflict (fig. 6.1, 6.), with the potential to damage the relationship or threaten the partnership. Conflicting interests, approaches or interpretations of the value of the partnership needed to be repaired, rather than merely glossed over. Value repair practices (fig. 6.1, 7.) can be understood as resources used by partners, which display their recognition of a conflict and require further

interactional work to restore common ground (i.e. value realignment), before the conversation can return to a value building mode.

The following extract is relatively lengthy, so as to illustrate this process. The background is that Nicola, who has been acting as the lead contact at CrediCo, is about to leave the organization and her role as Head of CSR is not being directly replaced. Chloe pushes Nicola concerning CrediCo's current view of the value of the partnership and their future aspirations for it, by putting a direct question.

Chloe: I guess my question is: where is it now and where do you want it to be?
(4.0)
Chloe: I mean, I sort of see this ((i.e. the current planning process)) as, as part of delivering to that.
Nicola: Yeah. Er, exactly.
Chloe: Whether you had any more thoughts on that.
Nicola: Yeah. I think, um:::
(15.0)
Nicola: .hhhh. I think it's, it's unclear (0.5) what the future will hold. Given that they're not replacing their Head of CSR.
Chloe: Mm.
Nicola: In terms of how much priority they're going to put on, um -
Chloe: °Mm-hm°
Nicola: - maximising the potential for finding yoghurt.
Chloe: Mm?
Nicola: Um, I think, whatever I leave Rosa and Trevor and Ellie with, will happen over the next few months.

Chloe: °Mm-hm°

Nicola: So (0.3) I'm keen to push that, before I go and set them on a direction, where they are going to, um (0.5) be open to seeing the value of this.

Chloe: Mm:

Nicola: And Naomi sees the value of this. I think the question is that (0.3) whether the (3.0) um: what's the word (0.3) the full (0.3) potential (0.2) of (0.2) this will be realized. I'm not sure.

Chloe: °Mm-hm°

Nicola: Because I'm not sure of the appetite for anything that's <u>not</u> business aligned?

Chloe: Mm-hm

Nicola: And I think <u>this</u> is really valuable, if we can crack some of this in the, in the short term? (0.3) As in, in the next month? Or certainly start the ball rolling in that direction. I think Rosa will keep it rolling in that direction (.) and so will Naomi

Liam: Mm-hm

Nicola: So I think there's quite a critical job to be done in the next couple of weeks

Chloe: I was going to say – I mean, that's just what I wrote down what you were saying, it's like, it feels like we need to articulate a vision?

Nicola: <u>Yes</u>. Now

Chloe: =Now. A vision which is in Naomi's head

Nicola: Yes.

Chloe: And owned by –

Nicola: Yes

Chloe: <u>us</u>.

[Extract from 4th observed partnership meeting.]

The four second lapse in conversation after Chloe's initial question and the extremely long fifteen second lapse when she tries again to ellicit a view from Nicola, are indicative of a major conversational hitch and a crisis moment for the partners. Nicola's eventual response suggests that she has serious misgivings concerning CrediCo's commitment to the partnership and to integrating social value into the business (this is the "yoghurt" metaphor – see Chapter 5, section 5.3.4). Chloe's quiet "Mm-hm's" are delivered in a subdued tone. This is not a conflict between individuals, so much as a recognition of a potentially major rift between the two organizations in how they perceive the value of the partnership.

A major conversational hitch requires a major repair. Nicola's use of pronouns is indicative of her temporary identification with the partnership, rather than with her own organization, referring to CrediCo as "they" and "them" in the first half of the above extract and to the partnership as "we", which is echoed by Chloe in the final emphatic "<u>us</u>". This temporary identification with the partnership, rather than with one's own organization, helps to repair the conversational hitch. Nicola also brings about a repair by emphasizing that her colleagues are supportive of the partnership. The partners then realign with one another by identifying a positive way forward, which is to produce a shared vision and a joint plan for the partnership before Nicola leaves CrediCo, in a month's time. In the final six lines of the extract, Nicola's repetitions of and emphasis on "Yes" and Chloe's echoing of Nicola's "Now" confirm that the partners are realigned.

In the above example, the conversational hitch was caused by a sensitivity around CrediCo's level of commitment to the

partnership. Other causes of conversational hitches in the partnership dialogue were various kinds of *faux pas*, for example, where there was a tactless remark, inappropriate use of language, or some other embarrassing or awkward moment. Not all conversational hitches necessarily involved a lengthy discontinuation of talk. For example, in the extract below, a conversational hitch arises from an apprehension that a partner may have been caught in a fabrication. The context is that Nicola provided Chloe with a key contact from another business, who had the potential to be valuable to DigiGen. However, DigiGen did not receive a reply from this contact when they invited her to an event.

Chloe: I also dropped a note to, er (1.0) Isabella? In ((name of business)) 'Cos she was your contact as well, wasn't she?
Nicola: Yes. She was, yeah, yeah. She's great.
Chloe: She couldn't come… ((Trails off; uncertain tone))
Nicola: No, she couldn't come. I saw her later on at, er (0.8) the ((name of meeting)), um (0.5) annual (0.3) catch-up thing
Chloe: Oh, cool.
Nicola: And she was there, so we had a quick chat and she said "Oh I was very sorry I couldn't come", but um. (0.5) So, you dropped her a note?
Chloe: I dropped her a note, yeah.
Nicola: Haven't heard back?
Chloe: Haven't heard back
Nicola: OK ((Clipped tone))
Chloe: Is it worth? (0.3) She's in CR, right?
Nicola: Yeah, yeah. Yeah, yeah.
Chloe: She's quite senior in CR, isn't she, there, yeah?
Nicola: Yeah. Yeah. Do you want me to prompt her?

Chloe: Can you prompt her?
Nicola: Yeah.

[Extract from 1st observed partnership meeting.]

The awkwardness in this exchange arises because Nicola's claim that Isabella was "very sorry" she couldn't attend is belied by her failure to reply to the invitation and by Nicola's subsequent offer to "prompt her" to respond. Nicola is very hesitant in stating that she saw Isabella at a meeting (from "I saw her later on" through to "catch-up thing"). Nicola makes use of reported speech (see Chapter 5, section 5.4.3) to persuade Chloe that her business contact had said she regretted being unable to attend. However, Nicola then appears to realize that Chloe may have more information. The clipped "OK" conveys embarassment that the non-response from Isabella makes her previous claim that she was "very sorry" she couldn't come appear unlikely: if Isabella had in fact been "very sorry", surely she would have replied to say so, rather than simply ignoring DigiGen's invitation?

This glitch in the conversation is repaired by Chloe's use of self-deprecating humour, behaving in a subordinate manner, so as to save face for Nicola. It is also effected by Chloe's defence of her request for Nicola to "prompt" the business contact, on the basis of the potential value of this contact to DigiGen. Chloe thereby mitigates having wrong-footed Nicola and caused her embarrassment. This is shown in the continuation of the conversation, below.

Chloe: Is that all right?

((A bit of laughter – I think from Elliot – a male voice))
Chloe: °I'm being really cheeky!°
((A bit more laughter, again, I think from Elliot))
Chloe: Because ((name of Isabella's business)) work really closely with ((name of another current business partner of DigiGen)). They're obviously like - well, they all work together, you know, they've obviously, they've got various partnerships. Um, not that I want to shout about the ((name of current partner)) stuff at this point

[Extract from 1st observed partnership meeting.]

Other causes of conversational hitches are where it becomes evident that the partners' interests, views or understandings are at odds – which is, again, a situation requiring repair. In the following example, DigiGen's statistics on the numbers of young people accessing their website have dropped significantly. Chloe and Liam from DigiGen have been justifying this to Nicola from CrediCo as an inevitable and temporary consequence of the technical changes being made to their website.

Liam: And I think, I mean, the other thing that um, is (0.5) the, I guess the silver lin- the silver lining, in the most recent report is that the, on the year to March, traffic is actually down <u>less</u> than on the year to December
Nicola: Mm:
Liam: So we've kind of stopped – we've stopped losing and we're kind of getting a more solid base again. Um, we're coming out the other side, to an extent, but obviously we've got a lot of ground to regain (0.5) in the interim

Nicola: Yeah. That's really disappointing, isn't it (0.5) I was like (0.3) sort of reading it and thinking, you know, it's sort of going in the wrong direction
Liam: Mm
Nicola: Um:
(5.0)
Chloe: I don't think – I don't think we see it in – it's going in the wrong direction at the moment – but I think we know it's linked to a technical piece of work?
Nicola: Yeah
Chloe: So, in the long term, our targets remain and we're still confident that we're going to deliver that, so
Nicola: Mm:
Chloe: It's, it is frustrating, but I think (0.5) we just need to be focused on how to fix it in the short term, the technical side of things

[Extract from 4th observed partnership meeting.]

A divergence of views is indicated by the five second lapse in talk: partners are interpreting the drop in numbers in opposing ways. However, DigiGen avoids directly contradicting its partner's interpretation, since this could exacerbate the conflict. Following the lapse in talk, Chloe resumes, putting forward DigiGen's viewpoint, but she mitigates this and repairs the conflict by simultaneously orienting to Nicola's stated position. This is a strategy used to repair a hitch resulting from conflicting views: the speaker puts forward their own agenda, whilst simultaneously orienting to their partner's viewpoint.

Chloe makes a reversal after "I don't think we see it in -", where she stops herself from directly contradicting Nicola, instead

echoing Nicola's previous statement by acknowledging that it is "going in the wrong direction at the moment", but going on to offer justifications for this and assurances that the problem is being addressed. There are also several noncommital "Mm's" in the above extract, where partners are withholding endorsement of one another's views, whilst also avoiding direct contradiction (see section 6.3.5).

6.6 Chapter summary

This chapter has presented findings concerning how misalignments and tensions in asymmetrical partnership talk are managed, so as to preserve or repair value and avoid overt conflict. Misalignments, such as differences in priorities and interpretations, sometimes occurred and were mostly dealt with through value preserving practices, aimed at safeguarding the relationship between the partners and maintaining the partners' integrity. These practices included mitigated controlling moves, such as the limited use of directive questioning, the evading of questions, interruptions and changes of subject. Criticism of partners was avoided or heavily mitigated, again, to preserve the relationship. The avoidance or mitigation of criticism of competitors, or other third parties, was aimed at preserving the speaker's integrity, thus avoiding undermining trust between partners.

Another discursive practice aimed at demonstrating integrity was refraining from participating in other-deprecating humour. Whilst the use of humour is often affiliative and can be used as a means of building the relationship, asymmetrical forms of humour,

which target an individual or an organisation, had the potential to backfire, in particular where the partner avoided participating in other-deprecating humour. Partners sometimes reverted to self-deprecating humour as a strategy to avoid participating in other-deprecating humour, thereby preserving their integrity. Where the partners were misaligned, another value preserving practice was the withholding of endorsement, either through silence or, more frequently, through the use of minimally aligning responses, thereby avoiding conflict.

Whilst overt conflict between partners was completely absent (such as direct contradiction or angry exchanges), underlying conflicts nevertheless occasionally emerged, sometimes reflecting divergent values or logics between the partner organizations. These were indicated by long silences (lapses in talk) and disfluencies, such as reversals and hesitancy. These conflicts were recognised by partners and addressed through value repairing practices, which overlapped with value preservation practices, but also included re-constructing value, by employing practices such as: positive assessments and compliments; diverting from the business of the meeting into personal chat; orienting to the partner's viewpoint; or temporarily identifying with the partner organization, or with the partnership, rather than with one's own organization.

The nonprofit sometimes engaged in one-sided realignments of value, whereby the social value of the partnership was discursively re-constructed for the business. However, as will be explained in Chapter 7, the partners struggled to construct the business value of the partnership. Although the potential for generating business value was raised by both partners, in practice, this was given far less attention than social value.

Tensions between CrediCo's stated aims of creating business value and social value were inherent both to its business model and to its approach to the partnership with DigiGen. These tensions were not resolved through the partnership and, it is proposed that, as a consequence, the partnership was not transformative, as far as business value was concerned. The partners' perspectives on the business, social and mutual value created through the partnership are explored in the following chapter.

Chapter 7: Framing the social, business & mutual value of the partnership

7.1 Setting the scene

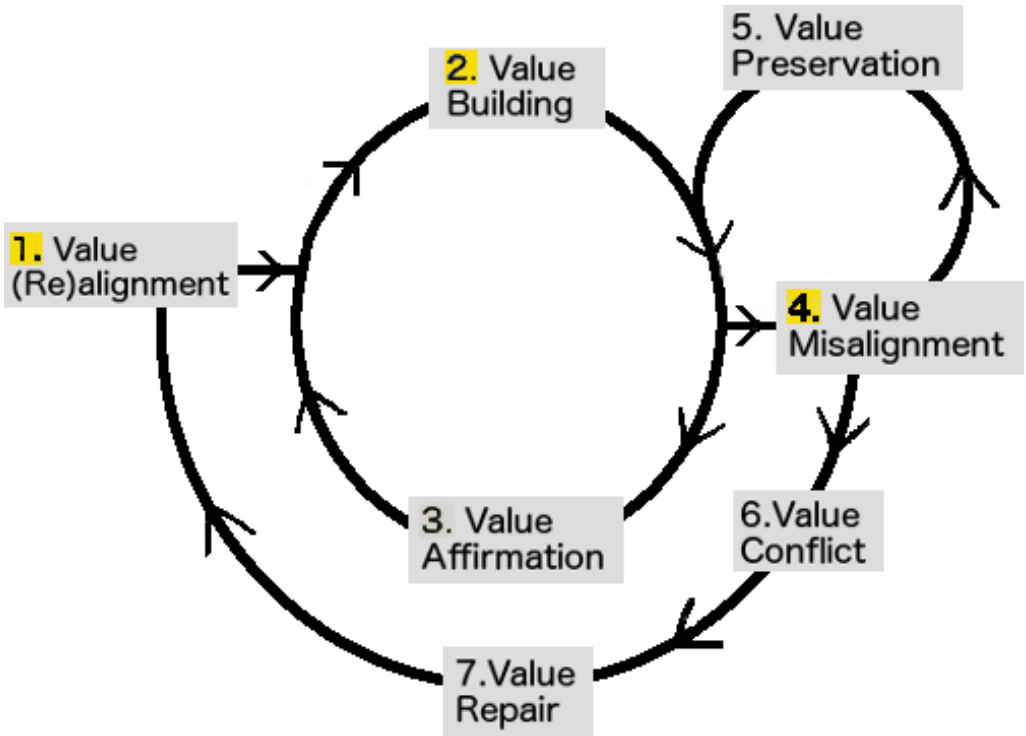
7.1.1 Chapter overview

The overarching outcomes of the partnership can be understood as the aggregate effects of micro-level processes of partnership interaction. This chapter opens out the analysis by zooming out from the detailed focus on micro-level features of partnership talk, to provide an overview of the lifecycle and evolution of the partnership, taking advantage of the longitudinal nature of this research. It compares and contrasts how partners framed different forms of value, i.e. social value, business value and mutual value, drawing on Kuypers' (2009) rhetorical approach to framing analysis. It illustrates how partners' discursive constructions of the value of the partnership evolved over time, drawing principally on data from interviews, but also incorporating data from partnership meetings, field notes and documentary sources, where appropriate.

The Value Construction Model is reproduced as Figure 7.1, overleaf, and is used as a theoretical framework for making sense of the multiple accounts of the value of the partnership, thereby testing its usability as a meso-level theory, with explanatory power concerning the progress and outcomes of social partnerships, rather than confining it to the micro-level of partnership talk. It is by no means self-evident that patterns and features identified at the micro-level of partnership talk will necessarily translate up to the meso-level outcomes of the

partnership. The proposition is that recurring patterns in the construction of value identified at the micro-level of partnership talk (e.g. which serve to construct commonalities or avoid conflict) will tend to shape the discursive construction of partnership outcomes at the meso-level, in research participants' accounts of the success or otherwise of the partnership. This chapter will use the Value Construction Model as a framework to explore the extent to which the partners aligned for and built social, business and mutual value (fig. 7.1, 1.;2.) and how these different forms of value became misaligned (*ibid*. 4.) over the lifecycle of the partnership, thus inhibiting value creation.

Figure 7.1 Value Construction Model: the meso-level



A shared objective of much of the partnership discourse (whether in partnership meetings, interviews or documents) was to construct understandings of the value of the partners' work, the value of the organizations themselves and the value of the partnership. Micro-level features of talk, used in the value

building processes set out in Chapters 5 and 6, were also employed to produce discursive constructions of the value of the partnership. When analysing the data, *analytical* codes were used to identify these micro-level features of talk, alongside *thematic* codes, which were used to highlight relevant topics of conversation, in particular around different forms of value - i.e. themes pertinent to the main research question of how partners construct value through their discourse. This chapter considers the evolution of these value-related themes over the lifecycle of the partnership, addressing the following sub-research question:

'How do discursive constructions of value change over the lifecycle of the partnership and across sectors?'.

7.1.2 Summary of data coding processes

Table 7.1 (below) sets out some of the key value-related themes which frequently occurred in the partnership discourse and served as sources of value, or discursive resources. It relates these sources of value to the Value Construction Model (fig. 7.1). The table illustrates that the partnership was ultimately more successful in constructing social value for young people and organizational value for the nonprofit partner, than it was in constructing value for the business.

Table 7.1: Sources of value in relation to value processes

Sources of value / discursive resources	**For whom value is constructed**	**Form of value**	**Predominant value processes**
• Co-creation with young people • Young people led / needs led approach • Peer support • Holistic approach • User-generated content • Support for volunteers • Additional social partnerships • Young people as "awesome" • Young people as vulnerable/ disadvantaged • Business partner's capacities - e.g. funding, know-how, expertise, 'great place to work', etc.	Nonprofit & young people	Social & organizational value	Value aligning, building & affirming (occasional misalignments)
• Nonprofit partner's capacities - e.g. mindset, • know-how, expertise, etc. • Employee benefits – e.g. engagement, loyalty, morale, identification, skills, recruitment & retention. • Customer benefits – e.g. credit-worthiness of future customers	Business	Organizational value	Some value aligning; little value building; some misalignment
• Specific / unique capacities of each partner • Co-creation between partner organizations • Young people as "savvy" about brands / corporations • "Yoghurt" metaphor for socially driven businesses	Business, nonprofit & young people	Mutual value (win-win-win)	Some value aligning; little value building; some misalignment

Various forms of value emerged in the partnership talk and were coded either as "organizational value", "social value" or "mutual value". Sub-codes were used for different types of organizational and social value. For example, talk which implied a direct or indirect link to generating profit was coded as "business value", which was a sub-code within "organizational value". Other sub-codes included "Constructing value for employees" and "Constructing value for customers". Within the "social value" code, sub-codes included: "co-creation with young people", "constructing value for beneficiaries", "peer-support", "user-generated content", et cetera. Some of these categories overlapped, but this was not problematic, since the objective was merely to capture how and in what contexts partners invoked these various kinds of value. The codes used are therefore not claimed to be either mutually exclusive or exhaustive.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, for the nonprofit partner, talk about social value and organizational value frequently overlapped, since the primary purpose of the organization was to create social value.

7.2 Constructing social value

Chapter 4 explained how the partners constructed commonalities between their two organizations, for example, in terms of cultural fit, the age and level of maturity of the partner organizations and their shared emphasis on innovation. These themes also emerged strongly in the interview data, where relationships between individuals also tended to be framed in terms of commonalities, i.e. personal compatibilities, rather than

the discursive processes through which relationships were built. In Chapter 5, this phenomenon of constructing commonalities was theorized in terms of value alignment and value building processes, whereby commonalities were utilised as discursive resources to construct the value of the partnership. This section provides insights into how the partners framed the social value of the partnership through their talk and how these constructions evolved over the lifecycle of the partnership.

7.2.1 Value alignment - social value

In addition to the discursive construction of commonalities, the partners also aligned with one another by negotiating the social value which they aspired to create through the partnership. Although the fieldwork began after the formation stage of the partnership (see Appendix F), it was possible to elicit perspectives from the partners on the early stages of the partnership by means of interviews. This provided insights into how the partners aligned with one another in terms of framing the social value objectives for the partnership, albeit via retrospective accounts, rather than live partnership interaction.

As discussed in Chapter 4, CrediCo's Vision to "Make lives better" was used to construct the business as ethical in its approach to lending to "sub-prime" customers. This "Vision" (later the "Mission") was also used as a rationale for the business' CSR and for entering into a national partnership with a nonprofit organization, as a means of adopting a more strategic approach to the construction of social value. This is explained in the following extract from the first interview with Trevor, CrediCo's Community Manager.

Trev: I think the whole point of it is, originally was to (1.0) promote CrediCo as kind of tied in with the 'Make Lives Better' - into the Vision - and doing something on a national scale, so it will be interesting to see what difference we can actually make to DigiGen over the four years.

A similar rationale was given in the first interview with Nicola, CrediCo's Head of CSR, where the aspiration to develop a more "strategic" approach to CSR was explained in terms of "having a meaningful impact on a social issue". CrediCo had been too focused on "inputs" - "time and money and energy", but without any focus on "outcomes", or on "what are we trying to solve, what social issue are we trying to tackle?". Nicola describes CrediCo as enthusiastic about "giving and volunteering and fundraising and doing stuff for charities", but not in a "consciously strategic or, um, meaningful way". She explains that a lot of nonprofits were being supported in a very small way, but there was no "tangible, meaningful benefit" to those charities.

Since CrediCo is a financial services business, it made sense that its original social value objective for a national partnership was around financial education. CrediCo enlisted the help of a consultant to identify a suitable nonprofit organization with which it could enter into a partnership. However, the outcome of the early conversations with DigiGen was to shift the social value purpose of the partnership to a much more holistic objective, loosely constructed around the employability of young people. In practice, much of CrediCo's funding was used to build the nonprofit partner's capacity and sustainability, by investing in its

information technology and website. CrediCo's then Managing Director was instrumental to this alignment of social value between the partners (fig. 7.1, 1.). However, the rationale for the change was not communicated effectively to Trevor, who was subsequently given responsibility for the contract negotiations, which resulted in a significant value misalignment (fig. 7.1, 4.; see also section 7.2.3).

Turning to DigiGen's perspective on the early alignment of social value, Anna, DigiGen's CEO, describes how CrediCo's former Managing Director, bought into the idea of holistic support for young people.

Anna: The amazing thing with CrediCo is…it was very clear from Roger Tate ((CrediCo's former MD)) when we first met him that he wanted this to be driven by meeting young people's needs. So what you have with a lot of financial institutions - and again we have to be a bit diplomatic how we say it - is that they - it's all about financial education, whereas it's not, it's actually about how you relate it to young people's lives. So the main focus absolutely with CrediCo is around employability, because it is about allowing young people to flourish, to achieve aims - and there are so many indicators that employment is such a liberator for people. And I suppose - but the nature of what ((Name of DigiGen service)) does is that we don't treat it in isolation. So we see a lot of the connection, obviously, between unemployment, onto financial issues, onto housing, onto relationships.

The shared, holistic social value purpose of the partnership is emphasized again by Anna, later in the same interview.

Anna: this is a genuine desire to kind of bring together organisations that work differently to have impact on young people.

Chloe was more heavily involved in the early meetings between the partners. In Chloe's first interview, her description of CrediCo's approach to creating social value for the partnership corresponds with the CrediCo interviewees' explanations of the significance of shifting from low-level support to local chariries, to a major national partnership.

Chloe: They wanted to do something properly, is the word they often used, "We want to do it properly, want to invest properly", because it was going to be a major (0.5) shift for them, going from local to potentially a national thing.

She goes on to describe her own role in persuading CrediCo to shift from its original focus on financial education to broadening the aim to employability and a more holistic approach to supporting young people. (N.B. Note the rhetorical effect of reported speech in both these extracts - see Chapter 5, section 5.4.3.)

Chloe: I mean I was trying to (1.0) um: (0.8) really help them think about (0.3) financial education in a different way? So I really thought that they, they wanted to do stuff differently and I thought it was an opportunity there. And (0.3) we brought a lot of insights and research that we had from young people, which said, "Look", you know, "learning to manage your money is really not interesting for young people, they don't have any

money ((huh)); financial security is what matters, not 'Can I budget well'?".

Similarly, Chloe describes how DigiGen persuaded CrediCo to take a more holistic approach to the creation of social value.

Chloe: I was trying to get them to understand um, to look at it more holistically? And I think they really got that very early on, which made me feel it was going to be a good fit, because they really understood that.

The importance of openness, flexibility and of taking time to build trust and develop the relationship between partners before, and alongside, aligning for social value was evident, as emphasized in this next extract.

Chloe: It felt very early on that they were interested in - they didn't have all the answers, they didn't know where to invest and they were open about that, so it very much felt like we were on a journey from the very, very start. And I think it probably (0.8) helped that we didn't pitch them an answer really, really quickly, that we were interested in getting to know them and working out what do we actually want to achieve together?

The pivotal role played by the then Managing Director of CrediCo is again evident in Chloe's explanation of how their original idea for a partnership project shifted and the social value objectives of the partnership were aligned to focus on more holistic support

for young people and developing DigiGen's capacity as an organization.

Chloe: Roger was really pushing us on, on reach and on brand awareness, so he was thinking much bigger than the project. So he, he got the project, but he was interested in our core service and our delivery models and our awareness and our reach and and how (.) and how we were going to increase that.
I also wonder how long it would have taken us to progress with that strategy and thinking had we not had this opportunity? That's the kind of exciting thing, I think, about the way it worked. Because they really pushed our thinking, Roger really pushed (0.8) our thinking.
And I remember Roger saying to me - cutting me off at some point, saying "This is great. You know what" - he didn't say this but, you know - "we love you, we trust you guys, we trust you know young people. What I really want to talk about is -" um, he really came back to the marketing stuff, about plans for increasing reach, um, you know, knowing our audience. And he didn't need us to talk about the need again, you know, the social need, he didn't need to hear that again. It was like "You know your beneficiaries better than we do and we really trust you as an organisation to support them in the best possible way. I'm interested about, you know, how this investment can help you as an organisation get to the next level".

Hence the social value purpose of the partnership underwent a substantial shift from CrediCo's initially narrow focus on financial education, to a more holistic approach to employability, to an emphasis on CrediCo supporting the charity to develop its capacity and future sustainability. This evolution to a broader

social value purpose is, to some extent, reflected in the contractual agreement between the partners, which states that CrediCo "wishes to invest in and support young people through a holistic approach to skills development, including employability, work and study and financial education".

The funding from CrediCo was partly a donation and partly in the form of a contract. The contract negotiations were very protracted (see Appendix F), however, interviewees from both organizations indicated that this was not owing to a misalignment concerning the objectives of the partnership, so much as the involvement of lawyers in agreeing the detailed terms and conditions.

Chloe: The contract was a bit tricksy, but that was not because we had different views on it. Erm, it was just a bit tricky.

Nicola suggests this was owing to a lack of experience within CrediCo of negotiating this type of agreement, presenting her legal team as "quite hardnosed and quite sort of forthright with what you get in your side of the bargain", since they were accustomed to dealing with "business to business relationships". She presents herself as acting in an intermediary role, whereby she persuaded her own legal team to be more flexible.

Nicola: From my perspective my role in all of it really was to kind of erm get them ((i.e. CrediCo's legal team)) to kind of chill out a little bit, you know, a bit more flexible and be less stringent and be a bit more erm, yeah, a bit nicer about the whole thing. And from DigiGen's perspective, they don't have in-house legal counsel, so it was quite slow, because they had to use pro bono

support from a legal firm and getting them to kind of go back and forth, it was quite a long, drawn out, slow process. Erm, and you know, I was quite keen that we didn't screw them over. You know they are a charity at the end of the day.

However, interviewees from both CrediCo and DigiGen stated that the protracted contract negotiations did not result in a serious misalignment or damage the relationship between the partners.

Trev: Even throughout the contract negotiations it was always a- a feeling of informality, it was it was always running right, it was never a real chore to kind of - even on some of the things we were questioning. We've done it previously with community partners, where they've been really reluctant to change something or, you know, they've just been really stubborn and said "No" and we have - but even then, even some of the more trickier detail in the contract they were kind of open to and they were happy to -
Katy: Right, so there was flexibility?
Trevor: Yes.
Katy: On both sides?
Trevor: On both sides, definitely, yes.

However, the social value objectives remained fairly broad, particularly after the first year of the partnership, therefore the process of social value alignment was not concluded at the end of the formation stage of the partnership. Social value alignment was instead an ongoing communicative activity as well as a

precursor to the value building processes of the partnership (fig. 7.1, 1.-3.).

7.2.2 Value building – social value

Perhaps unsurprisingly, given DigiGen's mission, social value for young people was often conflated with organizational value for the nonprofit partner. For example, in the first interview with Nicola (CrediCo's Head of CSR), she constructs the social value of the partnership in terms of organizational benefits for DigiGen, as follows.

Nicola: I think for DigiGen erm, I think CrediCo is their most significant partnership and most valuable in terms of, in terms of investment. And so for them - and they've seen a huge amount of benefit which they will tell you about tomorrow, I'm sure. But in terms of their ability to erm, err, progress as an organisation, infrastructure, in terms of their website but also erm, I guess (0.5) having the (.) credibility of being chosen as a partner at that level? I think allows them to go to other organisations and say, well, you know, "It shows that we're a decent organisation if we've got investment at this level". And also erm, you know we've seen, we know that they've been able to leverage something like erm, three quarters of a million pounds extra funding from other sources they would not have been able to get had the CrediCo partnership not been there. So that's, that's hugely valuable in terms of, well for them in terms of extra benefits.

The additional funding and contacts which the partnership with CrediCo enabled DigiGen to secure were cited as social value

benefits, both in interviews and in partnership meetings. Each partner sought to persuade the other of the social value constructed by their own organization, but this was much more frequent and salient in the case of the nonprofit partner. The quarterly partnership meetings provided opportunities for DigiGen to persuade CrediCo of the social value of the work it had been undertaking, using the funding from the business. In the following extract, Chloe emphasizes the potential importance and impact of DigiGen's work on the lives of young people.

Chloe: So digital is not just a way to promote offline volunteering. People can volunteer online – and save people's lives, actually!
Nicola: ((Laughs))
Chloe: And we see that every week. So, we're seeing this group with the sort of, um, to refine those interpretations
Nicola: Yep
Chloe: And ideally to start leading the, um, discussions -
Nicola: Yep
Chloe: about (0.3) the value of it.

[Extract from 4th observed partnership meeting.]

Nicola initially responds to Chloe's assertion about saving lives by laughing, treating it as hyperbole and not as a serious claim. However, Chloe's response that DigiGen staff "see that every week" affirms that she is being serious in her claim about the impact and value of the peer support work undertaken by DigiGen's volunteers. Nicola repairs this slight misalignment with supportive backchannel cues ("Yep"), thereby affirming Chloe's social value claim (see fig. 7.1, 3.).

Various strategies were used to construct the value of one's own organization, including those described in Chapter 5, section 5.4, to establish credibility. The following example illustrates the rhetorical effect of conflating the social and organizational value of the nonprofit partner, by aggregating different forms of value. This was a strategy used by DigiGen to persuade the business of the value of its activities, hence of the value for money being produced with the funding provided by CrediCo.

Chloe: Taking action, which is essentially what the young people came up with themselves for this, but it does link to what we know about… that process of recovery
Nicola: Absolutely

[Extract from 4th observed partnership meeting.]

In the above brief extract, social value for young people and the idea that DigiGen's services are needs-led, or co-produced with young people themselves, is conveyed in the same sentence as a claim about the organizational value of DigiGen and its expert knowledge of young people.

A further strategy used by the nonprofit partner to construct the social value of its work was to emphasize or claim uniqueness. This was a strategy used at various times by several nonprofit employees. In the extracts below, Steve constructs the social value of DigiGen's work by emphasizing the uniqueness of its holistic approach to digital services.

Steve: We always look actu- there's not, there's nobody who really does what ((Name of DigiGen's website)) does, in terms of holistic content and bringing <u>everything</u> together in one place?

Also, later in the same meeting, Rosa affirms the social value claims of DigiGen and Steve then reaffirms and builds on this:

Rosa: You're quite a one stop shop really
Steve: We are. Yeah. There's really nobody does what we do. Particularly at the level, particularly at the volumes that we have.

[Extracts from 5th observed partnership meeting.]

Two more brief examples will suffice to illustrate this strategy:

Chloe: And something that – I mean, no other charity is… <u>doing</u> this, really.

Eva: Nobody else does what we do, but DigiGen doesn't get that recognition.

[Both extracts from 6th observed partnership meeting.]

Notwithstanding the occasional misalignment (see also examples in Chapter 6), the partners were, for the most part, broadly aligned in terms of the social value created through the partnership. In the final interviews the partners agreed that the partnership had benefitted DigiGen significantly and, through them, young people. They were also in agreement that DigiGen had been successful in meeting its objectives, in terms of

developing its services and extending its reach to a larger audience of young people. However, differences also emerged in how the social value of the partnership was framed by the two partner organizations, as explained below.

7.2.3 Value misalignment - social value

As described in section 7.2.1, the partners underwent a process of aligning for social value during the formation stage of the partnership. However, there was a lack of communication within CrediCo concerning the rationale for broadening the social value objectives. This resulted in a significant misalignment when responsibility for negotiating the contract with DigiGen was passed to Trevor, who had not been involved in the discussions. The following extract is from the first interview with Trevor.

Trev: "For me personally it was a bit of a shock because, as I say, we were all about focussing on financial education and then kind of a couple of months later, I'm in this meeting and they were talking about employability and DigiGen and helping 16 to 25 year olds. Err, and it was all kind of news to me, to be honest with you. There was very little about financial education in there, it was all very much around employability. Erm, I think what happened was (0.8) Anna (0.3) and Roger and and DigiGen had kind of gone on this journey and kind of Anna or somebody, they'd spoken to Roger and kind of talked to him about the benefits of working with DigiGen and how employability should be part of it.
Erm so Roger went along with it and then (0.5) before we knew it we'd kind of signed up for this 4 year deal which was kind of a- a half a million pound a year for four years. Erm, so the tricky

thing that I found was that kind of Roger had been on this journey and kind of understood why we were working with DigiGen, but nobody else had. So I'd been meeting with senior leaders and we've been talking about this financial education programme that was on the way and then all of a sudden it's like bang, "By the way we're doing this instead". So it was a bit, it was a bit tricky.

This early misalignment was subsequently repaired by the partners reaching agreement through the contract negotiation process. However, Nicola, the newly appointed Head of CSR, who became involved in negotiating the contract, also expressed her difficulty that the partnership with DigiGen had been agreed in principle before she came into post (see also Chapter 5, section 5.4.3, first extract, which continues below).

Nicola: Erm and so I was like "Wow, so now you want me to make sense of all of this!". DigiGen - I mean it's a massive investment from CrediCo, never done anything like this before on this scale in terms of the amount of investment and the erm, I guess the - we've never had a national charity partnership before. So there's a whole bunch of new things about it which CrediCo have never done before and so when I joined, I was a bit sort of err, taken aback by the fact that err, that I guess my hands were tied, in that I couldn't take it back, take the whole thing back to square one and start from scratch properly, like I would have liked to. Erm, so I had to then work with what I had, which was an amazing community programme based in ((location of CrediCo's UK headquarters)) and this new charity partnership, a national charity partnership for 4 years, with this charity that I didn't know anything about.

Again, this misalignment arose from the fact that Nicola had not yet been in post, therefore she had not been party to the early discussions with DigiGen and the agreement which had taken place was not communicated effectively.

Nicola: It was quite hard, especially because I didn't know kind of what had been agreed in principle, because also it was done verbally or over email, all quite informally.

Nicola described her later development of a CSR strategy for CrediCo as "almost like retrofitting" the strategy to the existing partnership with DigiGen, or "a bit arse about face really". Her manager, Naomi similarly described it as "a little bit tail wagging dog". (This problem was particularly pertinent for the alignment of business value, or the lack thereof - see section 7.3.1).

Relatively minor misalignments as to how the partners construed social value occasionally occurred during the partnership meetings (e.g. see Chapter 6, section 6.3.2, second extract on digital badges and section 6.5, final extract, on the numbers of young people accessing DigiGen's website). However, a more significant divergence in how the partners framed the social value constructed by the partnership became evident in the final round of interviews.

The nonprofit interviewees were very positive about the social value derived from the partnership with CrediCo. Again, social value and value for DigiGen as an organization were often conflated. For example, DigiGen's new Chief Executive, Steve,

stated that "there's been a lot of interesting projects", but that CrediCo had "always backed the things that would increase the overall capacity of the organization, that would deal with reach and would mean getting to more young people and getting to more young people in interesting ways". This included "re-energising" DigiGen's "digital ecosystems", i.e. updating its interconnected digital products and services (website, mobile applications, use of social media platforms, etc.), to make them more sophisticated and user-friendly, as well as upgrading its underlying systems architecture to make it scalable and sustainable. Along with CrediCo's funding for DigiGen's "brand work", this investment in DigiGen as an organization enabled it to support more young people, year on year.

From DigiGen's perspective, in terms of social value, the only ambition which had not (yet) been achieved was that future funding from CrediCo, to renew the partnership beyond its original four year term, had not been secured. However, the CrediCo interviewees presented a rather different social value account, as indicated in the extract below from the final interview with Naomi, their Head of HR.

Naomi: Um, you think well, are you actually getting more value from that than you are out of – and I think Trevor would be the first to say that with his pot of money, three hundred odd K
Katy: Yeah
Naomi: That he uses then to spread across, you know, ((Name of CrediCo local community project))
Katy: Mm:
Naomi: ((Names of 2 more local CrediCo community projects)) - all of - and so on and so forth - he gets tremendous value out of those and he can show a real impact?

Katy: Yeah
Naomi: But it's been <u>harder</u> to show that (.) with DigiGen
Katy: Mm. Mm.
Naomi: And he's worked very, very hard to make that happen.

However, in asserting that the DigiGen partnership had less impact, Naomi does not differentiate explicitly between the social value and the business value derived from the partnership. As the Community Manager with responsibility for CrediCo's CSR projects, Trevor could be said to have a vested interest in framing his own projects as of greater value. Also, in order to save face, CrediCo needed to offer a justification for the non-renewal of funding for the partnership, which went beyond its failure to secure sufficient business value.

Nevertheless, CrediCo interviewees conceded that DigiGen's services reached far larger numbers of beneficiaries than their own local communtity programme and, whilst measuring social value is fraught with difficulty, DigiGen did provide CrediCo with quarterly reports, containing both qualitative and quantitative information about how DigiGen was supporting young people. These performance reports emphasized DigiGen's work on employability, since this was a major focus of the contract with CrediCo, but also indicated how DigiGen's services supported young people emotionally to cope with multiple pressures. In this extract from the final interview with Trevor, he acknowledges that DigiGen's reach was greater, but in emphasizing the difference in cost between CrediCo's local community projects and the DigiGen partnership, he nevertheless calls into question the value for money of the DigiGen partnership.

Trev: We:: (1.0) it's a huge investment, it's a huge amount of money that we're paying
Katy: Yeah
Trev: Um (1.0) and (0.5) a lot of our community programmes we:: we invest a lot less money (1.0) – it's – I was gonna say we, we get more impact out of them, but that's not strictly true, 'cos DigiGen kind of touch hundreds of thousands of young people. °Um (.) er° - I guess it's, it's things like we:: (1.0) we support things like ((Name of CrediCo's local community project)) and ((Name of another CrediCo local community project)) and they currently cost about twenty thousand pounds for a year
Katy: Yeah
Trev: And at the end of the year, we've got loads of really good local examples
Katy: Mmm
Trev: We've got hundreds of older people, hundreds of university students, that we've got testimonials from. We're able to get them into the business. It feels a bit more hands on.
Katy: Yeah
Trev: For a fraction of the cost.
Katy: Yeah
Trev: Um (0.3) so DigiGen, I think we're paying, °I think° we're looking at kind of four hundred thousand pounds a year - it's a huge sum of money.

The statement that CrediCo has "loads of really good local examples" and "testimonials" from their local community projects implies that it is business value, rather than social value which is being compared, i.e. examples from CrediCo's own local CSR projects had greater value in terms of employee

engagement, motivation and identification with the business. Indeed, it is unsurprising that CrediCo would derive more business value from sharing positive stories with employees about its own community programme, than from sharing the stories of a remotely based partner organization.

Rosa offered a very similar account to those of her colleagues, again calling into question the value for money of the partnership with DigiGen, by emphasizing the cost to CrediCo, in contrast to the costs of its local community projects. A more extended extract is needed to illustrate how claims concerning social value became conflated with business value.

Rosa: Um (0.3) I struggle, for the amount of money it is - makes my eyes water
Katy: M-hm
Rosa: Erm ((smiling)) I think about how much we invest in our local programmes and then the impact we see
Katy: °Mm°
Rosa: For very small amounts of money, like twenty, thirty thousand a year
Katy: Yeah
Rosa: And the output from that and the impact it has
Katy: Yeah
Rosa: Versus millions of pounds that have gone into the DigiGen partnership
Katy: Mm
Rosa: Erm (0.5) I <u>don't</u> think that - I'm happy for them that they've been able to redesign the foundations of their website
Katy: Yes
Rosa: Um, that they've been able to do a re-branding, they've been able to develop the apps that they have

Katy: Mm:

Rosa: And you cannot argue with the reach that they have

Katy: Mm:

Rosa: As a charity. Um – and I understand the impact that has on young people

Katy: Yeah

Rosa: I think there was, I think there could have been an opportunity (0.3) up front, before my days, to think about how we could have really (1.0), I think, had more power with that money

Katy: Mm

Rosa: How we could have invested it in something (1.0) really thought about how (1.0) we would interact with the charity we were gonna give that to, how we could have been innovative with it

Katy: Yeah

Rosa: Um, how it could have fed into the future of our business.

This extract begins with Rosa implying that the DigiGen partnership represented poor value for money in terms of social value, however, she then acknowledges the significance of the impact both for DigiGen and for young people. She then shifts her account to talking about a missed opportunity in terms of business value. (It is worth noting that Rosa absolves herself of responsibility by suggesting that this could only have been addressed "up front, before my days".) When questioned as to whether this missed opportunity was in relation to social value, or only in terms of the benefits for CrediCo, she replied, "I think it's, I think it's both". However, the claim that there had not been value for money in terms of societal impacts was not

substantiated, either by Rosa or by any of other CrediCo interviewees.

In this final round of interviews, all the interviewees of the business called into question the social value created through the partnership, by conflating social and business value and by contrasting the costs of their local CSR projects with those of their national partner. However, given the much larger numbers of DigiGen's beneficiaries, they offered little or no justification for casting doubt on the social value created through the DigiGen partnership. The case was rather different when it came to business value.

7.3 Constructing business value

7.3.1 Value alignment – business value

At the outset, the emphasis was on aligning the partnership for social value, rather than business value (see section 7.2.1). This was made clear in the initial interview with Chloe, when she was asked whether business value was discussed between the partners during the formation stage of the partnership.

Katy: Was the rationale always explained in terms of "We want to help DigiGen to transform, we want to help young people", was there anything explicit about the benefits to CrediCo? Or were they just not focusing really on anything beyond DigiGen's goals?
Chloe: That's a really good question. Erm, I felt that they really (0.5) that they - that we never got round to the discussion about benefits for them.

According to Chloe, this early inattention to the business case for the partnership was owing to a reticence on the part of CrediCo to discuss it - and DigiGen actually encouraged CrediCo to consider the potential for the partnership to create business value, assuming that their business partner would want something back from the partnership.

Chloe: We were quite explicit, I remember we did a slide - you've probably got it - um, looking at mapping their stakeholder groups, so mapping what we would (.) assume, you know, saying in discussion, for discussion, how this partnership could benefit CrediCo. And we looked at um, you know, brand equity, trust with customers, reputation build, um, thinking about who their key stakeholders might be, regulators, government etc, how we could facilitate that, PR, insight. I remember mapping the stakeholder kind of (.) groups and I had a slide of that - I was quite proud of it as well at the time. So they always had that and they had that quite early on? Um (1.0) at the meetings we never (1.0) we never really focused on that at all.

DigiGen's CEO, Anna, also emphasized that most corporate partners "talk about genuine impact and making a difference", even if "they are truly thinking about the P.R. and the value that they get". However, CrediCo's Managing Director, Roger, convinced DigiGen that the priority they were giving to social value over business value was sincere.

Anna: It was a big learning moment for us….But I don't think you ever get an answer to those kind of questions, which is 'Is it

really about impact on young people?', you only see it by the whites of eyes and through very senior level engagement. So when you meet the MD and you get that real sense, then you know.

However, the eventual contract was drawn up between the partners after Roger had left CrediCo. The contract did specify a number of anticipated benefits for CrediCo, principally the right to be credited in communication and marketing materials, on DigiGen's website, at stakeholder engagement events and in press releases, as well as the right for CrediCo to be invited to relevant workshops involving young people. Thus the contract negotiation process did involve some alignment for business value. Deliverables for CrediCo in the first year included that DigiGen "may share insights from major pieces of research" with young people, (subject to any confidentiality agreements), the development of a "communications and media strategy" and an "associate engagement strategy", to scope how CrediCo employees could be involved in the partnership.

In the first interview with Nicola, CrediCo's Head of CSR, she explained that part of the payment to DigiGen was a donation, which did not attract VAT, but that a small part of the funding had to be subject to a contractual agreement, since CrediCo did anticipate deriving business benefits from the partnership.

Nicola: There's a small portion of the overall amount which is, erm, subject to VAT and subject to a contract, because we felt that there were certain things that we would expect from the relationship that fell outside of philanthropy. Because we were expecting there to be some business benefit to us, either

through having volunteers involved, or through having some P.R. benefit, or through being able to speak at conferences, or being able to access their research - they do an awful lot of research - and being able to use that for our company's benefit. There are a whole range of benefits that we might experience as a result of the partnership and so we basically put all those in a contract and said that this is what we would expect from the relationship.

However, the statement that "we basically put all those in a contract and said that this is what we would expect" does not imply that the anticipated business value of the partnership was co-constructed and aligned through detailed negotiations with DigiGen. In the first interview with Naomi, CrediCo's Head of HR, she indicates that there was some attempt at aligning for business value.

Naomi: So, spent a bit of time with the CEO of DigiGen, Anna, with Chloe, who's our relationship manager, erm, and with Roger Tate at the time, working with, "So <u>why</u>, for the sake of what, what are we going to look to get out of this partnership?". And we linked it totally to our erm, I guess our employability agenda…

…Why? Because their audience are our future (.) customers. Erm, they are young and the next generation and, as I alluded to, our strategy needs those people to be confident, contribute to society economically, be work savvy, be financially savvy. They need to get in employment so that they can earn money to borrow money to pay it back - quite frankly.

The "quite frankly" hints at a reticence to be up front about the desire to create business value from the partnership, which was sometimes mirrored in partnership meetings and other interviews with CrediCo and was coded as "Coyness over business case". For example, the following extract is from the first observed partnership meeting, where Nicola is explaining the business rationale for the partnership in terms of increasing the employability, hence the creditworthiness, of future CrediCo customers.

Nicola: If they don't have, if they don't have (0.8) um jobs, and they don't know how to manage their money, then they won't be able to be CrediCo customers, essentially.
Chloe: °Mm-hm. Mm-hm°
Nicola: Um, it sounds very (1.0) mercenary to cloak it in such terms, but that's essentially what – you know – we need to make sense of it – internally.

[Extract from 1st observed partnership meeting.]

This rather hesitant and apologetic manner of referring to the business case lessened as the partnership progressed and Nicola came to develop a CSR strategy for CrediCo. However, as Naomi acknowledged in an early interview, many of the perceived business benefits, such as increasing the employability of young people, operated at "a very macro level", i.e. these benefits could not be appropriated exclusively by CrediCo: instead, they would accrue to businesses and society more generally. This is also evident in the extract below.

Naomi: So how could we take what we do…in the local community onto a more national scale and you could see that it would drive behaviours and outcomes into society that would help the sustainability of our business.

Business value was framed in terms of making future customers more "confident, financially savvy, employable, you know, great contributors to the economy and to society". Naomi explained that this had business value for CrediCo "Because our data will show, if you are in employment, if you are financially savvy, if you make a contribution, our risk profile goes down on you so we can lend you money and you will pay it back". However, it could be argued that "financially savvy" credit card customers are those who pay off their balance in full each month, thus avoiding the high rates of interest. These customers tend not to be in CrediCo's target "sub-prime" market and are considerably less lucrative for the business.

Thus, in the early stages of the partnership, the business case remained unconvincing. However, in the May 2014 partnership meeting (see Appendix F), Nicola's imminent departure from CrediCo prompted the hasty discussion of a partnership strategy. DigiGen led on producing some slides, based on the conversation in the partnership meeting. The resulting outline strategy explicitly aligned the partners' organizational contexts, linking the partnership to CrediCo's "business imperatives" and proposing more specific business benefits. These included: DigiGen sharing its skills and expertise in "agile working, mobile development, social media and [online] community management"; "considering how DigiGen's insight into young people's motivations and behaviours can help CrediCo better

support their young customers now and in the future, helping them succeed with credit"; and pooling resources "to explore how to support young customers digitally".

Nicola's CSR strategy, also produced shortly before she left CrediCo, mirrored this ambition to leverage the partnership with DigiGen to develop business value in more specific ways, as the following extract from CrediCo's CSR strategy indicates.

We know we can learn a lot from DigiGen and the way they engage young people in a meaningful online community. Over the course of the partnership we hope to tap into the expertise of DigiGen, and seek to understand the needs of a new generation of financially active people. This will allow us to plan for the future, create products that serve their needs, and understand Millennials' feelings about credit and how they want to interact with businesses. We hope to involve more young people in our innovation greenhouse work, both as a source of insight and as active participants. Perhaps even using a focus group of DigiGeners to test our new digital platforms - really the possibilities are endless.

However, notwithstanding these moves to *re*align the partnership to produce business value (see fig. 7.1, 1.), following Nicola's departure there was a lack of focus on developing these specific business value benefits, as the next section explains.

7.3.2 Value building – business value

Both partners constructed the potential business value of the partnership in interviews, where they were explicitly asked about business benefits. For example, Nicola listed examples of potential business value as deriving from: staff development benefits from volunteering with DigiGen; P.R. benefits from publicity for the partnership; and business benefits from being able to access DigiGen's expertise, including its digital mindset and its research on young people.

However, the impact of any perceived business benefits was difficult to quantify, as there were no KPIs or attempts to measure the business benefits produced by the partnership. Furthermore, wherever actual business value was claimed to have been derived, this was as a byproduct of activity aimed principally at creating social value (see section 7.4.2). In contrast, the social value created from the funding provided to DigiGen by CrediCo was much more apparent and DigiGen used KPIs against which to measure its performance.

In the partnership meetings, it was the nonprofit partner which more often sought actively to construct the actual or potential business value of the partnership for CrediCo. In the example below, Nicola offers CrediCo's help and Chloe first constructs the value of this for her own organization, but then constructs value for CrediCo from being involved.

Nicola: Great. So what would you envisage, er, you need from us? Or want from us?
Chloe: Um, we'd love some people to be there, for the co-creation session

Nicola: Mm-hm. Yeah
Chloe: Um (0.5) HR would be brilliant
Nicola: Yeah
Chloe: I'll let you know. 'Cos actually, it might be a question for you about who do you think would gain from it as well?
Nicola: Yep
Chloe: You know, who'd be interested in it.

[Extract from 2nd observed partnership meeting.]

In the extract below, Chloe seeks to construct the potential business value of the partnership, by persuading Nicola that DigiGen has know-how from which CrediCo could benefit as a business.

Chloe: But um, because I know that, you know, we talked a bit about mindset and about value and I think you were saying, you know, wouldn't it be amazing if we could show that CrediCo had made some different business decisions? Because of the insight that this partnership can bring?
Nicola: Yep.
Chloe: Um, it would be really interesting to kn- understand a bit more about that segment of customers?
Liam: Mmm
Nicola: Yeah. I've been meaning to get that. I have asked people.
Chloe: Because that's where we could add value, presumably, to someone like ((Name of CrediCo senior manager))'s department
Nicola: Yeah
Liam: Yeah

Chloe: Because, even if it's, if it's about - I mean one of the questions was about language, actually.
Nicola: Mmm
Chloe: I think Steve was asking me in that meeting, was like (0.3) <u>our</u> expertise is around communicating and understanding that target market?
Nicola: Yeah
Chloe: Um, we also have some research we've done on borrowing that we haven't shared with you guys yet, which we should also do. But whether there is appetite with you guys to explore that?
Nicola: Yeah
Chloe: 'Cos in terms of real sustainability – this partnership delivering against that, that would be <u>really</u> exciting
Nicola: That would be amazing
Chloe: And could we – is it, is it things like literally changing language and approach, or is it tools that we could co-develop?
Nicola: Yep

[Extract from 4th observed partnership meeting.]

Here, Chloe seeks to persuade Nicola to provide DigiGen with information about its younger customers, with a view to co-creating something which could provide business value for CrediCo. She employs the strategies described in Chapter 5, sections 5.4.1 (using business language such as "segment" and "target market") and in 5.4.5 (claiming expertise). The partners are aligned and the potential business value is affirmed. However, this was Nicola's final partnership meeting before leaving CrediCo and the idea of *co-creating* tangible products, which could be of business value to CrediCo, never actually came

to fruition during the lifetime of the partnership. Nicola nevertheless constructed this source of business value rhetorically in her last interview, just before she left CrediCo.

Nicola: So erm, for us as an organization, one of the major benefits that we, that we went into the relationship <u>for</u> is that because DigiGen have a huge user base basically and they are in the, in the age bracket of 16 to 25, for us that's, that's a that's a very interesting (.) age group because obviously, 18 plus, if they're economically active, they could get a credit card potentially. The ones that are not yet economically active, then they're a customer of the future. So for us identifying or understanding that age group more (0.3) is hugely beneficial for us. Understanding how those people who are customers of the future, erm, very <u>near</u> future, understanding how they think, how they use digital and how they like to interact with services, erm, is a massive piece of insight for us.

Following the attempt to realign the partnership for business value (described in section 7.3.1, above) and the departure of Nicola (CrediCo's Head of CSR), responsibility for the partnership passed to Rosa, CrediCo's Head of Employee Communications (see Appendix F). However, the partnership with DigiGen was not the main focus of Rosa's role and, despite an introductory handover meeting involving Nicola, Rosa and DigiGen colleagues, there was a lack of intensive interaction between the partners following Nicola's departure. The realignment of the partnership therefore did not translate into the realization of business value (fig. 7.1, 1.-3.). There was a gap of just over five months between Nicola's last partnership meeting, in May 2014 and the first partnership meeting involving Rosa and Trevor, in October

2014, since the normal quarterly meeting was postponed twice by CrediCo.

Therefore, although business benefits were anticipated and constructed rhetorically, they were not fully realised. There was an aspiration to generate significant value for the business, but the necessary work was not done to achieve this, either during the formative stage or the implementation stage of the partnership. In terms of the Value Construction Model (fig. 7.1) business value remained stuck mostly at the value aligning stage. However, the failure to build significant business value was not solely owing to the lack of focus on business value building processes and activities: it was also a consequence of misalignments, as the next section explains.

7.3.3 Value misalignment – business value

There was a misalignment between the former Managing Director's early emphasis on creating social value, by building the capacity and sustainability of the nonprofit partner (see section 7.2.1), and the subsequent focus by Naomi and Nicola on the need to create business value, as the extract below, from the first interview with Nicola, makes clear.

Nicola: So there is always going to be, there has to be a business driver for why we do any of this stuff…

…So there's always got to be that underlying why, as a business, why are we doing this, why should we bother (0.8) we've got to make the connection between what we do from a social perspective to what impact is that going to have on us as a business. For the sake of what question, basically.

Another misalignment became evident fairly early in the implementation stage, after a partnership launch event, when DigiGen realised that the partnership was of relatively little importance to CrediCo and that there had been a lack of internal communication concerning the partnership amongst CrediCo staff. The following quotes from the first interview with Liam, from DigiGen, make this clear, where he intimates that CrediCo is not yet ready to take the partnership to the next level.

Liam: And so I think maybe, perhaps there's an extent to which we are like an impatient (0.5) an impatient little puppy that wants to be, wants to be played with now!

….I felt was a bit of an eye opener after, erm, the end of November, um…I think we've come from a place where CrediCo is so big to us at DigiGen, that we imagine it being the other way around. Um, and it was really interesting to discover that it's not as embedded in, within CrediCo as (0.5) we perhaps would have imagined...

…I guess we kind of hadn't twigged how secondary, erm, CSR is…

…CrediCo's not necessarily in the right place – yet.

There was also a misalignment within CrediCo between its social value 'Vision' to 'Make lives better' (later its 'Mission' to 'Change banking for good') and its profit-maximising core business model, which targeted 'sub-prime' borrowers with a history of

financial problems, since the real world effects of the business were to charge relatively high rates of interest to already financially disadvantaged sections of the community (see Chapter 4, section 4.3.6). This internal misalignment, at times acknowledged explicitly as a problem by CrediCo, may also have acted as a constraint on the creation of business value in the partnership with DigiGen. It may have led to the initial reticence on the part of CrediCo to align the partnership for business value, as well as to misalignments between the partners, when the issue was raised at partnership meetings (see Chapter 6, final example in section 6.3.5). Furthermore, the partners tended to respond to these misalignments by using value preservation strategies, rather than by tackling the source of the tension head on, resulting in value conflict, followed by value repair processes, which could potentially have addressed these tensions (see examples in Chapter 6 and fig. 7.1, 4.-7.).

Thus, despite some realignment of the partnership for business value, the partners failed to capitalise on this potential. For example, towards the end of the partnership, DigiGen was unsuccessful in its attempts to persuade CrediCo of the business value of its research on young people's use of social media, in order to secure future funding. As with the framing of social value, the uniqueness of DigiGen's position with respect to young people was emphasized, this time as a source of business value for CrediCo.

Emily: And we will make sure that those young people are treated as they should be, safeguarded, et cetera, which I think is a (0.3) unique position

Steve: The immersion into young people's lives and actually being able to translate that out again, it's something quite unique, which only somebody with a very trusted relationship could do?

[Both extracts from 8th observed partnership meeting.]

The misalignment in how the partners framed the business value of the partnership was evident in this final observed partnership meeting and was subsequently explored in the final round of interviews, which exposed CrediCo's dissatisfaction with the business value derived from the partnership. However, this dissatisfaction was evidently not communicated clearly to DigiGen. Steve, DigiGen's CEO declared rather hesitantly that he thought CrediCo had done "pr-pretty well" out of the partnership and Emily also stated in her final interview that "C-co seem to be happy". However, contrast the following comment from Naomi, CrediCo's Head of HR.

Naomi: I would say from a business perspective, it has been less impactful (0.3) for the amount of investment, compared to some of our other programmes.

In this final round of interviews, both DigiGen and CrediCo interviewees were specifically asked about the business value generated over the lifecycle of the partnership. Emily from DigiGen only acquired responsibility for the partnership in its latter stages (see Appendix F) and, as with Rosa, this partnership was not the principal focus of her role. Emily expressed uncertainty concerning the business value that had been derived from the partnership, pointing out that CrediCo had

received some publicity, such as "exposure of their name on our site", but that perceptions of the impact of this publicity had not been measured, therefore "It's kind of a bit difficult to answer".

Steve, by this time DigiGen's CEO (see Appendix F), was also rather noncomittal when asked whether he thought the partnership had achieved its full potential, as far as benefits for CrediCo were concerned.

Steve: Err I think (.) mm. I mean I don't know, 'cos I'm not CrediCo
Katy: No
Steve: It's ((laughs)) so err. I-I think (1.0) I think they've had (1.0) I think they, I think they've done pr- <u>pretty</u> well out of it.
Katy: °Mm°
Steve: Err (0.8) I think they've got some significant successes. I think (0.5) what they have asked us to do, we've delivered.
Katy: Yeah
Steve: And what we've agreed to do (0.3) we've evolved with them
Katy: Mm-hm
Steve: So from that point of view (1.5) they should be pretty pl(heh)eased with where they've got it

Steve hesitates and hedges, his laughter serving to cover the slight awkwardness arising from his initial evasion of the queston. He then makes a qualified positive assessment of the business value of the partnership for CrediCo. However, in stating that DigiGen has delivered what was required in the contractual agreement, therefore CrediCo should be pleased with the outcome, Steve neglects to specify any actual business

benefits that have accrued to CrediCo. He then goes on to explain the return on CrediCo's investment in terms of the impact not on the business, but on DigiGen.

Steve: If I look back, I would be feeling pretty pleased with – I think you would be:: hard pushed to see (0.8) such a change in an organization over four years…
…and err (0.3) and like, and like, so I think, I would hope, when the- when they look back on the course of it
Katy: Yeah
Steve: Tha- that CrediCo will realise (1.0) kind of what a, what a significant piece of work they've done?

Steve therefore answered a slightly different question, as to whether he thought CrediCo should be pleased with the outcomes of the partnership, justifying his answer in terms of the organizational benefits for DigiGen, rather than those brought about for CrediCo. However, Steve then went on to concede that DigiGen had not been able to involve CrediCo's staff in the partnership "at scale". He was very positive about the potential for continuing the partnership, identifying new opportunities to work with CrediCo, arising from DigiGen's merger with another charity (see Appendix F). However, whilst he couched this in terms of benefits for CrediCo, he did not specify precisely how this would generate business value.

Steve: I would be sad (0.3) if we entered this great new (0.5) version of us, with all the opportunity that has
Katy: Yep
Steve: And they didn't benefit from it (0.3) by being involved
Katy: Yeah, yeah

Steve: Because I think, I think they're so responsible for where we've got to
Katy: [=Yeah]
Steve: [=So] that would be my, my, my thought - it would seem, it would be (0.3) going all the way to the doorway of the party and not, not coming in
Katy: Yeah, yeah
Steve: Would be <u>my</u> sense, but they may, they may think differently. But that would be my view.

Turning to the final interviews with CrediCo, when asked about business value, interviewees reaffirmed that the partnership had not been aligned for business value from the outset. Naomi, the senior manager responsible for the partnership, acknowledged that the business rationale for the partnership was not made sufficiently clear.

Naomi: It <u>wasn't</u> clear
Katy: OK
Naomi: Um and that's just a massive learning

Trevor responded similarly, stating that the partnership "wasn't set up for business value". However, since none of the CrediCo participants responsible for the partnership at its conclusion had been involved at the outset, pointing out the initial failure to align the partnership for business value could be seen as a means of absolving themselves of responsibility for the subsequent failure to create significant business value during the remaining years of the partnership.

In the final interview with Naomi, she acknowledged that the partnership felt like a "bolt-on" for CrediCo, contrasting it with partnerships which are more integrated into the business. This failure was attributed to the personal approach of CrediCo's former CEO, as illustrated in the following extracts. Note that "we shied –" hints at the difficulty inherent in confronting tensions, which may nevertheless have been necessary to create substantial business value. Also, the reversal after "we shied -" avoids allocating blame to Naomi herself and her team.

Naomi: You know, these national partnerships and their CSR Strategy's <u>not</u> just part of associate engagement, it is <u>really</u> integral to the way they do business
Katy: Yes
Naomi: Um, and I think we had an opportunity to do that (0.3) and we shied –
Katy: Mm:
Naomi: We didn't quite go there. Er, that's just interesting. What then happens is it becomes vulnerable <u>because</u> um, er - or the job becomes harder, because it's so linked with that CEO
Katy: Yeah
Naomi: That when you get a switch of CEOs, which you do, um, it sort of becomes, it's a make the best of wha- what you've got…

Naomi: at the end of that four years, it was <u>always</u> going to be vulnerable to non-renewal, 'cos it wasn't integrated into the whole business
Katy: Yeah
Naomi: It was really a legacy of, of a previous CEO?...

Naomi: As I say, I just <u>wish</u> um that it had been championed by you know (0.5) those people, or was championed broader than the CEO and actually gone into the, er, Chief Technology Officer or the Chief Marketing Officer
Katy: Yeah
Naomi: Or the Chief Operating Officer
Katy: Yeah
Naomi: Because <u>then</u> you get something, erm, that is really, really powerful.

However, arguably, it was for Naomi herself to secure that broader engagement and commitment, as the senior manager responsible for the partnership - although this is undoubtedly far easier said than done.

The conflation of social value and business value was a strategy employed by both partners, for diametrically opposite ends. In the case of CrediCo, it was used to frame the partnership as less successful, justifying the non-renewal of funding, by casting doubt on the social value created by the partnership (see section 7.2.3). However, in the case of DigiGen, this same strategy was used for the opposite purpose: to frame the partnership as *more* successful, by glossing over its failure to create significant business value, thereby strengthening the case for the renewal of the partnership funding. This strategy of conflating social and business value therefore resulted in a significant misalignment between the two partners, in terms of their discursive constructions of the overall value of the partnership.

Notwithstanding the asymmetry between the social value and the business value created by the partnership, the potential for

mutual value, or win-wins, was a fairly common theme within the partnership talk, as well as being a focus for the interviews, as discussed below.

7.4 Constructing mutual value / win-wins

7.4.1 Value alignment – mutual value

Whilst the partners did not align for business value during the early discussions, the aspiration to create mutual value through the partnership was, to some extent, reflected in the contract (as described in sections 7.2.1 and 7.3.1, above), which contained both social value and business value objectives. Early in the implementation stage of the partnership, the partners constructed commonalities between their organizations, which had the potential to serve as discursive resources for creating mutual value. For example, in the first interview with Nicola, CrediCo's Head of CSR, she stated, ""DigiGen are a digital charity: we're an organization increasingly digitising our services - there is some link there".

A theme emerging in both the interview and partnership meeting data was that creating social value alone is inferior to creating mutual value for both partners. This mirrored the academic concepts of "strategic CSR" and "shared value" in the literature (see Chapter 2). Both these concepts were occasionally invoked explicitly by partners. In the first, brief extract, below, Chloe draws on Porter and Kramer's concept of "shared value" (2006; 2011). (N.B. I was aware that the partners had encountered this concept, as it was referenced in the original PhD studentship

proposal, agreed with them.) In the second example, Naomi, from CrediCo, employs the concept of "strategic CSR".

Chloe: There's a lot of shared value that can come out of that process

[Extract from 3rd observed partnership meeting.]

Naomi: Cos I think it's really awesome for companies, you know, when they, if they really want to go in terms of a strategic CSR programme. You have to have, i-it can't be down to one person, it has to be integral to business success? To get the real impact. Um, you know, err, out of it, basically.

[Extract from interview with Naomi]

This illustrates the influence of macro-level CSR discourse on the partners. In the above extract, Naomi, CrediCo's senior manager responsible for the partnership, is describing the impact of strategic CSR in terms of business value, rather than social value. The idea of social value alone being inferior was sometimes framed by partners using the term "philanthropy", which was given negative connotations - one-way gifts, transfers or hand-outs being held to be of less value than two-way benefits for both the business and society. Again, this reflected the dominant macro-level discourse on philanthropy and Austin's (2000) least evolved "philanthropic" stage of the "Collaboration Continuum" (see Chapter 2, section 2.6). This was coded in the data as 'Social value only constructed as inferior'.

Business value and social value were sometimes conflated in the partnership talk, as well as in interviews. In the first interview

with Naomi, she spoke of the aspiration for CSR to become "integrated into the business rather than something philanthropic that's just there for employee engagement, which is a great goal, but it's limited. And it's very much been part of our journey to be highly engaged, be the number one place to work, but it is limited to ourselves rather than an impact on society as a whole".

The term "philanthropy" is given negative connotations and associated with small scale, "bolt-on" community projects that create relatively little social value. Yet, in the above extract, the rationale Naomi gives for engaging in philanthropy is still couched in terms of business value - "employee engagement" - and not in terms of social value. However, the aspiration to make a bigger social value impact "on society as a whole" is arguably far more philanthropic - i.e. generous, benevolent, public-spirited. This conflation of social value and business value motivations, with "philanthropy" framed as a negative concept, served to construct mutual value as superior to social value alone.

It was sometimes taken as a given by both partners that mutual value, or "win-win" outcomes are synergistic, i.e. greater than the sum of their parts, or that significant business benefits would automatically derive from creating social value, and vice versa. This idea was constructed rhetorically by both partners.

Anna: …first and foremost was their ((i.e. CrediCo's)) commitment to having an impact that was (.) good and useful for young people and just saying "If you're genuinely committed to that then that's what has the business benefit"….."it's multi-pronged and I suppose this is one way of, if you, if they're

committed in the long term to supporting young people, it also shows a real commitment to their staff, to developing them".

[Extract from 1st interview with Anna, DigiGen's CEO]

Liam: Erm (0.8) and actually by helping (0.5) those, helping CrediCo understand young people (1.0) we can therefore help (0.3) young people who go to CrediCo have a better experience.

[Extract from 1st interview with Liam, DigiGen's Business Development Manager]

The following example is a further development of Liam's idea, taken from a partnership planning meeting. A lengthier extract is needed to illustrate how the partners did sometimes align successfully for mutual value. Chloe is identifying the potential for mutual value to be created from a deeper understanding of CrediCo's younger customers.

Chloe: But I'd love to know, out of that 18 to 25 market
Nicola: Yeah
Chloe: How many of those customers are unemployed?
Nicola: Yeah
Chloe: You know, because, like your thing about asking that person ((i.e. a CrediCo customer)) if he was OK
Nicola: Yeah
Chloe: Like, if that, if those young people are in a cer- it would be good to know more about their circumstances?
Nicola: Yeah
Chloe: Because actually, through our partnership, you've got a range of – well you could have a range of insight

Nicola: Yeah
Chloe: And language
Nicola: Yeah
Chloe: And tools to offer them?
Nicola: Yep
Chloe: As another way in?
Liam: Mm:
Nicola: Yeah
Chloe: And that would be re- <u>really</u> exciting
Nicola: Yeah
Chloe: Because it would also help raise awareness of DigiGen
Nicola: Yeah
Chloe: If it was done –
Nicola: =Absolutely
Chloe: =right. And <u>that</u> is a real sweet spot
Nicola: It really is, yeah
Chloe: Personally, I would love to try and crack that.
Nicola: I know. I want to nail that. I want to nail it before I go. Or at least move it forward.

[Extract from 3rd observed partnership meeting.]

Chloe's idea is for CrediCo to share information concerning its younger customers, in order for DigiGen to use its expertise in communicating with and developing tools for young people, to help them manage their credit card debt. Her reference to asking a customer "if he was OK" alluded to Nicola's earlier account of a nonpaying customer, who had failed to respond to multiple demands for repayment, but who eventually did respond to a communication expressing concern for his wellbeing, leading to the arrangement of a repayment plan. However, this notion of a

win-win, or a "sweet spot", assumes that the business interests of CrediCo in having debts repaid are aligned with the interests of young people. Whilst young people may benefit from arranging a manageable repayment plan, the optimal outcome for them would be to have their debts written off - especially if they are unemployed and therefore not in a position to afford even small repayments.

However, this example demonstrates that there was some alignment between the partners to create mutual value. Nevertheless, in practice little was actually achieved by way of synergistic win-win outcomes, owing to the lack of focus on defined business objectives (see 7.3, above). The potential for synergistic, win-win outcomes was therefore identified by the partners, but - except in a few minor ways, described below - it was not realised in practice. At times, the discursive conflation of social value and business value may have assisted in aligning the partnership for mutual value in a rhetorical sense, whilst inhibiting clear thinking concerning specific business and social value benefits, thereby impeding the actual co-creation of mutual value.

7.4.2 Value building - mutual value

Participants were specifically asked about mutual value during interviews, but it was also a theme in the partnership meetings, whereby the partners sought to build mutual value through their talk. Many of the discursive features of collaborative talk, described in Chapter 5, were employed when discussing the potential for mutual value, or win-wins. In the following extract, Nicola shifts from using the pronoun "we" to refer to CrediCo's

business objectives, to using "our" in the final sentence to refer to the partnership with DigiGen, hinting at a shared (albeit temporary) identity for the partnership, which served as a discursive resource for constructing mutual value.

Nicola: So, um at the start of 2014, er, we, every sort of year we have our business imperatives? Which are things we're going to focus on for, for that particular year. And, .hhhhh, the reason I'm telling you about this is because there's a few are - one in particular – plays very nicely into our hands.

[Extract from 3rd observed partnership meeting.]

In the following extract, Nicola talks about the potential for mutual value from learning from one another, before Chloe interrupts to propose bringing their teams together to co-produce something that creates business value for CrediCo alongside social value for DigiGen.

Nicola: So, I guess we need to think about how we could use your expertise, to, to help us with our thinking and whether there's any way that we can share our thinking with you guys in more detail and -
Chloe: Do you know what would be really cool?
Nicola: What?
Chloe: ((Laughs)) 'Cos I think like experiential learning's really good
Nicola: Yeah
Chloe: Rather than just like sharing stuff, like to actually like get our teams together to build something together?

[Extract from 3rd partnership meeting.]

In this example, several of the features of partnership talk identified in Chapters 5 and 6 are used in conjunction with each other to contruct mutual value discursively. Interrupting a speaker is a controlling move (see Chapter 6, section 6.3.3), but Chloe mitigates this by prefacing her proposal first with a question ("Do you know what would be really cool?") and then by providing a rationale and a positive assessment ("'Cos I think…"), rather than putting her proposal directly. She also softens the impact of her interruption by laughing (after Nicola's "What?") and through the use of collaborative language, slipping into the young people's idiom of using redundant "likes" (see Chapter 5, section 5.4.2), which, in this context, may be interpreted as more deferential than using professionalized language. When her proposal is finally put, it is framed as a question, rather than a statement or claim. Nicola's responses demonstrate her understanding that Chloe's interruption was not intended to give offence.

Chloe continued to push this idea of co-creating something that would produce mutual value, however, the partners struggled to develop this further and it was never put into practice. Thus, in terms of mutual value, the partnership became stuck at the value alignment stage (fig. 7.1, 1.). Two further examples are given below – note that the extreme case formulation "huge value" in the first extract and the use of reported speech (see Chapter 5, section 5.4.3) in the second extract are used to heighten the rhetorical effect.

Chloe: So it's like, we're going to create something, which will actually have, will have huge value for both of us – but even if it had only value for DigiGen, there's a learning process involved there that actually drives business value.

Chloe: Or maybe you develop two products. You know, maybe you say "We're going to build something for a specific business need of CrediCo and then we'll build something (0.3) for young people"
Nicola: Yeah
Chloe: Or two versions of the same thing – do you know what I mean?
Nicola: Yeah, yeah

[Extracts from 3rd observed partnership meeting]

There were a few examples which were cited during interviews as having produced mutual value, or "win-wins" for both partners. One was an innovation training event provided by CrediCo (which was also observed and at which fieldnotes were taken), bringing together CrediCo's recent graduate employees with several DigiGen staff, to address a practical challenge faced by DigiGen. (N.B. Naomi's use of the pronoun "you" refers to DigiGen, hence this was interpreted as reported speech - see Chapter 5, 5.4.3 - and was transcribed using inverted commas.)

Naomi: We have graduates here and as part of their programme we want them to learn about innovation. "We will use real problems from DigiGen, bring you in to work with our graduates, 'cos it's a test, it's low risk for us. They will put their skills to the

test. We will get to learn a bit about our grads, they will learn new skills and hopefully you get some benefit because you will get ideas that you can implement in DigiGen".

[Extract from Naomi's 1st interview]

I questioned the claim that the application of the innovation training to a DigiGen challenge provided additional benefits for CrediCo, pointing out that CrediCo could have worked on a challenge facing its own organization. However, Naomi framed the use of a DigiGen problem as a "really good example of a win win", because it encouraged the graduates to challenge the status quo in a way that was "low risk" and enabled their managers to assess their potential at an early stage. However, Naomi acknowledged, "Have we seen all of that play out yet? Probably not (0.3) but I can see that as being one of the benefits".

There was some involvement of CrediCo employees in the partnership activity, which could be said to have furthered CrediCo's "associate engagement" objective, at the same time as benefitting DigiGen. However, CrediCo's own local community programmes were viewed by the business as providing greater business value, since employees were able to choose local causes to which they were personally committed. Hence the construction of mutual value, or win-wins for both partners remained mostly rhetorical and aspirational.

7.4.3 Value misalignment - mutual value

The potential for tensions, or conflicts, between social value and business value sometimes became evident in interviews, as well as in partnership meetings. For example, in the following extract, Chloe touches on a conflict which can arise when corporate partners want "logo exclusivity" on DigiGen's website, but the charity needs to be able to secure funding from other funders (hence display other logos), as well as needing to retain the trust of their service users. Here, CrediCo is presented in a positive light, in contrast with other corporate partners.

Chloe: Um and I was quite keen to understand her ((i.e. Naomi's)) views around logo exclusivity on the site – because it had been a challenge we'd had in the past with other corporate partners. And um (.) it was the first very open, direct conversational steer from them that I had in terms of what they wanted? Erm, and basically she said to me, you know, "Exclusivity makes no sense to me: we want to strengthen you as an organization, it's important you get funders elsewhere, um (.) I don't understand, you know, why we would do that" – and that was immensely refreshing for me to hear. And I think gave the rest of the team (1.0) real confidence that they were doing this to help DigiGen, rather than just wanting a logo splashed over everything (.) and (0.3) control?
Katy: They just weren't demanding, um, exclusivity about it, but they did want to be recognized for (0.5) their contribution?
Chloe: They wanted to be recognized, but they were always very concerned that (0.3) – they always wanted to point out that they would take a lead from us on how we could do that in a way that wouldn't compromise trust with our users?

[Extract from 1st interview with Chloe.]

When asked about DigiGen's policy on displaying the logos of businesses on its website, Chloe explained that there must be no control by a corporate partner over the editorial of its website and that it was a question of not endorsing the company and "being <u>really</u> clear" about the nature of the funding relationship, "because young people are very savvy, they're actually used to seeing brands everywhere". However, whilst it is undoubtedly the case that young people are habitually exposed to brands and advertising, it does not necessarily follow that they are "savvy" about this. Indeed, if they were, it could be argued that advertising would be ineffective and corporations would not waste money on it.

It was notable that DigiGen framed young people as "savvy" in relation to companies' brands. Most sources of charitable funding have some strings attached and this served as a means of glossing over tensions arising from accepting funding from corporations. In contrast, where DigiGen constructed the social value of its services, young people were portrayed as facing multiple pressures and sometimes as disadvantaged or vulnerable. Also, in cases where DigiGen sought to construct the value of young people themselves, as well as the charity, young people tended to be described as "awesome", "amazing", etc. These differing accounts concerning young people were coded as: "Young people as savvy", "Young people as vulnerable / disadvantaged" and "Young people as awesome" (see Table 7.1).

A tension for DigiGen between supporting young people and the need to generate income from businesses became apparent

much later in the partnership, in relation to DigiGen's research on young people's use of social media. DigiGen planned to generate an income stream from selling its research findings to other organizations, including businesses. Emily states that this "could actually add value to us, in terms of creating something, a product to sell". At the same time, DigiGen's "trusted relationship" with young people and its role to "make sure that those young people are treated as they should be, safeguarded, etc.", was emphasized.

At the launch event for this project, young people were presented as "sophisticated digital marketeers" in their use of social media platforms to market themselves. When I spoke with Eva, from DigiGen at this same event, she emphaisized that young people are "savvy about branding" and that they are "in control". The project found that young people are "hyperaware" of the strategies brands use on them. However, it also found that young people are not all the same and that they are "highly influenced by brands". Despite talk of assisting companies to market their products to young people in "safe and responsible ways", it was unclear how DigiGen would manage the risk of those same companies exploiting young people, especially those who are impressionable or vulnerable.

As previously discussed, there was a salient tension for CrediCo between its social value Mission/Vision and its profit-maximising "sub-prime" business model. This internal value misalignment within CrediCo (fig. 7.1, 4.) may also have constrained the development of mutual value between the partners. A "yoghurt" metaphor was invoked when discussing the potential for CrediCo to integrate its CSR into the business and become a more

socially driven organization (see Table 7.1 and examples in Chapter 5, section 5.3.4 and Chapter 6, section 6.5).

Following partners' discussion of this yoghurt metaphor in the May 2014 partnership meeting, the potential to use the partnership as a vehicle for changing CrediCo's business practices to create more social value was raised during the next round of interviews. Nicola was candid about the fundamental problem with CrediCo's business model: "'Cos at the moment, we make – i-it's – we make a lot of money out of people that can't (0.4) pay the money back". She described CrediCo's leadership team as "very aware that it's not a very, um (0.6) ethical way to do business?". Nicola explained the yoghurt metaphor in terms of "how business can achieve a social purpose, if they put it at the centre of their business model". Applying this to the credit card industry, "the holy grail"…"is how you design it so that everyone gets all the benefits, but (0.5) very few of the negative side of (0.3) credit". However, Nicola concluded that "Um, I don't th-think that there's an appetite for-r (0.4) us to go after yoghurt, um, any time in the next five to ten years".

Interviewees from both partner organizations expressed similar views. Naomi expressed an ambition to make CrediCo a more socially driven business, but said that "As an organization, we don't appear to be ready for that". Rosa's view was "at the moment it's probably seen as a distraction, or that it isn't a priority: we need to grow and be digital if we want to survive as a business". Trevor described himself as "sceptical", stating that "I don't think there's anywhere near as much, erm, appetite from senior people around the business".

DigiGen interviewees hedged their bets slightly more: when asked whether she thought CrediCo was willing to transform into a more socially-driven business, Chloe stated "Erm, I think it's unclear", pointing out that the yoghurt story had been introduced to CrediCo by Roger, the former CEO. She added "I think the will is definitely there with Naomi"…"But I don't see any evidence that that has been - that probably that's shared across the business"…"So I think I'd be (0.5) you know, realistic about that being an ambition". Liam also described it as "a lofty goal", recognising that "they don't want to be like some of the other sub-prime lenders, from what I can see", but questioning whether this was a realistic aim, or a priority for CrediCo.

In order for the partnership to have been transformative not only for DigiGen, but for CrediCo also, the business may have needed the will and the ambition to confront the conflict between its purported values and the real-world outcomes of its core business model. In terms of the Value Construction Model (fig. 7.1), this may have involved acknowledging the misalignment between social value and business value (*ibid*. 4) and, instead of engaging in value defending practices (*ibid*. 5.), exploring this value conflict (*ibid*. 6.) and undergoing a value repair process (*ibid*. 7.), in order to realign the partnership (*ibid*. 1.) to co-create mutual value (*ibid*. 2;3). This process could potentially have produced the elusive "yoghurt" to which the partners referred: the transformation of a profit-maximising business into an organization that is socially driven.

In the final round of interviews, both partners recognised that there had been missed opportunities for co-creating mutual value. This was conveyed more strongly by the business partner interviewees, who were disappointed with the lack of business

value created by the partnership. However, this was also recognised by DigiGen: as Emily stated, "It would have been good to have something that we were launching together and actually could get all of our stakeholders involved in".

The lack of mutual value was partly owing to a lack of intensive, focused work to develop the identified potential of the partnership - particularly in terms of CrediCo's exploitation of DigiGen's expertise around a digital mindset, the development of digital services, online communities, and its knowledge of young people, who would be CrediCo's future customers. However, the potential for win-wins may not have been easy to achieve, as there was the risk of misalignments, arising from tensions or trade-offs between social value and business value, leading to value conflict (fig. 7.1, 4. & 6.). As explained in Chaper 6, when there were tensions or misalignments, partners tended to engage in value preservation strategies (fig. 7.1, 5.), as a means of avoiding overt conflict (fig. 7.1, 6.).

7.5 Chapter summary

This chapter has applied the Value Construction Model to the meso-level, overarching accounts of the value of the partnership, to make sense of the asymmetry between the construction of social and organizational value for the nonprofit partner and the construction of business value for the corporation. It explained the partnership's relative success in terms of the building of social value and organizational value for the nonprofit partner, as well as its failure to deliver significant business value. It can therefore be concluded that the Value Construction Model can be

used as an explanatory framework at the meso or partnership level, as well as at the micro-level of partnership talk.

This chapter also addressed the sub-question of how discursive constructions of value changed over the lifecycle of the partnership and across sectors, presenting the multiple accounts of the partnership in terms of how the partners framed social, business and mutual value. Every nonprofit-business partnership will be unique in this respect. However, the accounts of the value created through this particular partnership are of intrinsic interest, also adding an in-depth, multi-level case study to the existing body of research. This case also has the potential to shed light on other examples of nonprofit-business partnership. Furthermore, the application of the Value Construction Model demonstrates its potential as an explanatory framework for other cases, not only of dyadic nonprofit-business partnership and cross-sector social partnerships more generally, but also in any research setting aimed at the collaborative construction of value. The penultimate chapter of this thesis will relate the findings from this research to the literature and discuss its implications.

Chapter 8: Discussion

8.1 Setting the scene

The findings from this research challenge the assumption that the outcomes of social partnerships can be predicted reliably from a set of factors, or initial conditions (See Chapter 2, Table 2.1, 'Business Value' perspective). The importance and complexity of processes of value construction in the evolution of partnerships calls into question the potential to develop a partnership theory with predictive power (see Chapter 2, section 2.10). This is not to deny that certain factors or initial conditions may make partnership success more or less likely (Arya & Lin, 2007). However, by illuminating the micro-level processes of talk that construct the value of a social partnership, this thesis has demonstrated how the outcomes which eventually emerge are shaped by the creative, discursive processes of the actors involved, throughout the lifecycle of the partnership.

8.1.1 Summary of key findings

The core findings from this research were presented in Chapters 5, 6 and 7. Chapters 5 and 6 identified recurring features of partnership talk, based on a micro-level, close analysis of data, principally from partnership meetings. This revealed insights into the importance of symmetrical and asymmetrical talk in constructing the value of social partnerships. A Value Construction Model emerged from this fine-grained analysis (see Chapter 5, Fig. 5.1), which accounted for the appearance of

these micro-level features in symmetrical and asymmetrical partnership talk.

This Value Construction Model was subsequently used in Chapter 7 as a framework for interpreting partners' accounts of the social, business and mutual value that evolved over the lifecycle of the partnership. This analysis drew principally on data from interviews. The Value Construction Model accounted for discrepancies in how the partners framed the social and organizational value they deemed to be created through the partnership. It explained the partnership's perceived relative success in terms of the construction of social value and organizational value for the nonprofit partner, as well as its perceived failure to deliver significant business value for the corporation. The overarching outcomes of the partnership can be understood in terms of the cumulative effects of micro-level processes of partnership interaction. Therefore the Value Construction Model offers a multi-level, unifying framework for analysing why social partnerships are viewed as successful, or as failing to create sufficient value. It connects the local, situated micro-level processes of value construction with the meso and macro-levels. The longitudinal application of the Value Construction Model can therefore reveal insights into how partners' constructions of value evolve over the lifecycle of a partnership.

8.1.2 Summary of points for discussion

It was argued in Chapter 2 that the concept of value is often taken for granted in the social partnership and related literatures (Austin & Seitanidi, 2012a; Cousins et al., 2002) and that treating value as a dynamic, socially constructed and discursively

constituted concept had the potential to yield new insights into how nonprofit-business partnership talk operates and how it translates into partnership outcomes. This chapter explains the implications of this research, in the context of the relevant partnership and discourse analytic literature, with a view to clarifying the main contributions of this thesis. The following section explains how this thesis makes an innovative methodological contribution to the study of social partnerships. Contributions from the close analysis of partnership talk are considered in section 8.3, relating this to discursive approaches in the social partnership literature and also drawing comparisons with wider literatures focusing on language and social interaction. Meso and macro-level interpretations are discussed in section 8.4 and related to the nonprofit-business partnership and CSSP literature, with particular reference to the "shared value" debate (Porter & Kramer, 2011) and to clarifying contributions to Austin and Seitanidi's CVC framework (2012a).

For the purpose of relating the findings from this thesis to the extant literature, the discussion in sections 8.3 to 8.4 has been divided into micro-level and meso or macro-level constructions of value, since most empirical studies focus on just one level of analysis. However, as explained in the following section and in Chapter 3 (especially section 3.3.3), my approach treats context as multi-layered and dynamic, collapsing the micro-macro dichotomy (Gray et al., 2015). In other words, macro and meso-level discourses of value are drawn on strategically by partners and embedded in the micro-level of partnership talk, whilst micro-level features of talk combine to shape and construct the meso (organizational) level and macro (societal) level partnership outcomes.

8.2 Methodological contributions

This research offers a fresh perspective on the nature of value, as a socially and discursively constructed concept. This led to a novel methodological approach to identifying how value is constructed through partnership talk and the recognition of multiple, alternative perspectives, which are framed by participants in specific situated contexts and for strategic purposes. The blending of ethnographic and discourse analytic qualitative methods has enabled our knowledge of value construction in nonprofit-business partnerships to be deepened and enriched. It is a methodology which would be equally applicable to the wider field of CSSPs and to other forms of collaboration, with the potential to yield further fruitful results.

Chapter 4 served as a bridging chapter to the core findings of this thesis, by providing a rich ethnographic account of the partnership, so as to acclimatize the reader to my interpretations of the cultures of the two partner organizations and to emerging themes and perspectives. It also provides a means of enhancing the reflexivity of this thesis through the incorporation of autoethnographic detail (Humphreys, 2005). This holistic account connects themes emerging from field work with later interpretations from data analysis, also providing contextual detail to justify subsequent findings, which draw on ethnographic knowledge beyond the immediate situated talk of research participants. A more incidental rationale for including an ethnographic account is its usefulness for novice researchers, particularly ethnographers, to equip them with a feel for what it is like to enter the field in a sensitive research setting and for the kinds of predicaments they may encounter (Russell, 2005).

This thesis demonstrates the advantages of combining context-sensitive ethnographic techniques with a rigorous discursive approach, which prioritises the close analysis of situated talk. A methodological contribution of this study is to reveal the interconnections between communicative practices and organizational culture, building theory which bridges the micro, meso and (to a lesser extent) the macro level of analysis, without the need for a cumbersome analytical framework. Instead of attempting to analyse multiple, predefined layers of context in a systematic way, this methodology recognises that context is never-ending, but that different features of context become salient in situated partnership talk. This approach thereby deconstructs the binary opposition between text and context and between micro and macro levels of analysis. It combines the rigorous analysis of situated talk with an intimate ethnographic knowledge of the research setting. This methodology also offers a promising solution to the challenge of bridging the gap between academia and practice, since it positions the researcher in a close relationship with practitioners, as a participant-observer, thereby enabling an in-depth understanding of the participating organizations' perspectives and priorities.

This research has investigated a single case of nonprofit-business partnership. However, the focus on specific communicative practices within the partnership talk significantly increases the scope for generalization, owing to the fact that there are multiple instances of these micro-level discursive features, deployed by different research participants over the lifecycle of the partnership. The main micro-level contributions of this thesis are discussed below.

8.3 Micro-level constructions of value

8.3.1 Contributions to research on interpersonal skills & competencies

A research sub-question which emerged inductively from the close analysis of partnership talk data was as follows: 'How is collaborative talk constructed and deployed (i.e. using what interpersonal skills and rhetorical strategies) so as to co-construct value?'. The importance of interpersonal skills and competencies has previously been highlighted by scholars of nonprofit-business partnership and in the wider literature on social partnerships (Austin & Seitanidi, 2012a; Getha-Taylor, 2008). For example, while leadership has often been viewed in terms of a single, inspirational individual, it has been recognised that there is a need for leadership skills to be developed by practitioners operating at all levels of CSSPs (Liddle & Diamond, 2007). However, whilst the potential for acquiring new skills, knowledge and competencies has often been cited as a source of value for CSSPs (e.g. Austin, 2000; Dahan et al., 2010), relatively little attention has been given to the softer, interpersonal skills and communicative competences that are necessary prerequisites for building successful partnerships (Kagan, 2007).

Chapters 5 and 6 of this thesis reveal insights into the micro-level, discursive strategies used by partners to build common ground, navigate relationships and manage tensions and conflicts, through their talk. These discursive strategies reveal

how partnership talk is performed, therefore relate to the communicative competencies of practitioners. As MacDonald and Stadtler explain, "skills commonly define the 'what' of specific learned activities, while competencies relate to 'how' the learned activities are performed" (2017, p.45). Several of the discursive strategies identified in Chapters 5 and 6 map closely onto competencies in the interpersonal and communication skillsets in MacDonald and Stadtler's (2017) framework. Most notably, their "Identifies common ground among collaborators" and "Identifies overlapping interests and needs" competencies map onto my "constructing commonalities" discursive strategy (Chapter 5, section 5.2.1). Also, "Develops shared meaning using boundary spanning language" maps onto my "mimesis" discursive strategy (section 5.2.2); and "Nurtures interpersonal relationships" maps onto the "Value building – strengthening relationships" discursive strategies in Chapter 5, section 5.3 (see MacDonald & Stadtler, 2017, p.46). A contribution of this research is therefore to open up the 'black box' of more generic categories of communicative skills, such as "consensus-building", "active listening" and "conflict management" (Kagan, 2007; MacDonald and Stadtler, 2017) to reveal precisely *how* these are enacted in situated partnership talk.

The discursive strategies identified in Chapter 5 were theorized as playing a role in value building processes, by building common ground, building relationships, establishing credibility and affirming the value of the partnership (see Table 5.1). Hence these discursive strategies relate to "consensus building" skills, which is one of the core, generic partnership skills identified by Kagan (2007). The discursive strategies discussed in Chapter 6 were theorized principally as value defending practices, employed by partners to manage tensions and deal with conflict

(see Table 6.1). Hence these discursive strategies relate to "conflict resolution" skills (another category of generic partnership skills identified in Kagan's 2007 model), or "conflict management" skills in MacDonald and Stadtler's (2017) framework.

As explained in Chapter 3 (section 3.6.2), discursive strategies may be employed unconsciously, being used spontaneously in response to the ever-changing interactional contingencies of partnership talk. However, the *conscious-competence* model of skills acquisition (Cannon, Feinstein & Friesen, 2014) illustrates how the findings from this thesis could be used to develop and enhance the interpersonal skills and competencies of people engaging in CSSPs. When practitioners first become aware of the need to develop their partnership skills, they move from *unconscious incompetence* to *conscious incompetence*. They then learn how to apply interpersonal skills more effectively, moving from *conscious incompetence* to *conscious competence*. With experience, partners reach the stage of *unconscious competence*, where they are able to use and adapt their interpersonal skills spontaneously, in response to complex, real-life communicative situations.

Chapter 5 of this thesis demonstrates the discursive strategies used by partners to align with one another by constructing common ground and adopting one another's language (what I have termed 'mimesis'); how they engage in ongoing processes of relationship building, so as to co-construct value, through the use of behaviours engendering trust and rapport, compliments, enthusiastic endorsement, affiliative humour and collaborative language; and how they build credibility through their use of language, including by using reported speech, by invoking third

parties and by claiming expertise. These features of partnership talk may therefore be identified as constitutive of what Kagan (2007) terms "consensus-building skills".

The discourse analytic method used in this research therefore provides a more precise and sophisticated understanding of how communication skills are utilised *in situ* and what functions they perform in partnership talk (Stokoe, Hepburn & Antaki, 2012). Other identified features of partnership talk, such as the use of body language, not interrupting, asking questions for clarification, etc. relate to Kagan's (2007) and MacDonald and Stadtler's (2017) generic category of "active listening skills" and to the latter's "effective communication skills", i.e. skills that facilitate ongoing processes of relationship building and value construction, by validating interlocutors' perspectives (see also Jagosh, Boudreau, Steinert, MacDonald & Ingram, 2011).

However, this thesis also demonstrates that, in a social partnership setting, such skills are deployed for *strategic* purposes and are not neutral. For example, summarizing can be used as a rhetorical tool to actively re-frame a discussion, rather than merely to check understanding. Similarly, directive questioning can be used to control a partner, rather than merely to elicit information.

While Diamond (2002) identified practical strategies for resolving conflict in partnerships, this thesis highlights skills involved in conflict *avoidance*, as a means of preserving the relationship between partners. Seitanidi (2010) identified the importance of "overt functional conflict deficit" in nonprofit-business partnership, whereby the failure to express opposing values or perspectives can lead to missed opportunities to alter partners'

viewpoints. This thesis builds on Seitanidi's (2010) identification of a constructive, positive role for conflict in nonprofit-business partnership, by identifying specific discursive strategies that underpin conflict avoidance. It uncovers *how* partners avoid value conflict, by employing strategies such as withholding endorsement (either through silence or the use of minimally aligning responses) and mitigated controlling moves, such as the evading of questions, interruptions and changes of subject. These findings concur with Seitanidi (2010) in proposing that the avoidance of conflict may have prevented partners addressing tensions between social and business value, which, if tackled head on, could potentially have led to a deepening of the partnership and more transformational outcomes. There is insufficient evidence from this one case to assert that conflict is *always* necessary for transformation. However, it is proposed that a more overt exploration of underlying tensions may have facilitated more transformative change in this particular case. It is anticipated that this may also be so for other cases of nonprofit-business partnership, particularly where underlying tensions are present.

Whilst overt conflict was absent from this partnership, tensions nevertheless emerged. Again, a variety of interpersonal skills were employed to realign the partners. These value repair practices included positive assessments and compliments; diverting from the business of the meeting into personal chat; orienting to a partner's viewpoint; and temporarily identifying with the partner organization, rather than with one's own organization.

This research has found that overlapping interests and needs are not so much discovered as actively *constructed* through social

interaction, by developing shared objectives, values and meanings between partners. This involves adopting language that transcends sectoral boundaries, for example, in this case, through the nonprofit partner adopting the language of business ('mimesis'). This also complements previous findings on the "buffering roles" played by individual actors, as boundary spanners or "cultural mediators" in bridging differences between organizations or sectors (Crane, 2000). Indeed, in this particular case, key actors from both the business and nonprofit organizations perceived themselves as functioning in this capacity to facilitate the CrediCo-DigiGen partnership. However, this research builds on previous findings by beginning to explore the specific rhetorical and discursive skills employed in bridging differences between sectors. A contribution of this thesis is therefore to unpack broad categories of interpersonal skills, such as relationship building skills and conflict management skills, to facilitate a deeper analysis as to *how* these operate in situated partnership talk, to construct the value of social partnerships.

8.3.2 Contributions to discursive research on CSSPs & interorganizational collaboration

This thesis builds on Koschmann et al.'s (2012) communicative framework of value in CSSPs. Their framework draws on the theory of "communication as constitutive of organization", i.e. it treats the organizational forms of CSSPs as emerging from communication processes that construct an "authoritative text" (*ibid.* p.335). The capacity of CSSPs to act, hence their potential to produce value, is therefore viewed by Koschmann et al. (2012) as an emergent property of CSSPs, established through communication processes between partner organizations. The

findings in this thesis complement this framework by contributing an empirically grounded analysis, identifying more specific communicative practices that construct the value of CSSPs.

However, my findings suggest that the proposed emergence of an "authoritative text" may gloss over inherent and ongoing tensions and contradictions within partnership discourse, particularly where there are unresolved (or unresolvable) conflicts of interest or value conflicts (*ibid*. p.335). Koschmann et al. acknowledge that partners may vie with one another to author the text and they recognize the importance of persuading others, or of "marshaling consent", but without identifying *how* these rhetorical effects are accomplished (2012, p.337). They also recognize the need to manage tensions between "centripetal" and "centrifugal" forces that are "intrinsic to human interaction" (*ibid*. pp.340-341). This is analogous to the findings in this thesis concerning collaborative and asymmetrical talk, except that these findings are empirically grounded, identifying the specific patterns and communicative practices that underpin these different styles of talk.

Therefore this thesis contributes a fine-grained, in depth analysis of dialogic partnership interaction, moving beyond the limitations of theoretical papers and interview studies (see Chapter 2, section 2.7). Le Ber and Branzei's empirical study revealed how partners iteratively revised their value creation frames, devising a four stage grounded model of "frame negotiation, elasticity, plasticity and fusion" (2010b, p.163). However, a limitation of this study is that findings are still based on partners' retrospective accounts, together with documentary sources – and not on live partnership interaction. The findings from Chapter 7 of this research, based principally but not exclusively

on partners' accounts at various stages of the partnership, reach similar conclusions concerning processes of value alignment. These suggest that partners' framing of the value constructed through partnerships may remain multiple and conflicting. However, these findings extend Le Ber and Branzei's (2010b) study, by drawing on Kuypers' (2009) approach to framing analysis as a form of rhetorical analysis (see Chapter 3, section 3.3.3). This rhetorical orientation recognises that different accounts are produced for strategic purposes in the context of research interviews. For example, interviewees sometimes sought to present the partnership as more successful, or endeavoured to deflect blame from themselves for partnership failures. Furthermore, whilst Le Ber and Branzei (2010b) focus on how partners reconcile divergent value creation frames, this thesis suggests that "frame fusion" can be a means of rhetorically conflating social and business value, by glossing over inherent tensions or trade-offs between competing forms of value.

This thesis has also responded to Le Ber and Branzei's call for finer grained analysis, as well as a better understanding of how partners nurture and sustain relational attachment and deal with friction through their social interaction (2010c). At the micro-level, the Value Construction Model reveals new insights into how partners build and sustain relationships, through the use of behaviours engendering rapport and trust, compliments, enthusiastic endorsement, affiliative humour and collaborative language. In keeping with Le Ber and Branzei's (2010c) findings, this thesis reinforces the notion of relational attachment as an important "buffering mechanism" for the partnership, these relationship building strategies being key components of the Value Construction Model. In addition to demonstrating that

relational attachment assists in the value building process, this research also shows how relationship building strategies are employed to cushion the partnership against the effects of value misalignments and value conflict. Thus the same discursive strategies, which are used to build and sustain relationships, can also be deployed as resources in value preservation or repair practices, when value becomes misaligned.

This case of nonprofit-business partnership can also be linked with Le Ber and Branzei's (2010a) distinction between the "voice receiving", "voice taking" and "voice making" roles of beneficiaries, owing to its emphasis on co-creation with service users, peer support and user-led services. The focus of this research is not on how young people themselves framed the value of the partnership. The nonprofit partner was nevertheless seen to construct the value of its own organization, by emphasizing co-creation and by incorporating the voices of young people into its talk, through reported speech and 'mimesis' (i.e. imitating young people's language). This extends Le Ber and Branzei's (2010a) findings, by revealing how the "voice making" roles of beneficiaries can be discursively (re)constructed through partnership talk, incorporating user voices by proxy, with the strategic aim of persuading a partner of the value, credibility and authenticity of one's organization. The incorporation of user voices into the nonprofit's quarterly performance reports to the business (which is a common practice when reporting to funders) could be viewed as performing a similar purpose.

There have been a few empirical discourse analytic studies which have explored directly observable discursive practices in interorganizational collaborations (e.g. Hardy et al., 2006; Hardy et al., 2005; Lawrence et al., 1999; Hardy & Phillips, 1998).

However, they have not focused specifically on processes of value construction. This research therefore builds on prior discursive studies in the wider interorganizational collaboration field, by contributing a Value Construction Model, grounded in the discourse analysis of partners' conversations.

Hardy et al.'s "generalized and particularized membership ties" form part of their "Model of Collective Identity, Conversations and Effective Interorganizational Collaboration" (2005, p.62). The findings in Chapters 5 and 6 of this thesis both corroborate and extend these insights, connecting them to value, by revealing (*inter alia*) how partners build & maintain relationships, trust and credibility and how they construct commonalities and downplay differences. Unlike Hardy et al. (2005), this thesis does not focus on the concept of identity, or on the construction of a temporary collective identity for the partnership. However, like Koschmann et al.'s (2012) theoretical paper, it does touch upon the concept of identity and how it relates to partnership value. This research builds on Hardy et al.'s (2005) findings and on Koschmann et al. (2012), by illuminating how partners strategically switch between organizational and partnership identities in their talk and how this connects with their attempts to construct or preserve the value of the partnership. For example, participants were found to take on the identity of a partner so as to orient to the partner's viewpoint, as a value preservation or repair strategy (see Chapter 6, Table 6.1).

Thus constructing a shared identity is not only a discursive resource for partnerships, as identified by Hardy et al. (2005) and Koschmann et al. (2012): it is also an *in situ*, turn by turn discursive practice, or a local accomplishment, utilised strategically by partners as part of value building and value

repair processes. In contrast with Hardy et al. (2005) and Koschmann et al. (2012), this thesis has highlighted the temporary shifts in identity, which can be evidenced in partnership talk, for example, through the adoption of a partners' jargon (see Chapter 5, section 5.2.2) or through changes in the use of pronouns (see section 5.4.3).

Koschmann et al. (2012) propose that the construction of a coherent narrative, together with a process of naming the partnership, contribute to the creation of a distinct and stable partnership identity. My findings extend this notion of a naming process as a means of constructing a shared identity, by assigning the term 'mimesis' to the construction of shared language, jargon and metaphors and by demonstrating how partnership talk is co-constructed. However, whilst these processes extend well beyond the mere naming of partnerships, they were still found to be insufficient to construct a stable partnership identity. Koschmann at al. (2012) call for the longitudinal analysis of CSSP narratives, which this thesis has provided. However, in this particular case of nonprofit-business partnership, instead of a single, coherent narrative, there were found to be multiple and at times conflicting accounts of the partnership over time and across sectors, which suggests that the construction of a stable identity for CSSPs may be more problematic than Koschmann et al. (2012) anticipated.

Hardy et al.'s (2005) identification of the multiple, conflicting "ongoing production of common and private constructions" of key issues does chime with the findings in this thesis concerning partners' differing constructions of social, business and mutual value over the lifecycle of the partnership (see Chapter 7). This research also builds on Hardy et al.'s (2005) "cooperative &

assertive styles of talk" and the tension or interplay between these different styles of talk, by revealing the specific discursive strategies associated with collaborative and asymmetrical patterns of talk and the role these play in constructing the value of the partnership. Whilst Hardy et al. (2005) identify different "styles" of partnership talk ("cooperative" and "assertive") this thesis identifies the underlying structures of partnership conversation, which have differing degrees of symmetry / asymmetry. It therefore adds to Hardy et al.'s (2005) findings, by identifying that nonprofit-business partnership talk tends to be characteristically both collaborative (as opposed to competitive) in terms of the style of talk *and* asymmetrical (as opposed to symmetrical) in terms of how the talk is structured. Therefore my research both complements and deepens Hardy et al's (2005) framework. This thesis has followed Hardy et al.'s advice that "Researchers interested in the role of language should focus on the discursive resources…that are available and, especially, the tensions among them" (2005, p.72), thereby highlighting "primary patterns of interaction without submerging less dominant threads" (*ibid*. p.73).

Employing critical discourse analysis, Hastings investigated power relationships and transformations in how partners rhetorically constructed the problem being addressed by a cross-sector partnership, observing that power relations are rarely explored in the partnership literature (1999, p.91). There remains a lack of empirical research that critically examines power in cross-sector partnerships in general and in nonprofit-business partnerships in particular (Mutch, 2011; Seitanidi & Ryan, 2007; Selsky & Parker, 2005). Whilst power is not a central concept of this thesis, this research nevertheless goes some way towards addressing this deficit, by exposing

complexities in the relationship between structural power and how partners exert influence at the micro-level of partnership talk. Findings in Chapter 6 emphasized how misalignments and conflicts are managed, through heavily mitigated controlling practices, so as to exercise power at the micro-level, whilst preserving value and avoiding damaging relationships.

A key contribution of this research is the insight that, whilst organizational power asymmetries (e.g. discrepancies between partners' resources and dependencies between partners) inevitably influence the partnership talk, the subordinate partner (i.e. the nonprofit) can nevertheless still exert influence over the partnership talk, not merely through the quantity of talk and number of conversational initiatives, but also through the skilful deployment of micro-level rhetorical practices.

8.3.3 Contributions to discursive research in other empirical settings

Whilst this thesis does not employ a pure CA method (see Chapter 3, section 3.3.2 for the rationale for this), the findings nevertheless both draw on and contribute to the knowledge base of conversation analytic and similar approaches (Fitch & Sanders, 2005, p.68). Nonprofit-business partnership provides a novel research setting for this type of approach, therefore the findings in Chapters 5 and 6 concerning the micro-level features of partnership talk should be of interest to conversation analysts and scholars of social interaction.

Various aspects of indirectness have previously been investigated in studies of human interaction, for example, drawing on Goffman's theory of face and politeness theory (Goffman, 1955; Brown & Levinson, 1987). The related concept

of professional cautiousness has also been shown to be a feature of talk in various institutional settings (Drew and Heritage, 1992). However, in this case study, whilst both the business and the nonprofit organization engaged in indirectness and professional cautiousness, this was much more evident in the case of the nonprofit partner. The nonprofit participants tended to design their turns in ways that were more cautious than the business, using strategies such as indirectness, hedging and heavily mitigated criticism (see Chapter 6). This is an unsurprising finding, in that it corresponds with the structural power difference between the partner organizations. Nevertheless, this thesis demonstrates the potential of nonprofit-business partnership as a promising research setting for further exploration into the influence of structural power asymmetries at the micro-level.

In Chapters 5 and 6, partners are shown to respond to one another in ways which are broadly consistent with the relationship between the two organizations. However, this thesis also demonstrates the importance of the rhetorical and interpersonal skills of individual participants in shaping the outcomes of their interactions. This corresponds with Drew and Heritage's (1992) comments in their overview of studies on talk in various research settings, where they note that the extent to which institutional talk is influenced by the social relations of the encounter fluctuates according to the situated contingencies of the interaction. Thus, in this study, whilst the main current of partnership talk was usually seen to flow in accordance with structural power relations, micro-practices nevertheless created eddies, which ran counter to the predominant flow.

Interruptions and changes of subject have previously been identified by researchers of social interaction as tools for controlling conversations (Ng and Bradac, 1993). Linguistic features such as hedging and hesitation have been associated with reduced credibility and persuasiveness and a subordinate style of talk (Holtgraves & Lasky, 1999; Hosman, 1989). However, as far as I have been able to ascertain, the evaluative implications of these features of talk and their role in the discursive construction of value have not previously been explored – and certainly not in a nonprofit-business partnership context.

In contrast to the more symmetrical relationships between speakers in everyday conversations, institutional talk has been found to be characterised by asymmetry (Drew & Heritage, 1992). In this thesis, partnership talk has been found to embody many conversational asymmetries, for example in the initiating of topics and in the decisiveness of interventions. This research complements previous conversation analytical studies and related approaches (for examples, see Drew & Heritage 1992), which have found associations between structural power and asymmetries in conversational turn-taking. In this thesis, partnership talk was seen to be influenced by the exogenous roles and power difference between the business and nonprofit partners. However, these findings also support Drew and Heritage's (1992) assertion that institutional talk is shaped by the *in situ*, endogenous construction of discourse statuses, rather than straightforwardly following omnipresent structural power relations.

Previous studies have tended to focus on highly asymmetrical encounters, such as patient-doctor consultations (e.g. Heritage &

Maynard, 2005). However, in a nonprofit-business partnership context, whilst nonprofit partners are often dependent on funding from businesses, they may nevertheless have superior knowledge, expertise and know-how for addressing the social issue to be tackled through the partnership. This thesis therefore offers a novel research setting for conversation analytic scholars and those adopting similar approaches, to explore institutional talk in a setting where the relationship between the parties is less unambiguously one-sided.

Question-answer sequences are often a dominant pattern within institutional interaction, particularly in more formal environments, such as doctor-patient interviews and court proceedings (Drew & Heritage, 1992, p.39). This thesis has found that, in the partnership talk, question-answer sequences tended to occur where the roles of the two organizations as funder and funded body were salient. At other points in the meetings, the talk transitioned into a more conversational mode, which was less asymmetrical. In particular, sequences where the partners were engaged in informal chat or in joint planning activity were characterized by much more symmetry. This suggests that, in settings where an objective is to co-construct value on an equal basis, there must be sufficient opportunities created for the participants to interact outside of their formal roles, as equal partners.

Holt and Clift (2006) bring together previous research on reported speech, which has been investigated in naturally occurring talk, as well as in some institutional settings, such as political interviews and debates. The dramaturgical character of reported speech has been noted, together with its role in evaluating different perspectives, but also in enabling the

speaker to disown or distance him or herself from the reported viewpoint, by adopting a different role, or "footing" (Goffman, 1974). This thesis complements and builds on previous studies, by offering the new insight that reported speech is employed in a nonprofit-business partnership context as a discursive resource for establishing partners' credibility and authenticity and by illuminating the role this plays in constructing value. Thus a contribution of this thesis is to show how reported speech serves as a value building strategy, as part of the Value Construction Model.

This thesis identifies various other features of talk that play a role in constructing the value of the partnership by establishing partners' credibility. The process of establishing credibility is treated as a discursive accomplishment. There have been few discursive studies exploring the concept of credibility, although it has been explored using other methodologies in the CSR and related literatures, particularly in relation to businesses establishing credibility with external stakeholders (e.g. see Du, Bhattacharya & Sen, 2010; Hur, Kim & Woo, 2014). However, Brannigan & Lynch (1987) investigated credibility as a discursive concept in the very different research context of the cross-examination of a defendant in court. In this highly adversarial setting, the focus was on how credibility is tested in court, rather than on how it is established, or constructed in a collaborative and much more naturalistic setting. The findings of this thesis concerning mimesis, reported speech, invoking third parties, citing research and citing personal credentials, as strategies for establishing credibility, may therefore be of interest to researchers in various fields, particularly scholars adopting discursive approaches, who have an interest in collaborative institutional settings.

The effects of metaphors have received a great deal of attention in discursive research, including their emotive and persuasive functions (Bradac & Giles, 2005; Sopory & Dillard, 2002). In this study, partners frequently employed metaphors, in conjunction with other discursive features, to enhance the persuasive force of their talk, thereby helping to construct the value of the partnership. This thesis corroborates previous findings on the rhetorical function of metaphor, but also extends previous research by yielding the insight that the adoption of a partner's metaphorical language (which is part of what I have termed 'mimesis') also constructs shared conceptualizations between the partners, thereby playing a role in value alignment and in the co-construction of value.

Some of the recurring metaphors employed in this case were not novel, therefore were not considered worthy of reporting as part of the core findings (for example, well-used "marriage" and "journey" metaphors for the partnership). However, the "yoghurt" metaphor for socially driven business (e.g. see Chapter 7, Table 7.1) was noteworthy, in that it served a more euphemistic function in the partnership talk, providing a means for the partners to avoid stating directly that CrediCo did not in fact have a socially driven business model. In terms of the Value Construction Model, this use of non-literal language to avoid talking directly about a potentially sensitive topic could be interpreted as a value preservation strategy, in keeping with other forms of verbal mitigation (see Chapter 6). Whilst the euphemistic function of figurative language is not a wholly new finding in other research settings (e.g. see Fernández, 2008), it remains underexplored in the context of social partnerships. This thesis therefore makes a further contribution to discursive

studies in suggesting the role of metaphor, alongside other linguistic features, as an avoidance strategy in partnership talk.

This research has found that humour can also be used as an avoidance strategy, or as a value defending strategy, by easing tension between partners when their talk becomes misaligned. This finding builds on previous studies on the functions of humour in the workplace, such as its role in de-emphasizing power imbalances, as well as in expressing collegiality (Holmes, 2000; Kangasharju & Nikko, 2009). In asymmetrical encounters, humour has been interpreted as a resource to assist in managing power imbalances, for example, by licensing subordinates to challenge existing hierarchical structures (Holmes, 2000) or to ease tension in difficult or sensitive situations (Kangasharju & Nikko, 2009). This research corroborates these findings, but also builds on them, by illuminating the role of affiliative humour in relationship building, hence in constructing the value of social partnerships, as well as highlighting its role in defending value when partners' talk become misaligned. A further contribution of this research is to identify the role of self-deprecating humour in partnership talk, which can be used as a politeness strategy to save the face of a partner (Brown & Levinson, 1987). However, overuse of self-deprecating humour was seen as risking undermining credibility, whilst other-deprecating humour was seen to run the risk of backfiring, by undermining the integrity of the speaker.

8.4 Meso & macro level constructions of value

8.4.1 Revisiting shared value

The findings from this research endorse the position that the shared value concept (Porter & Kramer, 2006; 2011) glosses over inherent tensions between social and business value, by revealing insights into micro-level partnership talk and the contingencies and complexities of discursive value construction processes. This thesis thereby provides an antidote to what Crane at al. term "naïve proselytising about the viability of win-win scenarios" (2014, p.135-6) and to the over-representation of more inspirational, transformative cases in the partnership literature (Laasonen et al., 2012).

This thesis also supports the related criticism that CSV does not depart radically from the business-centric logic of pursuing competitive advantage (Crane et al., 2014). The business partner in this case did not leverage the partnership with the nonprofit organization to effect transformational change to its core business model, or to initiate change to the social impacts of the credit card or wider financial services industry. For example, in theory, this partnership could have been used to pilot changes to lending policies which benefit young people, by enabling them to build up a credit score without incurring interest or charges (for example, by issuing pre-paid credit cards, or by setting up processes to ensure that young people always to pay the balance in full within the interest-free period).

In Chapter 2, it was argued that the shared value debate (Crane et al., 2014) exposes underlying tensions between different strands in the partnership literature, which reflect business value, social value, or critical perspectives. It was also argued

that this debate is not winnable, in the sense that these alternative perspectives are grounded in competing views of the kinds of value which partnerships exist to create. The findings from this research are similarly amenable to alternative interpretive accounts, such that the value claimed to be created by this partnership could be framed from a business value, social value, or from a critical perspective. My social constructionist research orientation adheres to the view that there are multiple subjective realities, rather than a single objectively true explanation for the outcomes of social partnerships (see Chapter 3, section 3.2). Explanations as to why the funding was not renewed and lessons learned from this case can therefore be framed in alternative ways, linked to these three competing strands in the partnership literature (summarized in Chapter 2, Table 2.1).

From a business value perspective, the partnership could be viewed as largely unsuccessful, since insufficient attention was given to defining business value at the outset and there was a lack of clarity as to the business case for partnering. It could be claimed that there was potential for sufficient "Organizational Fit, Cultural Compatibility and Trust", as well as "Combinative Capabilities" between partners (Dahan et al., 2010), or "complementarities" (Rondinelli & London, 2003). However, from a more positivist business value perspective, there was a lack of intensive focus on the creation of business value both in terms of "value definition" at the outset and in terms of achieving "value balance" throughout the life of partnership (Austin, 2000). Therefore the business could not justify renewing the funding at the end of the four year agreement. The lesson learned from a business value perspective is that nonprofit-business partnerships need to give equal attention to business value in

order to achieve "shared value" (Porter & Kramer, 2011). This needs to be championed by the CEO or senior management team of the business (Rondinelli & London, 2003; Waldman, Siegel & Javidan, 2006), as emphasized by the senior business lead for the partnership in her final interview. It may therefore not be realistic to expect profit-maximizing businesses to invest significantly in long-term partnerships, which are aimed at creating social value alone, or which are imbalanced in terms of the creation of business and social value (Austin, 2000). This may particularly be the case in contexts where reputational benefits and establishing social legitimacy are not a very high priority for the business (Dacin, Oliver & Roy, 2007; Graf & Rothlauf, 2011; Miles & Covin, 2000), as was the case with CrediCo.

From a social value perspective, insufficient attention was given to identifying win-win scenarios, both at the outset and throughout the life of the partnership, therefore there was a lack of synergistic value (Austin & Seitanidi, 2012a). The lesson learned from this perspective is that, if the partners had focused more intensively on identifying and pursuing win-win scenarios, the partnership could potentially have generated transformative business value, as well as social value, changing the core business practices of the for-profit partner and even driving social innovation in the financial services sector (Austin & Seitanidi, 2012a). This is discussed further in section 8.4.2, below, in relation to the collaborative value creation (CVC) framework (*ibid*.).

However, from a critical perspective, the funding was not renewed at the end of the agreed term, because the business case was deemed insufficient (Yaziji & Doh, 2009). This was

despite the business emphasizing at the outset that its principal, if not its sole motive for partnering was to create social value. There was no transformative win-win scenario, because the core business model was a profit maximization model, which ultimately conflicted with the social value mission of the charity (Margolis & Walsh, 2003). In terms of the Value Construction Model, the value misalignment at the heart of the business, between its social value Vision/Mission and real world outcomes, was not tackled head-on through the partnership, via value conflict and value repair processes, but was instead avoided, by means of defensive value preservation practices. The potential for win-wins was constrained, since pursuing business interests could have involved compromising social value, by diverting partnership activities and resources away from young people's stated needs and priorities. From a critical perspective, it could therefore be argued that placing equal emphasis on generating business value would have been likely to have created trade-offs, compromises and potentially conflicts, rather than win-win, synergistic value (Hahn, Figge, Pinkse & Preuss, 2010).

The lesson learned from a critical perspective is that genuine transformation of the financial services sector requires more radical reform, based on an underpinning social value logic, as opposed to a profit maximization logic (Le Ber & Branzei, 2010b). In practice, conflict between institutional or value creation logics may persist, hence transformational opportunities may fail to emerge (Ahmadsimab & Ashraf, 2016; Ashraf, Ahmadsimab & Pinkse, 2017; Vurro, Dacin & Perrini, 2010). It may therefore be unrealistic to expect financial institutions that are set up for profit maximization to shift to a profit-sacrificing, or a "profit-satisficing" model (Kaufman, 1990), which genuinely prioritizes social value – for example, by giving access to

affordable credit, whilst aiming to reduce levels of personal debt. Such transformation may require concerted action from the other sectors, for example, pressure from civil society; the scaling up of alternative nonprofit models (such as credit unions or other forms of social, nonprofit lending); government investment in these alternative models; and / or increased regulation of financial institutions by government. Furthermore, from a nonprofit perspective, far from achieving greater societal impact, a more integrative partnership could theoretically have undermined the nonprofit partner's legitimacy, by compromising its social value mission (Herlin, 2015).

As explained in Chapter 2, my discursive approach means that my own scholarly affiliations are more closely aligned with critical perspectives. However, each of the three broad perspectives found in the partnership literature can contribute alternative versions of the 'truth' of social partnerships. The following section uses Austin and Seitanidi's (2012a; 2012b) collaborative value creation (CVC) framework to relate the findings from this thesis to the different perspectives in the partnership literature and further clarify how this thesis builds on existing research.

8.4.2 Contributions to the CVC

It has been noted that previous empirical research on value creation in social partnerships has been based predominantly on retrospective interview studies, with direct observation of partnerships in real time seldom being used as a principal research strategy (see Chapter 2). As a consequence, studies have worked principally with participants' own *reports* of value and value creation processes, rather than directly on the discursive processes of value creation themselves. A key

contribution of this thesis is to demonstrate how synergistic value is not so much *created* as actively *constructed* through interactive work between the partners. In other words, my social constructionist methodological approach (see Chapter 3, section 3.2) led to the formulation of an overarching research question and an approach to data collection and analysis which generated a different kind of knowledge concerning how value is socially constructed in nonprofit-business partnerships.

In terms of Austin and Seitanidi's (2012a; 2012b) CVC framework, in this particular case of nonprofit-business partnership, insufficient attention was given to "value definition" and "value balance" processes. The Value Construction Model offered by this thesis builds on the CVC framework by revealing *how* value definition and value balance proceed, in live partnership talk. By elucidating the micro processes of discursive value construction, the Value Construction Model complements existing research, adding explanatory power to *how* partners co-construct the value of social partnerships.

The findings of this research are consistent with Austin and Seitanidi's (2012a) "value creation spectrum", whereby greater value is viewed as being created as partners move from sole creation through to co-creation. "Resource complementarity", based on the resource dependency literature, is identified as a key source of value for partners (*ibid*.). In this thesis, partners' distinctive capacities, expertise, approaches and mindsets were identified as potential sources of value for the partnership (see Chapter 7, Table 7.1). These organizational capacities were embedded within the partnership discourse, with themes such as the nonprofit's uniqueness and the business being a 'great place to work' being particularly prominent. In terms of the resource

based view (RBV), these were intangible sources of competitive advantage for the partnership, being rare and difficult to imitate or substitute (Barney, 2001; Clarke & MacDonald, 2016; Das & Teng, 2000). However, unlike the RBV, this research emphasizes the *discursive* nature of these intangible sources of value and how they play a role in constructing the value of the partnership, through talk.

The achievement of "organizational fit" is recognized in the partnership literature as a key source of value creation (Austin & Seitanidi, 2012a). Again, the discursive approach of this thesis illuminates *how* the partners actively construct commonalities between their organizations and gloss over differences, reconciling their value creation frames so as to align for, and overcome barriers to, the construction of value. Whilst the partners in this case could be viewed as having limited success in creating synergistic, mutual value, they nevertheless made considerable progress in the *discursive* construction of "linked interests" (*ibid*.), for example, around ideas for the co-creation of digital products. Again, the discursive approach of this thesis illuminates how linked interests are not so much discovered as actively *constructed* through partnership interaction. This thesis therefore deepens our level of understanding of value processes by investigating the micro-processes of partnership talk.

In terms of the stages of the "Collaboration Continuum" (CC), this partnership could be viewed as remaining largely at the "philanthropic" stage, in that CrediCo principally viewed itself in the role of a charitable donor (Austin, 2000; Austin & Seitanidi, 2012a). However, there were aspirations for a more reciprocal relationship on the part of both partners - and both organizations stated that some benefits had accrued to the corporation, albeit

fewer than anticipated (see Chapter 7). Furthermore, there were aspirations and conversations, particularly during joint planning sessions, which raised the potential for the partnership to evolve to a more integrative and even a transformational stage (Austin & Seitanidi, 2012a). The Collaboration Continuum (*ibid*.) offers explanations for why the partnership failed to achieve this potential in terms of the nature of the relationship, including the level and intensity of interactions between partners, which was identified as a key barrier to closer integration in this case.

Austin and Seitanidi (2012a) acknowledge that the relationship between partners does not automatically evolve through each stage of the Collaboration Continuum in turn. This case of nonprofit-business partnership affirms the radically non-linear and unpredictable journey which partnerships may take - particularly where there are many changes to the key individuals responsible for the partnership. During the lifecycle of this partnership, the CEOs in both organizations changed, as well as multiple changes taking place amongst the key staff leading the partnership and those involved in day to day partnership activities (see Appendix F for changes to key staff throughout the lifecycle of the partnership).

Had greater emphasis been placed on generating value for the business, the relationship may have remained principally at the interactional stage of the Collaboration Continuum. This may have resulted in a trade-off, whereby the nonprofit's resources may have been diverted away from creating social value for young people, in order to meet the priorities of their business partner. This may therefore have resulted in the creation of more business value, but at the expense of social value. Whilst the business ostensibly had a social mission, in practice this did not

drive fundamental changes to its core business model - and this could be viewed as an insuperable barrier to the development of a more integrated or transformational partnership with DigiGen.

The second part of Austin and Seitanidi's review of the nonprofit-business partnership literature (2012b), identifies that insufficient attention has been devoted to the dynamics of value creation processes. They identify various formal and informal control measures that produce "intangible resources", including trust, relational capital and joint problem solving, which enable and preserve value, theorizing that, as partnerships become institutionalised, "interaction value" increases, with partners first acquiring information, then knowledge and finally developing new capabilities (*ibid*.). The role of emotional engagement and enthusiasm is recognised as assisting this process (*ibid*.). This thesis adds to our knowledge of value creation processes, by identifying *how* intangible resources, such as trust and relational capital are built and *how* joint problem solving operates in partnership talk. Many of the features of partnership talk have multiple functions, depending on their situated context. For example, humour is identified as playing a key role in building relational capital, but it is also used as a resource when partners become misaligned, to overcome tensions and return the conversation to a constructive, value building mode.

This thesis is not concerned with the measurement of social and business value created through nonprofit-business partnership. However the insight that value is socially and discursively constructed problematizes issues concerning how partnership outcomes are evaluated and how performance metrics are defined. The approach taken in this research treats outcome measures as subjective (see Brewer, 2006), or as intersubjective

social constructs, rather than objective measures - and therefore as provisional and contestable. Along with Gazely (2010), this research emphasizes the role of informal and interpersonal aspects of partnerships in bringing about successful collaborations, rather than structural features. However, whilst Gazley (2010) recognises the importance of the intensity of shared goals and trust, this thesis digs deeper, by illuminating *how* partners arrive at shared goals and *how* they build trust through their social interaction.

Austin and Seitanidi identify that there is a need to focus on the "loci" of value, in terms of the micro, meso and macro levels and *for whom* value is being created: i.e. individual beneficiaries; partner or other organizations; and societal benefits (2012b, p.945). This thesis has responded to the identified need for further exploration of the role played by individuals in value construction, at the micro-level of analysis (Austin & Seitanidi, 2012b). It connects this micro-level with meso-level outcomes for the partner organisations and (to a lesser extent) with macro-level, societal outcomes.

This section has explained how the story of the partnership between CrediCo and DigiGen relates to the CVC framework (Austin & Seitanidi, 2012a; 2012b) and how this thesis builds on the CVC, by revealing *how* processes such as "value definition" and "value balance" proceed through partnership talk. The emergent Value Construction Model also adds to previous studies by theorizing the pathways to value construction from the micro level to the meso and macro levels.

8.5 Chapter summary

This chapter has elucidated how the findings from this research build on our existing knowledge of nonprofit-business partnerships in particular and social partnerships more generally. It has also clarified the contributions of this study to discursive research, as well as highlighting the potential of nonprofit-business partnership as a fruitful research setting for scholars of language and social interaction.

Real-time, recorded partnership talk has rarely been analysed in the study of nonprofit-business partnerships, CSSPs and related areas of research. Therefore the discursive practices through which the value of social partnerships is constructed have previously remained largely unexplored. A key contribution of this research is to begin rectifying this omission, by opening up the 'black box' of partnership talk.

Based on an approach to discourse theory, in the tradition of discursive psychology, this thesis has contributed a conceptualization of value as discursively and socially constructed through partnership talk. Based primarily on an inductive analysis of *how* partners utilise communication and rhetorical skills in situated conversations, this thesis has contributed a multi-level Value Construction Model, which accounts for how partners construct the value of social partnerships, at the micro level of situated talk; at the meso level of creating value for the partner organisations; and (to a lesser extent) at the macro level of societal value.

Grounded in the detail of live partnership talk, this study is unusual in emphasizing the role of individuals and of the

dynamics of partnership talk in the perceived success or otherwise of social partnerships. This thesis therefore concurs with Hardy et al. (2005) in concluding that, whilst the pre-existing characteristics of partner organizations and their structural relationship are important aspects of context, they cannot adequately account for the processes and outcomes of social partnerships, without attention to the detailed features of partnership talk.

A unique contribution of this thesis is the significance of symmetrical and asymmetrical talk in constructing the value of social partnerships and how micro-level features of symmetrical and asymmetrical partnership talk are used as discursive resources in the social construction of value. It has been demonstrated that the Value Construction Model, which emerged from this fine-grained analysis of partnership talk, can be used as a framework for interpreting partners' accounts of the social, business and mutual value that is seen to evolve over the lifecycle of a partnership. The Value Construction Model can also account for discrepancies in how partners frame the social and organizational value generated through their partnerships. It therefore offers a multi-level, unifying framework for analysing the value generated through social partnerships, connecting the local, situated micro-level processes of value construction with the meso and macro-level outcomes. The longitudinal application of the Value Construction Model can therefore reveal insights into how partners' constructions of value evolve over the lifecycle of a partnership.

Chapter 9: Conclusions

9.1 Setting the scene

The overall aim of this thesis was to explore how value is discursively constructed in nonprofit-business partnership. This research project created a multilevel Value Construction Model, grounded in the close analysis of partnership talk. This model answers the overarching research question, by providing an explanatory framework for how partners construct value, both in terms of how they construct and draw upon micro-level, discursive resources to influence and persuade one another of value on a turn by turn basis; and in terms of how they frame the overall value of the partnership.

Three research sub-questions emerged from the data analysis. The first posed the question of how collaborative talk is constructed and deployed, i.e. using what interpersonal skills and rhetorical strategies, so as to construct value. These findings were presented in Chapter 5 and dealt with the first parts of the Value Construction Model: value aligning, value building and value affirming practices in micro-level partnership talk.

The second sub-research question asked how misalignments in asymmetrical talk are managed, so as to preserve or repair value and avoid overt conflict. These findings were presented in Chapter 6 and dealt with the remaining parts of the Value Construction Model: value misalignment, value preservation, value conflict and value repair. As with Chapter 5, these findings

were also based principally on a close analysis of partnership meeting data.

The third and final sub-research question asked how discursive constructions of value changed over the lifecycle of the partnership and between sectors. These findings were presented in Chapter 7 and drew principally on interview data, using the Value Construction Model as an explanatory framework for how the partners constructed their accounts of the partnership and how these varied at different stages and between interviewees representing the business and the nonprofit partners.

This concluding chapter summarizes the significance of the main findings, in terms of its methodological contributions; implications for discursive studies; and implications for partnership theory. It also draws out the relevance of this research for practitioners of nonprofit-business partnership and other social partnerships. The chapter then discusses the limitations of the research and how these limitations were mitigated. The thesis concludes by highlighting directions for future research and by making a few final remarks.

9.2 Implications for academics

9.2.1 Methodological implications

As explained in Chapter 8, section 8.2, the novelty of these findings ultimately derives from the methodological approach adopted for this research. This section explains the implications of this innovative methodological approach for the study of nonprofit-business partnership and other social partnerships. First, the reconceptualization of value as an (inter)subjective, discursive concept (see Chapter 2) was key to unpacking how

partnership talk functions so as to construct value. Secondly, the particular approach to discourse theory, grounded in the tradition of discursive psychology and influenced by conversation analysis, shaped the approach to data analysis. It enabled a focus on what the partners were trying to accomplish through their talk, thereby getting beneath the surface meanings to identify *how* they discursively constructed the value of the partnership, both in partnership meetings and in interviews. Thirdly, the approach to data analysis, coding the data not so much for *what* the partners said, but for *how* they accomplished their objectives through their talk, enabled both the identification of and functions of micro-level features of partnership talk and the surfacing of the Value Construction Model, with explanatory power for how nonprofit-business partnership talk operates to construct value, both at the micro and meso / macro levels. This thesis has only begun to scratch the surface of how partnership talk works, but the usefulness of these findings are inextricably bound to the methodological approach. It is therefore recommended that future research, looking to build on these findings, adopts a comparable methodology.

9.2.2 Implications for discourse studies

The audio-recording of live partnership meetings provided a rare opportunity for in-depth analysis of the dialogue taking place between partners, on a turn by turn basis. Chapter 8, section 8.3.2 clarifies how the findings from this analysis contribute to previous discursive studies on CSSPs and other interorganizational collaborations, while section 8.3.3 discusses the findings in relation to previous studies of social interaction in wider research settings. Some of the findings, which are novel in the context of the interorganizational collaboration literature,

have closer parallels with previous discursive studies of institutional talk in other research settings. For example, the findings concerning reported speech, the functions of humour, the functions of indirectness, mitigated criticism and professional cautiousness in talk and the subtle and complex interrelationship between structural power and the micro-practices of partnership talk, all represent novel contributions to the literature on social partnerships. The appearance of these discursive practices in nonprofit-business partnership talk suggests that there are distinctive features of social interaction in this research setting, which can usefully be compared and contrasted with talk in other research settings. Nonprofit-business partnership talk was found to be characteristically both collaborative and asymmetrical and this has important implications not only for how micro-level partnership talk operates, but also for the outcomes of that talk, i.e. how partners resolve tensions and problems, how decisions are taken and ultimately the overall impact of the partnership.

9.2.3 Implications for partnership theory

The Value Construction Model makes a contribution to partnership theory, by adding a multilevel framework for explaining the value constructed through nonprofit-business partnerships, which is potentially also applicable to other forms of CSSP and interorganizational collaboration. Chapter 8, section 8.4 clarifies the contributions of this research in relation to meso and macro level partnership theory, with specific reference to shared value (Porter & Kramer, 2006; 2011) and the CVC framework (Austin & Seitanidi 2012a; 2012b). The conceptualization of value as a discursive concept, together with the findings from Chapter 7, based principally on interviews, emphasizes that multiple and conflicting accounts of the value

created through social partnerships are possible. This thesis affirms the contestability of social partnerships as effective vehicles for the co-creation of value which is capable of benefitting both partner organizations, whilst having a transformative effect on the social or environmental issues they aim to address. This is not to claim that nonprofit-business partnerships or social partnerships in general are not worth pursuing: only that their success is both highly context-dependent and contestable. The application of the Value Construction Model as an explanatory framework is therefore necessarily an interpretive process, which draws upon the complex multi-layered contexts of social partnerships to reach evidence-based, yet ultimately contestable conclusions.

Scholars are only beginning to scratch the surface of how partnership talk works. However, this research has provided new insights into how partners actively generate opportunities for co-constructing value through rich, collaborative talk - as well as how they deal with misalignments, tensions and challenges and avoid overt conflict.

This research suggests that the perceived success of nonprofit-business partnerships is highly context-dependent, relying (inter alia) on the individual collaborative skills of participants and how they operationalize these skills and respond to their colleagues and partners in live partnership dialogue. The Value Construction Model suggests that, where partners engage in value defending practices in order to avoid overt conflict, the risk of damage to the relationship may be reduced, but the potential for deepening the relationship and co-constructing more transformative social value may also be reduced. This case of nonprofit-business partnership suggests that synergistic, or win-win-win solutions,

for both of the partner organizations and for society, may be less likely to occur where there is a significant power differential between the partners and/or where the funding relationship between the partner organizations is salient. These findings also suggests that, other things being equal (which in reality is never the case in these highly complex interactions) more symmetrical nonprofit-business partnership talk, where the partners contribute on a relatively equal basis, may be more likely to lead to synergistic, win-win-win solutions for both the partner organizations and for society. However, it is anticipated that this would require the business and nonprofit partners to enter into a dialogue as equals and to devote sufficient time and effort to joint planning. In the particular case investigated by this doctoral research, there was insufficient interaction of this kind to result in the co-creation of joint products or services that produced transformative benefits both for the business and for the nonprofit and its beneficiaries.

9.3 Implications for practitioners

Some of the lessons learned from this case have been highlighted in previous research - notably the need for clarification as to the motivations and objectives of participating organizations, which was lacking on the part of the business (McDonald & Chrisp, 2005). This was recognised by the partners themselves, as was the need for the partnership to be championed at a more senior level within the business, following the appointment of a new CEO (see Chapter 7, section 7.3.3). The need for greater breadth and depth of engagement with the

partnership within the business was also acknowledged by both partner organizations.

This case highlights the importance of *joint* planning and of investing sufficient time in this on an ongoing basis. In this case, there was a particular challenge of asymmetry, whereby the business partner provided the funding and the recipient was a relatively small nonprofit partner, which was responsible for spending the funding so as to achieve the agreed social value objectives. In this type of partnership, there can be a lack of time and other resources devoted to planning and delivering genuinely joint activities with reciprocal benefits. In this case, the consequence was that the potential for developing innovative solutions to shared problems was not fully realized, hence the perception that the comparatively transformational benefits which the funding provided for the nonprofit partner were not replicated within the business. Whilst the partners acknowledged that there were some business benefits, these were perceived as relatively peripheral. Therefore the potential for the nonprofit partner's expertise to be leveraged within the business, which was recognized at various stages of the partnership by both partners, was viewed as not realized in practice. These identified areas of expertise included: the nonprofit partner's knowledge of and research on young people; its know-how in building online communities; its cycle of innovation and co-creation processes; and its digital mindset.

Where joint planning did take place and where events were delivered in partnership, the partnership talk tended to be more symmetrical and the partners were seen to be more effective in constructing shared understandings, building upon one another's

ideas and joint problem-solving. More specific implications for business and nonprofit partners (respectively) are set out below.

9.3.1 Implications for business practitioners

There are several key lessons which can be learned by business practitioners from the story of this partnership. A key implication for the private sector is the need for business motivations to be discussed explicitly and communicated effectively, both horizontally and vertically, to key employees across multiple levels and departments within the business. This is needed both at the outset of the partnership and on an ongoing basis. This can be particularly challenging for a large business and where key staff leave the organization part way through the lifecycle of the partnership (in this case, both the Chief Executive and the CSR manager left the organization – see Appendix F for details). There is also a need for a senior level champion and for buy-in across the senior management team.

A further implication is that business motivations need to be communicated overtly with the nonprofit partner, both at the outset of the partnership and on an ongoing basis, in order to ensure that the business perceives the partnership as delivering sufficient reciprocal value. In this case, the reticence of the business to construct the value of the partnership for itself led to an inability to justify the renewal of funding internally. This was despite the increased potential by the end of the four year partnership to develop mutually beneficial outcomes, arising from the increased capacity of the nonprofit partner and its merger with another charity.

9.3.2 Implications for nonprofit practitioners

This case has highlighted the need for nonprofit partners to push for the overt discussion of business value, even where the business partner ostensibly prioritizes social value and is reticent about discussing the business case. It also highlights the need for nonprofit partners to consider the level of experience of the business partner in entering into these kinds of partnerships and to recognise the limitations for a relatively small nonprofit organization of engaging with a relatively large corporation across multiple levels and departments. There is a further risk of potential trade-offs and tensions between the focus on generating business value for the private sector partner and the generation of social and organizational value for the nonprofit partner (see Chapter 8, section 8.4.1).

It would be too simplistic to claim that nonprofit partners should be more assertive in their dealings with businesses. In cases such as this, where the nonprofit partner is far smaller and financially dependent upon the funding from the business, there is a need to balance professional caution with assertiveness, so as to preserve the relationship. This involves the exercise of considerable judgement and skill in the situated contexts of partnership negotiation and discussion. However, the findings from this case point towards the potential for nonprofit partners with ostensibly less power as funded organizations to exert a great deal of influence over the decisions that are taken and the value that is constructed, through the deployment of effective interpersonal skills. This is discussed further below, in relation to both sectors.

9.3.3 Developing collaborative skills

The findings suggest that partners' success in constructing value is dependent not only on the individual skill sets of participants, but also on how they operationalize their interpersonal skills and respond to the initiatives of their colleagues and partners, in live partnership dialogue. This has implications for practitioners from both sectors, in terms of how organizations participating in these kinds of partnerships recruit for and develop the skills necessary for partnership success.

The fine-grained analysis of partnership conversation undertaken in this study has revealed features of talk underpinning some of the softer communicative and collaborative competencies needed for effective partnership working. There are important implications for practitioners of recognizing that partnership talk is a performance in context and therefore that there is a need to understand the linguistic challenges of interacting effectively in these complex and sometimes sensitive settings. Core competencies often considered necessary for effective partnership interaction include, but are not limited to: effective communication and listening skills, networking skills, relationship management skills, negotiation skills and conflict management skills (e.g. see Williams, 2002). However, these broad brush categories tell us little about how these skills can be assessed and how they are operationalized in real-life partnership conversations.

This thesis unpacks these generic categories of skills to illuminate how specific discursive practices actually function in partnership talk. For example, adopting one another's language was found to be a strategy for building common ground, while

the nonprofit's frequent adoption of the speech patterns of young people served to demonstrate authenticity and credibility. These and other value building strategies identified in this thesis are viewed as adopted more or less unconsciously by partners with good interpersonal skills. However, understanding the functions they perform in partnership talk can enhance their effectiveness, by enabling them to be employed in more purposeful ways. In particular, mitigated controlling practices, such as withholding endorsement and silence, evading questions and changing the subject, along with practices such as hedging and self-deprecating humour, can enable partners to exert influence without damaging their relationship. These are skills which can actively be developed and practised, so that they can be employed more effectively in partnership situations.

This research suggests that establishing effective institutional arrangements, such as contracts, protocols, procedures, roles and reporting arrangements are necessary but not sufficient conditions for ensuring partnership success. This thesis proposes that common ground is not so much identified or discovered as actively constructed through partnership talk. Thus effective interpersonal and communicative skills are imperative not only for constructing this common ground, but also for constructing the value of the partnership in terms of the desired outcomes for the partner organizations. These communicative skills are also necessary in terms of the rhetorical strategies which are deployed on a turn by turn basis, to negotiate the partnership, to influence partners, to arrive at shared understandings and to make decisions, thereby producing outcomes which are deemed to be of value to the partners. The findings from this research emphasize that decision-making processes involve not only rational argumentation, but that they are also heavily influenced

by appeals to emotion, including, for example: behaviours aimed at engendering intimacy and trust; the use of compliments; enthusiastic endorsement of a partner; the role of informal chat; and the appropriate use humour, as resources for building personal ties, securing agreement and dispelling tension.

This research has implications for how organizations can 1) assess the communicative and interpersonal skills of job applicants and existing employees; and 2) how they can enhance and develop these skills through training and continuing professional development. The role of specific discursive practices in partnership dialogue suggests that the development of partnership skills and competences needs to be based around interactive learning techniques that mimic real-life partnership situations. For example, the CARM (Conversation Analytic Role-play Method), which is underpinned by academic research, offers continuing professional development workshops for practitioners, aimed at improving their communication skills (see www.carmtraining.org). However, there is a caveat that even role plays and simulations cannot precisely replicate the complex contexts of partnership interaction, hence CARM utilises real-life extracts from recorded institutional talk. Nevertheless, training may not be an effective substitute for the expertise acquired through experience of engaging with these kinds of collaborations. More sophisticated, competency-based selection methods may offer a better approximation of partnership skills than, for example, reliance on psychometric testing, to assess the communicative partnership skills of prospective employees.

9.4 Limitations & mitigations

The case was a given, rather than being selected for its suitability in addressing a specific research question. After the first observed partnership meeting in October 2013, I was concerned that this case might turn out to be little more than a corporate donation, with the main purpose of meetings being for the charity to account for how the funding was being spent, thus lacking the mutuality of a genuine "partnership". However, this concern was subsequently dispelled, as the partners did in fact undertake joint planning and joint activities. Also, previous empirical studies have tended to focus disproportionately on more successful partnerships (Laasonen et al., 2012), therefore this somewhat less successful partnership helps to redress the balance and its perceived failure to generate sufficient business value arguably makes for a more interesting contribution to the extant literature.

Despite having numerous instances of the specific discursive features under investigation, the relatively small number of participants involved in the partnership was a limitation of this study. This was mitigated by chance rather than design, through multiple changes of personnel in both partner organizations over the lifecycle of the partnership. While it was possible to take into consideration how the seniority of individuals within their respective organizations may have influenced the partnership talk, it was not possible to account specifically for the influence of gender, socio-economic and educational backgrounds, age, ethnicity, etc. owing to the small number of research participants. However, although some differences in nonverbal behaviour between men and women were evident on greeting and parting (see Chapter 5, section 5.3.1), previous research

has mostly revealed relatively minor and subtle differences in the frequency of use of linguistic features based on gender (Beach & Glenn, 2011; Bradac & Giles, 2005), therefore the inability of this study to account for gender-based linguistic differences is not considered too problematic. Arguably a more significant limitation in drawing inferences to other cases is the potential differences in how partnership interaction operates within different cultures and linguistic communities.

Nonverbal behaviour could not be analysed systematically, since partnership meetings and interviews were only audio-recorded, not video-recorded. However, as in much discursive and CA related research, the capturing of nonverbal behaviour was considered secondary to verbal interaction (Drew, 2005). Furthermore, where nonverbal actions were captured through field notes, they were not found to alter fundamentally the discursive practices identified through this research.

The timescale for the research and the time taken to set up and agree the PhD studentship meant that it was not possible to observe and record the communication between partners during the early, formation stage. However, whilst this is a limitation, it does not compromise the integrity of the findings, which have been made during the implementation stage of the partnership.

The 100,000 word limit of a PhD thesis, whilst far longer than academic articles, is nevertheless a constraint, particularly for ethnographic studies, since rich description of the organizational cultures of the two partners and of the partnership cannot be conveyed in a few words. I accumulated sufficient field notes during the course of the twenty-seven months intermittently spent in the field to write a 100,000 word ethnographic account

of the partnership, but the overall word limit for this thesis meant that, in practice, I had to limit my ethnographic account to a single chapter (Chapter 4). Images and other potentially disclosive details could not be included in the thesis, owing to the need to preserve the anonymity of participating individuals and organizations. It is nevertheless hoped that the ethnographic chapter, together with the data excerpts in Chapters 5 through to 7, is sufficient to convey an understanding of the ethos of the two partner organizations and to enable the reader to exercise his or her independent judgement concerning the interpretations that have been made.

9.5 Directions for future research

It is recommended that a similar methodological approach could usefully be applied to the investigation of the formation stage of nonprofit-business partnerships. It is anticipated that during the formation stage, greater emphasis will be placed on value alignment practices by the partners, building common ground and developing trust, credibility and personal ties. However, in this study, live partnership talk could only be observed and recorded from the early implementation phase of the partnership. Therefore an avenue for future research may be to focus on partners' conversations during the match-making, or early formation stage and / or negotiation stage of nonprofit-business partnerships.

This thesis did not set out to analyse the uses of humour in nonprofit-business partnership. However, the inductive nature of this research gave rise to findings concerning some of the functions of different kinds of humour, namely affiliative humour,

self-deprecating humour and other-deprecating humour. Affiliative humour was found to be used as a value-building strategy, by strengthening personal relationships. Both affiliative and self-deprecating humour were sometimes used as value defending strategies by easing tensions between partners when their talk became misaligned. In contrast, other-deprecating humour was found to be a risky strategy, which could backfire, owing to its potential to undermine the integrity of the speaker. There is scope for further investigation of how humour is deployed in partnership conversations. For example, future research could investigate how different forms of humour function in partnership talk, looking at data from multiple social partnerships and exploring the contingencies under which different types of humour are effective and ineffective. There is similar scope for building on many of the other micro-level features of talk identified in this thesis and it is hoped that this research will stimulate further such studies.

In partnerships where conflict is more overt, there should be far more scope for exploring conversational hitches, repairs and realignments than were available in this case. It is theorised that overt conflict is likely to be more prevalent in partnerships which are relatively equal in terms of structural power and / or where the partnership is less voluntary in nature, where the stakes for both partners are high and where there is greater potential for the partners' interests to be misaligned.

There is also potential for further research on how micro-level power is exercised in partnership talk and how this relates to meso and macro level structural power relationships. Power asymmetry is a key issue in many nonprofit-business partnerships, as well as in other forms of CSSP. Any future

research into this topic could usefully investigate how power discrepancies between partners can be addressed or neutralised. A further question is how the power exercised in partnership interaction relates to the perceived fairness of partners' dealings with one another, as well as to perceived partnership success.

There is also scope for a more comprehensive exploration of identity construction in nonprofit-business partnership and other forms of CSSP, in particular investigating how organizational and partnership identities are constructed in partnership talk. Future studies could build on these findings to include how identity construction serves different strategic purposes in partnership talk. It could also build on Hardy et al. (2005) and Koschmann et al. (2012) to investigate the relative stability / instability of partnership identities, as well as challenges in constructing stable partnership identities and how this relates to perceived partnership success.

The exploration of cross-cultural perspectives was beyond the scope of this thesis. However, comparative studies of partnership talk across different cultures and linguistic communities could potentially prove very fruitful. There is also potential for the statistical analysis of findings across multiple cases of nonprofit-business partnerships or CSSPs, for example, using the methodology of corpus linguistics. Connections could then potentially be made between features of partnership talk and the outcomes of CSSPs. For example, future research could look across multiple cases of nonprofit-business partnership to investigate whether more symmetrical nonprofit-business partnership talk, where the partners contribute on a relatively equal basis, is correlated with perceptions of more successful partnerships. This kind of approach could also be used to identify

other kinds of variation in partnership talk between CSSPs and contextual factors to which these variations are sensitive; and to track emerging trends in partnership talk over time. This is comparable to Heritage's claims for the potential for quantifying observations from institutional CA, in order to make generalizations that can be used by practitioners (Heritage, 2005, p.137-141).

For scholars with realist epistemological stances, the following propositions could be explored in future research.

Proposition 1: The success of nonprofit-business partnerships in co-creating value is highly context-dependent, relying not just on external 'factors', but on the individual collaborative skills of participants and how they operationalize these skills and respond to their colleagues and partners in live partnership dialogue.

Proposition 2: Where partners engage in value defending practices in order to avoid overt conflict, the risk of damage to the relationship is reduced, but the potential for deepening the relationship and co-creating more transformative social value is also reduced.

Proposition 3.: Synergistic, or win-win-win solutions, for both of the partner organizations and for society, are less likely to occur where there is a significant power differential between the partners and/or where the funding relationship between the partner organizations is salient.

9.6 Final remarks

In drawing this thesis to a close, I make no claim or presumption that the interpretations and conclusions made within these pages are superior to the perspectives and judgements of the individuals who so generously participated in this research. The views and experiences of those involved cannot be replicated precisely - nor is that the intention of this research project. The content of this thesis is merely my best effort to uncover how nonprofit-business partnership talk operates, so as to construct value for the organizations involved and for the beneficiaries they seek to support.

This thesis opened with an epigraph, quoting an excerpt from 'The Lovesong of J. Alfred Prufrock'. It will end in a similar vein, with an epilogue, in the form of a later extract from that same poem.

> *"Do I dare*
> *Disturb the universe?*
> *In a minute there is time*
> *For decisions and revisions which a minute will reverse.*
>
> *For I have known them all already, known them all:*
> *Have known the evenings, mornings, afternoons,*
> *I have measured out my life with coffee spoons;*
> *I have heard the voices dying with a dying fall*
> *Beneath the music from a farther room.*
> *So how should I presume?*
>
> *And I have known the eyes already, known them all –*
> *The eyes that fix you in a formulated phrase,*
> *And when I am formulated, sprawling on a pin,*
> *When I am pinned and wriggling to the wall,*
> *Then how should I begin*
> *To spit out all the butt-ends of my days and ways?*
> *And how should I presume?"*
>
> *The Lovesong of J. Alfred Prufrock – T.S. Eliot.*

References

Ahmadsimab, A., & Ashraf, N. (2016, January). Where worlds collide: Competition Between Institutional Logics in Cross Sector Partnerships. In Academy of Management Proceedings (Vol. 2016, No. 1, p. 13134). Academy of Management.

Alcock, P. (2010). A strategic unity: defining the third sector in the UK. Voluntary Sector Review, Vol.1(1), pp.5-24.

Alcock, P., & Kendall, J. (2011). Constituting the third sector: processes of decontestation and contention under the UK Labour governments in England. Voluntas: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations, Vol.22(3), pp.450-469.

Alexander, C. (2005). 'Value: Economic valuations and environmental policy'. In J. G. Carrier (Ed.). A handbook of economic anthropology. Edward Elgar Publishing, pp.455-471.

Alvesson, M. (2009). "At-home ethnography: struggling with closeness and closure". In S. Ybema, D. Yanow, H. Wels & F. Kamsteeg (Eds.) Organizational ethnography: Studying the complexities of everyday life, pp.156-174. London: Sage.

Alvesson, M., & Karreman, D. (2000). Varieties of discourse: On the study of organizations through discourse analysis. Human relations, Vol.53(9), pp.1125-1149.

Arya B., Lin Z. (2007). Understanding collaboration outcomes from an extended resource-based view perspective: The roles of

organizational characteristics, partner attributes, and network structures. Journal of Management, Vol.33, pp.697-723.

Ashman, D. (2001). Civil society collaboration with business: Bringing empowerment back in. World Development, Vol.29(7), pp.1097-1113.

Ashraf, N., Ahmadsimab, A. & Pinkse, J. (2017). From Animosity to Affinity: The Interplay of Competing Logics and Interdependence in Cross- Sector Partnerships. Journal of Management Studies.

Athanasopoulou, A., & Selsky, J. W. (2015). The social context of corporate social responsibility: Enriching research with multiple perspectives and multiple levels. Business & Society, Vol.54(3), pp.322-364.

Atkinson, P., & Coffey, A. (2003). 'Revisiting the relationship between participant observation and interviewing'. In J. Holstein and J.F. Gubrium (Eds.) Inside interviewing: New lenses, new concerns. Thousand Oaks: Sage, pp.415-428.

Austin, J.E. (2000). Strategic collaboration between nonprofits and businesses. Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly, Vol.29, pp.69–97.

Austin, J.E. & Seitanidi, M.M. (2012a). Collaborative Value Creation A Review of Partnering Between Nonprofits and Businesses: Part I. Value Creation Spectrum and Collaboration Stages. Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly, Vol.41(5), pp.726- 758.

Austin, J.E. & Seitanidi, M.M. (2012b). Collaborative Value Creation A Review of Partnering Between Nonprofits and Businesses: Part II. Partnership Processes and Outcomes. Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly, Vol.41(6), pp.929-968.

Austin, J. E. & Seitanidi, M. M. (2014). Creating value in nonprofit-business collaborations: new thinking and practice. John Wiley & Sons.

Baldry, A., & Thibault, P. J. (2006). Multimodal transcription and text analysis: A multimedia toolkit and coursebook. London/Oakville: Equinox.

Barney, J. B. (2001). Resource-based theories of competitive advantage: A ten-year retrospective on the resource-based view. Journal of management, Vol.27(6), pp.643-650.

Bauman, L. J., & Adair, E. G. (1992). The use of ethnographic interviewing to inform questionnaire construction. Health Education Quarterly, Vol.19(1), pp.9-23.

Beach, W.A. & Glenn, P. (2011), 'Bids and responses to intimacy as gendered enactments'. In S.A. Speer & E.H. Stokoe (Eds.), Conversation and gender, pp.210-228. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Bendell, J. (Ed.). (2000). Terms for endearment: Business, NGOs and sustainable development. Sheffield: Greenleaf publishing.

Berger, I. E., Cunningham, P. H., and Drumwright, M. E. (2004). Social alliances: Company/nonprofit collaboration. California

Management Review, Vol.47(1), pp.58–90.

Berger, I. E., Cunningham, P. H., & Drumwright, M. E. (2006). Identity, identification, and relationship through social alliances. Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science, Vol.34(2), pp.128-137.

Berger, P. & Luckmann, T. (1967). The Social Construction of Reality. London: Penguin.

Billig, M. (1996). Arguing and thinking: A rhetorical approach to social psychology (2nd Ed.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Billis, D. (Ed.). (2010). Hybrid organizations and the third sector: Challenges for practice, theory and policy. Palgrave Macmillan.

Binham, C. (2017). 'Bank of England warns of fast rate of consumer credit expansion', Financial Times, April 4 2017. Downloaded from https://www.ft.com/content/0f0a554a-1913-11e7-a53d-df09f373be87

Bosch-Badia, M. T., Montllor-Serrats, J., & Tarrazon, M. A. (2013). Corporate social responsibility from Friedman to Porter and Kramer. Theoretical Economics Letters, Vol.3(3A), Article ID:33208.

Bourdieu, P. (2004). Science of science and reflexivity. Polity.

Bradac, J.J. & Giles, H. (2005). 'Language and social psychology: Conceptual niceties, complexities, curiosities, monstrosities and how it all works'. In K.L. Fitch and R.E. Sanders (Eds.), Language and Social Interaction, pp.201-230. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Brannigan, A., & Lynch, M. (1987). Credibility as an interactional accomplishment. Journal of contemporary ethnography, Vol. 16(2), pp.115-146.

Brewer, G.A. (2006). 'All measures of performance are subjective'. In G.A. Boyne, K.J. Meier, L.J. O'Toole, Jr. & R.M. Walker (Eds.), Public service performance: Perspectives on measurement and management (pp. 35-54). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Bromley, P. & Meyer, J. W. (2014). "They Are All Organizations" The Cultural Roots of Blurring Between the Nonprofit, Business, and Government Sectors. Administration & Society, 0095399714548268.

Brown, P. & Levinson, S. C. (1987). Politeness: Some universals in language usage (Vol. 4). Cambridge University Press.

Camarena-Martinez, J. L., Ochoa-Silva, B., & Wendlandt-Amezaga, T. R. (2016). Exploring the Origins of Creating Shared Value in the CSR Literature. International Journal of Business and Management, Vol.11(12), pp.97.

Cannon, H. M., Feinstein, A. H., & Friesen, D. P. (2014). Managing complexity: applying the conscious-competence model to experiential learning. Developments in Business Simulation and Experiential Learning, Vol.37.

Carmel, E., & Harlock, J. (2008). Instituting the 'third sector' as a governable terrain: partnership, procurement and performance in the UK. Policy & Politics, Vol.36(2), pp.155-171.

Carrier, J. G. (2005) (Ed.). A handbook of economic anthropology. Edward Elgar Publishing.

Carroll, A. B., & Shabana, K. M. (2010). The business case for corporate social responsibility: A review of concepts, research and practice. International Journal of Management Reviews, Vol.12(1), pp.85-105.

Charmaz, K. (2006). Constructing Grounded Theory: A Practical Guide through Qualitative Analysis. London: Sage.

Clarke, I., Kwon, W., & Wodak, R. (2012). A Context- sensitive Approach to Analysing Talk in Strategy Meetings. British Journal of Management, Vol.23(4), pp.455-473.

Clarke, A. & MacDonald, A. (2016). Outcomes to Partners in Multi-Stakeholder Cross-Sector Partnerships A Resource-Based View. Business & Society, 0007650316660534.

Clayman, S.E. & Gill, V.T. (2004) 'Conversation Analysis', in M. Hardy & A. Bryman (Eds.) Handbook of data analysis. Sage.

Clifford, D. (2017). Charitable organisations, the great recession and the age of austerity: longitudinal evidence for England and Wales. Journal of Social policy, Vol.46(1), pp.1-30.

Collins, J. C., & Porras, J. I. (2005). Built to last: Successful habits of visionary companies. Random House.

Condor, S. & Antaki, C. (1997). 'Social cognition and discourse'. In T.A. van Dijk (Ed.). Discourse as structure and process (Vol. 1). London: Sage.

Cornforth, C. and Spear, R. (2010). The governance of hybrid organisations. In D. Billis (ed.) Hybrid Organizations and the Third Sector: Challenges for Practice, Theory and Policy. Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave, pp.70–89.

Cottrell, A. (1981). Value theory and the critique of essentialism. Economy and Society, Vol.10(2), pp.235-242.

Cousins, P., Swan, A. J., & Buirski, A. I. (2002). Defining value and managing the value gap: a supply chain management perspective. In 11 th IPSERA Conference, pp.162-173.

Crane, A., Palazzo, G., Spence, L. J., & Matten, D. (2014). Contesting the Value of the Shared Value Concept. California Management Review, Vol.56(2), pp.130-153.

Crane, A. (2000). 'Culture Clash and Mediation. Exploring the culture dynamics of business-NGO collaboration.', in J. Bendell (ed.), Terms of Endearment. Business, NGOs and Sustainable Development. Sheffield: Greenleaf Publishing.

Cunliffe, A. L. (2003). Reflexive inquiry in organizational research: questions and possibilities. Human Relations, Vol.56(8), pp.983-1003.

Dacin, M. T., Oliver, C. & Roy, J. P. (2007). The legitimacy of strategic alliances: An institutional perspective. Strategic Management Journal, Vol.28(2), pp.169-187.

Dahan, N.M., Doh, J.P., Oetzel, J. & Yaziji, M. (2010). Corporate-NGO collaboration: co-creating new business models for developing markets. Long Range Planning, Vol.43(2), pp.326-342.

Das T. K., Teng B. S. (2000). A resource-based theory of strategic alliances. Journal of Management, Vol.26, pp.31-61.

Dembek, K., Singh, P., & Bhakoo, V. (2016) Literature Review of Shared Value: A Theoretical Concept or a Management Buzzword? Journal of Business Ethics, Vol. 137(2), pp.231-267.

Diamond, J. (2002), Strategies to resolve conflict in partnerships. International Journal of Public Sector Management, Vol.15(4), pp.296–306.

Docherty, S., & Hibbert, S. (2003). Examining company experiences of a UK cause- related marketing campaign. International Journal of Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Marketing, Vol.8(4), pp.378-389.

Drew, P. (2005). 'Conversation Analysis'. In K.L. Fitch & R.E. Sanders, Language and social interaction, New Jersey: Lawrence Eribaum Associates.

Drew, P. & Heritage, J. (Eds.) (1992). Talk at work. Interaction in institutional settings. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Du, S., Bhattacharya, C.B. & Sen, S. (2010). Maximizing business returns to corporate social responsibility (CSR): The role of CSR communication. International Journal of Management Reviews, Vol.12(1), pp.8-19.

Eckstein, H. (1975). Case study and theory in political science. In Fred I. Greenstein and Nelson W. Polsby (Eds.). Strategies of Inquiry, pp.79-137.

Edvardsson, B., Tronvoll, B., & Gruber, T. (2011). Expanding understanding of service exchange and value co-creation: a social construction approach. Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science, Vol.39(2), pp.327-339.

Eisenhardt, K. M. (1989). Building theories from case study research. Academy of Management Review, Vol.14(4), pp.532-550.

Elkington, J. (1994). Towards the suitable corporation: win-win-win business strategies for sustainable development. California management review, Vol.36(2), 90-100.

Fairclough, N. (1992) Discourse and Social Change. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Fairclough, N. (2010). Critical discourse analysis: The critical study of language. 2nd Ed., Pearson Education Limited.

Fann, K.T. (1970). Peirce's theory of abduction. Springer Science & Business Media.

Fernández, E. C. (2008). Sex-related euphemism and dysphemism: An analysis in terms of conceptual metaphor theory. Atlantis, pp.95-110.

Fitch, K.L. & Sanders, R.E. (2005). Language and Social Interaction. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Finlay, L., & Gough, B. (Eds.). (2008). Reflexivity: A practical guide for researchers in health and social sciences. Blackwell Science Ltd.

Fleming, P. (2005). Workers' playtime? Boundaries and cynicism in a "culture of fun" program. The Journal of Applied Behavioral Science, Vol.41(3), pp.285-303.

Flyvbjerg, B. (2006). Five misunderstandings about case-study research. Qualitative inquiry, Vol.12(2), pp.219-245.

Foley, D. K. (2000). Recent developments in the labor theory of value. Review of Radical Political Economics, Vol.32(1), pp.1-39.

Foucault, M. (1971). Orders of discourse. Social science information, Vol.10(2), pp.7-30.

Foucault, M. (1972). The Archaeology of Knowledge. Translated by AM Sheridan Smith. Pantheon Books.

Fourcade, M. (2011). Cents and sensibility: Economic valuation and the nature of "nature" 1. American Journal of Sociology, Vol.116(6), pp.1721-77.

Freeman, R. E., Wicks, A. C., & Parmar, B. (2004). Stakeholder theory and "the corporate objective revisited". Organization science, Vol.15(3), pp.364-369.

Gazley, B. (2010). Linking collaborative capacity to performance measurement in government-nonprofit partnerships. Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly, Vol.39(4), pp.653-673.

Gee, J. P. (2014). An introduction to discourse analysis: Theory and method. Routledge.

Getha-Taylor, H. (2008). Identifying collaborative competencies. Review of Public Personnel Administration, Vol.28(2), pp.103-119.

Gill, J. & Johnson, P. (2010). Research methods for managers (4th Edition). London: Sage.

Goffman, E. (1955). On face-work: An analysis of ritual elements in social interaction. Psychiatry, Vol.18(3), pp.213-231.

Goffman, E. (1974). Frame Analysis: An Essay on the Organization of Experience. New York: Harper and Row.

Golombisky, K. (2006). Gendering the interview: feminist reflections on gender as performance in research. Women's Studies in Communication, Vol.29(2), pp.165-192.

Googins, B. K., & Rochlin, S. A. (2000). Creating the Partnership Society: Understanding the Rhetoric and Reality of Cross- Sectoral Partnerships. Business and Society Review, Vol.105(1), pp.127-144.

Graeber, D. (2005). 'Value: Anthropological theories of value'. In J. G. Carrier (Ed.). A handbook of economic anthropology. Edward Elgar Publishing, pp.439-454.

Graf, N. F. & Rothlauf, F. (2011). The why and how of firm-NGO collaborations. Working papers in information systems and business administration. Mainz, Germany: Johannes Gutenberg-

University Mainz. Retrieved January 3, 2014, from http://wi. bwl. uni-mainz. de/publikationen/WP-04-2011.pdf.

Gray, B. (2000). Assessing inter-organizational collaboration: Multiple conceptions and multiple methods. In D.O. Faulkener & M. De Rond (Eds.), Cooperative strategy: Economic, business, and organizational issues, pp.243-260. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Gray, B., Purdy, J.M. & Ansari (2015). From interactions to institutions: microprocesses of framing and mechanisms for the structuring of institutional fields. Academy of Management Review. Vol.41(1), pp.115-143.

Hahn, T., Figge, F., Pinkse, J. & Preuss, L. (2010). Trade- offs in corporate sustainability: you can't have your cake and eat it. Business Strategy and the Environment, Vol.19(4), pp.217-229.

Hall, S. (2001). 'Foucault: Power, knowledge and discourse'. In M. Wetherell, S. Taylor & S.J. Yates, Discourse theory and practice: A reader, London: Sage, pp.72-81.

Hammersley, M., & Atkinson, P. (2007). Ethnography: Principles in practice (3rd Edition). Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge.

Hardy, C. & Clegg, S. (1997) Relativity without relativism: Reflexivity in post-paradigm organization studies. British Journal of Management, Vol.8, S5–S17.

Hardy, C., Lawrence, T.B. & Grant, D. (2005). Discourse and collaboration: the role of conversations and collective identity. Academy of Management Review, Vol.30(1), pp.58-77.

Hardy, C., Lawrence, T.B., & Phillips, N. (2006). Swimming with sharks: Creating strategic change through multi-sector collaboration. International Journal of Strategic Change Management, Vo1.1, pp.96–112.

Hardy, C., & Phillips, N. (1998). Strategies of engagement: Lessons from the critical examination of collaboration and conflict in an interorganizational domain. Organization Science, Vol.9, pp.217–230.

Hastings, A. (1999). Analysing power relations in partnerships: is there a role for discourse analysis?. Urban Studies, Vol.36(1), pp.91-106.

Haynes, K. (2012). 'Reflexivity in qualitative research'. In G. Symon & C. Cassell (Eds.) Qualitative organizational research: core methods and current challenges. London: Sage, pp.72-89.

Heritage, J. (2005). 'Conversation analysis and institutional talk'. In K.L. Fitch & R.E. Sanders (Eds.) Handbook of language and social interaction. New Jersey: Lawrence Eribaum Associates.

Heritage J. & Maynard D.W. (Eds.) (2005). Communication in Medical Care: Interactions between Primary Care Physicians and Patients. Cambridge: UK. Cambridge University Press.

Heritage, J. & Raymond, G. (2005). The terms of agreement: Indexing epistemic authority and subordination in talk-in-interaction. Social psychology quarterly, Vol.68(1), pp.15-38.

Holt, E. & Clift, R. (Eds.). (2006). Reporting talk: Reported speech in interaction (Vol. 24). Cambridge University Press.

Holmes, J. (2000). Politeness, power and provocation: How humour functions in the workplace. Discourse studies, Vol.(2), pp.159-185.

Holtgraves, T. & Lasky, B. (1999). Linguistic power and persuasion. Journal of Language and Social Psychology. Vol.18, pp.196-205.

den Hond, F., de Bakker, F. G., & Doh, J. (2015). What prompts companies to collaboration with NGOs? Recent evidence from the Netherlands. Business & Society, Vol.54(2), pp.187-228.

Hosman, L.A. (1989). The evaluative consequences of hedges, hesitations and intensifiers: Powerful and powerless speech styles. Human communication research, Vol.15, pp.383-406.

Humphreys, M. (2005). Getting personal: Reflexivity and autoethnographic vignettes. Qualitative Inquiry, Vol 11.(6), pp.840-860.

Hur, W.M., Kim, H. & Woo, J. (2014). How CSR leads to corporate brand equity: Mediating mechanisms of corporate brand credibility and reputation. Journal of Business Ethics, Vol.125(1), p.75.

Herlin, H. (2015). Better safe than sorry: Nonprofit organizational legitimacy and cross-sector partnerships. Business & Society, Vol.54(6), pp.822-858.

Huxham, C. & Vangen, S. (2005). Managing to collaborate: The theory and practice of collaborative advantage. Routledge.

Irmak, C., Sen, S., & Bhattacharya, C. B. (2015). Consumer reactions to business-nonprofit alliances: Who benefits and when?. Marketing Letters, Vol.26(1), pp.29-42.

Jagosh, J., Boudreau, J. D., Steinert, Y., MacDonald, M. E. & Ingram, L. (2011). The importance of physician listening from the patients' perspective: Enhancing diagnosis, healing, and the doctor–patient relationship. Patient education and counselling, Vol.85(3), pp.369-374.

Jefferson, G. (1984). 'Transcription notation'. In J.M. Atkinson & J. Heritage (Eds.) Structures of social action. Cambridge University Press.

Jensen, M. C. (2001). Value maximization, stakeholder theory, and the corporate objective function. Journal of Applied Corporate Finance, Vol.14(3), pp.8-21.

Johnson, P., & Duberley, J. (2003). Reflexivity in Management Research. Journal of Management Studies, Vol.40(5), pp.1279-1303.

Jørgensen, M. W., & Phillips, L. J. (2002). Discourse analysis as theory and method. Sage.

Kagan, C. (2007). Interpersonal skills and reflection in regeneration practice. Public money and management, Vol.27(3), pp.169-174.

Kangasharju, H. & Nikko, T. (2009). Emotions in organizations: Joint laughter in workplace meetings. The Journal of Business Communication (1973), Vol. 46(1), pp.100-119.

Kaufman, B. E. (1990). A new theory of satisficing. Journal of Behavioral Economics, 19(1), pp.35-51.

Koschmann, M. A., Kuhn, T. R., & Pfarrer, M. D. (2012). A communicative framework of value in cross-sector partnerships. Academy of Management Review, Vol.37(3), pp.332-354.

Kristjanson-Gural, D. (2011). Opening the system: (Re)Writing value theory discursively. Rethinking Marxism, Vol.23(2), pp.198-215.

Kress, G. and van Leeuwen, T. (2001) Multi-Modal Discourse: The Modes and Media of Contemporary Communication. London: Arnold.

Kurucz, E., Colbert, B. and Wheeler, D. (2008). 'The business case for corporate social responsibility'. In Crane, A., McWilliams, A., Matten, D., Moon, J. and Siegel, D. (eds), The Oxford Handbook of Corporate Social Responsibility. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp.83–112.

Kuypers, J. A. (2009). Rhetorical criticism: Perspectives in action. Lexington Books.

Laasonen, S., Fougère, M., & Kourula, A. (2012). Dominant articulations in academic business and society discourse on NGO–business relations: A critical assessment. Journal of business ethics, Vol.109(4), pp.521-545.

Laclau, E. and Mouffe, C. (1985) Hegemony and Socialist Strategy. Towards a Radical Democratic Politics. London: Verso.

LaFrance, J., & Lehmann, M. (2005). Corporate awakening–Why (some) corporations embrace public–private partnerships. Business Strategy and the Environment, Vol.14(4), pp.216-229.

Lamont, M. (2012). Toward a comparative sociology of valuation and evaluation. Sociology, 38(1), 201.

Langley, A., Smallman, C., Tsoukas, H., & Van de Ven, A. H. (2013). Process studies of change in organization and management: unveiling temporality, activity, and flow. Academy of Management Journal, Vol.56(1), pp.1-13.

Lawrence, T.B., Phillips, N., & Hardy, C. (1999). Watching whale watching: Exploring the discursive foundations of collaborative relationships. Journal of Applied Behavioral Science, Vol.35, pp.479–502.

Liddicoat, A. J. (2011). An Introduction to Conversation Analysis. London: Continuum International Publishing Group.

Liddle, J. & Diamond, J. (2007). Reflections on regeneration management skills research. Public Money and Management, Vol.27(3), pp.189-192.

Linell, P. (1990). "The power of dialogue dynamics", in I. Markova & K. Foppa (Eds.) The Dynamics of Dialogue. Hertfordshire: Harvester Wheatsheaf.

Le Ber, M. J., & Branzei, O. (2010a). Towards a critical theory of value creation in cross-sector partnerships. Organization, Vol.17(5), pp.599-629.

Le Ber, M. J., & Branzei, O. (2010b). Value frame fusion in cross sector interactions. Journal of Business Ethics, Vol.94(1), pp.163-195.

Le Ber, M. J., & Branzei, O. (2010c). (Re)Forming strategic cross-sector partnerships relational processes of social innovation. Business & Society, Vol.49(1), pp.140-172.

Locke, K. D., Colden-Biddle, K., & Feldman, M. 2008. Making doubt generative: Rethinking the role of doubt in the research process. Organization Science, Vol.19, pp.907-918.

Loza, J. (2004). Business–community partnerships: The case for community organization capacity building. Journal of Business Ethics, Vol.53(3), pp.297-311.

MacDonald, A. & Stadtler, L. (2017). It's more than the reading assignment: Skillsets and competencies for effective cross-sector collaboration. Annual Review of Social Partnerships, 12, pp.45-49.

MacDonald, S. & Chrisp, T. (2005). Acknowledging the purpose of partnership. Journal of Business Ethics, Vol.59(4), pp.307-317.

MacMillan, K., Money, K., Money, A., & Downing, S. (2005). Relationship marketing in the not-for-profit sector: an extension and application of the commitment–trust theory. Journal of Business Research, Vol.58(6), pp.806-818.

Margolis, J. D. & Walsh, J. P. (2003). Misery loves companies: Rethinking social initiatives by business. Administrative science quarterly, Vol.48(2), pp.268-305.

Marx, J. D. (1999). Corporate philanthropy: What is the strategy?. Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly, Vol.28(2), pp.185-198.

Marx, Karl. (2001 [1867]) Marx's Capital (Student Edition). London, GBR: ElecBook, 2001. ProQuest ebrary.

Maynard, D.W. (2010). 'Ethnography and conversation analysis: What is the context of an utterance', in S.N. Hesse-Biber & P. Leavy (Eds.) Handbook of emergent methods. Guilford Press.

Milbourne, L. (2013). Voluntary sector in transition. Policy Press.
Miles, M. P. & Covin, J. G. (2000). Environmental marketing: A source of reputational, competitive, and financial advantage. Journal of business ethics, Vol.23(3), pp.299-311.

Millar, C. C., Choi, C. J., & Chen, S. (2004). Global strategic partnerships between MNEs and NGOs: Drivers of change and ethical issues. Business and Society Review, Vol.109(4), pp.395-414.

Mintzberg, H. (2015). Rebalancing Society: Radical Renewal Beyond Left, Right, and Center. Berrett-Koehler Publishers.

Moon, H. C., Parc, J., Yim, S. H. & Park, N. (2011). An extension of Porter and Kramer's creating shared value (CSV): Reorienting strategies and seeking international cooperation. Journal of International and Area Studies, pp.49-64.

Moon, J. (2002). The social responsibility of business and new governance. Government and Opposition, Vol.37(3), pp.385-408.

Mutch, N.E. (2011). Does power imbalance matter in corporate-nonprofit partnerships? Thesis, Doctor of Philosohpy. University of Otago. Retrieved from http://hdl.handle.net/10523/1839.

NCVO (2017). UK Civil Society Almanac 2017. Retrieved from https://data.ncvo.org.uk/a/almanac17/finance-overview/

Ng, S.H. & Bradac, J.J. (1993). Power in language. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Nyberg, D. and Nicholson, H. (2014). "Critical Ethnography" in E. Jeanes and T. Huzzard (Eds.) Critical Management Research: Reflections from the Field. London: Sage.

Nyssens, M. (2006). Social enterprise: At the crossroads of market, public policies and civil society, Routledge.

OED Online (2014). oed.com Oxford University Press. Entry for value n. updated Sept 2011.

Okoye, A. (2009). Theorising corporate social responsibility as an essentially contested concept: is a definition necessary?. Journal of Business Ethics, Vol.89(4), pp.613-627.

Oliver, A. L. & Ebers, M. (1998). Networking network studies: an analysis of conceptual configurations in the study of inter-organizational relationships. Organization studies Vol.19(4), pp.549-583.

Osborne, S.P. (1998). Partnerships in local economic development: a bridge too far for the voluntary sector? Local Economy, Vol.12(4), pp.290-295.

Oxford Dictionary for the Business World (1993). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Parker, B., & Selsky, J. W. (2004). Interface dynamics in cause-based partnerships: An exploration of emergent culture. Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly, 33(3), 458-488.

Pettigrew, A. M., Woodman, R. W., & Cameron, K. S. (2001). Studying organizational change and development: Challenges for future research. Academy of Management Journal, Vol.44(4), pp.697-713.

Pomerantz, A. (1986). Extreme case formulations: A way of legitimizing claims. Human Studies, Vol.9, pp.219-229.

Porter, M. E. & Kramer, M. R. (2006). The link between competitive advantage and corporate social responsibility. Harvard business review, Vol.84(12), pp/78-92.

Porter, M. E. & Kramer, M. R. (2011). Creating shared value. Harvard Business Review, Vol.89(1/2), pp.62-77.

Potter, J. & Wetherell, M. (1987). Discourse and social psychology: Beyond attitudes and behaviour. London: Sage.

Potter, J. & Wetherell, M. (1994). 'Analyzing discourse'. In A. Bryman & R.G. Burgess (Eds.), *Analyzing qualitative data*, pp.47-66. London: Routledge.

Potter, J. (1998). Discursive social psychology: From attitudes to evaluations, *European Review of Social Psychology*, 9, pp.233-266.

Potter, J. (1999). Beyond cognitivism. Research on Language and Social Interaction, Vol. 32 (1-2), pp.119-127.

Potter, J. (2003). Discursive psychology: between method and paradigm. Discourse and Society, Vol.14 (6), pp.783–794.

Potter, J. (2004). 'Discourse Analysis', in M. Hardy & A. Bryman (Eds.) Handbook of data analysis. Sage.

Ramirez, R. (1999). Value co-production: intellectual origins and implications for practice and research. Strategic Management Journal, 20(1), 49-65.

Ricardo, D. (2001 [1817]). On the principles of political economy and taxation. London: Electric Book Co.

Rittel, H. W., & Webber, M. M. (1973). Dilemmas in a general theory of planning. Policy sciences, 4(2), 155-169.

Rondinelli, D. A. & London, T. (2003). How corporations and environmental groups cooperate: Assessing cross-sector alliances and collaborations. The Academy of Management Executive, Vol.17(1), pp.61-76.

Rugg, G. & Petre, M. (2007). A Gentle Guide to Research Methods. Maidenhead, Berkshire: Open University Press.

Russell, L. (2005). It's a question of trust: balancing the relationship between students and teachers in ethnographic fieldwork. Qualitative Research, Vol.5(2), pp.181-199.

Rutner, S.M. & Langley Jr, C.J. (2000). Logistics value: definition, process and measurement. The International Journal of Logistics Management, Vol.11(2), pp.73-82.

Salamon, L. M., & Anheier, H. K. (1992). In search of the non-profit sector II: The problem of classification. Voluntas: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations, Vol.3(3), pp.267-309.

Sánchez-Fernández, R., & Iniesta-Bonillo, M.Á. (2007). The concept of perceived value: a systematic review of the research. Marketing theory, 7(4), 427-451.

Sanzo, M. J., Álvarez, L. I., Rey, M., & García, N. (2015). Business–nonprofit partnerships: a new form of collaboration in a corporate responsibility and social innovation context. Service Business, Vol.9(4), pp.611-636.

Scherer, A.G. & Palazzo, G. (2007). Toward a political conception of corporate social responsibility: Business and society seen from a Habermasian perspective. Academy of Management Review, Vol.32(4), pp.1096-1120.

Scherer, A. G., & Palazzo, G. (2011). The new political role of business in a globalized world: A review of a new perspective on CSR and its implications for the firm, governance, and democracy. Journal of management studies, Vol.48(4), pp.899-931.

Schreier, M. (2012). Qualitative content analysis in practice. Sage Publications.

Shumate, M., Hsieh, Y. P., & O'Connor, A. (2016). A Nonprofit Perspective on Business–Nonprofit Partnerships Extending the Symbiotic Sustainability Model. Business & Society, 0007650316645051.

Shwom, R. (2015). Nonprofit-business partnering dynamics in the energy efficiency field. Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly, Vol.44(3), pp.564-586.

Seitanidi, M. M., (2010). The politics of partnerships: A critical examination of nonprofit-business partnerships. Springer Science & Business Media.

Seitanidi, M. M., & Ryan, A. (2007). A critical review of forms of corporate community involvement: from philanthropy to partnerships. International Journal of Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Marketing, Vol.12(3), pp.247-266.

Seitanidi, M. M. & Crane, A. (2009). Implementing CSR through partnerships: Understanding the selection, design and institutionalisation of nonprofit-business partnerships. Journal of Business Ethics, Vol.85(2), pp.413-429.

Seitanidi, M. M. & Crane, A. (2014). Social partnerships and responsible business: A research handbook. Routledge.

Seitanidi, M. M. (2010). The politics of partnerships: a critical examination of nonprofit-business partnerships. Springer.

Seitanidi, M. M. & Lindgreen, A. (2010). Editorial: Cross-sector social interactions. Journal of Business Ethics, Vol.94, pp.1-7.

Selsky, J. W., & Parker, B. (2005). Cross-sector partnerships to address social issues: Challenges to theory and practice. Journal of Management, Vol.31(6), pp.849-873.

Shepherd, D. A., & Sutcliffe, K. M. (2011). Inductive top-down theorizing: A source of new theories of organization. Academy of Management Review, Vol.36(2), pp.361-380.

Silverman, D. (2013). Doing qualitative research: A practical handbook (4th Edition). London: Sage.

Smith, A. (2001 [1776]). An Inquiry into the nature and causes of the wealth of nations. London: Electric Book Co.

Sopory, P. & Dillard, J. P. (2002). The persuasive effects of metaphor: A meta-analysis. Human Communication Research, Vol.28(3), pp.382-419.

Spencer, J. W. (1994). Mutual relevance of ethnography and discourse. Journal of Contemporary Ethnography, Vol.23(3), pp.267-279.

Srivastava, P., & Hopwood, N. (2009). A practical iterative framework for qualitative data analysis. International journal of qualitative methods, Vol.8(1), pp.76-84.

Stake, R.E. (2000). "Case studies" in N.K. Denzin, & Y.S. Lincoln (eds.), Handbook of qualitative research (2nd Edition). London: Sage.

Stokoe, E., Hepburn, A. & Antaki, C. (2012). Beware the 'Loughborough School' of Social Psychology? Interaction and the politics of intervention. British journal of social psychology, Vol.51, pp.486-496.

Ten Have, P. (2007). Doing conversation analysis. London: Sage.

Thorpe, R. & Holt, R. (2008). The Sage Dictionary of Qualitative Management Research. London: Sage.

Tsarenko, Y. & Simpson, D. (2017). Relationship governance for very different partners: The corporation-nonprofit case. Industrial Marketing Management, Vol.63, pp.31-41.

Tulder, R., Seitanidi, M. M., Crane, A. & Brammer, S. (2016). Enhancing the impact of cross-sector partnerships. Journal of Business Ethics. Vol.135(1), pp.1-17.

Van Dijk, T.A. (2013) 'Discourse and Knowledge'. In Gee, J. P., & Handford, M. (Eds.). The Routledge handbook of discourse analysis. Routledge, pp.587-603.

Van Dijk, T.A. (Ed.). (2011). Discourse studies: A multidisciplinary introduction. Sage.

Van Maanen, J. (1988). Tales of the field: On writing ethnography. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Van Maanen, J. (2011). Tales of the field: On writing ethnography (2nd Edition). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Van Staveren, I. (2013). The values of economics: An Aristotelian perspective. Routledge.

Vargo, S. L., Maglio, P. P., & Akaka, M.A. (2008). On value and value co-creation: A service systems and service logic perspective. European management journal, Vol.26(3), pp.145-152.

Vock, M., van Dolen, W., & Kolk, A. (2013). Micro-level interactions in business-nonprofit partnerships. Business & Society.

Vurro, C., Dacin, M. T. & Perrini, F. (2010). Institutional antecedents of partnering for social change: How institutional logics shape cross-sector social partnerships. Journal of Business Ethics, Vol.94, pp.39-53.

Waddell, S. (2000). The win-win rationale for partnership with NGOs. Terms for endearment: Business, NGOs, and sustainable development. Sheffield: Greenleaf.

Waddock, S. A. (1988). Building successful partnerships. Sloan Management Review, Vol.29(4), pp.17-23.

Waldman, D.A., Siegel, D.S. and Javidan, M. (2006). Components of CEO Transformational Leadership and Corporate Social Responsibility, Journal of Management Studies, Vol.43(8), pp.1703-1725.

Watson, T. (2008). The social construction of reality. In Y.

Gabriel, Organizing Words. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Wetherell, M. (2001). 'Debates in discourse research'. In Wetherell, M., Taylor. S. & Yates, S.J. Discourse theory and practice: A reader. London: Sage, pp.380-399.

Williams, P. (2002). The competent boundary spanner. Public administration, Vol.80(1), pp.103-124.

Wymer Jr, W. W. & Samu, S. (2003). Dimensions of business and nonprofit collaborative relationships. Journal of Nonprofit & Public Sector Marketing, Vol.11(1), pp.3-22.

Yaziji, M. & Doh, J. (2009). NGOs and corporations: Conflict and collaboration. Cambridge University Press.

Yin, R.K. (2012) Applications of Case Study Research (3rd Edition). Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Appendix A

Nottingham University Business School
UNITED KINGDOM · CHINA · MALAYSIA

Information for Participants

Thank you for agreeing to participate in the project. Your participation is voluntary, and you may change your mind about being involved, or decline to answer a particular question or questions at any time and without giving a reason.

This information sheet is designed to give you full details of the project, its goals, and what you will be asked to do as part of the research. If you have any questions that are not answered by this information sheet, please ask.

What is the project title?

Nonprofit-Business Partnership and the Co-creation of Value (provisional title)

Who is carrying out the project?

Kathryn Wing, Doctoral Researcher (known as Katy). The research is funded by Nottingham University Business School (NUBS) and [Name of business], under the terms of a Studentship Agreement. There will be three supervisors involved in this project, whose contact details can be found towards the end of this document. Neither the researcher nor the supervisors involved in the project have any institutional affiliations which would be likely to give rise to a conflict of interest.

What is the project about?

This is an exploratory case study of the partnership between [Name of business] and [Name of nonprofit]. The project will investigate the processes involved in the formation and implementation of the partnership, with the aim of yielding new insights into partnership theory. The research will focus on the processes involved in the creation of value for both partner organisations, including less tangible impacts of the partnership, such as capacity building, knowledge creation, reputational impacts and other sources of value.

Who is being asked to take part, and why?

Employees of [Name of business] and [Name of nonprofit] will be asked to take part in the research, by consenting to be observed and/or interviewed, or by sharing relevant documents or email communications, so as to facilitate an understanding of the detailed processes involved in the formation and implementation of the partnership.

What will participants be asked to do?

Interviews
Participants may be asked to participate in interviews to talk about their experiences and understanding of the partnership, including any challenges they have faced. They may be asked about their views on motivations, risks and opportunities in relation to the partnership. Any interviews will be loosely structured and informal, giving participants the opportunity to express their views and experiences in their own words. Interviews may vary in length, but are expected to last between 30 minutes and one hour. Participants may be asked for an interview at an early stage of the project to discuss the formation of the partnership. They may also be asked for either one or two further interviews during subsequent stages of this three year research project, to enable the development of the partnership to be studied over time. Interviewees are likely to be asked for their permission to record interviews on a digital voice recorder, to facilitate detailed analysis.

Observations
Individuals involved in the partnership may be asked for their consent to be observed during meetings and for field notes to be taken, so as to capture what is being said and done. They may be asked for their permission to record meetings on a digital voice recorder, however, this would only be done with the informed consent of all those involved.

Emails
Participants may be asked for their permission to share email exchanges. This would require the informed consent of all recipients and senders. This applies whether individuals are asked to forward relevant email exchanges, or whether requests are made for other methods to be used to retrieve emails, for example, by carrying out keyword searches on servers.

Documents
Requests may be made for documents relevant to the project to be shared with the researcher. Any confidential or commercially sensitive information contained in these documents will be kept strictly confidential and only used for the purposes of the project. Documents containing sensitive personal data, such as personnel records, will not be requested.

What will happen to the information I provide?

Subject to the informed consent of participants, field notes may be taken during observations of meetings. Again, subject to informed consent, interviews and other meetings may be recorded on a digital voice recorder, where this is needed to facilitate detailed analysis. Transcriptions will be made anonymous, so that individuals cannot be identified. It is proposed that individual participants will be referred to in the research by their generic roles, e.g. 'Manager' and/or using pseudonyms. However, individual agreements can be made with

participants as to whether and how they will be referred to in the research. Direct quotes may be used, but these will be made anonymous. All personal data will be held securely and confidentially, in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

The data will be analysed to identify relevant issues and themes that address the aims of the project. Research outputs will be made available to the named representatives of both partner organisations for review, 30 days prior to publication, in accordance with the separate Studentship Agreement with Nottingham University Business School (NUBS). The broad characteristics of the participating organisations and the partnership may be referred to, however, I will take care to ensure that the participating organisations cannot be identified and, if requested, amendments will be made to ensure that the anonymity of the participating organisations is protected.

I am conscious that I may be exposed to confidential and commercially sensitive information. Therefore I will take care to protect the confidentiality of organisational information. All electronic files containing confidential research data will be password protected and stored securely on a network drive to eliminate the risk of loss of data, for example, in the event of theft of a laptop. Personal data will not be retained for longer than necessary. Research data will only be used for the specific purposes of this research. The final thesis and/or any academic papers resulting from the project may be referenced in subsequent research (see below).

What will be the outputs or outcomes?

The main output of the project will be a thesis for a PhD in Corporate Social Responsibility, approximately 80,000 words in length, which will include a review of the current literature on nonprofit-business collaboration, a description of the methodology of the research and a write-up of the main findings and conclusions. Academic papers, presentations and reports may also be published based on this research. However, any research outputs will made available to the named representatives of both partner organisations for review, 30 days prior to publication, in accordance with the Studentship Agreement between NUBS, [Name of business] and [Name of nonprofit].

Contact details:

Katy Wing
Tel: 07967 352333
Email: lixkewin@nottingham.ac.uk
Address: c/o Nottingham University Business School, Jubilee Campus, Nottingham NG8 1BB.

Supervisors:

Dr. Wendy Chapple	Tel: 0115 951527 8	Email: wendy.chapple@nottingham.ac.uk
Dr. Judy Muthuri	Tel: 0115 846661 5	Email: judy.muthuri@nottingham.ac.uk
Prof. Daniel Nyberg		Email: daniel.nyberg@nottingham.ac.uk

Address for all supervisors:
Nottingham University Business School, Jubilee Campus, Nottingham NG8 1BB.

Complaints and governance procedure:
If you wish to complain about the way in which the research is being conducted or have any concerns about the research then in the first instance please contact Judy Muthuri or the School's Research Ethics Officer:

Adam Golberg,
Nottingham University Business School, Jubilee Campus, Nottingham NG8 1BB. Tel: 0115 846 6604 Email: adam.golberg@nottingham.ac.uk

Appendix B

Initial interviews - topic guide

1. Overview of professional background and any previous experience of business-voluntary sector collaboration

2. How the partnership came about; how it was initiated; who was involved; how partners reached the conclusion that they were compatible / a good 'fit'.
   E.g.
   - how do partner's complement each other?
   - how can they benefit each other?
   - what social problems do both partners have in common, how do they perceive these problems?

3. Any differences in values or approaches; how these were negotiated.

4. Rationale for the partnership in terms of the business case for own organisation.

5. Understanding of the potential benefits of the partnership for the partner organisation.

6. Views about how these kinds of partnerships should be approached to make them work successfully.

7. Experiences in the early stages of developing the partnership and developing relationships.

8. Any challenges or difficulties so far.

9. Any benefits or outcomes from the partnership so far.

10. Thoughts about how they see the partnership evolving; possible longer-term impacts for either / both partners.

Appendix C

Transcription symbols

Symbol	Use
[text]	Brackets: start and end points of overlapping talk
=	Equals sign: no gap between two utterances
(0.0)	Timed pause: silence in seconds & tenths of secs.
(.)	Micropause: brief pause, under 0.2 seconds
?	Rising intonation, not always signifying a question
-	Hyphen: abrupt halt or interruption
_____	Underlining: stress, audible in pitch or volume
::	Colon(s): prolongation of sound
° °	Degree symbol surrounding talk: lower volume
.hhh	Audible inhalation
hhh	Audible exhalation
ALL CAPS	Spoken loudly or shouted
(text)	Speech which is unclear / in doubt in the transcript
( )	Empty parentheses: something said, but inaudible
((text))	Double parentheses: transcriber's annotations / descriptions of non-verbal activity

Sources: adapted from Jefferson (1984) and Silverman (2013).

Appendix D

Observations log

Date	Place	Details	Time (in hours and minutes)	Running total (in hours and minutes)
10-10-2013	Nonprofit's office	Induction day with nonprofit. Observations made in between interviews with staff.	04:00	04:00
15-10-2013	Business' headquarters	Induction day with business. Observations made in between discussions with key contact.	04:00	08:00
24-10-2013	Nonprofit's office	Quarterly partnership meeting*	02:00	10:00
		Observations in the office	01:30	11:30
21-11-2013	Business' headquarters	Event aimed at promoting the partnership within the business; workshops with young people, led by the nonprofit and supported by the business partner	07:30	19:00
22-11-2013	Business' headquarters	Innovation Development Day with nonprofit staff and business' new graduate intake	08:30	27:30
18-12-2013	Business' headquarters	Observations in between interviews with staff from the business	03:30	31:00
19-12-2013	Nonprofit's office	Observations in between interviews with staff from the nonprofit organisation	02:30	33:30
30-01-2014	Nonprofit's office	Quarterly partnership meeting*	02:15	35:45
		Planning session*	02:00	37:45

		Observations in the office	02:15	40:00
18-03-2014	Business' headquarters	Observations in the office	03:00	43:00
28-03-2014	External venue, near nonprofit's office	Employability Co-creation Roundtable nonprofit event; business partner participated along with other businesses and nonprofits	04:00	47:00
01-05-2014	Business' small office base	Quarterly partnership meeting*	03:30	50:30
		Observations in the office	01:30	52:00
14-05-2014	Business' headquarters	Observations before and after interview with departing Head of CSR	02:15	54:15
17-06-2014	External venue, near nonprofit's base	Nonprofit event showcasing work to businesses and other stakeholders; business partner representative attended	04:00	58:15
19-06-2014	External venue, near business' headquarters	Vision Day – annual business event, this year focusing on digital transformation; nonprofit partner invited and had an exhibition stand	07:45	66:00
03-07-2014	Nonprofit's office	Observations before and after interviews with nonprofit staff	03:00	69:00
21-07-2014	Nonprofit's office	Observations before and after interviews with nonprofit staff	02:30	71:30
22-07-2014	Business' headquarters	Observations before and after interviews with staff from the business	03:00	74:30
07-08-2014	Nonprofit's office	Observations in the office (partnership meeting cancelled)	03:00	77:30
06-10-2014	Nonprofit's office	Quarterly partnership meeting*	02:00	79:30
		Observations in the office	02:20	81:50

29-01-2015	Business' headquarters	Quarterly partnership meeting*	02:00	83:50
		Observations in the office	01:40	85:30
19-02-2015	Nonprofit's offices	Observations before and after interviews with nonprofit staff	02:00	87:30
16-03-2015	Business' headquarters	Observations before partnership meeting	02:00	89:30
		Partnership meeting on communications*	01:00	90:30
		Observations over lunch & during meeting about Marathon sponsorship	02:30	93:00
30-06-2015	Business' headquarters	Quarterly partnership meeting	01:00	96:45
		Observations in the office	02:30	99:15
27-07-2015	Nonprofit's office	Observations before and after interviews with nonprofit staff	02:45	95:45
15-12-2015	Business' headquarters	Observations before and after interviews with staff from the business	03:00	102:15
17-12-2015	Nonprofit's office	Observations before and after interviews with nonprofit staff	03:45	106:00

*Audio-recorded. In other instances, only field notes were taken.

Appendix E

Interviews log

Date	Place	Role	Pseudonym	Informal discussion (I) / no. transcribed interviews with that individual	Time	Running total number of interviews
10-10-2013*	Nonprofit's office	Deputy Development Director	"Chloe"	I	00:30	1
		Business Development Manager	"Liam"	I	00:30	2
		Engagement & Support Officer	"Mae"	I	00:30	3
		Head of Volunteering & Training	"Georgia"	I	00:30	4
15-10-2013*	Business' UK headquarters	Head of Corporate Social Responsibility	"Nicola"	I	02:00	5
18-12-2013	Business' UK headquarters	Head of Corporate Social Reponsibility	"Nicola"	1st	00:50	6
		Vice President, HR & Sustainability (NB interview cut short by emergency drill)	"Naomi"	1st	00:25	7
		Community Relations & Employee Engagement Manager	"Trev"	1st	00:45	8

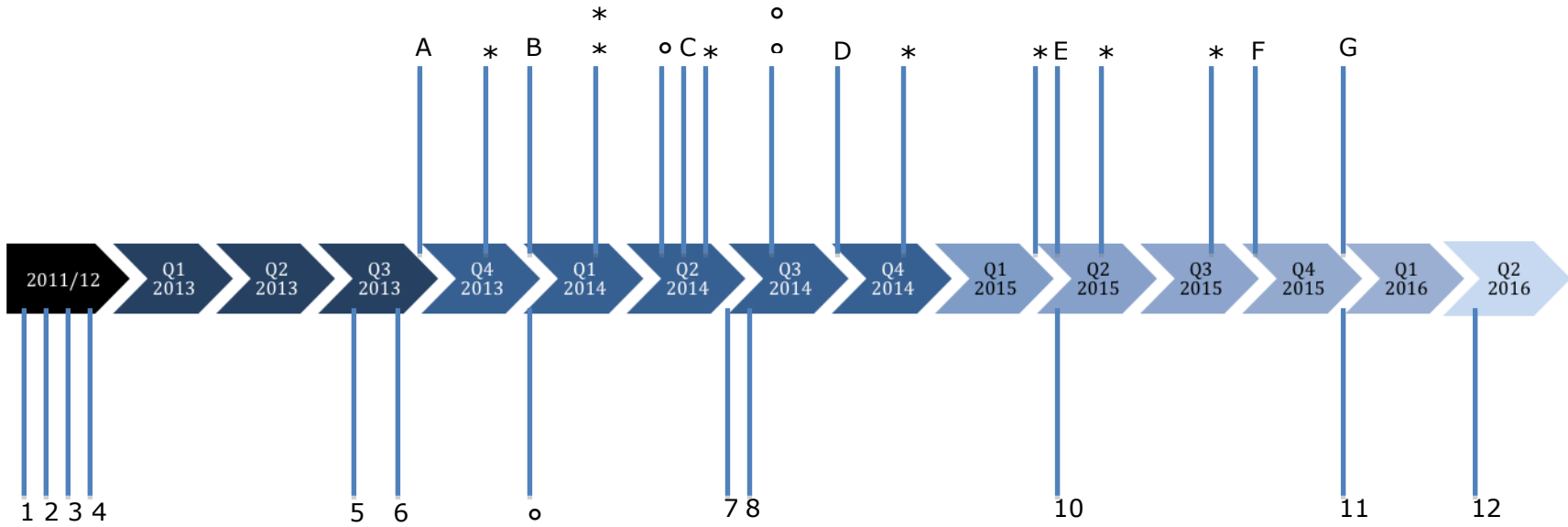
19-12-2013	Nonprofit's office	Chief Executive	"Anna"	1st	00:50	9
		Deputy Development Director	"Chloe"	1st	01:05	10
		Business Development Manager	"Liam"	1st	00:45	11
14-05-2014	Business' UK headquarters	Head of Corporate Social Responsibility	"Nicola"	2nd (final interview before leaving)	00:55	12
03-07-2014	Nonprofit's office	Operations Director	"Steve"	1st	01:10	13
		Business Development Manager	"Liam"	2nd (final interview before leaving)	00:50	14
21-07-2014	Nonprofit's office	Deputy Development Director	"Chloe"	2nd	01:05	15
		Chief Executive	"Anna"	2nd	00:30	16
22-07-2014	Business' UK headquarters	Head of Employee Communications (with new CSR remit)	"Rosa"	1st	00:50	17
		Vice President, HR & Sustainability (short interview, owing to diary commitment)	"Naomi"	2nd	00:15	18
		Community Relations & Employee Engagement Manager	"Trev"	2nd	00:35	19
08-09-2014	Skype interview	Former Development Director (nonprofit)	"Esther"	1st (additional retrospective interview on	00:40	20

				formation of partnership)		
19-02-2015	Nonprofit's offices	Deputy Development Director	"Chloe"	3rd	00:35	21
		Development and Marketing Director	"Eva"	1st	00:45	22
27-07-2015	Nonprofit's offices	Acting Deputy Development Director (Maternity Cover)	"Yvonne"	1st	00:45	23
		Commercial Development Manager	"Emily"	1st	00:30	24
15-12-2015	Business's UK Headquarters	Community Relations & Employee Engagement Manager	"Trev"	3rd	00:31	25
		Vice President, HR & Sustainability	"Naomi"	3rd	00:33	26
		Head of Employee Communications (CSR remit)	"Rosa"	2nd	00:36	27
17-12-2015	Nonprofit's offices	Commerical Development Manager	"Emily"	2nd	00:25	28
		Development and Marketing Director*	"Eva"	2nd	00:10	29
		Chief Executive (former Operations Director)	"Steve"	2nd	00:40	30

*All interviews were audio-recorded, except for the informal discussions, which took place during the induction days with each partner organisation, when field notes were taken. Also one final informal interview occurred, where field notes only were taken.

Appendix F

Timeline of the partnership



Q1 = January - March
Q2 = April - June
Q3 = July - September
Q4 = October - December

Key events for partners:

1. *April 2011 – start of formation stage of the partnership; informal talks began between partners.*
2. *June 2012 – partnership agreed; start of contract negotiation stage.*
3. *September 2012 – CrediCo's first Head of CSR took up her post.*
4. *December 2012 – first payment made; start of the implementation phase of the partnership.*

5. *June 2013 – contractual agreement finally signed between CrediCo and DigiGen.*
6. *July 2013 – CrediCo's UK CEO left and was replaced by a CEO with an international remit.*
7. *May 2014 – CrediCo's Head of CSR left her post; the role was not replaced and responsibility for the partnership was assigned to the Head of Employee Communications.*
8. *July 2014 – DigiGen's Business Development Manager, who was involved with a lot of the day to day work of the partnership, left.*
9. *February 2015 – DigiGen's partnership lead (Deputy Development Director) went on maternity leave.*
10. *April 2015 – DigiGen's Chief Executive left and was replaced by their Operations Director.*
11. *December 2015 – DigiGen merged with another young people's charity to form a new organization.*
12. *June 2016 – partnership ended.*

Key periods of fieldwork:

A. *October 2013 – start of fieldwork; induction days with partners and informal interviews.*
B. *December 2013 – first round of planned audio-recorded interviews with both partner organizations.*
C. *May 2014 – CrediCo's Head of CSR & partnership lead was interviewed for a second time, just before she left the organization.*
D. *July 2014 - second round of planned audio-recorded interviews.*
E. *February 2015 – interviewed DigiGen's Development & Marketing Director (a relatively new member of staff involved in the partnership) and DigiGen's partnership lead just before she went on maternity leave.*
F. *July 2015 – interviews with two DigiGen staff: one who was providing maternity cover for the partnership. lead, but who was about to leave the organization; the other a new member of staff, who had been given responsibility for the partnership.*
G. *December 2015 – final round of planned audio-recorded interviews; fieldwork ends.*

* Observed partnership meetings (see Appendix D for precise dates).
° Other observed events involving both partner organizations (see Appendix D for precise dates).