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Stepping in, aside or away?
A micro-level study of commitment in cross sector partnerships

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Abstract

Cross sector partnerships (CSPs) are considered essential for addressing grand challenges, yet the actual partnering process often leads to friction, disappointing results, and dismay for those involved. Scholars have identified that individuals play a critical role in the success of cross sector collaboration and that their commitment to the partnership facilitates CSP functioning. However, the micro-level aspects of commitment within CSPs have yet to be examined carefully. The partnership literature calls for more in-depth research on individuals and recommends drawing from the fields of organizational behaviour and organizational psychology. Meanwhile, the commitment literature calls for examination of workplace commitment within cross boundary settings and in relation to higher purpose causes. My interpretive, micro-level study responds to these parallel and synergistic needs for additional research by exploring what shapes individuals' commitment to cross sector partnerships.

I use a constructivist grounded theory approach to conduct a longitudinal, comparative case study of 23 health partnership practitioners in South Africa. My findings are consolidated in an empirically developed model that describes how the nature of individuals' CSP commitment differs depending on which of three key commitment targets (employing organization, career, or social goal) they prioritize in the context of the partnership. In distinguishing between those who are instrumentally vs altruistically committed to the CSP, the model outlines two pathways through adversity which result in four different behavioural outcomes of exiting, stepping aside, stepping away or stepping in. Critically, the model illustrates what enables certain partnership practitioners to sustain CSP commitment despite adversity and how eudaimonic well-being is generated through this process.

My examination of workplace commitment within CSPs contributes to the partnership literature by enhancing micro-level understanding of the human and emotional side of cross sector partnering. I provide insight on why individuals commit to CSPs and illustrate how this influences behavioural responses to adversity. I also contribute to the commitment literature by shedding light on the interplay of different commitment targets within a cross boundary, socially oriented workplace setting and providing empirical evidence for how altruism facilitates commitment. Finally, I reveal the benefit that sustained commitment generates for partnership practitioners and suggest how my findings may be leveraged for both partnering practice and future research.

Dedication

In memory of my father,

Professor Bal Raj Sehgal.

A brilliant scholar and devoted parent,

who taught me that to deliver good work, you must invest the right effort,

whose dedication and perseverance I channelled to complete my thesis,

and whose absence I feel each day.

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The PhD is often described as a journey, and I couldn't agree more. Mine was somewhat longer than expected and included shifting careers, moving to Cape Town, losing my father, and "repatriating" to Geneva during Covid. While the research journey often felt solitary, it was truly a collaborative effort, and I would like to acknowledge those who contributed along the way.

Thank you first to my husband Patrick and daughters Satya and Maya. This has been a long journey, for all of us. Words cannot express how grateful I am for your patience, understanding and support over these years. Patrick, your belief in me helped me to believe in myself. Satya, your calming energy soothed me when I felt frantic. And Maya, your innate understanding of my moods meant your encouraging notes arrived at just the right time.

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Finally, I would like to thank my study participants. You were the main collaborators in this endeavour. I am grateful for your time, energy, and willingness to share your experience and insights. I enjoyed the opportunity to learn and construct knowledge with you.

Declaration

I recognize that plagiarism is a serious form of academic dishonesty. I have read the relevant document on plagiarism, understand its contents, and have ensured I avoid all forms of plagiarism that are mentioned. I have used quotation marks to denote where I have used the words of others, and these, as well as ideas that I have borrowed or built on, have been properly referenced. I have not allowed others to plagiarize my work and will take steps to ensure it does not happen in the future.

I, Sarita Sehgal, hereby declare that this PhD thesis is based on my own original ideas and work, except where this has been indicated and referenced otherwise. I also confirm that neither the whole monograph, or any part of it, has been, or is being submitted for another degree at UCT or any other university. I authorize UCT to reproduce this work, or any part of it, for the purpose of further research in any manner required.

List of Figures

List of Tables

Table of Contents

Chapter 1 - Introduction

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (UN General Assembly, 2015) and accompanying SDG partnership platform[1] are based on the belief that complex social and environmental problems require collaborative action across issues and sectors. The recent Covid-19 pandemic is a case in point, having led to an "unprecedented all-sector, rapid response" that harnessed collaboration at all levels to fight the disease (UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2021, p. 4). Indeed, the numbers and popularity of cross sector social partnerships (CSPs)[2] have grown dramatically over the last three decades (Austin, 2014; Koschmann et al., 2012; Seitanidi & Lindgreen, 2010; Selsky & Parker, 2005). They have also become more encompassing and expansive in terms of issues covered and geographical reach (Crane & Seitanidi, 2014).

CSPs are complex, joining interdependent actors with disparate institutional logics (Gray & Purdy, 2014; Vogel et al., 2021; J. Yin & Jamali, 2021) in which they are emotionally invested (Fan & Zietsma, 2016; Friedland, 2018). It is understandable, therefore, that the process of partnering is often characterized by tension and complexity leading to inertia, less than expected results and disappointment for those involved (Bryson et al., 2006, 2015; Gray, 1989; Huxham & Vangen, 2000; Kolk, 2014; Koschmann et al., 2012; Nguyen & Janssens, 2018; Powell et al., 2018).

[1] https://sdgs.un.org/partnerships

[2] For the purposes of this dissertation, I use the term cross sector partnerships and its acronym CSP interchangeably with the term social partnerships as a way to encompass academic scholars' broad and diverse terminology for cross sector collaboration aimed at addressing complex social and environmental challenges. Definitions and other examples of terminology are included in Chapter 2.

A substantial body of interdisciplinary literature exists on CSPs and examines these unique organizational forms from multiple vantage points and theoretical lenses (Austin, 2014; Branzei & le Ber, 2014; Crane & Seitanidi, 2014; Selsky & Parker, 2005). Scholars highlight the challenge of diverging interests in CSPs and emphasise that shared loyalty and commitment facilitate partnership functioning (MacDonald et al., 2019; O'Leary & Vij, 2012; Venn & Berg, 2014; Villani et al., 2017). The fact that "it is the people who make the partnership" (Vogel et al., 2021, p. 2), and that specific individuals are often key to CSP success (Manning & Roessler, 2014; Purdy et al., 2017; Vangen & Huxham, 2003; Venn & Berg, 2014) has gained in recognition. Yet most studies of CSPs adopt the perspective of one or more partner organizations, leaving the micro-level "underexposed" (Kolk et al., 2015, p. 19) and in need of additional research (Kolk, 2014; Kolk et al., 2010; Sloan & Oliver, 2013; Stott & Murphy, 2020; Venn & Berg, 2014; Vogel et al., 2021). The reasons why individuals commit to CSPs has not been carefully examined in the literature and reflects recent calls for more insight on the human and emotional side of partnering (Albats et al., 2020; Battisti, 2009; Bode et al., 2019; Y. Liu et al., 2017; Stott & Murphy, 2020). To explore this theme of individuals' commitment in CSPs, I turn to the literature on workplace commitment.

Research on commitment in the workplace is well established and offers extensive insight into how individuals commit to their work (Klein, Becker, et al., 2009; van Rossenberg et al., 2018). Yet, the primary focus is on employees' commitment to their organizations (T. E. Becker et al., 2009; Klein, Becker, et al., 2009; Klein, Molloy, et al., 2009; van Rossenberg et al., 2018), and comparatively few studies examine the broader array of workplace commitment targets, or how they interact (R. E. Johnson et al., 2009; Klein et al., 2020, 2022; Meyer et al., 2021). Commitment scholars acknowledge that the workplace has evolved, and that more research within cross boundary settings and in relation to meaningful work and

higher purpose causes is required (Bingham et al., 2013; Geldenhuys et al., 2014; Klein et al., 2020; van Rossenberg, Cross, et al., 2022; van Rossenberg et al., 2018). CSPs, by definition, embody these characteristics.

My review of these literatures thus revealed a compelling opportunity to address parallel and synergistic needs for additional research by exploring what shapes individuals' CSP commitment and how it is sustained through adversity. I also found that both partnership and commitment scholars were calling for exploratory, process-oriented research using person-centred designs, interpretive inquiry, and qualitative methods (Babiak & Thibault, 2009; Bryson et al., 2015; Klein et al., 2020, 2022; Manning & Roessler, 2014; Meyer et al., 2013, 2021; Meyer & Morin, 2016; Moran, 2009; Nguyen & Janssens, 2018; van Rossenberg, Cross, et al., 2022; van Rossenberg et al., 2018). I therefore took a constructivist grounded theory approach (Charmaz, 2017) and embarked on a longitudinal, comparative case study (Eisenhardt, 1989, 2021) of 23 individuals involved in four CSPs that focused on public health challenges in South Africa.

When I began my data collection, I believed that individuals' commitment to a particular CSP was based primarily on their perceived "return on investment"[3]. In other words, guided by traditional, utilitarian perspectives of social exchange and reciprocity (Blau, 1964; Brown, 1996; di Domenico et al., 2009; Emerson, 1976; Seitanidi & Crane, 2009; Weber et al., 2021), I expected that CSP members would consciously attribute value to what the partnership delivered for their organizations and/or themselves, and invest their time and effort accordingly. This was reaffirmed by long standing assertions in the partnership

[3] This was a personal belief informed in part by practitioner experience and the term "return on investment" is used colloquially.

literature that a clear organizational or resource benefit promotes most active engagement in a CSP (Clarke & MacDonald, 2019; Wood & Gray, 1991).

Yet, as I listened to my respondents' views and experiences, and witnessed their interactions and behaviours over time, I began to understand that while such cognitive and tactical reflections did take place, many of my study participants also had a more purposeful commitment to the work of the CSP, and in particular to the social goal that the CSP was working towards. Indeed, as I compared and analysed my data, I found that there were a variety of factors and processes that shaped the *nature,* or motivation behind my respondents' bond to the partnership, as well as their ability to sustain CSP commitment during situations of partnership adversity.

My consolidated findings reveal how the nature of individuals' CSP commitment depends on which of three key commitment targets (employing organization, career, or social goal) they prioritize *in the context of the partnership,* which is reflective of either a "self" or an "other orientation". Individuals who express a "self" orientation in relation to the CSP are more likely to prioritize their organizational and/or career goals as the primary commitment target and exhibit what I label as an *instrumental CSP commitment nature.* Individuals who express an "other" orientation are more likely to prioritize the partnership's social goal, in this case the health and welfare of underserved individuals and communities, as the primary commitment target, and exhibit an *altruistic CSP commitment nature*.

In distinguishing between those who are *instrumentally* vs *altruistically* committed to the CSP, I articulate two iterative pathways through adversity which result in four different behavioural outcomes of *exiting, stepping aside, stepping away* or *stepping in*. Critically, I

identify how a self-reflective practice of *stepping back,* combined with a positive relational context, promotes certain individuals to *step in* to address collaborative challenges, whereas others do not. I further illustrate how the process of sustaining CSP commitment through partnership adversity enhances individuals' eudaimonic well-being,[4] which both validates and reinforces their purpose-driven bond towards the partnership.

Given scholars' assertion that a clear resource or organizational benefit motivates partnering engagement (Clarke & MacDonald, 2019; Wood & Gray, 1991), one would expect the instrumental nature of CSP commitment to dominate. My study findings confirmed that this is indeed the case for many partnership practitioners, whereby they come to the table with a focus on the extrinsic value of the CSP and how it will serve their organization, in addition to the social goal. The fact, however, that an almost equal portion of my study participants demonstrated an altruistic nature of CSP commitment, counters the traditional understanding of what promotes cross sector collaboration. For these partnership practitioners, the higher purpose social goal and belief in the intrinsic value of partnering motivated their sustained commitment to the CSP, not the organizational benefit.

My person-centred study of commitment in CSPs contributes to scholarly knowledge in the following ways. In relation to the partnership literature, I enhance micro-level understanding of the human and emotional side of cross sector partnering, from the perspective of the partnership practitioner. I provide empirical insight on *why* individuals commit to CSPs and illustrate *how* this influences behavioural responses to adversity. In relation to the commitment literature, I shed light on the interplay of different commitment targets within a

[4] Eudaimonic well-being has its foundation in Artistotle's *eudaimonia* which he described "as activity of the soul in accord with virtue". Ryff's widely used model of eudaimonic well-being emphasises multiple facets such as purposeful engagement, realization of personal potential, autonomy, mastery, quality ties to others, and self-acceptance. (Ryff, 2019).

socially oriented, cross boundary workplace setting. I also illustrate how altruism facilitates commitment and reveal the reinforcing benefit that individuals derive from sustaining commitment through adversity.

My dissertation proceeds in the following manner. In Chapter 2, I begin with an overview of the social partnerships literature and explore what is known about how commitment and individuals facilitate CSP success. I then shift to the commitment literature and examine the construct in relation to CSPs and partnership practitioners. In Chapter 3, I explain my research methodology and describe how I selected my cases, collected my data, and conducted my analysis. I also outline the strategies I used to promote rigour and relevance in my study. Chapter 4 presents my findings which are structured around my empirically developed model. I share what I learned from my study participants and describe in detail the two different pathways I identified through adversity, as well as their respective outcomes. In Chapter 5, I discuss the relevance of my findings on *why* and *how* individuals commit to CSPs for both partnership and commitment literatures. I present the practical implications of my study and propose several avenues for future research before concluding my thesis in Chapter 6.

Chapter 2 - Literature Review

2.1 Chapter introduction

My study explores the commitment of individuals to cross sector partnerships (CSPs)[5]. As such, I have been guided by two relatively distinct bodies of literature: social partnerships and commitment. Since my overall research objective was to contribute towards a better understanding of the role of individuals in overcoming CSP adversity, I chose to anchor my study within the literature dealing with social partnerships and collaboration, which encompasses CSPs and highlights the important role of partnership commitment. I then applied theoretical knowledge and insights from the study of workplace commitment to assist in my analysis of what shapes individuals' commitment to CSPs.

This chapter therefore begins with an overview of the literature on social partnerships and collaboration, highlighting the interdisciplinary nature and key focus areas of study. I proceed by presenting existing knowledge related to partnership commitment, as well as the role of individuals in CSPs. I then shift to the commitment literature, articulating the theories and concepts in relation to CSPs and "partnership practitioners", who I define as the individuals

[5] A range of terminology and definitions exist for the phenomenon of cross sector partnership which is typically understood as the collaborative efforts of organizations from two or more sectors (business, government and civil society/NGO) to address complex social and environmental challenges. This includes the term "social partnerships" which is defined as the "joining together of organizations from different sectors of society to tackle social problems" (Crane & Seitanidi, 2014). Other terms include "multi-stakeholder partnerships and collaboration" (Clarke & MacDonald, 2019; MacDonald et al., 2019; UN General Assembly, 2015); "multisector and/or cross sector collaboration" (Bryson et al., 2006, 2015; DiVito et al., 2021; Rondinelli & London, 2003; Stadtler & Karakulak, 2020); "cross sector interorganizational collaborations"(Vangen et al., 2015); "social-driven collaboration"(Tello-Rozas et al., 2015) "cross sector social partnerships"(Austin & Seitanidi, 2012a, 2012b; Kolk et al., 2010; Rueede & Kreutzer, 2015; Seitanidi, 2008; Selsky & Parker, 2005, 2010; Venn & Berg, 2014); "cross sector development partnerships" (Manning & Roessler, 2014); "intersectoral partnerships" (Waddell & Brown, 1997); "social, collaborative and cross sector alliances" (Berger et al., 2004; Rondinelli & London, 2003; Wood & Gray, 1991); and "collaborative partnerships" (Crooks et al., 2018; Y. Liu et al., 2017). For the purposes of this dissertation, I use the term cross sector partnerships and its acronym CSP interchangeably with the term social partnerships as a way to encompass academic scholars' broad and diverse terminology.

working within the cross-boundary and often temporary organizational setting of one or more cross sector partnerships. I continue by identifying the parallel and synergistic calls for future research that I identified between the two literatures, and which point to the need for a more nuanced, micro-level understanding of individuals' commitment to cross sector partnerships. I conclude the chapter by presenting the research questions that guided my empirical study.

2.2 Social partnering – an interdisciplinary area of study

Academic literature on social partnerships has expanded alongside the escalation in practice (Branzei & le Ber, 2014) and has considered CSPs through various disciplines such as organisation studies, public policy and administration, international relations, development studies, non-profit management, and specific social issues (Crane & Seitanidi, 2014; Selsky & Parker, 2005). Considered to be "inherently multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary" (Austin, 2014, p. xxvii), the study of cross sector collaboration and partnership has also been noted for its significant fragmentation, varying terminologies, and wide array of theoretical perspectives (Branzei & le Ber, 2014; Bryson et al., 2015; Clarke & Crane, 2018; Crane & Seitanidi, 2014; Gray & Wood, 1991; Koschmann et al., 2012; O'Leary & Vij, 2012; Wood & Gray, 1991). This has led scholars to describe CSPs as a "phenomenon without a field" (Crane & Seitanidi, 2014, p. 5), and a research area where "theory and practice are inescapably interdependent" (Austin, 2014, p. xxvii; Seitanidi, 2015). Enhancing linkages between theory and practice is therefore considered to be critical (O'Leary & Vij, 2012). This view is underscored by the fact that development of practice-oriented theory on collaboration, and on those who facilitate it (i.e. partnership brokers, bridging agents and intermediary organizations), has been the objective of multiple scholars (Gray, 1989; Hundal, 2014; Huxham, 1996; Manning & Roessler, 2014; Sonday & Wilson-Prangley, 2016; Stadtler &

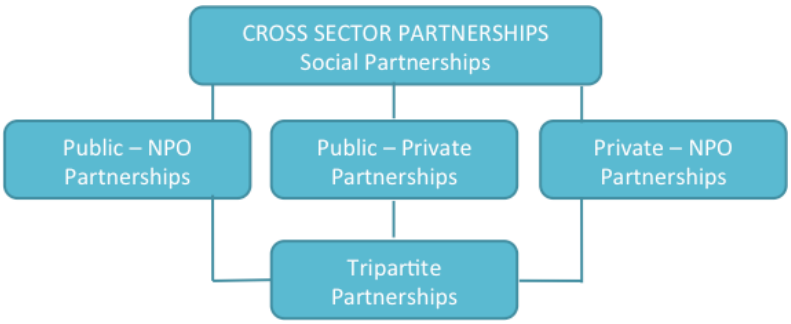
Karakulak, 2020; Stadtler & Probst, 2012; Vangen, 2017; Vangen & Huxham, 2003; Waddock, 1989).

2.2.1 Overview of CSPs

Multiple definitions for CSPs exist (Bryson et al., 2006, 2015; Clarke & Crane, 2018; Crane & Seitanidi, 2014; Selsky & Parker, 2005; Waddock, 1991), yet they centre around the voluntary "interactions between organizations from at least two sectors (business, government and/or civil society) aimed at addressing a social or environmental problem" (Clarke & Crane, 2018, p. 303). CSPs differ in size, scope, membership, and purpose ranging from large global level partnerships with broad mandates and numerous partners down to regional, national, and local level partnerships, which are typically smaller in terms of membership and geographic coverage. CSP partners vary from large multinationals to smaller companies, from donor governments to national and local government actors, and from large international non-governmental or non-profit organizations (NGOs and NPOs) to smaller civil society and community level organisations. The durations of social partnerships vary, and their functions are multiple and diverse including, but not limited to, knowledge production, service delivery, capacity building, campaigns and advocacy, norms and standard setting, brokering and social investment (Kolk, 2014).

As depicted in Figure 1 from Seitanidi and Crane (2009, p. 414), CSPs are grouped into four main types (Crane & Seitanidi, 2014; Kolk, 2014; Seitanidi & Crane, 2009; Selsky & Parker, 2005, 2010; van Tulder & Pfisterer, 2014). By bringing sectors together, CSPs facilitate a "linking or sharing of information, resources, activities, and capabilities" which enables them to achieve "an outcome that could not be achieved by organizations in one sector separately" (Bryson et al., 2006, p. 44).

Figure 1: CSP typologies



Source: Seitanidi and Crane, 2009

All types of CSPs are situated within the "macro-economic partnering space" which is defined as a highly dynamic arena "where societal actors can jointly address these complex societal issues and identify opportunities by bundling their core complementary competencies to create (shared) value for sustainable development" (van Tulder & Pfisterer, 2014, p. 110). CSPs are therefore acknowledged as operating at multiple levels (*macro* - sector/institution, *meso* - organization, *micro* - individual) all of which are interrelated (Kolk, 2014; Seitanidi, 2008; Seitanidi et al., 2010). Yet the majority of partnership research has been conducted at the meso level and from the perspective of individual organizations (Koschmann et al., 2012). This has led scholars to assert that micro-level processes and interactions within such partnerships remain largely underexplored (Bode et al., 2019; Kolk, 2014; Kolk et al., 2010, 2015; Venn & Berg, 2014; Vogel et al., 2021).

CSPs have been studied through a wide range of theoretical approaches revealing different insights. Research on resource dependence, transaction cost, institutional theory and stakeholder theory has generally examined collaboration from the perspective of the individual partner organizations (Koschmann et al., 2012; Sharafi Farzad et al., 2021; Vogel et al., 2021; J. Yin & Jamali, 2021), with the resource-based view often used to determine the

benefits and outcomes for each partner (Branzei & le Ber, 2014; Clarke & MacDonald, 2019; Guo & Acar, 2005). Scholars have also leveraged insights from the fields of organization, public administration, strategic management, and networks, among others, to reveal contextual contingencies that facilitate successful CSP functioning (Bryson et al., 2015). Through application of an identity lens, researchers have demonstrated how engagement in social partnerships can enhance employees' identification with their organization (Berger et al., 2006) and conveyed how the development of a strong collective identity across partners contributes towards successful collaboration (Koschmann, 2013; Kourti et al., 2018).

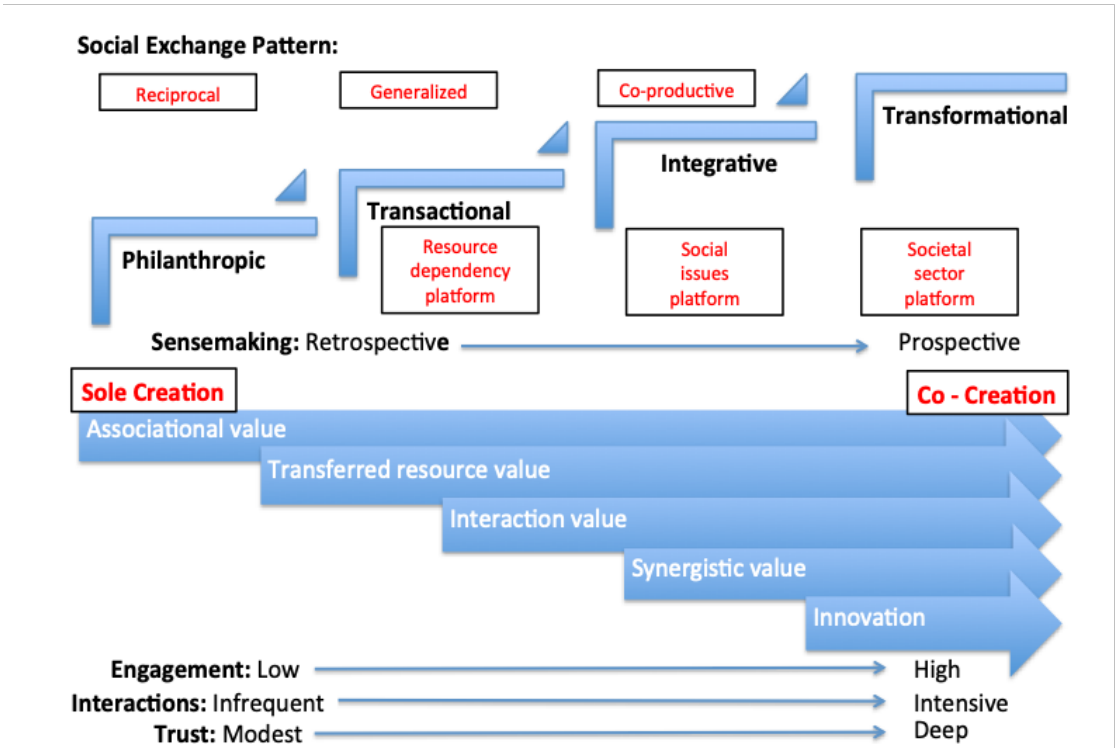
Several scholars have highlighted the fact that although CSPs are formed by the joining of different organizations, they also have the ability to act as an entity on their own. Drawing on complexity and communication theory respectively, CSPs have been conceptualized as "complex adaptive social systems" that drive social change (Seitanidi, 2008, p. 60) and "organisational forms that are distinct from their members and that display collective agency" (Koschmann et al., 2012, p. 333). More recently scholars have used contingency theory to explore how decision-making designs influence "partnership capacity" (MacDonald et al., 2019, p. 411), which refers to the level of human and social capital in the CSP, as well as its ability to adapt to changing environments (Bryson et al., 2006; MacDonald et al., 2019). As such, scholars confirm the notion that CSPs can be considered as *organisational entities*, linked to, but separate from the individual partners, and with the potential to be "agents of change" in society (Kolk et al., 2010, p. 134).

Partnership research has provided valuable insight in relation to the antecedents of collaboration (Vurro et al., 2010); the design, formation, chronology and stages of partnership (Austin, 2000; Austin & Seitanidi, 2012a, 2012b; Bryson et al., 2006, 2015; Manning &

Roessler, 2014; Rondinelli & London, 2003; Seitanidi et al., 2010; Selsky & Parker, 2005; Waddock, 1989); the formulation of collaborative strategy (Clarke & Fuller, 2010); the steps of implementation (Googins & Rochlin, 2000); the role of CSP conveners (van Hille et al., 2020); the governance of CSPs (Dentoni et al., 2018; DiVito et al., 2021; Rufin & Rivera-Santos, 2014); the value that CSPs generate (Austin, 2010; Austin & Seitanidi, 2012a, 2012b; Koschmann et al., 2012; le Ber & Branzei, 2010b); how to ensure a good "fit" and assess the relationships between the sector partners (Berger et al., 2004; Brinkerhoff, 2002); how knowledge is acquired and exploited in CSPs (Pittz & Intindola, 2015); and the collaborative advantage that arises through successful collaboration (Huxham, 1996).

The *Collaboration Continuum* (Austin, 2000; Austin & Seitanidi, 2012a, 2012b), which suggests that higher levels of engagement and more intense interactions lead to more significant collaboration gains, has been used as a frame of reference for other scholars who have explored CSPs from the perspective of trust and social exchange patterns (Venn & Berg, 2014) and as platforms conducive to prospective sense-making (Selsky & Parker, 2010). Figure 2 provides a graphic consolidation of some of these key concepts.

Figure 2: Value and characteristics of CSPs across the collaboration continuum



Sources: Austin, 2000; Austin & Seitanidi 2012a, 2012b; Selsky & Parker 2010; Venn & Berg 2014

More recently, scholars have also examined how to assess and enhance the impact of cross sector partnerships (Bode et al., 2019; Gilbert & Jenkins, 2014; Guarneros-Meza et al., 2018; Kolk, 2014; van Tulder et al., 2016; Vestergaard et al., 2021) and explore their contribution towards system level change (Clarke & Crane, 2018). However, they acknowledge that despite the introduction of a variety of tools, assessing partnership effectiveness and impact is challenging due to multiple and diverse partnership objectives, lack of data, absence of baselines and control groups and the fact that certain activities, such as advocacy and capacity building, are difficult to measure (Clarke & MacDonald, 2019; Kolk, 2014). Vestergaard et al. (2021) argue that existing partnership assessment frameworks (see Collaborative Value Creation (CVC) framework (Austin & Seitanidi, 2012a) and Impact Value Chain (IVC) framework (van Tulder et al., 2016)) separate internal partnership

efficiency from external effectiveness and are insufficient to assess development oriented CSPs in the Global South. They combine analytical parameters from the CVC and IVC frameworks with criteria for business as a development agent (Blowfield & Dolan, 2014) to develop an integrated process model to assess the *impact potential* of development oriented CSPs (Vestergaard et al., 2021).

Additional complexity in relation to partnership assessment arises from the fact that multiple partnerships and actors work in the same geographies and have similar objectives, making it difficult to attribute outcomes or impact to the efforts of an individual CSP (Kolk, 2014). This is further compounded by the fact that CSPs themselves are recognized to be "moving targets" (Kolk, 2014, p. 26) with membership and structures evolving and shifting over time (Clarke, 2014; Rufin & Rivera-Santos, 2014). The complex and dynamic nature of CSPs perhaps contributes to the fact that there is comparatively little scholarly understanding of "the inner workings of these partnerships during their implementation phase" (MacDonald et al., 2019, p. 419). What partnership researchers have explored in considerable depth, however, are the wide array of challenges that CSPs encounter.

2.2.2 Cross sector partnering – essential but challenging

Despite the consensus that CSPs are conducive to addressing grand challenges (Bryson et al., 2015; Koschmann et al., 2012; Weber et al., 2021), scholars agree that the actual partnering process is complex, fragile and tense and often leads to inertia, underwhelming results, and disappointment for those involved (Bryson et al., 2006, 2015; Gray, 1989; Huxham & Vangen, 2000; Kolk, 2014; Koschmann et al., 2012; Nguyen & Janssens, 2018; Powell et al., 2018). Numerous authors have written about the challenges in setting up and implementing CSPs (Austin, 2010; Bryson et al., 2015; Huxham, 1996; le Ber & Branzei, 2010a) many of which are linked to the inherent paradox in this organizational form, since the diversity of the

partners generates both extreme tension and potential collaborative advantage (Austin, 2010; Vangen, 2017; Vangen & Winchester, 2014).

Challenges that scholars have highlighted include cultural differences and misunderstandings (Austin, 2010; Berger et al., 2004; Vangen & Winchester, 2014); differing logics, frames, expectations, and material interests (Babiak & Thibault, 2009; Bryson et al., 2015; Gray, 2004; Gray & Purdy, 2014; le Ber & Branzei, 2010a, 2010c; Powell et al., 2018; Vogel et al., 2021; J. Yin & Jamali, 2021); diversity in organizational missions, capacity, strategies, goals, and governance (Austin, 2010; Clarke & Fuller, 2010; Hamann, 2014; Huxham & Vangen, 2000; Vangen & Huxham, 2012); power relationships and imbalances (Babiak & Thibault, 2009; Berger et al., 2006; Bryson et al., 2015; Gray et al., 2022; Nguyen & Janssens, 2018; Stadtler, 2011; Vangen & Huxham, 2003); lack of trust (Patnaik et al., 2020; Vangen & Huxham, 2003; Venn & Berg, 2014); and both exogenous and endogenous shocks that result from permeable boundaries (Bryson et al., 2015).

A number of insights for how to mitigate or address partnership adversity and facilitate constructive collaboration have been offered (Berger et al., 2004; Bryson et al., 2015; Gray & Purdy, 2014; Huxham & Vangen, 1996; Powell et al., 2018; Vangen & Huxham, 2003; Vangen & Winchester, 2014). Gray and Purdy (2014) for example propose a framework with eight tasks and corresponding tactics depending on the phase of the partnership and whether it has originated from conflict or opportunity (p. 217). Bryson et al. (2015) present strategies for conflict management which highlight the need for partners to be open to alternative visions, flexible in terms of meetings and adept at managing power imbalance. Powell et al. (2018) offer a process model for how to successfully "enact conflicting material interests and conflicting logics" which involves three self-reinforcing organizing elements of *focal activities*, *boundary management* and *partner posture* (p. 630). In general, scholars

emphasize that to overcome conflict and adversity, partners need to recognize existing frames of reference, promote willingness to compromise, establish good communication, ensure equality in decision making, build trusting relationships, and foster commitment and stamina towards their collaboration (Gray & Purdy, 2014; Huxham & Vangen, 1996; Vangen & Huxham, 2003).

2.2.3 The importance of partner commitment

All strategies to overcome partnership adversity imply intentional effort by both organizations and individuals, as well as a certain level of commitment to the partnership by all actors. Indeed, multiple scholars emphasize the importance of partner commitment and motivation in facilitating successful collaboration (MacDonald et al., 2019; O'Leary & Vij, 2012; Venn & Berg, 2014; Villani et al., 2017). Venn and Berg (2014) assert that the long and challenging process of cross-sector collaboration requires both "patience and long-term commitment" (p. 403). Villani et al. (2017) label "the commitment of diverse partners to long term value-creation" as "partnership loyalty" and outline how it supports smooth partnership functioning and achievement of collective outcomes (p. 893). O'Leary et al. (2012) recommend that "before one agrees to collaborate, one should weigh the motivation and commitment of other collaborators" (p. 513). These insights indicate that commitment of each partner helps to facilitate a conducive context for cross sector partnering. Yet they do not explain *how* to assess commitment, or what it actually entails.

Furthermore, commitment and motivation are typically analysed from an organizational perspective, rather than being unpacked at different levels. Selsky and Parker (2005) note that partners' motivations to engage in CSPs are typically viewed as a blend between altruism and self-interest, but emphasize that even in the case of NGOs, there is typically an expectation of organizational benefit. This aligns with earlier research by Wood and Gray (1991) who

concluded that "if collaboration is to occur, involved stakeholders must perceive that this will serve their own interests" (p. 160). Clarke and MacDonald (2019) contend that understanding the benefits that partners derive from the CSP is "critical to motivating partner engagement" which will ultimately enable the CSP to achieve its goals (p. 302).

These insights align with a resource-based view and principles of social exchange (Blau, 1964; Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005; Emerson, 1976; Homans, 1961). The latter are considered by some scholars to be "as important in interorganizational relationships as in interpersonal relations" (Muthusamy & White, 2005, p. 418). Described as "voluntary actions of individuals that are motivated by the returns they are expected to bring and typically do in fact bring from others" (Blau, 1964, p. 91), social exchange has been identified as a valuable framework to examine CSPs (di Domenico et al., 2009; Kolk et al., 2010). Scholars have used exchange frameworks to reveal insights related to trust, commitment and longevity within interorganizational and cross sector collaboration (Muthusamy & White, 2005; Venn & Berg, 2014; Weber et al., 2021).

Earlier research highlights the importance of reciprocity in organizational relationships from a generally utilitarian perspective of exchange. In their study on the transfer of learning and knowledge in strategic alliances, Muthusamy and White (2005) state that "the establishment of friendly partnership requires making investments that constitute commitments to the other party" (p .418), as well as a high degree of trust. They highlight the critical role of "reciprocal commitment" and draw on Blau (1964) and Homans (1961) to explain that it is driven by a moral obligation and "sense of duty" to the other partner, as well as to the collaborative venture (Muthusamy & White, 2005, p. 419). They further argue that through "mutuality of

commitment", uncertainty declines, trust increases, and partners are able to meaningfully communicate, take joint decisions and address problems.

Venn and Berg's (2014) application of social exchange theory to poverty-related partnerships reveals how trust serves a gatekeeping function in CSPs. The authors identify how higher levels of trust facilitate the indirect exchange patterns of generalized and co-productive exchange that are characteristic of more integrative CSPs (see Figure 2). Their empirical analysis leads them to suggest that intermediaries (both organisations and individuals) can play a vital role in promoting trust which fosters the necessary long-term commitment among partners for such CSPs.

Recent research by Weber et al. (2021) challenges scholars' prevailing utilitarian assumptions regarding exchange relations and identifies how the receipt of unexpected resources can help facilitate lasting cross sector collaboration. The authors' empirical analysis reveals the importance of pro-social norms and unconditional giving which they argue are reflective of generalized relational reciprocity and signify long-term commitment to the partnership. They acknowledge, however, that the motivation behind such unconditional giving and pro-social partnering behaviour remains to be explored.

Scholars therefore demonstrate that commitment is an important enabler for CSPs and helps partners to overcome adversity. Yet they also recognize the existence of diverging interests and loyalties between the organization and the collaboration or collective good (Babiak & Thibault, 2009; Bryson et al., 2015; Rey-Garcia et al., 2021; Wood & Gray, 1991). The question therefore arises as to how these interests and loyalties are prioritized, and the impact it has on both partner commitment and behaviour in the CSP. In this regard, Babiak and

Thibault (2009) emphasize that to partner successfully, "organizations must consider themselves to be working for the good of the whole and not for the benefit of their own organization" (p. 140). There is relatively limited insight, however, as to how such a shift in perspective comes about. What scholars have begun to identify is that individuals and interpersonal relationships play an important role in the process.

2.2.4 Insights on the micro-level in CSPs

Although micro-level partnership research is relatively limited (Kolk, 2014; Kolk et al., 2010, 2015; O'Leary & Vij, 2012; Sloan & Oliver, 2013; Venn & Berg, 2014; Vogel et al., 2021), scholars have offered some valuable insights on how individuals can contribute towards facilitating and safeguarding cross sector partnerships (Battisti, 2009; Kolk et al., 2010, 2015; le Ber & Branzei, 2010; Manning & Roessler, 2014; O'Leary & Vij, 2012; Patnaik et al., 2020; Purdy et al., 2017; Sloan & Oliver, 2013; Stott & Murphy, 2020; Vangen & Huxham, 2003; Venn & Berg, 2014). Much of this research explores micro-level interactions and how individuals relate to and influence each other.

Kolk et al. (2010) for example, draw on generic theories such as social exchange, contagion, and social learning to conceptualize the "trickle effects" that arise from individual interactions between employees, managers, and customers in CSPs. They argue that given the multiple roles that individuals play, such micro-level interactions have the potential to diffuse in different directions and enhance the partnership's benefit at meso and macro levels. In a subsequent empirical study, Kolk et al. (2015) identified that the likelihood of CSP trickle effects diffusing up, down and around appeared to be influenced by the nature and characteristics of the partnership activity.

Additional empirical insight on micro-level interactions is offered by Le Ber and Branzei (2010a) who describe how relational processes help sustain momentum towards either success or failure in cross sector partnerships. They conclude that "relational attachment acts as a buffering mechanism which tempers the negative effects of complacency and disillusionment" that often arise in such partnerships (le Ber & Branzei, 2010a, p. 168). Sloan and Oliver (2013) propose a model for how micro-level emotional engagement practices facilitate management of critical emotional incidents and contribute to building interpersonal trust. They emphasize how such emotional engagement processes differ from more traditional relational practices in that "weaknesses are exposed, vulnerability embraced, and leaps of faith taken" (Sloan & Oliver, 2013, p. 1853). Through this process of increasing the flow of both positive and negative emotions, trust and engagement grows, emotional hurdles are overcome, and partnership objectives are more likely to be reached. Such findings are reaffirmed by Patnaik et al. (2020) whose micro-foundational study on the interplay between power and trust revealed that "strong relational quality reduces information asymmetry and enhances trust" (p. 13).

Earlier studies by Vangen and Huxham (2000; 2003) also highlight how relational interactions help to overcome partnership challenges and point to the pivotal role of certain individuals themselves. As part of their longitudinal research programme to develop practice-oriented theory on interorganizational collaboration, they emphasize how the dynamic and complex nature of such partnerships requires practitioners to "continuously nurture the collaborative relationship" and actively build and maintain trust (Vangen & Huxham, 2003, p. 22). They further determine that "often, it is the individuals who are seen to be significant to the success of the collaboration; so much so that the collaboration would suffer greatly if

their organisations were to be represented by someone else" (Huxham & Vangen, 2000, p. 782).

This recognition of the influence of individual members of the partnership is underscored by other scholars. As noted above, Venn and Berg (2014) suggest that successful collaboration in CSPs requires the support of "enthusiastic individuals" who act as intermediaries between the different partners (Venn & Berg, 2014, p. 404). Drawing on social intrapraneurship literature, they argue that such individuals "demonstrate enormous creativity and entrepreneurial spirit in solving obstacles" and "understand the need for holistic benefit management beyond their own organization"(Venn & Berg, 2014, p. 404). They further explain that such characteristics enable these individuals to span boundaries and bridge the diverging mindsets of partners.

Manning and Roessler (2014) present a similar assessment in their study of individual "bridging agents" who can be either internal or external to the partnership. They highlight that internal bridging agents "are more likely to promote social innovation" in CSPs and conclude that such individuals, whether internal or external, are "critical in enacting collaborative opportunities across sectors and in influencing what many have called 'mutual interests' or 'common ground' between business, government, and civil society organizations" (Manning & Roessler, 2014, p. 544). Purdy et al. (2017) further reinforce these findings with their analysis of visionaries, who often play the role of conveners in social partnerships. They highlight how such individuals have a unique capacity to comprehend and frame organizational challenges in ways that others cannot fully appreciate. Within the context of a CSP, visionaries are therefore "able to see past barriers that other actors perceive" and "propose constructive paths forward" (Purdy et al., 2017, p. 8).

Practitioner literature also highlights the importance of key individuals in CSPs, outlining how they take on brokering and facilitation roles that help to optimise collaborative action (Brouwer et al., 2019; Kuenkel et al., 2021; Stott, 2018). Brouwer et al. (2018) present three key roles of convenor, moderator, and catalyst in multistakeholder partnerships and explain how they serve complementary facilitation purposes within the collaboration. They assert that when all three roles are filled, a CSP can effectively "overcome many barriers to collaborative innovation" (p. 120). Kuenkel et al. (2021) emphasize that CSPs require the support of "dialogic process facilitators" to help drive transformative change. While these individuals are not necessarily external to the partnership, the authors explain that they must be willing to "engage with different stakeholders in constructive and outcome-oriented communication and collaboration" and be open to different perspectives (p. 130). Taken together, these scholarly and practitioner insights demonstrate how the active commitment of key individuals to the CSP contributes towards overcoming adversity.

2.2.5 Limited understanding of partnership practitioners

Despite recognition of their critical role, scholars agree that study of the individuals themselves, i.e. the "partnership practitioners"[6], is underdeveloped and merits further exploration (Sloan & Oliver, 2013; Stott & Murphy, 2020; Venn & Berg, 2014; Vogel et al., 2021). Extant partnership research has focused primarily on the skills, attitudes and behaviours that are conducive to productive collaboration (Babiak & Thibault, 2009; Bryson et al., 2015; O'Leary & Vij, 2012; Vangen & Huxham, 2003). For example, scholars have determined that an individual's "collaborative capacity" includes competencies such as "interpersonal understanding, openness to collaboration and concern for the common good", as well as the ability to span boundaries, work in teams and effectively engage stakeholders

[6] In the realm of practice, individuals who work in social partnerships are generally labelled "partnership practitioners" (McManus et al., 2008; Serafin et al., 2008)

(Bryson et al., 2015, p. 655). People skills, relational intelligence, and the ability to manage power dynamics and conflict have also been noted to be of particular importance for effective partnering (J. Becker & Smith, 2018; O'Leary & Vij, 2012; Stott & Murphy, 2020). Table 1 provides a consolidation of the various components of collaborative capacity based on insights from the scholarly literature.

Table 1: Components of "collaborative capacity"

Attitudes / personal characteristics	Open-minded Learning orientation Patient Empathetic Goal oriented Decisive Friendly Sense of humour Concern for the common good Focus on complementarity Interpersonal understanding Open to collaboration Promote compromise Relational intelligence
Skills / behaviours	Boundary spanning Analysis and inclusion of stakeholders Strategic planning Team work Active listening and communication People skills Facilitation of partners Easily navigate ambiguity Interest based negotiation Collaborative problem solving Effective management of group dynamics, cultures and personalities Resolve and mediate conflicts Frame agendas to compel to all partners
Experience	Worked in a collaborative setting Engaged in multiple cross sector relationships Experience in other sectors or in other CSPs Experience with relevant technical issue

Note: Own table based on Babiak & Thibault, 2009; Bryson et al., 2015; O'Leary & Vij, 2012; Stott & Murphy, 2020; Vangen & Huxham, 2003; Vogel et al., 2021

There is scholarly consensus that working in CSPs requires individuals to balance individual, organizational and collective interests, as well as work priorities and time constraints (Eden & Huxham, 2001; Huxham & Vangen, 2005; Stadtler, 2011; Venn & Berg, 2014), all of which implies considerable personal commitment to the CSP. Yet there is limited empirical insight in the partnership literature as to *how* and *why* individuals develop and sustain such

commitment. This relative lack of understanding about individual partnership practitioners is different, for example, to the expansive theory on entrepreneurs and how they navigate adversity (Bacq & Alt, 2018; Branzei & Fathallah, 2021; Davidsson & Honig, 2003; Holland & Shepherd, 2013; Korber & McNaughton, 2018; Kruegel & Brazeal, 1994; Rauch & Frese, 2007; Shepherd et al., 2019, 2020; Shepherd & Williams, 2020).

Questions therefore remain as to what motivates these individuals who typically work in two spaces simultaneously i.e., their organization and their partnerships? What is behind their commitment towards cross sector collaboration? How do they sustain it through the frictions and challenges that typically arise?

The need to explore questions of this nature has been highlighted in the broader partnership literature. Practitioner scholars of CSPs have advised that more attention should be paid to individuals' incentives and disincentives to partner which are influenced by personal characteristics and dictate "the attention and value that they place on the partnership" (Caplan et al., 2007, p. 5). This was underscored by Battisti (2009) who argued that it is "individuals who work together and engage in partnerships rather than the organizations or the sectors" (p. 96) and therefore "cross-sector partnership building has to start at an individual rather than an organisational level" (p. 105). She further emphasized that by "becoming aware of underlying emotional and cognitive processes and articulating and reflecting on them" scholars can gain insight into "unconscious mechanisms" that underpin such collaboration (Battisti, 2009, p. 105). Le Ber and Branzei (2010), assert that the cross sector partnership literature "would benefit from a finer grained understanding of how, and to what effect, partners nurture positive affect", as well as a "a better understanding of how partners overcome friction" (p. 168). Sloan and Oliver (2013) reaffirm these perspectives with their

findings on how partners overcome critical emotional incidents in CSPs, concluding that ultimately, "managers themselves matter – not just in their cognitive orientations, but also in their emotional ones" (Sloan & Oliver, 2013, p. 1864).

More recent scholarship continues to emphasize that individual level dynamics, connections and abilities are central to collaborative arrangements (Vogel et al., 2021). Researchers argue that to understand macro level outcomes of CSPs, a deeper and more nuanced understanding of the human side of individuals, as well as their micro-level behaviours is required (Albats et al., 2020; Bode et al., 2019; Y. Liu et al., 2017; Stott & Murphy, 2020). Stott and Murphy (2020) for example conceptualize that by fostering better interpersonal relations among individuals in social partnerships, partners are more likely to move beyond instrumental and extrinsic reasons for engaging in CSPs and recognize the integrative and intrinsic value that partnering can offer. They argue that this important shift in perspective has the potential to enhance transformational collaboration and advance progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals. Management scholars also call for more micro-level studies in relation to the SDGs, emphasizing that it can "further the utility of management scholarship" in this area, yet requires researchers to "be open to discoveries that challenge accepted understanding" (Howard-Grenville et al., 2019, p. 363).

Indeed, general interest in the micro-foundational approach (Barney & Felin, 2013; Felin et al., 2012) continues to grow and scholars from different disciplines are leveraging it to advance social partnerships research (Albats et al., 2020; Bode et al., 2019; Felin et al., 2012; Kolk et al., 2015; Y. Liu et al., 2017; Patnaik et al., 2020; Vogel et al., 2021). Vogel et al. (2021) for example, offer a conceptual framework for how individual actors actively and strategically respond to the tensions that arise in CSPs due to institutional complexity.

Building on their review of the literature and work of Pache and Santos (2010), they present how different response strategies of acquiescence, compromise, avoidance, defiance, and manipulation can be applied to the type, stage, and motive of the CSP (Pache & Santos, 2010; Vogel et al., 2021) .

Although conceptual foundations on the role of individuals are useful (Kolk et al., 2010; Stott & Murphy, 2020; Vogel et al., 2021) there is consensus on the need for more empirical exploration of people's lived experience in such partnerships (Kolk et al., 2015; Nguyen & Janssens, 2018; Purdy et al., 2017). Scholars further argue that drawing from the academic fields of organizational behaviour and organizational psychology, as well as practitioner ideas like relational intelligence offer opportunities to advance understanding in this area (Y. Liu et al., 2017; Stott & Murphy, 2020) They also emphasize that deeper insight can be gained through longitudinal and comparative studies of collaboration that situate themselves within the partners' emergent context and explore how processes unfold (Babiak & Thibault, 2009; Bryson et al., 2015; Manning & Roessler, 2014; Nguyen & Janssens, 2018) .

2.2.6 Opportunity to examine the commitment of partnership practitioners

Taken together, these insights on the important role of partnership commitment and the need for enhanced understanding of individuals working in CSPs revealed an opportunity to explore and unpack the commitment of CSP practitioners. What fosters their commitment to such partnerships? How is it sustained? What are the outcomes?

Since individual commitment relates to organizational psychology and behaviour, I proceeded to explore the literature on workplace commitment with the objective of gaining general insight on the construct of commitment and how it is theorized. More specifically, I sought to identify what knowledge commitment scholars could offer in relation to individuals

who work in complex, interorganizational settings such as CSPs. However, what I soon discovered was that commitment scholars recognize that the evolving work environment and shift in individuals' expectations of work are providing new avenues for commitment research that relate directly to CSPs. For instance, van Rossenberg et al. (2018) call for more exploration of individual commitment in cross boundary and temporary work settings. Bingham et al. (2013) identify a need for better empirical understanding of individual commitment to "higher purpose" goals and causes. Therefore, rather than finding clear answers, I identified parallel and synergistic needs for additional research, some of which arose during my study and aligned with my own findings.

2.3 Commitment – a complex construct

Workplace commitment has been of interest to management scholars since the 1960s (Klein, Molloy, et al., 2009). It is arguably one of the most frequently studied constructs in organizational behaviour yet has also been characterized by "conceptual confusion" (Klein, Molloy, et al., 2009, p. 29). Indeed, numerous conceptualizations are found in the literature and debate continues among scholars over how to define the construct (van Rossenberg et al., 2018). Some describe commitment as a force that binds a person to a course of action (Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001), others define it as a particular type of bond (Klein et al., 2012), and still others consider the bond to be attitudinal (Solinger et al., 2015). There is also debate about whether the construct is uni- or multidimensional (Klein & Park, 2016; Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001; van Rossenberg et al., 2018).

Over the years scholars have articulated and delineated commitment across *forms* (affective commitment AC, normative commitment NC, and continuance commitment CC) and the respective *mindsets* (desire, obligation and perceived cost) that influence them (Meyer et al., 2002, 2013; Meyer & Allen, 1997); *bases* such as internalization, identification and

compliance, which motivate the development of commitment (T. E. Becker, 1992; Klein, Becker, et al., 2009; O'Reilly & Chatman, 1986); *rationales* which describe the self-explanations people have for their commitment (Klein, Molloy, et al., 2009); and *foci* or *targets* to which the individual is committed (T. E. Becker, 1992; Klein, Becker, et al., 2009; Klein et al., 2012). For purposes of this study, I adopt a unidimensional definition of commitment as a "volitional psychological bond reflecting dedication and responsibility for a target" (Klein et al., 2012, p. 137). Valued for its parsimony, the unidimensional construct is well suited for research that considers multiple commitment targets (Klein et al., 2022; Klein & Park, 2016).[7]

While traditionally studied in relation to employees and organizations, commitment is recognized to apply across multiple workplace targets which include organizations, teams, supervisors, co-workers, projects, ideas, career, etc. (Klein et al., 2012), as well as broader goals (Brown, 1996) and higher purpose causes (Bingham et al., 2013). Individuals develop and experience commitments to multiple work-related targets simultaneously, and these may conflict or synergize with each other (R. E. Johnson et al., 2009; Klein, Becker, et al., 2009; Klein et al., 2012; Meyer et al., 2021). Drawing on identity theory, scholars have conceptualized how the formation of strong individual, relational or collective identities influences which target an employee is most likely to hold the strongest commitment to (R. E. Johnson et al., 2010). Those with a strong individual identity tend to prioritize career; those with a strong relational identity tend to prioritize co-workers; and those with a strong collective identity tend to prioritize the organization (R. E. Johnson et al., 2010). The

[7] Klein et al.'s (2012) re-conceptualization of commitment situates the construct within a continuum of bonds (from acquiescence to instrumental to commitment to identification) which vary in their level of psychological involvement with the target. As such, the authors consider commitment to be one type of bond which is "volitional", and whereby the individual embraces the bond and "wants to" sustain it rather than feeling like they "have to" which is the case for an instrumental bond to a target.

combination and hierarchy of multiple commitments to different targets has been described as the person's *commitment profile* (R. E. Johnson et al., 2009; Meyer et al., 2021; Meyer & Morin, 2016).

Recently scholars have further advanced research in this area by offering *commitment system theory (CST)* as a "conceptual toolkit" for "describing, modelling and studying interrelated sets of multiple commitments" (Klein et al., 2022, p. 129). Klein et al. (2022) draw from general systems theory to offer a new perspective for how commitments behave within a larger commitment system that is defined as a "network of inter-relating commitments to a set of targets" (Klein et al., 2022, p. 117). More specifically, the authors offer explanations for synergistic, neutral, or conflicting inter-relationships between commitments, and account for temporal dynamics of these inter-relationships. Their theoretical insights and propositions open numerous lines of future inquiry. These include exploring the influence of local context on commitment system evolution and examining whether certain commitment structures are more common or effective for different organizational arrangements, such as cross boundary, temporary and project-based work.

Research on commitment in temporary and cross boundary organizational settings is relatively limited and has been identified as an area requiring additional study (van Rossenberg et al., 2018). Existing studies on cross boundary work are situated within the human resources management literature and have focused primarily on the commitment of individuals in knowledge-intensive, professional service firms and organizations (Jørgensen & Becker, 2015; Kinnie & Swart, 2012; Yalabik et al., 2015a, 2017). Within this context, scholars have identified that employees navigate between up to four foci or targets of commitment (employing organization, client, team, and profession) and determined that this

multiplicity of commitments can lead to tensions between the employing organization and the client (Kinnie & Swart, 2012; Olsen et al., 2019; van Rossenberg, Swart, et al., 2022; Yalabik et al., 2015a). This research tends to take an organizational perspective exploring how to mitigate such tensions and foster commitment and retention of employees (Yalabik et al., 2015b, 2015a, 2017). Less is known, however, about the "perceptions, experience and consequences of such tensions" for the employees themselves (van Rossenberg, Swart, et al., 2022, p. 1). With regard to cross boundary work that is also temporary, commitment scholars have identified four different workplace settings (intra-organizational, inter-organizational, project-based organizations, and project-based firms) and highlight their complexity across multiple dimensions: level of cross boundary work; combinations of different commitment targets; degree to which the work is actually temporary; and change over time (van Rossenberg et al., 2018). Given that such complex work settings are growing more common, scholars emphasize the need for more empirical research in each of these areas (van Rossenberg et al., 2018).

2.3.1 The benefits of commitment

A substantial body of evidence demonstrates the benefits an organization derives from having a strongly committed workforce (Meyer et al., 2004; Meyer & Maltin, 2010). Affective commitment, in particular, has been associated with going 'the extra mile' for the organization (Buchanan, 1975); enhancing motivation (Klein, Molloy, et al., 2009; Meyer et al., 2004); increasing prosocial and organizational citizenship behaviours (Meyer et al., 2002; O'Reilly & Chatman, 1986; L. J. Williams & Anderson, 1991); and decreasing counterproductive work behaviours (Klein, Becker, et al., 2009).

Research on multiple workplace commitment targets has consistently revealed that "the strongest relations between commitment and behavior result when there is congruence between the target of the commitment and the beneficiary of the behavior" (T. E. Becker et al., 2009, p. 437). In other words, commitment to the organization is likely to result in organizational citizenship behaviour, whereas commitment to the team or the team leader promotes team effectiveness (T. E. Becker et al., 2009; Klein, Becker, et al., 2009). On the other hand, little is known about how individuals themselves benefit from their commitment to different targets (Meyer & Maltin, 2010). Some research has shown that affective commitment benefits individuals by improving their well-being (Meyer & Maltin, 2010). However, scholars agree that there is a need for more exploration of how people benefit from commitment to different targets, as well as a broader elaboration of well-being which includes both hedonic and eudaimonic components (Meyer & Maltin, 2010; Meyer & Morin, 2016a). Descriptions of hedonic well-being typically refer to positive life evaluations and emphasise pleasure, happiness, and comfort (Bauer et al., 2008; Deci & Ryan, 2008; Huta, 2016; Huta & Waterman, 2014; Ryan & Deci, 2001; Ryff, 2019). Eudaimonic well-being, on the other hand, is understood as relating to purposeful engagement, meaning, authenticity, and personal growth (Bauer et al., 2008; Deci & Ryan, 2008; Huta, 2016; Huta & Waterman, 2014; Ryan & Deci, 2001; Ryff, 2019) .

2.3.2 Commitment in relation to CSPs and partnership practitioners

Insights from the commitment literature on how commitment benefits the target reaffirm the finding by partnership scholars that CSP commitment is an important contributor towards partnership success. Furthermore, the fact that the commitment construct is conceptualized at the individual level, and in relation to multiple workplace targets, makes it pertinent for exploration within the complex context of CSPs, since partnership practitioners inherently navigate different interests, loyalties, and allegiances. Finally, the need for more insight on

benefits of commitment for individuals is particularly relevant for partnership practitioners since their engagement in CSPs is often voluntary and additional to their core work responsibilities (Stadtler, 2011).

These conclusions are confirmed by commitment scholars themselves who call for more empirical research on individual level commitment to different targets, such as higher purpose causes (Bingham et al., 2013), and within different organizational contexts and arrangements, notably cross boundary and temporary work settings such as CSPs (Klein et al., 2012, 2022; van Rossenberg, Cross, et al., 2022; van Rossenberg et al., 2018). As noted above, scholars have identified four different cross boundary and temporary workplace settings where additional empirical research is merited (van Rossenberg et al., 2018). Cross sector partnerships would typically align with the inter-organizational category, yet they also have the particular quality of being oriented towards a social purpose (Selsky & Parker, 2005). This characteristic differentiates CSPs from the setting of professional service firms where cross boundary research has been conducted to date, and offers additional layers of complexity in terms of type of targets that individuals commit to. Due to their development focus, CSPs also offer scope for research on workplace commitment in different geographical contexts which is something that scholars have recognized as both necessary and valuable (Wasti et al., 2016). Furthermore, the fact that CSPs themselves are regularly shifting and changing makes them well suited as a setting for exploring another area identified by commitment scholars for additional research: the question of how commitment develops, is sustained, and declines over time (Klein et al., 2012, p. 145).

2.3.3 Influence of the evolving workplace on commitment

Commitment scholars have recognized that the contemporary workplace is very different to the past, with less long-term employment, more cross boundary and temporary work

arrangements and workers who are looking for meaning, purpose, and flexibility in their careers (Bingham et al., 2013; Geldenhuys et al., 2014; Klein et al., 2020; van Rossenberg et al., 2018). Employment relationships have been reshaped since foundational understandings of commitment were developed and this has an influence on its antecedents and outcomes (van Rossenberg et al., 2018). CSPs as cross boundary work-environments exemplify some of these shifts, as do partnership practitioners who simultaneously function in multiple work settings and regularly express their desire for "meaningful work" (Bode et al., 2019).

The influence of the evolving workplace on commitment was recently explored by Klein et al. (2020) in their study re-examining commitment model antecedents. Although many factors in extant models remain relevant (eg. social exchange[8]), others, notably altruism, were identified for the first time as explanations for commitment. Similarly, a set of primarily instrumental factors that have long been considered as important commitment antecedents were rarely given as explanations by study respondents. Table 2 presents an excerpt from their findings, summarizing the top four explanations for workplace commitment from their study. The frequency of responses for the twelve remaining explanations was 10 percent or less (Klein et al., 2020, p. 6).

[8] The understanding of "social exchange" as a commitment explanation has the same foundation as in the partnership literature (i.e., Blau, 1964). Klein et al. (2020) highlight that "organizational commitment has been viewed as a reciprocal social exchange response to the long-term investment and concerns from employers" (p.2). However, the way that the term is described and attributed to the participants in their empirical study reveals that although it remains perceived obligation to reciprocate, it is also considerably subjective and may be more relational than a more traditional understanding of social exchange. The nature of the benefit that participants in the study received ranged from support to advance their career to perceived respect and appreciation.

Table 2: Explanations for workplace commitment (excerpt from Klein et al., 2020)

Explanation Category and frequency of responses across targets and samples	Description of that explanation category
Social exchange 22%	Individual received or expects to receive something of social value that creates desire or felt obligation to reciprocate
Altruism 21%	Individual's commitment to the target will lead to a valued societal benefit; benefit to someone other than the individual
Affect from 20%	Individual takes pride in association with the target; positive affect derived from association with the target.
Self-interest 19%	Individual's commitment to the target will directly benefit them

The frequency of explanations varied depending on the commitment target in the study (i.e., organization, co-worker, occupation, and organizational goal). However, the fact that altruism ranked so highly overall was unexpected given that it has not figured in existing models (Klein et al., 2020) and has typically been understood more as an outcome of commitment rather than an antecedent (Carmeli, 2005). This insight was particularly relevant to my research question and aligned with some of my own findings. The authors suggest that it may be linked to the growing desire for meaningful work and acknowledged that "the role of altruism in facilitating commitment is not well understood" (Klein et al., 2020, p. 13). They therefore call for additional research in relation to both meaningful work and altruism as drivers of commitment. This relates to an earlier call from scholars to explore commitment to higher purpose goals that are supported by organizations, but also go beyond them (Bingham et al., 2013). Since CSPs are recognized as vehicles for "meaningful work" (Bode et al., 2019), it follows that they present a relevant setting for further exploration of how individuals explain and embody their commitment to the partnership, as well as other related commitment targets, such as their organization and the social goal of the CSP.

2.3.3 Opportunities for new ways of studying commitment

In view of the rapidly changing work environment and the need for more in-depth understanding of interactions between different commitment targets, scholars recommend the use of abductive and interpretive inquiry to study commitment (Klein et al., 2020; Moran, 2009; van Rossenberg, Cross, et al., 2022; van Rossenberg et al., 2018). Exploratory research using longitudinal, person-centred designs and qualitative methods are suggested as a good compliment to the more traditional, variable-centred, quantitative studies that dominate the commitment literature (Klein et al., 2022; Meyer et al., 2013, 2021; Meyer & Morin, 2016; van Rossenberg, Cross, et al., 2022; van Rossenberg et al., 2018). Such designs align with the methods proposed by partnership researchers for more micro-level and process-oriented case research on CSPs (Babiak & Thibault, 2009; Bryson et al., 2015; Manning & Roessler, 2014; Nguyen & Janssens, 2018) .

2.4 Chapter summary and research questions

In summary, my review of the partnership and commitment literatures led me to identify parallel and synergistic calls for additional research, as well as consensus on appropriate methods for study. The partnership literature stands to benefit from more in-depth study of individual level commitment to CSPs, to understand how partnership practitioners navigate their different CSP related interests and overcome partnership friction. Partnership scholars recommend longitudinal empirical research at the micro-level that draws insights from organizational behaviour and organizational psychology to enhance understanding. The commitment literature requires additional research on commitment to higher purpose causes and interactions between multiple commitment targets, as well as exploration of workplace commitment in cross-boundary and temporary organizational settings. Commitment scholars recommend the use of interpretive inquiry and person-centred longitudinal study designs for this purpose.

I therefore identified a compelling opportunity to bridge the two literatures by conducting an empirical study that explores the commitment of individuals working in cross sector partnerships and examines how it is sustained through adversity. Through an iterative and cyclical process of literature review two research questions were developed to guide my study:

1) What shapes individuals' commitment to CSPs?

2) How is commitment sustained through adversity?

The following chapter describes how I initiated and conducted my longitudinal research project.

Chapter 3 – Methodology

3.1 Chapter Introduction

This chapter presents how I conducted my research on individuals' commitment to cross sector partnerships. It begins by describing the study motivation and providing an overview of my research approach. I explain the rationale behind my design and methodology, as well as the evolving nature of my research questions. I then outline the case selection process which included reflection on geographic location, social issue, types of partnerships and the individuals within them. The chapter continues by presenting my data collection strategy and providing more information on the four CSPs that served as the research setting, as well as my study participants. I proceed by explaining how data collection and analysis were conducted in parallel, elaborating on the analytical methods that were used as I iterated between my data and the literature. The chapter concludes by summarizing my efforts to promote both academic rigour and practical relevance in my research.

3.2 Research approach

3.2.1 Research principle

I embarked on this research project because of my desire to contribute towards a better understanding of how to overcome CSP challenges and facilitate more effective partnering for sustainable development. I began by asking partnership practitioners in the development sector where they felt more knowledge was required. I wanted to ensure that whatever question I researched would resonate and respond to their interests and concerns. This core principle of remaining relevant to partnership practice informed my entire research approach.

3.2.2 Research paradigm

In terms of how to conduct my study, I was guided by the constructivist paradigm which assumes a relativist ontology, subjectivist epistemology and naturalistic set of methods (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). This perspective recognises the existence of multiple, concurrent, and sometimes conflicting realities that are socially constructed and evolve with individuals' subjective experiences (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Guba & Lincoln, 1994). The constructivist paradigm is associated with qualitative methods (Lincoln & Guba, 2013; Schwandt, 1998), which are well-suited for exploring phenomena when the state of prior research and theory is relatively nascent (Edmondson & Mcmanus, 2007). Research questions are typically open-ended, and the aim is to generate suggestive theory and invite further research (Edmondson & Mcmanus, 2007). My exploratory study of individuals' commitment in CSPs holds these attributes and therefore, in alignment with the constructivist paradigm, assumes that knowledge and understanding are co-created through interactions between the researcher and their subjects (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

3.2.3 Research methodology

In view of the relatively limited scholarly understanding of CSP practitioners, and my interest to gain deeper insight that would ultimately contribute towards addressing grand challenges, I chose to conduct an interpretive research project using qualitative methods (Eisenhardt et al., 2016). I adopted Eisenhardt's method of comparative case research (Eisenhardt, 1989, 2021) whereby individual partnership practitioners working in four different CSPs were my unit of analysis (R. K. Yin, 2009). Since my study objective was to gain insight into what shapes individual commitment to CSPs and how it evolves during situations of adversity, I designed the research as a process study. Empirical process studies are used by management scholars to explore dynamic phenomena and generate process theory to explain how and why things emerge, change, and grow (Langley, 1999; Langley et al., 2013). The Eisenhardt method is

considered particularly appropriate for unpacking the "black box" of a process (Eisenhardt, 2021, p. 148) and addressing research questions for "which there is little or conflicting prior theory and/or empirical evidence, and so no obvious answers" (Eisenhardt, 2021, p. 149). Through my multiple engagements with study participants and comparative case analysis, I aimed to shed light on individual CSP commitment during situations of adversity and develop theory to capture "processes during a slice of ongoing time" (Eisenhardt, 2021, p. 154).

Since I assume no single or universal explanation for social behaviour, I adopted a grounded theory approach, which scholars recommend for exploring open questions and complex social processes as it allows for interpretation of how meaning and concepts are produced and utilized by social actors in their natural setting (Charmaz, 2000; Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Gephart, 2004; Suddaby, 2006). I aligned myself to the constructivist approach to grounded theory (Charmaz, 2008, 2017), which has its origins in pragmatist philosophy and fosters a similar "openness to the world, curiosity about it, and a belief in gaining knowledge through experience in it" (Charmaz, 2017, p. 38). The constructivist approach recognizes the dynamic and emergent nature of not only the findings, but also the process of research, and contrary to positivist methods, provides no "clean break" between data collection and analysis (Suddaby, 2006, p. 636). It emphasizes that the research process emerges from interaction and that the researcher and the study participants "co-construct" data together (Charmaz, 2008, p. 402). Similarly, the researcher´s position, perspective and priorities influence how data collection, analysis and methodological strategies are both devised and implemented. Researchers are therefore embedded in a research process rather than neutral or passive observers situated at a distance from the phenomenon (Charmaz, 2008). Using constructivist grounded theory for critical inquiry therefore demands a significant level of methodological self-consciousness and reflexivity (Charmaz, 2017).

In alignment with this approach, I chose to adopt the "pragmatist logic of abductive reasoning" (Charmaz, 2017, p. 41), which involves identifying surprising or puzzling findings in the data and evaluating them against existing theoretical explanations (Charmaz, 2017). It therefore requires researchers to embrace doubt, develop ideas and hunches, and engage in systematic problem solving by iterating between the data and possible theoretical explanations and elaborating new theory as required (Charmaz, 2017). Abductive reasoning seemed particularly appropriate for the study of CSPs, since it is recommended for generating theory in relation to dynamic organizational and social contexts and has been the subject of growing interest among management and organization scholars (Mantere & Ketokivi, 2013; Sætre & van de Ven, 2021; Shepherd & Suddaby, 2017).

Regarding the methodology, I should note that the construct of commitment is typically studied through quantitative methods (Klein, Becker, et al., 2009; van Rossenberg, Cross, et al., 2022). However, the specific circumstances and objectives of this study led me to contend that an abductive, qualitative approach was better suited for two important reasons. Firstly, the organizational context of cross sector partnerships is distinct and complex, and individual level commitment has not been widely studied within cross boundary and temporary contexts that have a social purpose (Bingham et al., 2013; van Rossenberg et al., 2018). Secondly, the nuances of process theorizing (Langley, 1999; Langley et al., 2013) and the objective of abductive analysis called for a method that enabled significant openness, discovery, and depth. The constructivist approach to grounded theory seeks to facilitate an interpretive understanding of the study phenomenon (Charmaz, 2008) and, together with my supervisors[9], we believed it was therefore well suited to this unique context. This was underscored by the

[9] I began my PhD research under the supervision of Dr Tim London at the GSB in 2016. In mid 2018, Professor Ralph Hamann, who at that time was GSB Research Director, offered to join as co-supervisor which Tim and I both welcomed given his own knowledge and research on partnerships. In mid 2020, Tim left the GSB to pursue a position in the United States, and Ralph became my sole supervisor.

acknowledgement of commitment scholars that commitment research could benefit from more qualitative and interpretive research (van Rossenberg, Cross, et al., 2022; van Rossenberg et al., 2018). In particular, they highlight that such methods are appropriate for exploring "how the processes of shaping commitments and its interconnected phenomena evolve over time" (van Rossenberg et al., 2018, p. 157).

I therefore initiated the data collection and analysis virtually hand-in-hand as an interactive and cyclical process (Eisenhardt, 1989; Miles et al., 2014). I employed abductive reasoning to develop ideas and hunches from my data (Thornberg & Charmaz, 2013) and engaged repeatedly with partnership and commitment literatures, as well as other literatures such as emotions and eudaimonia once new and unexpected insights arose (Eisenhardt, 2021). In addition to narrative case summaries, thematic coding, reflective analytical memos and comparative data matrices (Miles et al., 2014), I made active use of visual data display techniques, regularly developing figures, 2x2 matrices and process maps to make sense of my data and identify patterns and relationships across my sample (Langley, 1999). My emerging analysis and understanding informed progressive stages of the research, notably the identification of several key respondents within my sample, with whom I had more repeat interactions. This helped to foster "intimate familiarity" with their worlds and facilitated more in-depth inquiry and validation of budding theoretical insights (Charmaz, 2004).

3.2.4 Evolving nature of my research questions

As is often the case with qualitative studies using a grounded theory approach, my research question evolved during the study period in response to the data collected and my ongoing interpretation and analysis of both the data and the literature. My initial question aimed to explore the micro-dynamics of CSPs and how they related to CSP success. While I knew from the beginning that this was quite broad, a central element I wanted to understand was

the individual level motivation to work in these CSPs and what it was based on. As I coded my initial interviews, I identified that the notion of "commitment" was frequently raised by my respondents and considered to be critical for the partnership. For example, in response to my interview question "What do you think makes or breaks partnerships?", one respondent articulated "Well, there has to be real commitment from all sides and then people will have to adhere to their commitments." (P81, Jan 2018). Another respondent explained that in a partnership "what you need to bring is an equal level of commitment because you can't bring an equal level of skill or knowledge... because you bring what you know… (but) what you can do is bring an equal level of commitment." (P83, Jan 2018)

These data combined with insights from the partnership literature and a desire to narrow my research question led me to agree with my supervisors to focus my study on individuals' commitment within CSPs. This shift also responded to feedback received from senior CSP scholars at the CSSI Symposium Doctoral Consortium in June 2018 who questioned what specific theoretical construct I was applying within the context of CSPs. This led to my engagement with the workplace commitment literature as described in the Chapter 2, as well as refinement of my research questions and analytical focus.

3.3 Case selection

In view of partnership scholars' recognition of the importance of relational interactions in cross sector partnering (le Ber & Branzei, 2010a; Stott & Murphy, 2020; Vangen & Huxham, 2003), I was eager to study partnership practitioners who were working *with each other*. Yet, I also recognized the need for a large enough sample with sufficient diversity to allow for replication logic (R. K. Yin, 2009), which I believed would be best achieved by studying practitioners who worked within several different CSPs. My study therefore involved two levels of case selection, firstly the CSPs, and secondly the partnership practitioners within

them. To narrow down the vast and broad array of CSPs that I could potentially choose from, my first step was to identify the geographical location and social issue of interest.

3.3.1 Geographical location and social issue

In view of the numbers and types of CSPs that exist, the research question could have been studied in multiple ways; for example, studying individuals who work in global, regional and/or national CSPs, in various CSPs across different countries, or in CSPs that address a range of different complex problems in one specific country. Due to the inherent complexity of CSPs themselves, and the objective of studying individuals who were working in comparable contexts and circumstances, I elected to focus my research on individuals working in partnerships in one country and in relation to one social issue.

With regard to the country, I chose South Africa primarily for practical reasons as I was based in Cape Town and this would facilitate longitudinal data collection. Indeed, I found that my proximity to most study participants and flexibility in schedule facilitated repeat interviews, as well as opportunities for observations, often at very short notice. This allowed for a considerably natural and organic research experience that aligned and responded to the evolutions of both the individuals and the partnerships. Situating my study within a middle-income country on the African continent was also deemed to be advantageous, since partnership research in the global south has only recently begun to gain traction (Vestergaard et al., 2021). While several scholars have explored CSPs in African contexts (for example Bitzer & Glasbergen, 2010; Bogie, 2014; Hamann, 2014; Hamann et al., 2011; Kolk, 2014; Powell et al., 2018; Rein & Stott, 2009; Vestergaard et al., 2021), empirical studies are relatively limited compared to those in the northern hemisphere.

As for the social issue of interest, during my study design process I considered examining several different social challenges that South Africa was confronting, notably basic education, health care, gender inequality, violence, etc. Ultimately, I decided to focus on CSPs working to strengthen health care for disadvantaged and underserved communities, for both strategic and practical reasons.

Even before the emergence of COVID-19, the South African public health system was already under major stress. This is primarily due to the continued impact of HIV, which affects almost eight million people in the country[10]. HIV remains a severe development challenge for South Africa and requires extensive funding for the government's life-saving ARV programme (Blecher et al., 2016; Meyer-Rath et al., 2019; Remme et al., 2016; Simelela et al., 2015), as well as multisectoral action to address structural drivers of the disease (Cluver et al., 2016; Mahlangu et al., 2019; Subedar et al., 2018). However, now that HIV has moved from being a death sentence to a chronic disease, the challenge that South Africa is facing is to ensure effective HIV care over the long term in addition to other conditions and especially non-communicable and "lifestyle" diseases such as diabetes, cancer and hypertension, the prevalence of which have increased substantially in recent years (Chetty & Hanass-Hancock, 2016; L. Liu et al., 2021; Vollmer et al., 2017).

Health policy makers and practitioners from different sectors are eager to collaborate to promote integrated care, differentiated service delivery and better access to specialists across the public health system (Bosire et al., 2021; Grimsrud et al., 2017; Harris et al., 2018; L. Liu et al., 2021; Mahlangu et al., 2019). This is particularly critical in underserved and disadvantaged communities, so that all patients can benefit from cohesive and integrated

[10] https://www.unaids.org/en/regionscountries/countries/southafrica

"patient-centred" rather than "disease-driven" care (Bosire et al., 2021; de Man et al., 2016; Duffy et al., 2022; L. F. Johnson et al., 2018; Santana et al., 2018). The growing focus on the patient cuts across all health conditions, and aligns with general calls for more holistic, people-centred development (de Man et al., 2016; Levin, 2018; Santana et al., 2018).

The above reasons were viewed to be of strategic importance since they reveal why public health remains such a complex challenge in South Africa and demonstrate that health practitioners have considerable experience in collaborating across sectors. Furthermore, knowing that health practitioners are accustomed to "data driven action" and engaging in research (Bhardwaj et al., 2014; Curry et al., 2012; South Africa Every Death Counts Writing Group, 2008), I expected that they might be more open to participating in a research project on CSPs, as well as willing to consider the findings and practical implications from my study.

More practically, through my work experience with the UN, I had networks and contacts within the national and provincial health departments, relevant NGOs, as well as the South African National AIDS Council. These contacts were helpful in identifying potential CSPs for the empirical study and also contributed to my gaining access to the organizations and individuals who participated in my research. Another practical consideration for the social issue of choice was my own personal knowledge and expertise in relation to public health, HIV, and the specific country context. I found that it enhanced my personal credibility when presenting my research project to practitioners and clearly helped to build trust and understanding with my study participants since they could relate to me more easily.

While restricting my research context to CSPs that focus on one challenge in one country could be perceived as presenting limitations for transferability or generalizability of the study

findings, their value for the project was considered to outweigh the potential risk. This builds on the perspective of other scholars who have conducted research on social partnerships in Africa and note that effectively identifying and transferring learnings from the internal workings of CSPs requires a well-informed "understanding of the contextual reality in which partnerships operate" (Rein & Stott, 2009, p. 87). Such a deep and contextualized understanding is more difficult to obtain when the research setting is widespread. Furthermore, the questions that I was exploring were not directly related to health, or to the specifics of the South Africa, but rather to the more general phenomenon of commitment in CSPs.

3.3.2 Partnership type

As noted above, the first stage of case selection was to identify the CSPs that would serve as the context for the research. I aimed for a number between three and five CSPs to allow for depth, as well as diversity. According to the Eisenhardt Method, it was critical that I select cases which would facilitate multi-case theory building – i.e., partnerships where the CSP practitioners were likely to develop, demonstrate and potentially sustain commitment to the CSP when confronted with adversity (Eisenhardt, 2021).

My review of the partnership literature revealed that tripartite CSPs may be considered the most complex since they aim to accommodate the interests of three different sector partners. While studies on them are growing (Laasonen, 2015), the majority of theoretical and empirical CSP research in management and organisation studies has been conducted on partnerships between only two sectors, with business-NGO partnerships receiving the most attention (Babiak & Thibault, 2009; Branzei & le Ber, 2014; Vogel et al., 2021). Several scholars, however, have emphasized that tripartite partnerships are best suited for the complex social issues at stake (Kolk, 2014; Kolk et al., 2008; Vogel et al., 2021), and noted

that when underpinned by accountability, they have the potential to result in fair and effective partnerships (Hamann & Acutt, 2003).

I was therefore keen to contribute towards more empirical exploration and balanced analysis in tripartite partnerships, where I expected challenges may arise due to the diversity of partners.

3.3.3 Partnership phase

An additional consideration related to my case selection was the phase of partnership that each CSPs was in when I began my study. Given that I was conducting a longitudinal study, I was eager to follow each partnership for a sufficient amount of time and therefore avoided CSPs that were coming to an end. I was also interested to witness partnerships as they encountered challenges since this was important for my understanding of commitment over time. Given that the formation phase of CSPs is typically a period of complexity and relative instability (Manning & Roessler, 2014), I chose to focus on tripartite CSPs that were in initial phases of conceptualization, establishment, or functioning. I adopted the strategy of purposeful sampling (Eisenhardt, 2021; Eisenhardt et al., 2016; Maxwell, 2009) of health oriented CSPs working in South Africa and assessed potential partnerships against the criteria below. Some of these would be considered as common antecedents, a case design orientation which is often adopted by scholars who use the Eisenhardt Method. (Eisenhardt, 2021).

CSP selection criteria

- The CSP is tripartite with at least one private sector, civil society/social enterprise and government partner
- The CSP is either under conceptualization, being established or recently became active
- The CSP's objective relates to improving health care for underserved or disadvantaged populations/communities
- The researcher has access to the key members of the CSP

3.3.4 Partnership selection process

Case selection and obtaining access was a long, drawn-out process involving networking, desk review, informal discussions with colleagues from my professional network and repeated engagement with the different focal points for each of the potential partnerships over a period of approximately one year. The colleagues and various focal points served as "connectors" who assisted in the process of identifying and assessing the various CSPs, as well as contacting the different members.

In October 2016, when I submitted my doctoral research proposal, I had already identified seven potential CSPs. Subsequently, through a process of snowballing I grew my list and by July 2017 had 20 CSPs which met the basic criteria, and for which I had a contact person/focal point from at least one of the partnering organizations. However, as I assessed each partnership more carefully and spoke with these initial focal points more intentionally, I learned that several were unlikely to come to fruition, some were unlikely to provide access, and others did not have the characteristics of "true" partnerships[11], and rather were contractual or transactional relationships, and hence of less interest for my study.

I therefore came to a preliminary selection of six CSPs– all of which shared the quality of being in the initial phases of conceptualization or set up, were already or were aiming to be tripartite, and reflected a relatively diverse sample in terms of types and sizes of organizations involved. I then conducted additional desk research on each of these and engaged in informal outreach with other members of the partnership to share information

[11] Both scholars and practitioners differentiate between "true" cross sector or multistakeholder partnership relationships where all partnering organizations contribute towards the activity and actually collaborate to get things done, vs others that are more of a transactional relationship or partnership on paper: eg. where one partner simply provides funding to another partner, but is not involved in any of the actual strategic planning or implementation of the activity (Austin, 2000; Austin & Seitanidi, 2012a, 2012b; The Partnering Initiative & UNDESA, 2020).

about the research project, assess their interest in participating and determine the extent of access I could obtain. Ultimately, two of the CSPs were removed from the preliminary list, one due to the key focal point moving organizations and no longer being able to facilitate access to the other partners, and the other because despite one of the partners being very interested and proactive, the representatives from the other partner organizations showed insufficient willingness and follow through.

3.3.5 Overview of CSPs

My study context therefore included four separate partnerships that aimed in different ways to promote better health outcomes for disadvantaged communities in South Africa. Their characteristics and objectives are summarized in Table 3, however the names of the CSPs and the partnering organizations have all been anonymized. As indicated in the last column of the table that summarizes developments during my study, all CSPs encountered some form of setback or adversity, which I learned about from the study participants themselves. Challenges had both internal and external causes and included things such as lengthy delays to get started, turnover of CSP representatives, insufficient funding, or lack of buy in from the target communities. These and other adverse situations, as well as the impact they had on study respondents, are integrated as part of the findings in Chapter 4.

Table 3: Overview of CSPs which served as the context for the study

Partnership	Objective	Partners	Province	Geographic level	Status at start of data collection	Developments over course of study
Healthy mining communities (HMC)	Improve health seeking behaviour, knowledge and access to preventive screening/health care within mining communities	SANFA (NGO/SE), Unite Health (Business), Tower Mining (Business), National and Provincial health authorities (Government), Thrive (NGO/SE), RANOC (NGO/SE)	Limpopo	District /Municipality	Preparation for launch with intention for geographical replication	Long lead time until the launch, challenges during launch event, key partner representative moved companies but stayed with partnership, partnership influenced replication in other provinces
Healthy rural communities (HRC)	Partnership to improve linkages and referrals between GPs and specialists through use of referrals App to promote better care in rural/underserved communities	BOLO (NGO/SE), Public health facility (Government), Pharmaceutical company (tbd) (Business)	Western Cape with aim for expansion	Municipal	Ongoing and aiming to expand through partnership with business	Serious internal setbacks (financial and people), sought but did not obtain business partner during the study period, however obtained provincial government approval which led to interest and expansion across the country after the study
Healthy townships (HT)	Provide alternative pick-up points for township residents to get chronic medicines and basic health services thus providing differentiated care options, while decongesting public health facilities	Resilience (NGO/SE), Plaka Medicine (Business), Plaka Foundation (NGO/SE), Provincial health authority (Government), Local health authority (Government)	Western Cape	Community level – piloting	Conceptualization and initial start-up /piloting	Partner representative changed in NGO, serious external and internal setbacks, long lull with little activity. Began to start up again at end of study
Healthy bodies (HB)	Partnership to provide low-cost orthopaedic surgeries and respond to a waiting list that is overwhelming public sector facilities	Broad Health (NGO/SE), Crown Health (Business), Public Health Facility (Government)	Western Cape	Provincial level	Conceptualization and initial start up	Business partner stepped away, reconfiguring of partnership approach, long lull with little activity. Began to start up again at end of study

3.3.6 Identification of partnership practitioners

For each CSP included in the study I had a primary contact person or focal point who was the individual that I had first been put in touch with during the snowballing process of identifying CSPs. Although my introduction to them was organic rather than by design, in all cases these focal points played a central convening role in their partnership. They facilitated coordination within their own organizations, as well as among their partners, to promote buy-in and support for CSP members' involvement in the research project. Each primary focal point also assisted me to identify and obtain access to the second level of cases: namely the individual partnership practitioners who were representing the different organizations on the CSP.

This process led to a total of 27 individuals being involved in the research project, either through formal or informal interviews and/or observation. Four of these individuals were only tangentially involved during one specific event for one CSP, and although they were observed on that occasion, their data were excluded from the core data set due to their limited role in the partnership. The remaining 23 individuals were more actively engaged in their CSPs and were included in my sample as the individual cases for analysis.

Table 4 provides an overview of study participants noting their respective roles and respective organizations. In view of the relatively small sample, several strategies have been taken to help safeguard anonymity and confidentiality within the thesis document. Names of organizations and individuals are pseudonyms that were purposefully selected to be as neutral as possible. The tables have been expressly designed to avoid linking names of study participants to their roles and organizations. Furthermore, the order of study participants per CSP was scrambled to hinder potential cross-identification from comparison of different tables. Since there was only one social enterprise in my study, I have grouped it together with

the NGOs in the sector description as NGO/SE. In Chapter 4, I have included some names of individuals, organisations and CSPs in the narrative to facilitate the reader's understanding and enjoyment. However, many quotes in the narrative, and all quotes in the data tables are identified by a specific numbered code that was developed per participant. I also use gender neutral pronouns when I have deemed it necessary.

Table 4: Overview of study participants

Partnership	Study participant	Role in Organization	Organization*	Sector
Healthy Mining Communities (HMC)	1	Director	Unite Health	Business
	2	Head of partnerships	Unite Health	Business
	3	Coordinator	SANFA	NGO / SE
	4	Chief operating officer	SANFA	NGO / SE
	5	Head of structure	Provincial Health Authority	Government
	6	Founder / CEO	Thrive	NGO / SE
	7	Chief Medical Officer	Tower Mining	Business
	8	Executive manager	RANOC	NGO / SE
Healthy Rural Communities (HRC)	9	Head of Department	Public Health facility	Government
	10	Acting CEO	BOLO	NGO / SE
	11	Sales manager	BOLO	NGO / SE
	12	Founder	BOLO	NGO / SE
Healthy Townships (HT)	13	Founder / CEO	Resilience	NGO / SE
	14	Training manager	Resilience	NGO / SE
	15	Project Manager	Resilience	NGO / SE
	16	Community Manager	Resilience	NGO / SE
	17	Head of structure	District Health Authority	Government
	18	Chief Operating Officer	Plaka Medicine	Business
	19	Head	Plaka Foundation	NGO / SE
	20	CSI Advisor	Plaka Foundation	NGO / SE
Healthy Bodies (HB)	21	Head of Department	Public Health facility	Government
	22	Business Development Manager	Crown Health	Business
	23	Founder / CEO	Broad Health	NGO / SE

3.3.7 Diversity within the study sample

Despite sharing a similar role as a "partnership practitioner", the individuals in my sample were considerably diverse. They were all involved in partnering across sectors for public health objectives, and the majority were South African nationals. Yet there was extensive variety in ethnic and racial heritage, as well as socio-economic background and circumstances. Participants covered a wide range of organizational roles and professions,

from founders, CEOs or COOs to medical doctors, lawyers, community health workers, and business development managers. Furthermore, the organizations they represented were not only from different sectors, but they also ranged in size from small, one-person non-profit organizations to large multinational companies.

All of the partnering practitioners in my study were involved in the CSPs as representatives of organizations that they were either employed by or running themselves. The amount of time they devoted to the "cross boundary" (van Rossenberg et al., 2018) work environment within one or more CSPs varied. For many study participants, engagement in cross sector partnering was an additional role beyond their "day job". For others, building partnerships and liaising with partners was a core part of their role in the organization.

This considerable diversity across a relatively small study sample, served to enrich my data analysis since I could explore patterns and identify whether they appeared to correlate with a certain sector, role, profession or background. My findings in this regard are presented in Chapter 4.

3.4 Data Collection

3.4.1 Data sources

Generating theory from case studies typically involves data collection from a variety of different sources (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007). Since my study involved exploration of individuals and relationships within CSPs, I was conscious of the need to collect and analyse both overt and tacit information (Charmaz, 2004). This influenced my choice of data collection methods, with observation during partner meetings, site visits and CSP related events being important since it helps to reveal tacit and liminal concerns that people cannot or prefer not to express (Bechky, 2011; Charmaz, 2004). Furthermore, since a

critical value of interpretivist research is the authentic representation of people's perceptions of lived experiences using their own terminology and language (Gioia et al., 2012), semi-structured interviews with the partnership practitioners in my sample served as the main source of data. The interviews were guided by themes related to my research aim, but the questions allowed for respondents to expand on different topics and reflect on CSP related events and circumstances (Castillo-Montoya, 2016). Repeated interviews with the same respondents enabled me to build on unexpected findings and insights that emanated during the ongoing and interactive research process (Charmaz, 2017). Throughout all primary data collection methods, a focus on observing non-verbal communication and action was maintained and documented in comprehensive field notes (Charmaz, 2017; Miles et al., 2014).

To ensure a comprehensive understanding of the CSP contexts in which study respondents were working, an additional data source (R. K. Yin, 2009) was the review of documents related to each partnership at the beginning of my engagement with the study respondents. These included guiding documents, terms of reference and workplans for the partnership, and meeting notes that study participants voluntarily shared with me, as well as publicly available advocacy documents and reports, media clippings, and organisational websites. The review of these secondary data served to enhance my general understanding of each CSP and enabled me to relate to my study participants, however, it did not contribute directly to my findings or analysis.

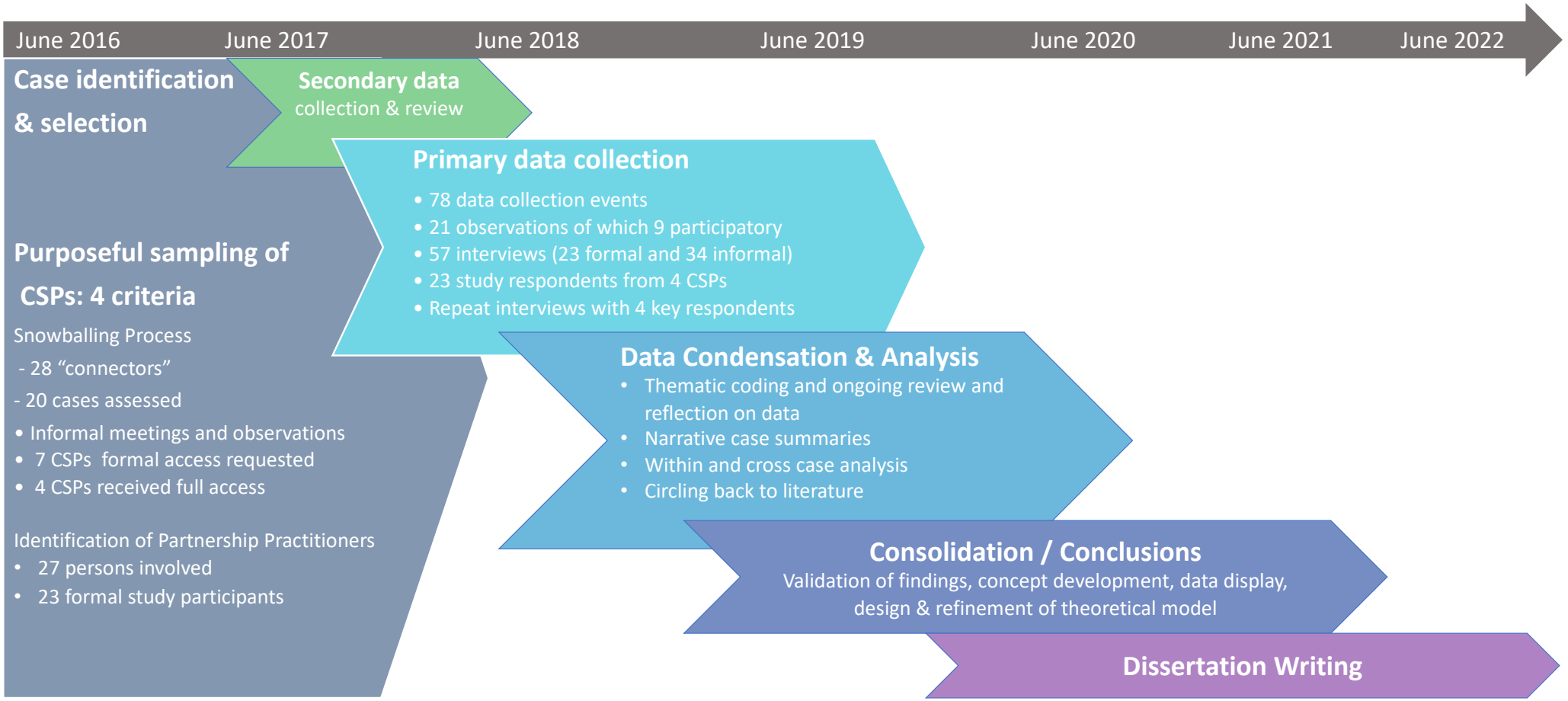
3.4.2 Duration of study

Since I understood CSPs and individual commitment to be inherently complex and dynamic research phenomena (Huxham & Vangen, 2000; Kolk, 2014; M. M. Seitanidi, 2008; van Rossenberg et al., 2018, 2022), I expected that to do my research justice, it would take some

time. This assumption aligned to management scholars' insight that "repeated interviews and meetings with practitioners in longitudinal research provide important opportunities to penetrate more deeply into the subject matter being investigated" (van de Ven & Johnson, 2006, p. 813). It was further reaffirmed by partnership and commitment scholars who emphasized the need for more longitudinal studies in their respective fields (Bryson et al., 2015; van Rossenberg, Cross, et al., 2022; van Rossenberg et al., 2018; van Tulder & Keen, 2018).

I therefore embarked on a longitudinal study with a view to collecting data as long as necessary in order to reach saturation. Ultimately, data collection took place over nearly three years between 2016 – 2019. This allowed for multiple interviews with primary respondents, and sufficient time to gain trust and repeated access, which also helped to promote data quality and facilitate triangulation within and across cases (R. K. Yin, 2009). The extended duration of my study enabled me to witness multiple situations of adversity across the different CSPs and observe individual level commitment and responses as the CSPs evolved. The shifts and changes that occurred within the CSPs during my data collection period reaffirmed what partnership scholars have identified in terms of the very fluid and dynamic nature of such partnerships (Clarke, 2014; Kolk, 2014; Rufin & Rivera-Santos, 2014). Exploring individuals' CSP commitment as processes unfolded helped to situate my research within the study participants' emergent context (Nguyen & Janssens, 2018). Figure 3 provides an overview of my research process and timeline.

Figure 3: Research process and timeline



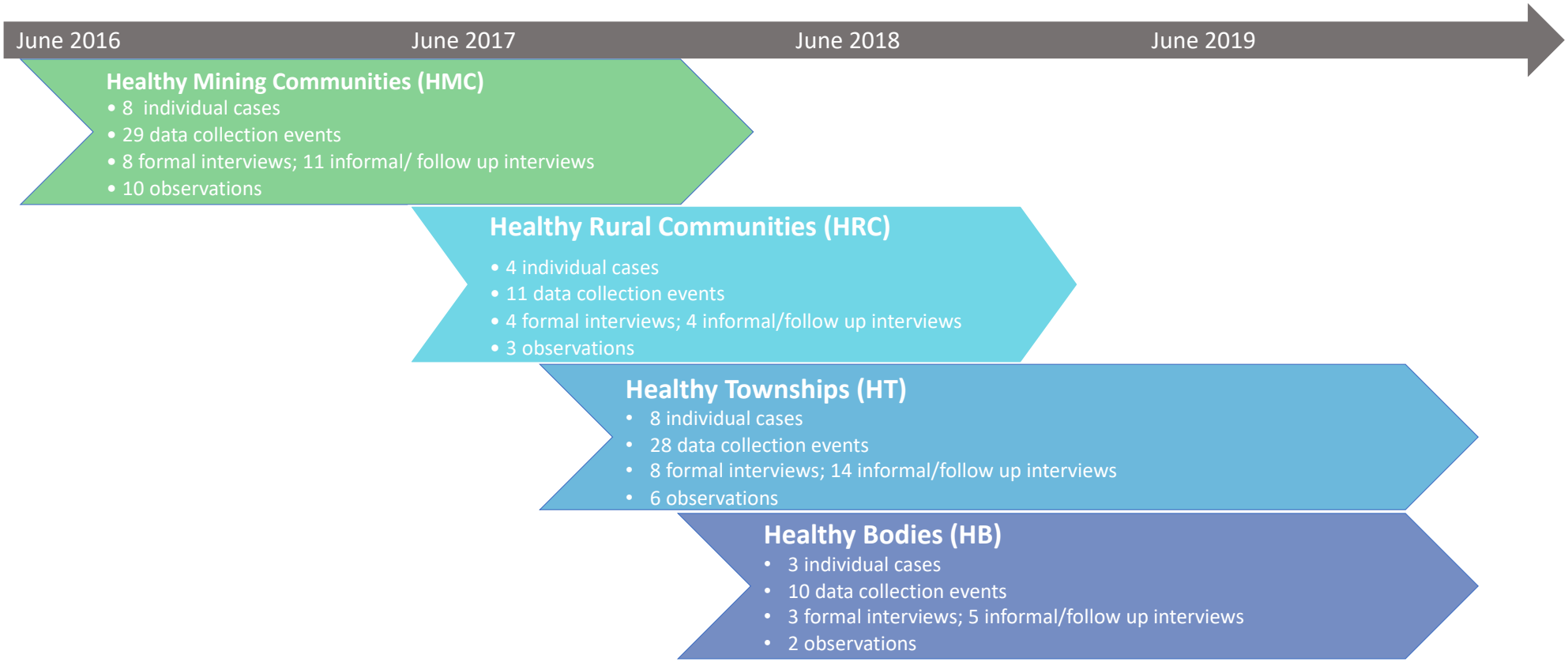
3.4.3 Research ethics

Ethical clearance for the study was obtained from the GSB Ethics committee and all research was carried out in accordance with the University of Cape Town Commerce Faculty *Ethics in Research Policy*. All study participants were provided with background information on the research and assured of confidentiality and anonymity as part of the informed consent process. For the desk review component of the study, approval was obtained from the relevant partner organizations for use of partnership documents that the study participants voluntarily shared with me. With regard to primary data collection, all interview participation was voluntary, informed written consent was obtained in advance, no incentives were provided, and anonymity was upheld. During and following each interview, respondents had the ability to withdraw from the study or specify elements of their responses that they preferred not to include in the interview transcripts or the study findings. During observations, the participants to the meeting, discussion or event were informed of my presence and assured of anonymity. Interviews were recorded, transcribed, and maintained in password protected folders on my laptop for the designated period required by South African law. No one had access to my data besides myself. Attention was also taken to ensure that any potentially sensitive information collected through one method was kept confidential and not "leaked" during other data collection methods.

3.4.3 Data collection process

The four partnerships in my project were at different stages in their conceptualization / development and access was not obtained at the same time. Therefore, my data collection process for each CSP began at different points and varied in duration as indicated in Figure 4 below.

Figure 4: Data collection per CSP



Some initial informal interviews were conducted as part of the case selection process, and during this period I also reviewed secondary data that were shared by my primary focal points or found on the internet to gain a general understanding of each CSP. In preparation for formal interviews, I developed a semi-structured interview protocol based on guidance from the interview protocol refinement framework (IPR) (Castillo-Montoya, 2016). The four key steps I followed were to align the content to my research questions; articulate open questions to ensure an inquiry-based conversation; request feedback from my supervisor and peers; and pilot test it with a CSP practitioner outside of my study to check for biases and further refine my questions. This interview protocol was used for all study participants for what I called the "formal interview" and is included as Appendix 1. The data collected through the formal interview provided the initial basis for comparison across cases. It was also the moment when I formally briefed the study participants on my research project and reaffirmed that I had their informed consent for participation in the formal interview, as well as in the general project, which also included informal interviews and observations.

As noted above, a few informal interviews were conducted as part of the case selection process, and these helped to build rapport and trust with the respondents, as well as learn about each CSP context. However, most informal interviews were conducted after the "formal" ones and served to explore how commitment was evolving over time. I called these interviews "informal" or "follow up" since they were less structured and typically revolved around developments in the CSP and how challenges were navigated and responded to. However, I ensured that respondents were aware that these interviews were included as primary data and that clearance had been obtained through the general consent form to participate in the research project. In some cases, these interviews were opportunistic – for

example while travelling to a meeting or waiting for an event to start. A few of them were conducted in pairs with two members from the same CSP.

The other main source of data was observations of partnership related events or situations. These included partner meetings, public events where the CSP was being launched or recognized, visits to programme sites and informal interactions among CSP members during travel and before or after events. All observations were of two or more people. To support my data collection, I developed an observation guide (see Appendix 2) to help maintain focus on verbal and non-verbal, and overt vs tacit aspects of the events and situations that I witnessed (Charmaz, 2017).

Due to the dynamic nature of the partnerships, and busy schedules of my respondents, I had to be persistent, opportunistic, flexible, and responsive in order to collect both interview and observation data. For three of the four CSPs, non-participant observations were conducted prior to the formal interview. This enabled me to gain valuable contextual information about the CSP, as well as interpret roles and relationships in the partnerships, which enhanced my own understanding during the interview process. Table 5 provides a summary of the primary data which were used to answer my research questions. As noted above, secondary data in relation to each CSP were reviewed to enhance my own contextual knowledge and understanding but were not directly relevant to the aim of my study.

Table 5: Overview of data collection for my study

Data Source	Total # of primary data collection events	# of data collection events per year				Metrics related to data collected		
		2016	2017	2018	2019	# of hours	# of single spaced pages of transcripts	# of single spaced pages of notes
Formal interviews	23		7	16	0	30	336	23
Informal interviews	34	2	15	12	5	32	92	47
Observations	21		16	5		34		67
TOTALS	**78**	**2**	**38**	**32**	**5**	**96**	**428**	**137**

For each study participant I sought to conduct at least the formal interview and ensure they were included in one observation. I also aimed to have a gap of a few months between these different data collection events to honour the longitudinal nature of my study and see how things evolved. There was one case where I could not conduct an observation because the respondent left the partnership and his organization, and another where an observation was not possible because the CSP had paused activity. There were also two cases where the formal interview and observation had less than a three-month interval. For many respondents I conducted considerably more interviews and over a longer duration of more than two years. As noted above, data collection for my study was an organic process that aligned with, and depended on, evolutions of the CSP.

Variations in the frequency and duration of data collected per respondent were due to a combination of different factors. These included the individual's level of engagement in the partnership; the relevance and quality of the data they provided in relation to my research

questions; and their relative accessibility. Furthermore, as the study progressed, based on my ongoing findings and analysis from initial interviews and observations, I identified four respondents (one from each CSP) who I believed could provide more in-depth insight regarding how CSP commitment is sustained during adversity. These individuals openly shared when they were encountering partnership challenges and expressed willingness to speak about them with me. I therefore conducted additional follow up interviews with them which allowed me to further enrich and validate my findings and proceed to develop my model which is presented in Chapter 4. Data collection per individual case is indicated in Table 6.

Table 6: Summary of data collection per individual case

Partnership	Study participant	Formal interview (always individual)	Informal interviews (includes follow up interviews at times in pairs)	Observations (always in groups)
Healthy Mining Communities (HMC)	Amy	1	1	3
	Beth	1	3	3
	Chris	1		3
	Dan	1	2	3
	Eric	1		3
	Fran	1		1
	Grace	1		3
	Hazel	1		1
Healthy Rural Communities (HRC)	Ian	1	3	2
	John	1		
	Kate	1	2	2
	Leo	1		1
Healthy Townships (HT)	Max	1	7	3
	Nick	1	1	2
	Oliver	1	2	1
	Peter	1	1	2
	Quinn	1		2
	Robert	1	1	1
	Sandra	1	1	2
	Tom	1		1
Healthy Bodies (HB)	Uma	1	3	2
	Vincent	1		
	Wanda	1		1

Formal interviews ranged in duration from 37 minutes at the shortest to 178 minutes at the longest. All formal interviews were conducted in person, and only one informal interview was conducted by phone. Average interview duration for formal interviews was 78 minutes and for informal interviews it was 56 minutes. All 23 formal interviews, and most informal interviews, were recorded with a high-quality recorder and transcribed in full. Only two recordings were of somewhat poorer quality. Notes were also taken during or immediately after all interviews to summarize the main content, record surprises and "juicy quotes" and capture non-verbal aspects, such as energy levels, body language and displays of emotion.

I also made a point to record my own impressions and feelings in relation to each interview experience. According to the psychodynamic perspective on organizational research, subjective experiences of the researcher can be an important source of data since they lend insight into what is going on "below the surface" (Prins, 2006, p. 351). Qualitative researchers are therefore encouraged to reflect on their own feelings and emotional states that arise through the interaction with a study participant, notably during or immediately after interviews, which are understood to be situations of countertransference (Holmes, 2014). I therefore made a conscious effort to reflexively analyse instances of countertransference and utilize these data as corroborative evidence that could be cross compared with data from other sources (Holmes, 2014).

For example, on one specific occasion during a formal interview, even though the respondent was saying similar things as other study participants, I recorded in my notes "I just don't feel her". I believe I was conscious of this because of my own background in social partnering and took care to critically examine my potential biases. However, I also understood this emotional response to be a potentially important insight, in view of the emphasis on

interpersonal relations in the partnership literature, as well as insights from my respondents, who said for example, that "partnerships are all about people" (P51); they "just know" (P34) if they can partner with someone or not; and they often decide to partner with someone based on a "gut feeling" (P73). In this particular case, through data triangulation I found that other partners who had worked with the individual in question shared a similar perspective as my own, and this had hampered CSP progress.

In addition to formal and informal interviews, I conducted 21 non-participant observations which ranged in duration from approximately 30 minutes to several hours and averaged 97 minutes each. I prepared detailed field notes for each observation and in some cases also videoed them (e.g., launch event presentations and speeches by some of my study participants). I paid particular attention to the interactions between the different study participants and noted what I had observed, as well as my impressions. It was during these observations that I was able to discern tacit concerns and notice unexpected or surprising behaviour. They were therefore an essential data source which enabled me to glean valuable insights regarding hierarchy and prioritization of commitment targets, relational interactions, and responses to partnership adversity.

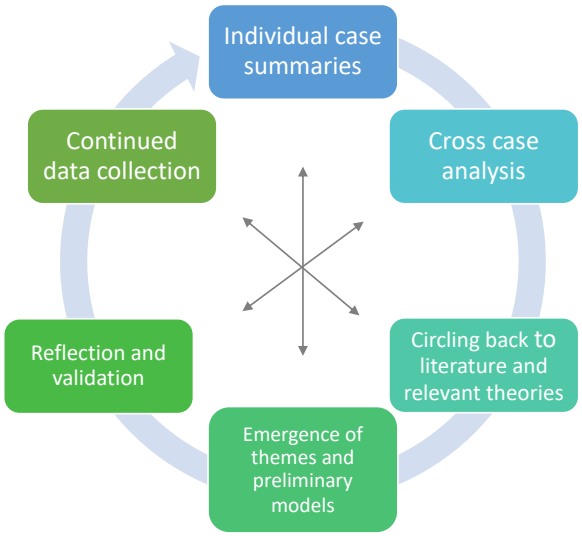
Finally, one of the most important practices that accompanied and informed my ongoing data collection and theory elaboration was my own memo-writing in Atlas Ti, the analysis software programme that helps qualitative researchers to code and analyse their data. The successive writing of analytic memos enabled me to create an intellectual workplace for self-reflection on buzz words emanating from interviews; emerging ideas and questions; preliminary themes and concepts, as well as their interrelationships (Thornberg & Charmaz, 2013). In line with abductive reasoning, I paid particular attention to anomalies or

unexpected findings in the data (Charmaz, 2017; Sætre & van de Ven, 2021). The emerging insights helped me to refine and enhance my questioning for subsequent interviews with my respondents. I also wrote memos to record my own progress; reflect on research conversations with supervisors, peers, and practitioners; and consider insights gleaned from academic webinars related to construct clarity, abductive reasoning, and scholarly writing. Finally, since I am a partnership practitioner who was studying other partnership practitioners, I recognized that my reflections on study respondents' insights and experiences may be influenced by my own, and that I may have more empathy or understanding than a researcher who had never worked in a CSP. I therefore actively used memos to reflect on and contemplate potential biases regarding my data collection, interpretation, and analysis. As an avid journal writer since the age of 13, I found memo-writing to be both natural and beneficial throughout my longitudinal study. I currently have 98 memos in my PhD project on Atlas Ti and have included some excerpts in Appendix 3.

3.5 Analysis and theory development

My iterative data analysis and interpretation was based on a process of synthesis and thematic coding (Strauss & Corbin, 1994) and is depicted in Figure 5.

Figure 5: Iterative process of data analysis



Open coding in Atlas Ti began after the third formal interview whereby I focused on interpreting interesting insights and commonalities in my data (Thornberg & Charmaz, 2013). Early on I noticed how multiple respondents raised the challenges involved with partnering and identified commitment as being critical for CSP success. As explained in Chapter 2, it was at this stage that I therefore delved into the commitment literature to gain a better understanding of the construct. This led me to learn about commitment targets, as well as the nature and antecedents of commitment. For subsequent interviews, I altered my probing questions slightly and paid particular attention to responses that related to existing understandings of commitment. As my data collection continued, I began to zero in on the data that were relevant to CSP commitment, re-coding existing data and selectively coding

new data as they were collected. I focused my exploration on my refined research questions, aiming to discern how commitment was shaped and manifested, and what happened during situations of adversity. This led me to also code for instances of partnership adversity that were articulated by respondents or observed, as well as emotional and behavioural responses.

3.5.1 Within case analysis

Based on the guidance of the Eisenhardt method, I developed narrative case summaries for each respondent according to the following outline which facilitated within case analysis (Eisenhardt, 2021).

- Attributes – in terms of profession, role, and sector
- History – length of engagement in such CSPs, personal interest or connection to the issue, organization, or people
- How they view the CSP – is partnering part of their job or over and above?
- How do other CSP partners speak about and relate to them?
- Within case analysis using available data:
    - How does he/she speak about and manifest CSP commitment?
    - Why? What seems to be driving the commitment?
    - How does the individual respond to adversity?
    - To what extent is commitment sustained through adversity? If so, How?
    - So what? What impact does this have on the individual, and on the partnership?

My individual case summaries ranged in length between 2 and 21 single-spaced pages, with the average length being 7 pages. I updated my individual case summaries each time I had a follow up interaction with the respondent, or other CSP members as relevant, to further enrich and refine my analysis. I also listened to past interview recordings regularly in order to re-immerse myself in my data and ensure integrity in the analytical process.

The within case analysis process enabled me to identify several factors that appeared to influence and relate to partnership commitment. These ranged from personal history to organizational requirements to a sense of moral imperative and desire to do good. Such insights helped me to consolidate an understanding of the different commitment targets that partnership practitioners were navigating and get a sense of which seemed to be of highest priority for each individual respondent.

In relation to adversity, I focused on how study participants described and interpreted their challenges and was intrigued by the frequent mention of how individual and organizational "egos" get in the way of effective partnering. I was also surprised by the emotions and passion that were often displayed during interviews and events, as well as the reasons that practitioners gave in response to the question "what keeps you going?". Ideas and hunches that arose from such unexpected findings led me to the literatures on ego, emotion regulation, perspective taking, and eudaimonia. This cyclical process of engaging with different literatures enabled me to gain a better understanding of these concepts and explore how existing theories in seemingly distant fields might explain some of what was emanating from my data (Eisenhardt, 2021).

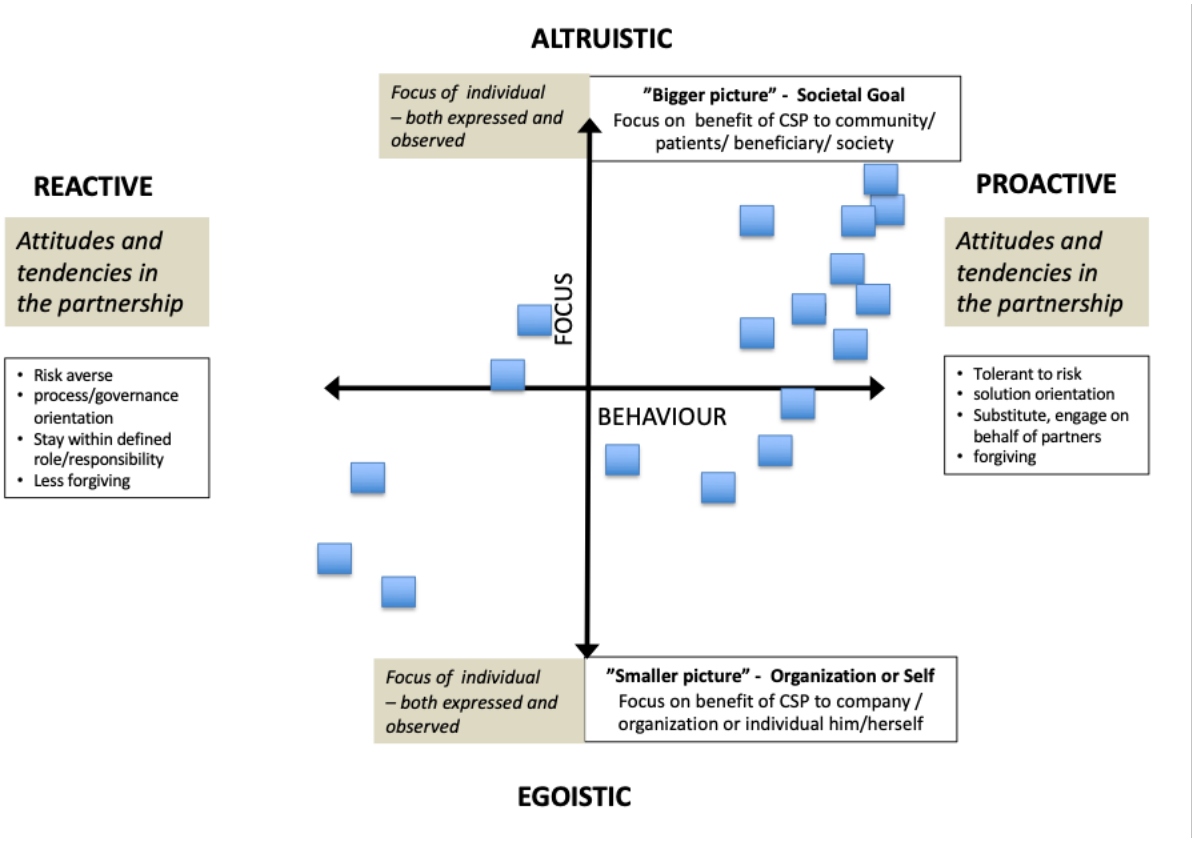
3.5.2 Cross case analysis

Once I had sufficient data from most of my study respondents, I began my cross-case analysis (Eisenhardt, 2021). I developed comprehensive tables in Excel that consolidated the condensed data from my study respondents. Through this process I was able to identify patterns and relationships between the different commitment targets; the reasons behind commitment; and attitudes, tendencies, and behaviours of my respondents, notably in situations of adversity. Based on the insights from my comparative analysis, I began to develop visual diagrams and found myself frequently sketching a variety of figures, maps and

2x2 matrices to try and make sense of the dynamic processes and correlations I was seeing within my study sample (Langley et al., 2013). I integrated these graphic experimentations into my research process, developing a range of visual displays which were shared with peers, supervisors, and key respondents for further discussion and elaboration.

The 2x2 matrix in Figure 6 is an example of a visual that I used to identify relationships between what appeared to be the focus commitment target in the context of the CSP and my respondents' attitudes and tendencies within the CSP. I began by simply reflecting on the different commitment targets and the range of behaviours I had witnessed and coming up with concepts and constructs to effectively describe them. I then had the idea of creating the matrix and actually plotting my study participants on the graph. At that stage in my analysis, I plotted 18 respondents which helped me to see patterns and groupings across my sample with more ease than through my Excel tables. It also revealed trends that I could explore in subsequent interviews, notably with those who demonstrated proactive attitudes and behaviour in the face of challenges, to hear what motivated an apparent resilience in CSP commitment. In several cases, I drew simple versions of the matrix and invited the respondent's thoughts on whether the relationships I had identified were reflective of their own experience and reality which helped to validate my insights and ensure I remained relevant to practice. Working with this matrix helped me to identify the important differentiation between prioritization of "self" oriented vs "other" oriented commitment targets in the context of the partnership. This distinction features on the left hand side of my consolidated model of my findings, which is presented in Chapter 4.

Figure 6: Preliminary correlation between focus commitment target and individual attitudes and tendencies (early 2019)



3.5.3 Temporal Analysis

As my study continued and the CSPs encountered repeated adversity I began to focus in on two aspects that had a temporal component. The first was a process that I labelled as "stepping back". This related to how a subset of respondents appeared to reflect on an adverse event or situation that had arisen in the partnership, shift their perspectives, and consciously quiet and/or regulate both their emotions and their "egos". As noted above, ego was a term that multiple respondents raised during interviews, both in relation to individuals and organizations. By ego, participants typically referred to a strong self-orientation and expressions of self-importance, whereby an individual or organization's needs had to be

catered to. Such descriptions relate to the psychology literature where *ego* is defined as *the self* and includes affective evaluations of the self, such as self-esteem, as well as considerations of the self in relation to others (Bauer & Wayment, 2008). These study participants spoke of the individual and organizational ego in relation to existing or former partners, as well as in relation to themselves and their own organizations. A reflective process of "stepping back" and consciously managing or "quieting" their own ego[12] appeared to facilitate a reappraisal and shift in perspective with regard to the challenging situation, some time after it was experienced. Table 7 provides an example of my data structure that led me to the "stepping back" concept.

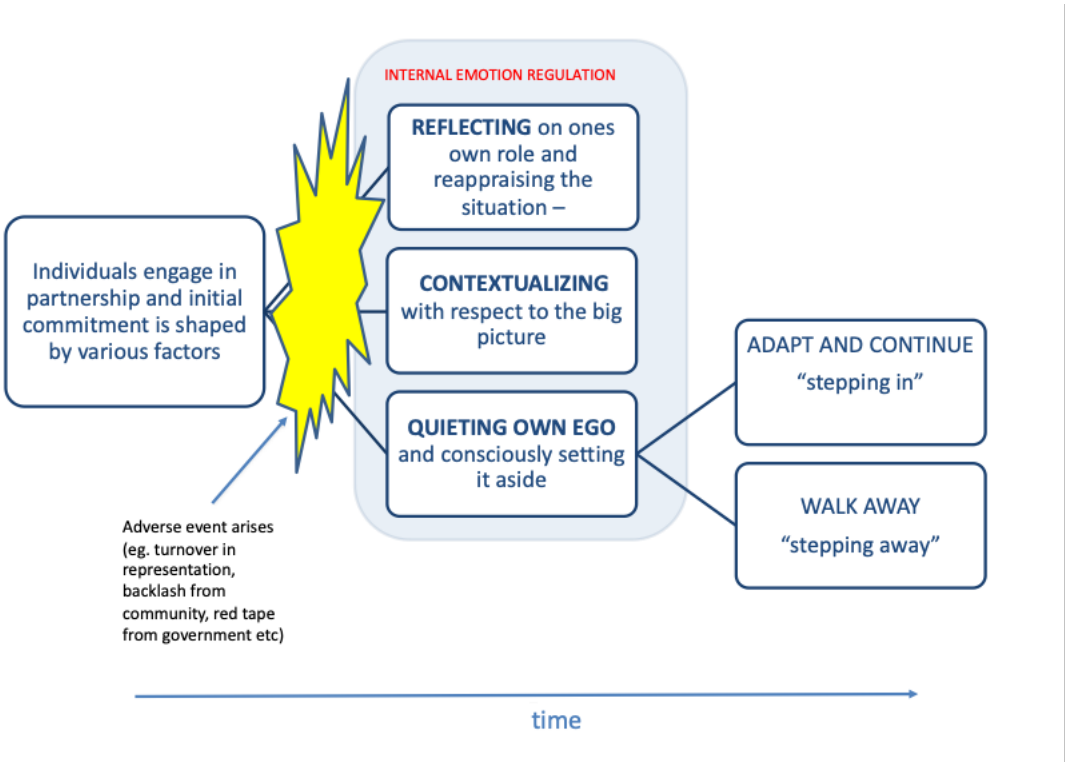
[12] Psychology scholars discern between the quiet and noisy ego, whereby individuals with a noisy ego exude self-importance and prioritize their self-interest. Quieting of the ego, thus refers to reducing the level of "egotism" and balancing self-interest with concern for others (Wayment & Bauer, 2017).

Table 7: Data structure example for "stepping back"

Examples of supporting data	Codes	
"Maybe I'm not making my passion coherent and explaining sufficiently why my five thousand patients are more important than the next guy's five thousand patients." (P24) *"I think there's a bit of a power trip on the Tower mining side. In the end it felt like it was more about them but then I say that because that was my experience there. But then you listen to that video that Thrive made and the Tower mining CEO himself says - this would not have been possible without SANFA and Unite. So, you know, yes things can play out on the day ... I think the Tower staff were just very forceful, they wanted it their way. On the other hand, you can understand they're the mine in that community and they were the host. But there's a way that you bring your other partners on board that doesn't make them feel that you were trying to run the show alone. So I think that, but as I say if we think about the changes in management and how, last minute, all of this was dumped on that group of staff, then I can also understand why they reacted the way they did." (P71)* *"…maybe we weren't as detailed and as disciplined and as rigid as we should have been in the planning of this thing. We probably weren't. We can't point a finger at other people…" (P83)*	**Reflect and reappraise** Refers to self-reflection on one's contribution to the situation, perspective taking in relation to other partners, and cognitive reappraisal or reframing to help shift perspective and regulate emotions in relation to the adverse situation	***Stepping back***
"I need to constantly remind me that the project is bigger than individuals. it's about *the bigger intent and the bigger opportunity." (P51)* *"The flight was delayed and then life happens. Then community stuff happens. But even then, it's always subservient to the bigger reason why we're there. All the other stuff, the small stuff is creating big issues but it's not why we're here, why we're there for the day or for the campaign." (P51)* *"Another thing that really cuts through that ego, 'my turf' nonsense is returning always to what are we in this for? We're in this for the patients." (P73)*	**Contextualize against the big picture** Refers to putting the situation into the context of the bigger picture to remind what/who is important and/or at stake	
"…you have to get past your ego because if the goal of this is to put the spotlight on you and how good you are and what you've achieved, etc. you've lost sight of the patient (P83) *"…then the individual egos, the typical corporate ego, become secondary. That doesn't come naturally." (P51)*	**Quiet/set aside ego** Refers to consciously acknowledging the challenge of the personal and organizational ego (i.e., self-oriented interests/expressions of self-importance/pride) and quieting it or setting it aside in the interest of the partnership	
"I can throw my toys, (but) that's the end of the partnership" (P51) *"And what I'm saying about being forgiving and demanding at the same time, without question it's to everybody that's engaged in this process. It's not just at the community. And it's even got to go inwardly to oneself 'cos otherwise ... I think it's a key element, how's this for a new dimension, is the micro dynamics of your engagement with self. Because otherwise you get battered so often in this process. It's easy to give up. Unless you are forgiving about that you didn't achieve that, you're gonna start giving up." (P83)*	**Regulate emotions** Refers to the internal process of becoming aware of one's emotions and influencing which emotions are experienced and how and when they are expressed	

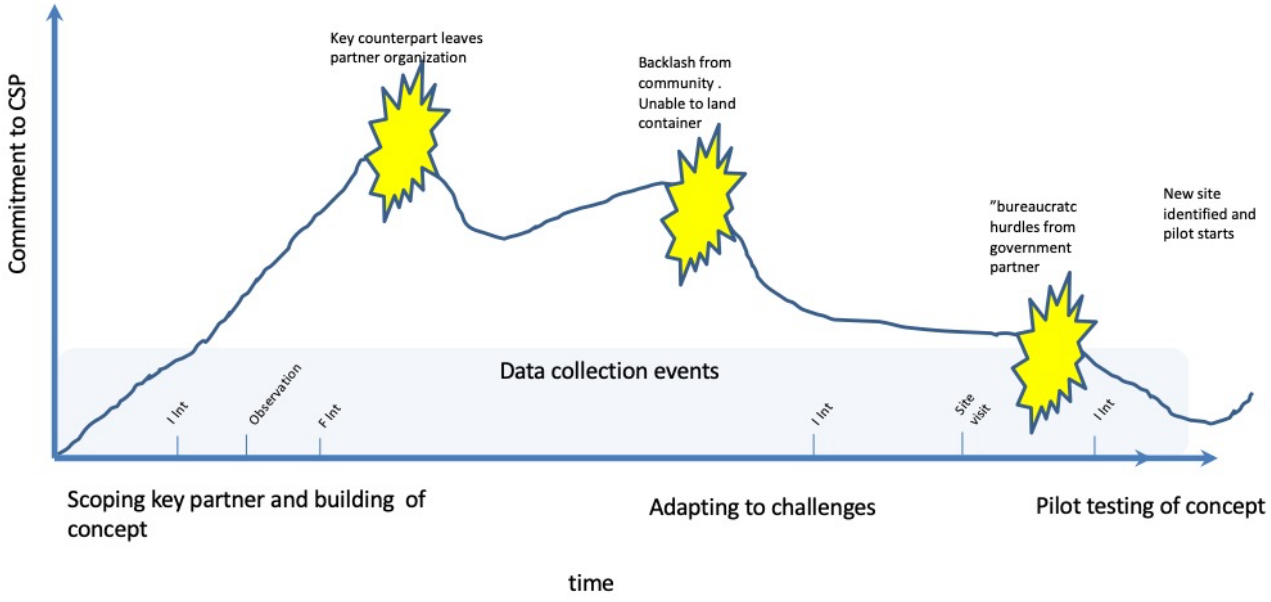
To explore these ideas further, I circled back to the literature exploring theories relating to perspective taking, emotion regulation, and ego management and developed rough process diagrams to try and depict what I was witnessing as responses to adversity. Figure 7 was an attempt to unpack the different components of the "stepping back" process and visualize it as a response to adversity. Developing this graphic representation and returning regularly to my data helped me to understand and explain that there were different behavioural responses across my sample and that stepping back was a pivotal process that not everyone engaged in. The analysis also enabled me to discern that in any theoretical model I would develop from my findings, there would be at least two pathways in response to adversity; one which included stepping back and the other that did not.

Figure 7: Preliminary reflections on emotion regulation as a process (mid 2019)



The second temporal process I explored was an apparent waxing and waning of commitment among certain respondents that I had identified through several follow up interviews. To depict and try and make sense of this, I created rough process diagrams for two individual cases, one of which is depicted as Figure 8. This helped me to identify what seemed to be inflection points in commitment which I proceeded to analyse in more depth by going back to the data.

Figure 8: Reflecting on evolution of commitment over time (mid 2019)



This exploration revealed cyclical processes in response to adversity that in some cases appeared to enable a subset of individuals to sustain and potentially even reinforce their CSP commitment. Hence, I realized that rather than trying to develop a process model in relation to time, I could potentially contribute towards better understanding of commitment by preparing a model in relation to the adverse event or situation, which would then iterate over time.

3.5.4 Bringing it all together

The last phase of my research was therefore devoted to bringing all these different insights and reflections together. Between 2020 and the development of this monograph, I prepared numerous versions of a consolidated process model, each time working to further enhance and refine for both clarity and parsimony. Earlier models had multiple pathways and variables, but as I continued to abstract to higher levels and focus on what appeared to be most decisive and influential across my sample, I realized that I could explain the phenomena through a model with two pathways and four different outcomes. On my supervisor's recommendation, I also developed an analytical synthesis document to ensure coherence and consistency across all aspects of my research project. As part of this process, I explored recent developments in the two key literatures of social partnerships and commitment which revealed new perspectives and potential for contributions, notably in relation to altruism and its role in shaping commitment. My final empirically developed model is presented in Chapter 4.

3.6 Ensuring rigour and relevance

Eisenhardt et al. (2016) offer three fundamental criteria to evaluate the rigour of qualitative research: 1) Is the emerging theory internally coherent and parsimonious? 2) Are the constructs and themes grounded in compelling data? and 3) Does the research provide rich and unexpected insights? For me personally, however, there was also a fourth criteria: is the research important and relevant to practice? This was primarily based on partnership scholars' assertions that theory and practice in this field are interdependent (Austin, 2014; Seitanidi, 2015) and merit better linkages (O'Leary & Vij, 2012). It also aligns with management scholars' views that to join any scholarly conversation, your topic must also be of concern to the real world (Lange & Pfarrer, 2017).

Throughout the research process, I therefore kept these four criteria in mind, and sought to fulfil them through strategies such as reflexive memos, repeated comparison of my preliminary insights with the data, and member checking/validation with key respondents. The latter was particularly critical and reaffirmed the value of a longitudinal study design since it helped to shape and enrich my analysis. For instance, it was through member-checking with respondents on behaviours I had observed, or insights they had shared during previous interviews that I identified the different components of the stepping back process. Repeat interactions over time also enabled me to integrate themes that were emanating from the data, such as the ego, or role of relationships, and request my respondents' perspectives and views. This generated more in-depth insight and led, for example, to my understanding that reflections on the ego referred to both individuals and organizations. Engaging in deeper discussion on the role of relationships as the different CSPs evolved and confronted challenges over time led to my finding of how a supportive relational context is a critical enabler for individuals to "step in" to adversity. Such interactions with key respondents also led to practical suggestions for how my study findings could influence partnering practice.

In addition to these discursive exchanges with study respondents, I also made a conscious effort to proactively engage and consult with a variety of scholars and practitioners who I felt could help enhance the quality and relevance of my study. As indicated in Table 8, interactions ranged from one-on-one discussions with academic peers and scholars to presentations and feedback sessions during academic conferences, doctoral workshops, and GSB research update sessions. All of these helped to identify gaps and areas for more exploration, promote coherence in my reasoning and surface my own biases.

In view of my consulting work in the partnering arena, I also had access to multiple CSP practitioners with diverse global experience who were outside my study sample. I therefore actively reached out to them to discuss my ongoing findings and share various versions of my figures and model to determine how they resonated and whether I might be missing something. These interactions were valuable not only for the insights and feedback, but also for the opportunity they provided to articulate my findings and conclusions in a clear and coherent manner that was accessible to a non-academic audience. Most importantly, however, these interactions complemented those with my study respondents, and helped me to identify and validate potential contributions to practice that respond to the real needs and interests of a broad range of CSP practitioners. These are described in Chapter 5 as the practical implications of my research.

Table 8: Engagements with academics and practitioners

Reviews with key respondents - validation and fact checking	Max - On each occasion of follow up interviews would share insights on findings for validation - 2018 - 2019 Ian - reviewed findings on stepping back - Oct 2018 Oliver - reviewed findings around the ego and shifting pathways - Sept 2019 Uma - reviewed findings around the relational context - Sept 2019
Reviews with PhD supervisors	Dr Tim London – Monthly guidance and discussion while preparing setting up the study, reflecting on preliminary insights and how to proceed with data collection Feb 2016 – May 2020 Professor Ralph Hamann – Guidance and support to refine research questions, explore other literatures, reflect on findings, prepare models, conference abstracts and presentations, and enhance parsimony, coherence and relevance of my research and writing - 2018 – 2022
Reviews with academic peers, PhDs and early career scholars	Michele Westerman Behaylo - discussion on preliminary findings and methods - October 2018 Marjolijn Dijksterhuis - discussed findings, concepts and analytical strategy - multiple occasions - 2018 - 2019 Katharina Husemann - discussed findings and theoretical lens multiple occasions - 2018- 2019 Jill Bogie - discussed research strategy and preliminary findings multiple occasions - 2017 - 2019 Cecile Feront - reviewed findings during EGOS - 2019 Derek Sprackett - reviewed findings and preliminary models - 2019 Priyanka Brunese - reviewed findings and analyses, shared model and data substantiation - multiple occasions - 2019- 2022
GSB research updates	PRC 4 - Research update - feedback from Peers and visiting scholars - October 2018 PRC 4 - Research Update - feedback from peers and supervisors - October 2019 Lunchtime seminar - Presenting full thesis project prior to submission - June 2022
Academic onferences	CSSI 2018 Doctoral Workshop: presented proposal and preliminary findings - feedback from Peter Glasbergen and Rob Van Tulder EGOS 2019- Doctoral Workshop: presented proposal and preliminary findings - feedback from Tina Dacin and peers CSSI 2020 Doctoral Workshop: Review of study progress and preliminary findings by peers and scholars - feedback May Seitanidi and Annmarie Ryan CSSI 2020 Panel session: presented interim findings and initial model - feedback from academics and peers
Practitioner conference Adolescent Health Partnership Forum	Presentation of theories around partnering… skills/priorities etc. focus on trust building - partnering principles, what drives commitment and good partnerships, capacity building and feedback from 80 CSP practitioners - April 2018
Discussions with practitioners outside the study sample Feedback / validation of ideas, review of models and discussion of potential contributions for practice	Sarah Miller - former Global Partnerships Director, Grassroot Soccer - review/discussion of emerging findings, conference papers, preliminary and final models, analytical synthesis, draft chapters with focus on promoting practical relevance - 2018-2022 Kate Nightingale, Global Fund Partnership Portfolio Manager- checking initial findings to see if they resonate - 2018 Darian Stibbe - Executive Director, The Partnering Initiative - sharing findings for views and insights - 2020 Avni Amin, Technical Officer, WHO, sharing findings for views and insights - 2020 Dave Prescott, Creative Director, The Partnering Initiative, Review of model and analytical synthesis - 2021 Dominic Hein, Head of Market Shaping, GAVI, discussion of model and findings, practical contributions - 2022 Pratik Bhatnagar, Global Public Health Director, IQVIA, discussion of model and findings, practical contributions - 2022 Mahmood Sonday, Director Africa, Reos Partners, discussion of model and findings, practical contributions - 2022

Chapter 4 - Findings

4.1 Chapter introduction

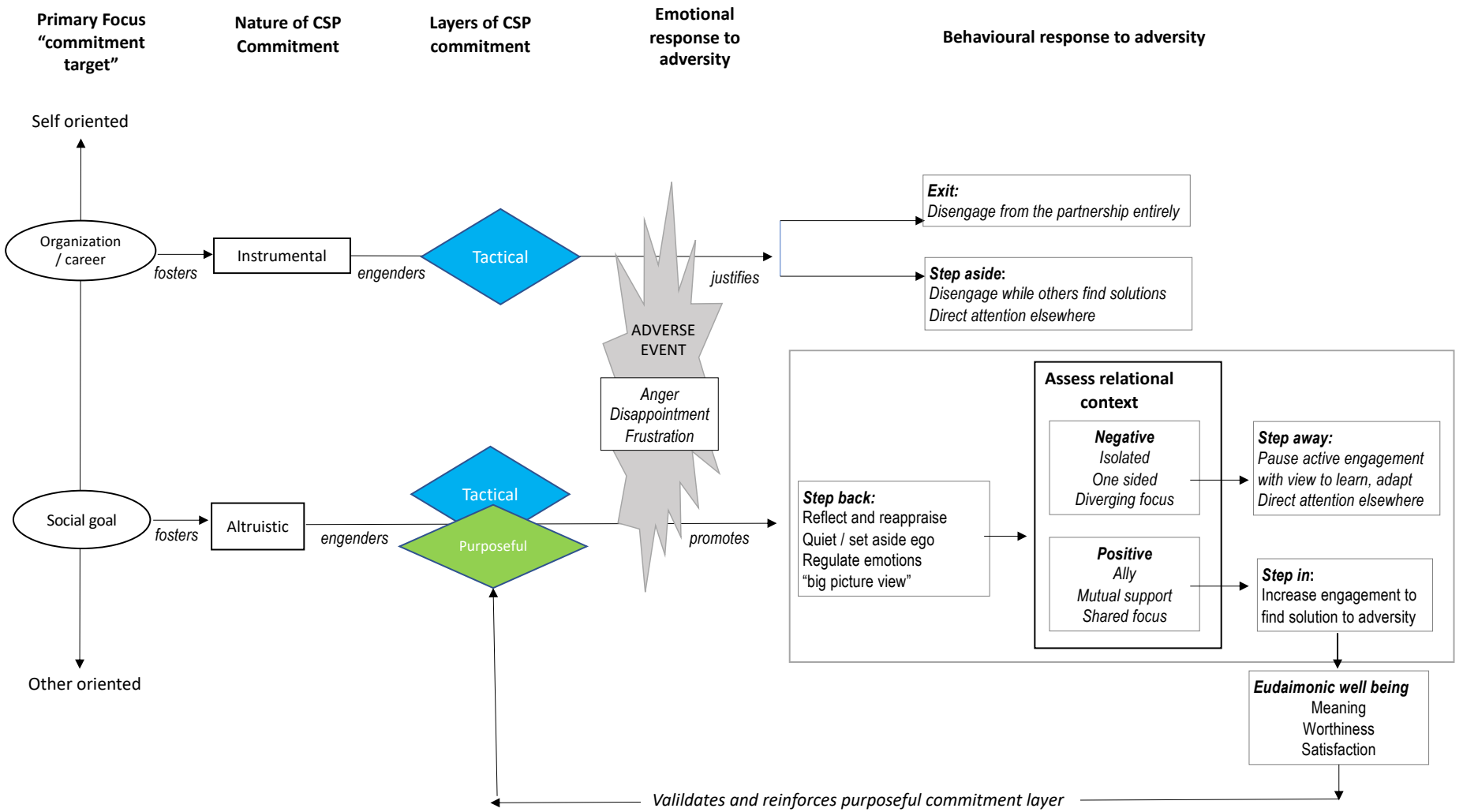
In this chapter, I present what I have learned about how CSP commitment is shaped through my interviews and observations of partnering practitioners working in health-oriented, cross sector partnerships in South Africa. When I began my research project, I believed that individuals' commitment to and engagement in a particular CSP was based primarily on their perceived "return on investment". In other words, guided by concepts of social exchange and reciprocity (Blau, 1964; Brown, 1996; di Domenico et al., 2009; Emerson, 1976; M. M. Seitanidi & Crane, 2009; Weber et al., 2022), I expected that my respondents would consciously attribute value to what the partnership delivered for their organizations or themselves, and invest their time and effort accordingly. I also thought I might uncover some patterns related to whether they represented business, government or an NGO/social enterprise.

Yet, as I listened to my respondents' views and experiences, and witnessed their interactions and behaviours over time, I began to understand that while such cognitive and tactical reflections did take place, many of my study participants also had a more purposeful commitment to the work of the CSP, and in particular to the social goal that the CSP was working towards. Indeed, as I compared and analysed my data, I found that there were a variety of factors and processes that shaped the *nature,* or motivation behind my respondents' bond to the partnership, as well as their ability to sustain CSP commitment during situations of partnership adversity.

I also found that people expressed CSP commitment in different *layers,* by which I refer to categories of how individuals articulated and manifested their bond to the partnership. The *tactical layer* of CSP commitment was typically the basis for their engagement. It was logical, frequently pragmatic, and readily explained by all study participants. The *purposeful layer* was deeper, related to personal experience, and passionately expressed by only a subset of my respondents. In short, individual commitment to CSPs is not only complex, but often quite subjective. One respondent also believed it to be relatively scarce, asserting that "true commitment is hard to find, you have to be truly altruistic, or to have had a personal event" (P43).

To illustrate my findings, I begin by briefly presenting an empirically developed model of archetypal CSP commitment pathways and highlighting the different outcomes that arise in response to adversity (see Figure 9). I then proceed to draw on data from all respondents to unpack and illustrate each component in the model, explaining the motives behind CSP practitioners' commitment and describing characteristics, behaviours and circumstances that enabled people to sustain their commitment through adverse events. I also describe the benefit that partnership practitioners who sustained their CSP commitment appeared to derive, which links closely to the purposeful layer of commitment. I conclude the chapter by introducing nascent findings for potential reinforcement effects of the altruistic pathway that merit additional exploration.

Figure 9: CSP commitment pathways through adversity



4.2 CSP commitment pathways through adversity

As illustrated in Figure 9, over the course of my study, I identified two CSP commitment pathways that were influenced by a driving force that some respondents characterized as whether a person is more focused on the "self" or the "other". This distinction relates to how they prioritize three primary commitment targets that are inherent to all individuals who work in such partnerships: their organization, their career and the social goal of interest to the CSP. Those who expressed a "self" orientation were more likely to prioritize their organizational and/or career goals as the primary commitment target. Those who expressed an "other" orientation, were more likely to prioritize the social goal of the partnership, in this case the health and welfare of underserved individuals and communities, as the primary commitment target.

The self vs other orientation fostered what I have labelled as the *nature* of their CSP commitment, which is a term used by commitment scholars to characterize different types and profiles of commitment (Meyer et al., 1989, 2012). In my study, the nature of commitment ranged from largely instrumental (i.e. focused on generating benefit for "themselves" and displaying strong allegiance to organizational or career goals), to highly altruistic (i.e. focused on generating benefit for "others" and displaying strong allegiance to the broader social goal). This in turn engendered what I identified to be two different *layers* of commitment (tactical and purposeful), which were reflected in my respondents' manifestations and expressions of their bond to the partnership. All respondents demonstrated a *tactical layer* of commitment to the CSP. This was generally articulated at a cognitive level and related the partnership to a vehicle for combining resources, such as funding, technical capacity and/or access to patients. Respondents who displayed an altruistic nature of commitment tended to also express a *purposeful layer* of commitment in addition to the

tactical layer. The purposeful layer was often articulated at an emotional level and was closely connected to their personal beliefs and experience. Most often it related to their conviction that the social goal they felt so strongly about could best be achieved through collaboration across sectors.

Over the course of the study, my partnership practitioners were confronted with multiple instances of both internal and external adversity that affected their CSPs. Challenges included loss or turnover of key partner organization representatives, insufficient funding and staff, power imbalances among partners, and delays due to community backlash or bureaucratic hurdles. The initial emotional response to adversity was similar for all study participants and was expressed primarily as frustration and disappointment. However, what I observed over time was that depending on the nature and layers of CSP commitment that an individual embodied, their corresponding behavioural response to the adverse situation varied.

Those with an instrumental nature and tactical layer of CSP commitment were more likely to "step aside" or even "exit" the partnership when challenges arose. They felt justified in directing their attention elsewhere, and in some cases disengaged entirely from the partnership.

On the other hand, the combination of an altruistic nature and tactical *plus* purposeful layers of CSP commitment promoted individuals to first "step back", which consisted of reflecting on and reappraising the situation, quieting their egos, and regulating their emotions. Through this self-reflective process, individuals acknowledged that their emotions and their personal or organizational egos were triggered by certain adverse events, and consciously chose to "get past [their] ego" (P83) in the interest of "the bigger opportunity" (P51) and "the greater

good" (P24). Depending on their assessment of the relational context and level of support within the partnership, these respondents would either "step away" and pause active engagement in the CSP, or "step in" to the challenge, demonstrating resilience in their commitment to the CSP. The act of stepping in and finding solutions ultimately generated personal benefit in the form of eudaimonic well-being, which appeared to reinforce the purposeful layer of CSP commitment.

As indicated in Table 9, my study showed that for each CSP, there were members who aligned to each pathway, and there was no clear correlation with the sector that the individual represented. I also could not identify a distinct pattern based on the respondents' profession or role in their organization.[13]

Table 9: Overview of CSPs and study participants' commitment nature

Partnership	Objective	Sector represented by study participant	Priority Focus commitment target in context of CSP	CSP Commitment nature
Healthy Mining Communities (HMC)	Improve health seeking behaviour, knowledge and access to preventive screening/health care within mining communities	NGO/SE	**Organization** / Career	Instrumental
		NGO/SE	**Social goal** / Organization	Altruistic
		Business	**Social goal** / Organization	Altruistic
		Business	**Social goal**	Altruistic
		Business	**Organization** / social goal	Instrumental
		Government	**Organization**	Instrumental
		NGO/SE	**Career** / Organization	Instrumental
		NGO/SE	**Social Goal / Organization**	Altruistic
Healthy Rural Communities (HRC)	Partnership to improve linkages and referrals between GPs and specialists through use of referrals App to promote better care in rural/underserved communities	NGO/SE	**Social goal** / Organization	Altruistic
		NGO/SE	**Career** / Organization	Instrumental
		NGO/SE	**Organization**	Instrumental
		Government	**Social goal** / Career	Altruistic
Healthy Townships (HT)	Provide alternative pick-up points for township residents to get chronic medicines and basic health services thus providing differentiated care options, while decongesting public health facilities	NGO/SE	**Social goal**	Altruistic
		NGO/SE	**Social goal**	Altruistic
		Business	**Organization** / Social Goal	Instrumental
		NGO/SE	**Career** / Organization	Instrumental
		NGO/SE	**Organization** / Social goal	Instrumental
		NGO/SE	**Career** / Organization	Instrumental
		NGO/SE	**Organization** / Social goal	Instrumental
		Government	**Organization** / Social Goal	Instrumental
Healthy Bodies (HB)	Partnership to provide low-cost joint replacements and help address waiting list that is overwhelming public sector facilities	NGO/SE	**Social goal** / Organization	Altruistic
		Government	**Social goal**	Altruistic
		Business	**Career** / Organization	Instrumental

[13] To help safeguard confidentiality, Table 9 does not list the roles and professions of study participants, yet as indicated in the narrative, no distinct patterns were identified in this regard.

4.3 CSPs: Complex setting with multiple commitment targets

CSP practitioners are, by definition, operating in a cross-boundary and often temporary work setting which is characterized by its social objective. The CSP is generally complex with multiple actors and stakeholders who need attention. The CSP is also separate to the partnership practitioners' own organization, and as such, represents a different workplace commitment target. However, respondents were also navigating among several other commitment targets in relation to their work, three of which played an important role in shaping how their commitment to the CSP was embodied and sustained. These targets are summarized in Table 10 and include the employing organization, the individual's career, and the social goal of the partnership.

Table 10: Three key commitment targets for CSP practitioners

Concept / component in theoretical model	**Definition / description of concept**	**Model Pathway components with description**		**Examples from data**
Primary focus commitment target	Refers to one of three important commitment targets that the individual holds the highest allegiance to *within the context of the CSP*.	*Organi-zation*	Focus on the "self" interest - which refers to what they can derive from or achieve through the partnership which will benefit their organizational objectives or their own individual career progression; generally hold a strong allegiance to the organization.	*"Now remember all corporate social investment is always done for a good purpose, always comes from here (points to his heart). But there's always a selfish underlying factor. I want to sell more products and I want to breed a customer for the future. Later on, they will ask for my medicine by name because they trust me and they feel I am making a difference in their lives." (P63)* *"At the end of the day we've still got a business to run. You need a good foundation, so that foundation is that organisation's stability." (P53)* *"Sharing risk also means absorbing costs at a certain point, but not to the detriment of the business because we can't." (P14)* *"I think of it as my goals incorporated in the overall goals of the department. Remember the department has a duty to provide health care in the community. So, peace of mind is that we are able to provide for our community members, in the community that our department is responsible for." (P13)*
		Career		*"Number one is how can I look good to my boss? Number two is how can I save money or how can I be better and maybe make money for the organization." (P32)* *"When a project like this is handed to you, you would like to succeed. Because your boss counts on you. He's given you this responsibility and he counts on you to make this work. So you're doing your best to meet those expectations" (P33)* *"For her it wasn't how many patients, it was her stature in the company" (P34 – speaking of another partner)*
		Social goal	Focus on the "other" which refers to the higher social goal or objective that the CSP aims to contribute to; generally hold a strong allegiance to the social goal and weaker allegiance to the organization. *(In this study the overarching goal of all CSPs is to improve the health of disadvantaged communities/individuals in South Africa)*	*"The primary goal for me is those 4945 patients just in the Western Cape" (P24)* *"It's not about me or SANFA, it's about the community" (P71)* *"We're in this for the patients" (P73)* *"The thing that drives me is finding the solution for the patient. That's what's all important. It trumps anything else." (P83)* *"It's patient centered, population focused, cost aware. But it's in that order. It's not first and foremost cost aware. It's patient focused. (P83)*

4.3.1 Employing organization

Many study participants came to the CSP with organizational objectives that they expected the partnership could help them to fulfil. These varied from reaching ambitious HIV testing targets required for a separately funded project to strengthening product sales and consumer loyalty through direct patient contact via community level health providers.

Some participants voiced these organizational objectives clearly during their interviews. For example, Oliver, a business representative, spoke openly to his primary "selfish" interest in relation to CSPs which related to building trust in his brand and "breeding a customer of the future".

> Our selfish underlying factor is that we want to bring a customer on much earlier in the value chain so that when they are in the economic stakes they actually look after themselves properly. They will actually ask for our drug by name.

For others, the description of the organizational interest in relation to such social partnerships was a bit less blunt, but similarly clear. Eric, who was also from the private sector, explained why his organization had an interest in the health of mining communities as follows,

> For my organization it's quite simple. These are communities that are hosting us, and our employees are coming from those particular communities. So, we have a moral responsibility of demonstrating value by being there. Communities need to wake up and say - our lives are better because Tower Mining is amongst us.

Statements such as these revealed that certain study respondents held a strong allegiance to their organization's interest and focused on benefits that could be derived from partnering with other sectors.

4.3.2 Career

From an individual standpoint, study participants also had personal career objectives which could be facilitated through the partnership. These ranged from demonstrating innovation

within a government entity or growing their own organization, to safeguarding respect and approval of the supervisor who assigned them to work on the partnership.

For example, Robert, from the NGO/SE sector, explained the motivation for his commitment as follows:

> When a project like this is handed to you, you would like to succeed. Because your boss counts on you. He's given you this responsibility and he counts on you to make this work… the mere fact that he trusted you with that responsibility says a lot. For me it's important to make sure that I do my best to meet his expectations.

In most cases, individual career goals were not vocally expressed by participants during their own interviews, but rather induced through behavioural observation, attention to spontaneous comments, and insights gleaned from interviews of other participants. For instance, when travelling to a partnership event, to the dismay and surprise of his other partners, Eric elected not to arrive at the site a day early like everyone else to help finalize joint preparations. Rather he arrived at the last minute by private plane with his CEO and the Minister of Health, something which the others viewed as considerably self-serving since it enhanced his political positioning within his company and with government.

Another example is my interview experience with Wanda, a private sector representative, who had recently exited the CSP she was engaging in. When considering the risk of potential failure of such partnerships, Wanda exclaimed under her breath “you can’t afford to” fail! This spontaneous statement, as well as her formal and slightly defensive demeanour during the interview, conveyed her concern about the potential detriment that partnership challenges could have inflicted on her reputation or her career. This was corroborated by the NGO/SE partner in the CSP (P34), who lamented that Wanda’s reason for engaging “wasn’t

how many patients [are helped], it was her stature in the company". Statements and behaviours such as these indicated that the respondents' engagement in the partnership was at least partially motivated by the value they could derive for their own career pathway.

4.3.3 Social goal

The social goal of strengthening health services and outcomes for underserved populations and communities was common to all the CSPs in my research project. For several study participants, it was also vocally articulated as a personal goal, and as such represented an important individual commitment target. They explained this objective in different ways, but for most it was first and foremost about the individuals and communities who the partnership was ultimately trying to serve. They described this as promoting "citizen centricity and ensuring a very good patient experience" (P13), putting "yourself in the client's shoes" (P23) and "changing an individual's life" (P34). For example, in Healthy Bodies, which aimed to reach underserved populations with joint replacements, the government representative (P24) emphasized "The primary goal for me is those 4945 patients just in the Western Cape. I don't even want to think about what is in the rest of the country. They don't even have proper numbers, but they're worse off".

Max, who represented the NGO/SE sector in his CSP, spoke about his desire to make a positive change at the community level. A medical doctor by training, he had helped to conceptualize the partnership's objective of offering differentiated health services and strengthening adherence to chronic medicines in township areas. Although he recognized that the partnership was good for the company on many levels, he explained his reason for engaging as follows: "I can say with absolute clarity, my aim is to achieve this objective of making a difference, making some impact in those communities. That's what it's about for me". Statements such as these indicated that the study respondent held a strong allegiance to

the social goal of the partnership and that this was an important motivation for their engagement in the CSP.

4.4 Priority focus commitment target

As people who study or work in CSPs would expect, most study participants expressed attention and some level of allegiance to more than one of the above commitment targets. There were distinct variations, however, in terms of their relative focus and priority for each respondent. This was indicated through different aspects of the interviews, such as the order and frequency in which they spoke about the different targets, the body language and level of emotion expressed in relation to each, and what kinds of personal stories and anecdotes were spontaneously given to accompany them.

For example, nearly all respondents articulated their interest in the social goal of improving the health and welfare of others. Yet, while some expressed this as a "desire to do good" (P63), others emphasized that they had chosen to work for the public sector, NGOs, and foundations precisely because they wanted to contribute to improving the health and the lives of others. Several also shared how personal experiences had influenced them in their choice of both profession and sector.

One example was Sandra, who was an NGO representative in her CSP and whose passion for helping people living with HIV at the community level had a long history. Sandra's first-hand experience of the impact of HIV on her family motivated her to become a community HIV counsellor and ultimately led her to an NGO where she coordinated an HIV treatment adherence programme in disadvantaged areas. Her greatest fear was what would happen to her staff and the community once their current funding ran out.

Another example was Leo who worked in a public hospital. Leo represented government in his CSP and had followed in the footsteps of his father who was also a public sector physician. He acknowledged that he could earn more money elsewhere but explained that in "State" there is more scope for research and innovation which enables him to "deliver better quality service than private practice" and serve patients and communities who "do not have a voice".

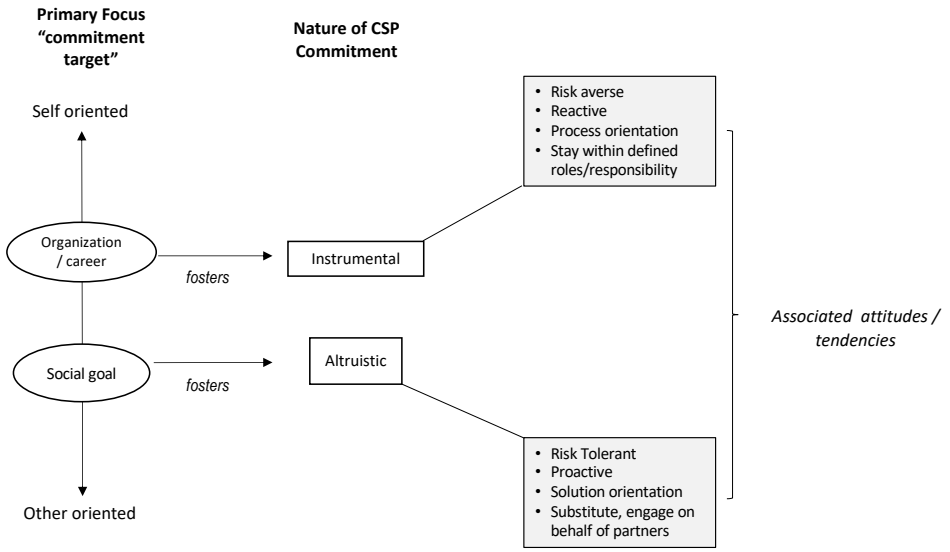
What took time and deeper analysis to fully discern and understand, however, was that for a few of the participants who expressed a passionate allegiance to the social goal, the commitment target that they vocally prioritized in their professional life, was not always the one that they prioritized in relation to the CSP. In some cases, this was openly stated during the formal interview. For example, one respondent from the NGO/SE sector (P23) had clearly devoted their career towards supporting disadvantaged communities. Yet, when they explained their engagement in the CSP they admitted "To be honest, funding will be the most important thing. If Resilience gets more funding to support the project, then I will see that as a gain for Resilience". Hence, their priority commitment target in relation to this particular CSP was the organization, not the social goal.

For others this important distinction was revealed through data triangulation and observation of behaviours, notably in response to adversity. This was the case for Quinn, for example, who had founded his NGO. His commitment to the health and welfare of his country and beyond was clearly and vehemently asserted during his interview with exclamations like "we owe it to the world!". Yet, his interactions during initial partnership meetings, consistently raising his organizational needs, as well as insights from his colleagues and partners, revealed that at the start of this specific CSP, Quinn's priority focus commitment target was his

organizational interest of enhancing his NGO's sustainability. As a colleague from the same NGO explained, "I don't want to sound negative, but I know that Quinn will pull out if there's no money or something" (P53).

Hence, what was decisive for my study was the priority focus commitment target for each respondent *within the context of the CSP*. I categorized this as being more "self" vs "other" oriented. Those who were "self-oriented" were more focused on what they could derive from the partnership for their organization or their own careers. Those who were more "other oriented" focused on contributing to the partnership as a vehicle through which they could effectively achieve the social goal. As indicated in Figure 10, this distinction fostered the *nature* of their CSP commitment which varied between *instrumental* vs *altruistic* and was associated with different attitudes and tendencies within the partnership.

Figure 10: Relationship between commitment targets and nature of CSP commitment



4.5 Nature of CSP commitment

Drawing on how commitment scholars employ the term (Becker et al., 2012; Klein et al., 2020; Meyer et al., 2012), I refer to the *nature* of CSP commitment to describe the motive behind an individual's bond to the partnership. It aligns with the priority focus commitment target that each respondent prioritized within the context of the specific partnership. Those with a strong "self-orientation" were more likely to display an *instrumental* nature of CSP commitment, whereas those with a strong "other-orientation" tended to exhibit an *altruistic* nature of CSP commitment. This was reflected in the way that respondents approached and explained their rationale for partnering, as well as in the attitudes and tendencies that were observed.

Respondents with an altruistic nature of CSP commitment tended to drive or coordinated their CSPs, and as described in subsequent sections of this chapter, they also exhibited persistence and a tolerance for risk. Respondents with an instrumental nature of CSP commitment tended to be more reactive and risk averse in the partnership, referring, for example, to the need for government "sanctions" (P14) before the CSP could go ahead, and a need for all partners to "share the risk" (P14). Irrespective of the sector they represented, they were also more likely to highlight "issues of compliance" (P13) or "governance" (P14) during interviews or meetings and to demonstrate a process orientation. Their altruistically natured counterparts tended to focus on identifying solutions during meetings, posing questions such as "Is there anything we can do to fast track?" (P83), which reflected a willingness to engage however required to reduce delays. Table 11 presents the CSP commitment natures that were identified through my research and Table 12 provides an overview of my study respondents and their respective CSP commitment natures in relation to the CSPs under study.

Table 11: Nature of CSP Commitment

Concept / component in theoretical model	Definition / description of concept	Model Pathway components with description		Examples from data
Nature of CSP commitment	Describes the motive behind the individual's CSP commitment and serves as a descriptor for the individuals' type of commitment to the partnership	*Instrumental*	CSP commitment motivation is self-oriented – linked to how/whether the partnership will enable the individual to progress towards/achieve organizational or personal career objectives	*"This is forward integration, we are looking after our own destiny to a degree and there is money in it as well… I won't lie about that." (P63)* *"Partnering with the private sector is a way for us to become relevant." (P53)* *"We [as government] have the responsibility to reduce the burden of HIV in our province. So our engagement with the partners is to ensure we have support to reduce that burden." (P31)* *"If the partner is credible and everything is going well and everything is above board, then it's easy for us, they complement what we want to achieve." (P13)* *"…because we're so small we rely on partnerships. We rely on curating and having those relationships"(P22)* *"…it's not only about going with what works and what is proven to make you look good. There are a whole lot of other things, about who's in the partnership, who's bringing the idea to you, who else is brought along …what other kind of influence all this brings in." (P21)*
		Altruistic	CSP commitment motivation is other-oriented – linked to how the partnership is helping or will help the beneficiary communities or individuals that it is aiming to serve, support or uplift – and/or potentially stimulate other organizations to engage in similar work	*"It's about the greater good rather than the individual." (P24)* *"One of the things that I do bring to this is an unwavering commitment to doing the right thing. As soon as this project starts being deviated towards business, profitable, to drive profits, I'll put my foot down and I will be unwavering on that… That's why I left the last place, and I wasn't going to break my principles on how these things should be done… it's not about us, it's about the patients. So the sharpest point is that person sitting in that chair" (P83)* *It's about "changing an individual's life". (P34)* *"The greatest people that shifted the boundaries of life, the human boundaries of life was people that never did it for any other reason, than for just doing it. Mother Theresa, Nelson Mandela. There's no personal gain….So when you do things not for rewards and gains and stuff like that, you realize that the credit and the accolades and things are maybe not in your life time but somewhere, even if it's in the life hereafter, which I believe." (P51)*

Table 12: Study respondents' CSP commitment natures

Respondent*	Sector	Priority commitment target in the context of the CSP	Nature of CSP commitment
Peter	NGO/SE	**Career** / Organization	Instrumental
Robert	NGO/SE	**Career**/Organization	Instrumental
Grace	NGO/SE	**Career** /Organization	Instrumental
Wanda	Business	**Career** /Organization	Instrumental
John	NGO/SE	**Career** /Organization	Instrumental
Amy	NGO/SE	**Organization** /Career	Instrumental
Fran	Government	**Organization**	Instrumental
Kate	NGO/SE	**Organization**	Instrumental
Sandra	NGO/SE	**Organization** /Social goal	Instrumental
Tom	Government	**Organization** / Social Goal	Instrumental
Oliver	Business	**Organization** / Social Goal	Instrumental
Quinn	NGO/SE	**Organization** / Social goal	Instrumental
Eric	Business	**Organization** / Social goal	Instrumental
Hazel	NGO/SE	**Social Goal** / Organization	Altruistic
Beth	NGO/SE	**Social goal** / Organization	Altruistic
Chris	Business	**Social goal** / Organization	Altruistic
Ian	NGO/SE	**Social goal** /Organization	Altruistic
Uma	NGO/SE	**Social goal** /Organization	Altruistic
Leo	Government	**Social goal** / Career	Altruistic
Vincent	Government	**Social goal**	Altruistic
Max	NGO/SE	**Social goal**	Altruistic
Nick	NGO/SE	**Social goal**	Altruistic
Dan	Business	**Social goal**	Altruistic

4.5.1 Instrumental nature of CSP commitment

The instrumental nature of CSP commitment is focused on how the partnership can serve as a strategy or vehicle to help advance and achieve organizational or career objectives. Those who exhibited an instrumental nature in their CSPs generally spoke about their reason for partnering within the context of their position and their organization's strategic objectives.

For example, Wanda, who engaged in multiple CSPs as part of her role at her company explained,

> My job is looking externally and engaging with external stakeholders to find out what the problems are in our health ecosystem and come back to the organisation and find out if we have capabilities or solutions to solve the problems in-house or do we need to do it through collaborations.

For Wanda and several other respondents, partnerships were intentionally sought out for the purpose of filling a gap related to their organizational interest. This was evident in a Tower Mining representative's (P41) explanation for why the company chose to start partnering in the CSP with SANFA to promote HIV prevention and health screening in mining communities. It related to their need to fulfil government expectations of the private sector.

> After the release of the NSP [The South African government's National Strategic Plan on HIV/AIDS and Tuberculosis], it was quite clear that in one shape or the other, we have to demonstrate as private sector how are we contributing to fight this plight. So for us that was enough to say we need to partner and to partner strategically in having sustainable impact on the communities that are around our mines…. We are a founding member of SANFA. So SANFA was the easiest vehicle to look at how do we pursue the various partnership mechanisms.

The CSP thus served as a vehicle for Tower Mining to show government and communities that they were actively contributing towards national HIV-related targets. When sharing more about how the CSP was working in the community, the respondent articulated how his organization was gaining from the collaboration stating that *"*this is where you tend to benefit from the value of partnership. Instead of going at it alone, now you get access, you get a platform*"*.

Another key motivator behind some respondents' instrumental nature of CSP commitment was the objective of strengthening or sustaining their own organization. For example, John who worked in the NGO/SE sector shared that his job was to "broker these partnerships" with corporates in order to promote stability for the organization. Kate, who was with the same organization explained that they "rely on partnerships" because they are so small and otherwise could not sustain themselves. A respondent from the SANFA (P81), an NGO/SE, stated at first that they "didn't mind" if companies partnered with each other or with SANFA to scale up health screening in mining communities since the underlying concept was to promote partnering between businesses for good. A second later, however, they revised their statement saying, "partner with SANFA so that we become more sustainable".

Peter also spoke about sustainability, as well as relevance for his NGO, in relation to the CSP. As a national NGO they were largely dependent on big international donors and were constantly "chasing the funding". When discussing the CSP, Peter admitted that "these projects, they're not priorities" for the organization. Yet as a self-declared entrepreneur with corporate experience and relative freedom in his role at the organization, he chose to focus his effort on the partnership since he believed that working with the private sector in an innovative way could help the NGO to gain viability, sustainability, and relevance.

At the same time, Peter had limited experience in the non-profit sector, and while he understood the constraints of working in a large NGO, he expressed frustration regarding the red tape and bureaucracy. He was interested in supporting development objectives but displayed less passion than other CSP participants towards the social goals of the partnership. His commitment to the partnership was rather utilitarian and instrumental, in the sense that he wanted to move things, grow his own experience, and "get things done".

The desire to enhance organizational sustainability was also reflected in the behaviour of the Resilience CEO during the first CSP brainstorming meeting. The CEO arrived late and appeared sceptical about the whole initiative, yet dominated the meeting, and asserted objectives related to their NGO's funding needs. Tensions arose since the CEO wanted to move the project as fast as possible and was hoping the collaboration could help Resilience to meet ambitious HIV testing targets for a separately funded programme. The other CSP members, however, preferred to first get the partnership concept right through a pilot exercise, and then take it to scale. The CEO was clearly frustrated by the situation saying "I can't count on you guys" and have to "go on my own" to "get the results" for the donor (P43). After the meeting, two CSP members expressed their dismay that the Resilience CEO's focus was "on the numbers" (P73, P83). Interestingly, however, one of them also reflected that even *"*when [the CEO's] focus remains on the numbers, if you introduce what we're actually doing this for, it is for the patient, and this kind of rejects that vision of [theirs] and helps to moderate it" (P73). This ability to relativize tensions and reorient focus on the bigger picture is something that revealed itself to be important in my study.

Clear instrumental motive for the CSP was also expressed by Oliver, who openly shared the outcomes he was expecting for the medical company where he held a leadership role. Oliver anticipated that the company-supported clinics located in the townships would benefit from increased foot traffic once the Healthy Townships CSP established nearby pick-up points for chronic medicines and staffed them with the NGO partner's community care workers. The clinics sold branded products from his company and he was hopeful that the proximity and link with the pick-up points would increase visits, sales and brand loyalty while also growing revenue for the health professionals who ran the clinics. Taken together this would help them to achieve *"*scalability and sustainability*"* for the differentiated service delivery model within

township communities that they were funding, and as he explained during a meeting with the partnering NGO, also support them in "looking after our own destiny".

A similarly instrumental nature of CSP commitment was exhibited within the Healthy Mining Communities CSP during an important public event. Tower Mining was hosting a full day event to launch the CSP in one of their rural areas and joint planning with partners had been underway for weeks. On the morning of the event, at the last minute, and without any consultation, Eric adjusted the event programme by adding a hospital visit which was apparently requested by the provincial minister of health. His partners were surprised and confused since they had never heard about the hospital visit, and they expressed their annoyance that it had clearly been included to serve Tower Mining's political interest. To their dismay, touring the hospital with all the VIPs took so long that a visit with recipients of a community programme, was cut from the day's agenda, even though the community group was ready, prepared, and waiting. It was a clear indication that Eric's organizational interest of strengthening the bilateral relationship with government superseded other objectives of the CSP that his partners felt were critical.

These and other examples revealed that for practitioners with an instrumental nature of CSP commitment, collaboration, and partnership are primarily viewed as a means to obtain tangible benefit for their organization. There were some cases where a career benefit also had importance, however, it was less commonly shared and was not openly articulated outside of interviews.

4.5.2 Altruistic nature of CSP commitment

The altruistic nature of CSP commitment focused on how the partnership can serve as a strategy or vehicle to advance the social goal of the partnership, which in my study related to

improving the health of disadvantaged individuals and communities in South Africa. Respondents who displayed an altruistic nature of CSP commitment often offered personal stories that they felt had influenced them to develop what they themselves considered to be an "other's first" mindset which they carried into their partnerships.

For example, Nick explained how he was influenced by the guidance of his grandfather.

> We come from a farming background and as kids I remember my grandfather sitting us down and saying when you plant something, you plant it for three reasons, in equal thirds. The first third is for the birds and nature, the second third is to sustain yourself, and the last third is for a bit of profit so you can buy more seeds and fuel to plant next year. He says if you keep that formula in life, you will always do well because you're always thinking of someone else….he used to sit us down and give us these little evening talks as a grandad and this was one of them that stuck with me with the planting… so I'm sort of planting.

Vincent told a similar story about how his "community first" ethos was inspired by his English mother.

> My mother's passed on now, but she was one of the war babies, a classic war baby. She had that English way of you don't always put yourself in front, you put the community or the village first, so that was always the ethos that I was brought up under. When you leave somewhere you leave it better off than when you found it. That was sort of the process that formed a lot of my thinking.

Such anecdotes revealed a deep desire among some respondents to help others which they embodied in their commitment to such partnerships. Uma, for example, articulated that the most important thing about Healthy Bodies was "changing an individual's life". She displayed this commitment through her personal visits to all patients who were benefitting from a subsidized joint surgery day through the CSP. She lamented at that stage that Healthy Bodies had not been able to scale as originally intended since the business partner had pulled

out, but she was grateful that they could at least still offer some people support for affordable joint replacements. Her compassionate attention to each patient was notable since there was no real obligation for her to be at the hospital and she received no compensation for her time. She took pride in the fact that she knew each patient's story and remarked that her experience with her partners in Healthy Bodies had made her realize that commitment to such socially oriented collaborations "has to do with what drives a personality".

Between 2018 – 2019, Healthy Bodies remained dormant for nearly a year due to a leadership change at the government health facility and during that period Uma had been focusing on other projects and partnerships. She continued to receive calls from patients on the joint replacement waiting list (which in the meantime had grown to over 6000 people) and in fall 2019 had identified an opportunity to rejuvenate the CSP through different partners. She admitted that her commitment to this somewhat "niche" health objective of providing affordable joint surgeries to people who had been waiting for years may seem surprising. She reflected that it was perhaps influenced by the fact that her grandmother had received one of the first hip replacements in South Africa and she had personally witnessed how her grandmother "had been in such pain and then suddenly her life changed". She acknowledged that this was most likely the "deep seated reason" for her own commitment to improving other people's lives through Healthy Bodies.

Max, a former medical doctor, was also extremely focused on improving patients' lives in the communities they were looking to serve through the CSP. During nearly every interview, conversation and meeting observation, Max repeatedly emphasized that "the patient has to be the sharpest point". He passionately expressed his "unwavering commitment to doing the right thing" which for him meant focusing on improving patient-centred services in

disadvantaged communities, rather than focusing on organizational benefit. In partnership meetings he smoothly acknowledged each partner's interests, yet consistently reminded them of the patient focus to re-orient discussions towards a shared vision that was greater than themselves. He embodied a giving mindset towards the partnership which was reflected in the way he presented things to his partners, focusing on what his organization could contribute and always offering to support and coordinate efforts to move things forward.

Dan, who worked in the private sector, also displayed an altruistic nature of CSP commitment however, his focus was slightly different. Although he acknowledged the business imperative of generating tax rebates and other benefits, he glossed over these quickly when describing the reasons for his engagement in such CSPs. He also explained that "it's a small component of my executive role but it's a very important component for me. So it's actually over and above what I'm expected to deliver in the company".

What drove Dan's commitment to such partnerships was the bigger objective of "spearheading sustainable future projects" and sharing the leadership experience they had with other businesses in a "passing it forward" approach. His objective of catalysing and stewarding CSPs was further demonstrated when he articulated how he views his own role, noting that he would take this partnership along with him to the new company he was joining through a merger and any others thereafter.

> I broker, I do the internal justification of why we should get involved in it…That's what I brought to [this company] and that's what I will take out to [the new one] and I'll take that to all the organisations that I go to.

Dan also shared his admiration for people like Nelson Mandela and Mother Theresa, stating that they had "shifted the boundaries of life" and they did it for "no personal gain", but rather

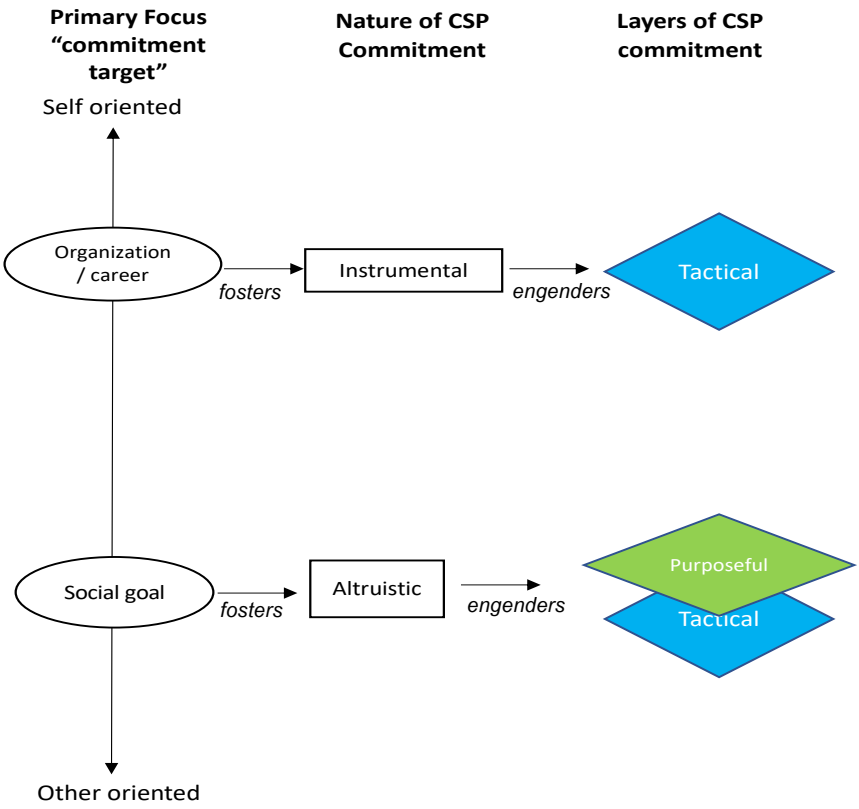
for the greater good. He further asserted his belief that when you "do things not for rewards or gains", you realize that you may receive "the credits and accolades" in the "life hereafter", a notion that "some people call karma".

Ian, who represented the NGO/SE sector, also spoke of historical figures who he admired, notably apartheid resistance leaders who "had put their lives on the line" for a cause they believed in. He explained how they inspired his commitment for improving the lives of disadvantaged South Africans through initiatives like the Healthy Rural Communities CSP since "health is all about partnerships". Such insights revealed that several of my partnership practitioners were driven by a sense of purpose greater than themselves.

4.5.3 From nature of CSP commitment to layers of CSP commitment

In summary, the nature of CSP commitment describes whether the motive behind study participants' commitment to partnering was driven by what they could derive for themselves (i.e. organization or career) or what they could contribute towards something bigger (i.e. social goal). In my study, all four partnerships were initiated, conceptualized and basically driven by practitioners who displayed an altruistic nature of CSP commitment. These individuals described themselves as "ignitors" (P24, P51) and emphasized how they used "constant engagement" (P51) and leveraged other "support bases" (P51) to "keep the fire burning" (P73). In their opinion, a tremendous level of persistence and dedication was required to get such partnerships off the ground and keep them moving along. As mentioned above, some invoked what appeared to be a higher purpose indicating that their nature of CSP commitment was influenced by deeply rooted personal characteristics and beliefs. This finding led me to identify two different *layers of CSP commitment* as depicted in Figure 11 below.

Figure 11: From nature to layers of CSP commitment



4.6 Layers of CSP commitment

The layers of CSP commitment refer to two observed categories of articulations and manifestations of partnership commitment that study respondents displayed. They differed in their nature and expression and corresponded to more cognitive vs affective motivations for commitment. As indicated in Figure 11, all CSP practitioners exhibited the *tactical layer of CSP commitment* which was articulated and manifested in a pragmatic and dispassionate manner and focused on practical needs and resources of the CSP. Those with an altruistic nature of CSP commitment, however, also displayed a *purposeful layer of CSP commitment.* This layer was articulated with emotion and manifested through purpose-driven action that often reflected the respondents' belief in the intrinsic value of partnering. Table 13 provides an overview of the two commitment layers and examples of corresponding evidence.

Table 13: Layers of CSP commitment

Concept / component in theoretical model	Definition / description of concept	Model Pathway components with description		Examples from data
Layers of CSP commitment	Refers to two observed categories of articulations and manifestations of CSP commitment by partnership practitioners that differed in their nature and expression and correspond to cognitive vs affective dimensions	*Tactical*	Commitment is articulated from a cognitive and generally resource-based perspective, which is practical and logical; generally expressed without emotion and manifested by pragmatic and somewhat detached actions and behaviours.	*"Health care is all about partnerships…because it's a massive problem and no organization, no amount of money can solve it all on their own" (P42).* *"We needed the private sector health provider since they were bringing the patients and the money" (P34)* *"We need to keep everything stitched up to a certain degree… otherwise we will never see the cohesive benefit" (P63)* *"It's critical that when you engage be sure you get the sanctioning from the provincial dept of health as well as the national dept of health, which is then quite a political landscape which can be your first barrier in your risk, because if you don't sort that out, it becomes a governance issue." (P14)* *"If we're wanting to make this thing affordable, we absolutely have to have a partnership with State" (P83)* *"We need to construct with the big picture in mind – but also be mindful of the small details on the ground" (P83)* *"Well, I think if you can both look at what you can sort of do for one another. And it's not that it's a power struggle or anything like that. But how do we both make one another look good for the betterment of the people… you have far bigger impact by collaboration."(P11)* *"you have to [work in]partnership because you just strengthen yourself so much"(P12)*
		Purposeful	Commitment is articulated from an affective and purpose-driven perspective, which is linked to the social goal of the CSP, the intrinsic value of partnering and often based on personal experience; generally expressed with emotion and manifested through action/behaviours that in some cases could be perceived as detrimental to the individual, but may also be acknowledged as virtuous, altruistic, and conducive to cross-sector partnering.	*"The passion for partnering comes over time. There's an inherent calling in people to do certain things. You know exactly that it's the right thing when you do it. That's a calling. But it takes time. So I'm pretty sure that it will come to the other partners…. It's a commitment to the model of partnership making a difference." (P51)* *"For it to work, start getting off the ground there has to be champions out there that say - I believe in this and I'm passionate about it and I want to make this work and I see the value of it and I'm going to drive that, whatever gets in the way, I'm gonna move through those things and be focused on the outcome I'm trying to achieve" (P83)* *"Bringing people together, that's what it's all about" (P71)* *"The more people you partner with, the greater your impact" (P42)* *"I never give up. I refuse, no never, I won't" (P73)* *"The real sustainability of partnerships is on the shoulders of specific individuals." (P61)* *"Because I do believe if we collaborate and that doesn't matter whether it's NGOs, if also corporates in South Africa collaborate. It's not about competing brands, it's about servicing people and their needs and the needs are so great. And we know that government can't do it." (P11)*

4.6.1 Tactical layer of CSP commitment

The tactical layer of commitment was articulated from a cognitive and generally resource-based perspective and reflected the fact that study respondents did not commit to a CSP indiscriminately. The partnership was formed first and foremost to do something that they

could not achieve on their own. The tactical layer of CSP commitment related to a belief in the extrinsic value of the CSP, whether potential or existing, and focused on what was needed to make the partnership work. It was rational, pragmatic, and exhibited by all study respondents, irrespective of their CSP commitment nature. The tactical layer was often described first when speaking about the reason for partnering; it was generally logical and easy to comprehend; and it was rarely accompanied by any emotion.

At the beginning of my study, all four CSPs were in the early phases of initiation, hence the tactical layer of commitment was frequently articulated in regard to partner and/or stakeholder outreach. To ensure the partnership could get off the ground, there was generally a need to mobilize adequate resources (funding, skills, technology); facilitate access to communities and/or medical facilities and commodities; and obtain authorization or endorsement to work with patients and health workers. Hence in a sense, the tactical layer was similar to the instrumental nature of commitment, however, rather than focusing on serving the "self" (i.e. organization or career), it was focused on serving the partnership and promoting its success. As such, it was frequently expressed in relation to committing to partner across sectors.

For instance, as Healthy Bodies was being conceptualized, Uma clearly articulated their need for the private sector health provider since "they were bringing the patients and the money". Vincent, explained that they needed the NGO to "manage the financial arrangements" for the CSP, whereas the private sector was required to provide additional capacity for joint replacements since they were "getting overwhelmed with the numbers". He elaborated further saying "The State can only do X. It just doesn't have the ability to do X + Y and that's what we have ... X + 4945".

Nearly all respondents were tactically committed to involving government in their CSPs. It was driven by their need to obtain endorsement or approval for the initiative; facilitate access to patients, communities, and clinics; and promote affordability and sustainability going forward. Vincent emphasized that "you have to have government involved" because "once the top guy says yes, it's very hard for other people to shut the door". Wanda asserted that the partnership "won't go anywhere unless it's sanctioned" by the Department of Health, which in her opinion, also helped to "mitigate the risks". Max explained "if we're wanting to make this thing affordable, we absolutely have to have a partnership with State".

Accessing government, however, was not always so straightforward, and required strategic inroads. The respondents from Plaka Foundation explained that part of their reason for proactively approaching Resilience to join the CSP was because the CEO had long standing relationships with national and provincial departments of Health. Their commitment to partnering with Resilience, as opposed to other NGOs who also had community health workers, was therefore tactical since they believed it would facilitate buy-in from government and help to sustain and scale the joint initiative over time.

In the early stages of each CSP, both instrumentally and altruistically natured study participants manifested tactical commitment towards making progress, yet the divergence in priority focus commitment targets remained apparent. For instance, during the conceptualization phase of one CSP, Peter who displayed an instrumental CSP commitment nature, invested considerable time and worked closely with two partner colleagues, who both displayed altruistic CSP commitment natures, to try and get it started. These colleagues described Peter as "no nonsense, very focused" (P73) and "wanting to make this thing work" (P83). They both agreed that Peter had to be their "point person" at the NGO/SE, since he

"gets it" and was engaged. Peter played an active role in fleshing out the project concept, developing the diagram for how it would work on the ground, and finalizing the Memorandum of Understanding between their organizations. Yet while the two altruistically natured CSP members constantly spoke about how the partnership would help to improve the lives of the patients, Peter explained that "he was putting all his time" into the project because of his personal interest in innovation, and desire to test the model through a pilot.

Through cross case analysis of such nuances, my study revealed that instrumentally natured CSP participants rarely veered from expressing the tactical layer of commitment to the CSP. When speaking about the partnership they were generally dispassionate, ascribed little importance to people and remained quite guarded about their relationships with other CSP members, even when probed. This was dramatically different from how the altruistically natured study respondents expressed their CSP commitment, and the emotion and passion that they shared during interviews. As noted above, they did embody the tactical layer of CSP commitment, however, it was superseded by a purpose-driven commitment that generally went beyond the specific CSP. This led me to identify a second layer of partnership commitment that was only exhibited by altruistically natured CSP members, and which I have labelled as the *purposeful layer of CSP commitment.*

4.6.2 Purposeful layer of CSP commitment

The purposeful layer of CSP commitment was articulated from an affective and purpose-driven perspective. It was linked to respondents' strong commitment to the social goal, but also reflected a belief in the intrinsic value of partnering, which often emanated from personal experience. Ian for example, emphasized that, "the more people you partner with the greater your impact". He also spoke of the need to focus on contributing because ultimately "the more you give the more you get". Dan shared a similar view, passionately exclaiming

during his interview that “if individuals, organisations, associations can provide environments where like-minded energy can gel, it can be bigger than the atom bomb!” He further asserted that his role was “to harness, to facilitate that like-minded, common goal, common vision” among more people, and especially in other businesses, through a “passing it forward” approach.

Uma and Nick also expressed their purpose driven commitment to promote such partnerships and help others to see what CSPs can achieve. Uma, for example, explained,

> I think there is this notion that public and private cannot work together and this was one of the reasons why it was quite important for me to get this project off the ground, and why I put so much time and effort into it. I wanted to show they can work together but it takes compromise, and it does take an approach that it’s not a win but it’s also not a loss. It’s for the greater benefit.

Nick held a similar view, lamenting that most people and organizations involved in social partnerships were unable to see the tremendous benefit that could be achieved through strategic partnering that leverages each sector’s “field of expertise”.

> Everyone wants to own their little niche and say, ‘look what we're doing, look what we've done, look what I've done’. Instead of partnering with all these amazing people and then you sit back and actually see the vastness of what can be achieved.

Nick wanted to help partners to “shift their mindsets from owning a project to sustaining a project” which required setting aside their egocentric natures and recognizing their own limits. He fervently believed that joining forces will help “each partner to become more sustainable” since they avoid unnecessary “duplication of spending”.

Leo reaffirmed these views and explained that although such partnerships take effort, they often achieve even more than what they set out to do. For this reason, he felt he had a

responsibility to partner because it leads to more innovation and progress in public health facilities.

> But you know what happens in partnerships? Firstly, all these things are incredibly hard work 'cos you really have to apply yourself to it otherwise as in 90% [of cases], it just falls flat and just peters out. But the funny thing is you start with something in a partnership to achieve. So, you've got an [intended] outcome. But 90% of the time, the end result is another outcome that's actually [more] positive. I mean it's a win! And that's what makes it my job. I mean, if I am not going to engage in partnerships and see what's on offer and see what we could offer, then I'm not doing my job…[actually] let's rephrase ... it's not my job at all, I've got four other jobs! ... but it is, I think, my responsibility. And that responsibility enhances my four other jobs.

Chris explained that he has an inherent bias towards working in partnership. He also highlighted the relative fragility of CSPs and underscored the statements of CSP ignitors noted above regarding the need for purpose driven commitment to keep them going.

> Because of who I am, I am biased towards a partnership. I've always in my business, and in my professional career, built partnerships and relationships. So I automatically seek partnerships and encourage that. But partnerships only happen due to a certain person who's got a certain passion and works hard to get partners together and then keep those partners on the same track and like-minded to achieve the goal. And if that person disappears, then it's not unlikely that the partnerships fall apart again.

In general, the purposeful layer of CSP commitment was expressed with considerable emotion and manifested through behaviours which may be considered as virtuous, altruistic, and conducive to cross sector partnering. In some cases, respondents' actions went beyond reasonable expectation and could even be perceived as being to the individual's own detriment. For example, Leo explained how his partner who had created the referral app that was used by all partners in the CSP, "nearly to his own failure and detriment" refused to create a traditional business model and charge partners for use of the tool. He attributed this

to the fact that his partner had a deep purpose to “service the greater group” and viewed the partnership as a vehicle to do this.

Nick’s behaviour was similar. He shared how he funds things from his personal credit card, and even “took 30,000R out of his bond” to keep a collaborative project on track. He was driven by the bigger objective saying, “I believe in it, and I know it will work” and simply counted on being reimbursed later. A white male, he also regularly ventured alone into “the hood” as he called it, which were violent township areas around Cape Town to scout for project sites. Although he was apparently known to the township community, and his efforts were critical to promote enabling environments for CSP work, his colleagues admitted that they worried about his personal safety.

Max also displayed purpose driven CSP commitment. His focus was on how the partnership could identify a solution to support broader public health goals, even beyond South Africa.

> You know whether it's in Kwa Zulu Natal or in the Western Cape or in Uganda, they're the same kind of principles about - how do we find some meaningful application of a solution towards universal health care. Which is tricky. But in developing world environments the challenges are universal. Specific and localised but they actually remain the same. If we can find a solution here, well we should be able to tailor it for anywhere.

Max acknowledged that he is a “dreamer - and an eternal optimist”, but it was clear that his commitment was driven by a purpose that was greater than the partnership or himself. This was demonstrated when he was developing a budget proposal for a new CSP and proposed to cut remuneration for his personal contribution by more than 50% in order to meet the funding limits. His colleagues from the partner organization explained that they couldn’t do that

because if something happened to him, they could never find a replacement who would accept that rate of remuneration.

Unlike those who only displayed tactical CSP commitment, the purposefully committed CSP members were less guarded in their interviews, freely expressing their feelings through tears and laughter, and displaying their passion about the partnership's work through facial expressions, body language, choice of words, and voice intonation. They vehemently shared their frustration and disappointment when challenges arose, and spoke openly about their relationships with CSP counterparts, accounting for how influential these people were to their work, from both positive and negative perspectives. Their interactions with partners before, during and after meetings, reflected a desire to engage at a personal and emotional level with their counterparts.

4.6.3 Implications of the different CSP commitment natures and layers

As the CSPs in my study moved from conceptualization towards initiation, the implication of the different CSP commitment layers became apparent. As described above, during the preliminary phases of each CSP, both instrumentally and altruistically natured respondents demonstrated commitment to the partnership. Some respondents were clearly more active in their CSPs than others, but in general, tactical commitment seemed to suffice as long as things were relatively smooth. There was a noticeable shift, however, once significant challenges began to arise in the different CSPs.

The following sections of this chapter describe the types of adversity that arose, as well as respondents' emotional responses to the challenges that they faced. I then present the behavioural responses that I identified which differed significantly between altruistically

natured CSP members who embodied the purposeful layer of commitment, versus their instrumentally natured counterparts.

4.7 Partnership adversity

During the course of my longitudinal study, respondents confronted multiple instances of adversity in their partnerships. By adversity I refer to an event, situation or episode - either internal or external to the CSP - which caused a conflict, delay, challenge or setback to the plans/expectations of CSP members and typically impacted the progress of the partnership. I interpreted adversity based on how it was described by study respondents or witnessed during observations. Table 14 indicates the different types of adversity that respondents experienced during the data collection period for my study.

Table 14: Partnership adversity

Concept / component in theoretical model	Definition / description of concept	Types of adversity that arose during the study period	Examples from data
Adversity	Refers to an event, situation, or episode, either internal or external to the CSP which cause a conflict, challenge, or setback to the plans/expectations and which may cause delays to the progress of the partnership.	Examples of partnership adversity observed during my study included departure of a partner organization representative, community backlash, lack of government sanction, internal organizational bureaucratic processes/hurdles, insufficient resources; tensions and power imbalances between partners, as well as conflict in frames and/or logics etc.	*"Peter left (Resilience) and he was an absolute gem - and that upset the apple cart." (P83)* *"So, it's all systems go. And then Peter has left Resilience!" (P73)* *"It was never going to take traction because it was trying to be done very undercover and not transparent." (P14)* *"I think for me the biggest challenge was the time frame and all the stumbling blocks in the industry, industrial actions, all of those things that one has to contend with." (P71)* *"So, it's both the community and the City government that we are now having a bit of a challenge with." (P33)* *"My problem with the NGOs is the overlapping and the egos, that just destroys so much." (P73)* *"The Township is so hot at the moment. There's kak brewing in there. And as an outsider, even as an insider, it's very hard to understand. The taxi killings and the whole political dimension of the EFF agitating for the land expropriation story against the background of a DA government. And the ANC trying to find its way in the province. That's all playing out in reality there. In comes an umlungu and says - hello, I want to put in a container over here. What the fuck are you about?" (P83)*

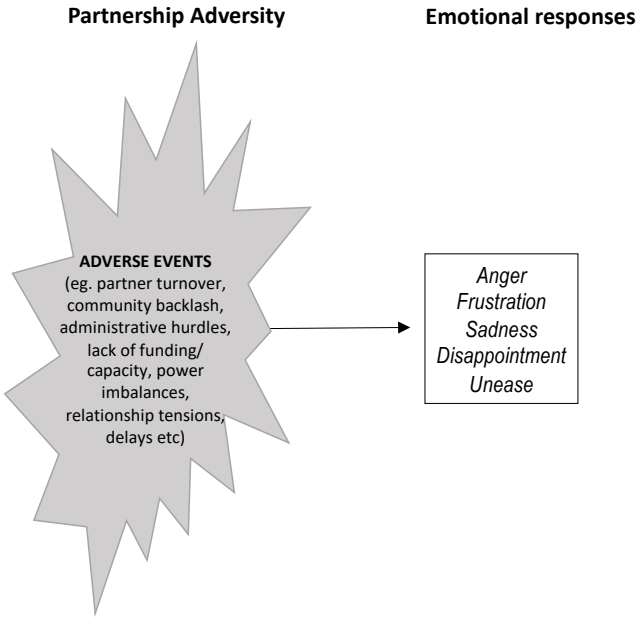
Challenges were both common and anticipated, and respondents regularly spoke about the difficulty of cross sector partnering in general. One private sector representative, for example, articulated how challenges had arisen in her CSP because the partners had different ways of

operating. She lamented that, from her perspective, “it was trying to be done very undercover” (P14) which was leading to potential risk. Another business representative shared the arduous process they were facing to obtain buy-in from leaders in the National Department of Health to scale the CSP concept, stating that “it's a slow journey” and “your roots are only as deep as your relationship with that individual” (P63). A government representative reaffirmed this point when he explained the challenge he was facing in his CSP due to a change in leadership in the partner hospital. He explained, “So on paper it looks fantastic. It's not going to happen [now] because we don't know that individual. These public/private partnerships, they work with the right people and the right relationship" (P24).

While speaking about adversity, many respondents highlighted the steps they took to try to mitigate such risks and challenges, for example through relationship building, promoting open communication, and consulting with relevant stakeholders etc. Yet, despite their efforts, both internal and external challenges nonetheless arose, sometimes totally unexpectedly. This was the case for Healthy Townships when Nick went to “land” the container that would be used as a chronic medicine pick-up point in the community. Upon his arrival he was confronted by an angry crowd that threatened violent backlash against him and the container. It was a complete surprise since Nick was known in the area and had consulted with key stakeholders around the site. It turned out, however, that the community street committee from the opposite side of the road had been unintentionally left out. This oversight, combined with heated political rallies on that specific day, meant that Nick had to retreat with his container. His colleague in the same NGO (P83) reflected on such external challenges saying, “Shit happens, and particularly in the hood. Shit happens exponentially”. This setback, however, was particularly damaging since it took months to identify another suitable site for the container, and the collaborative project could not begin without it.

As my study progressed, such adverse situations came up time and again, and sometimes compounded on each other. For instance, just after the container challenges, Nick left the country for several months on an unrelated project that was already planned and could not be postponed. Healthy Townships therefore suddenly had insufficient capacity and support, just when it was needed to identify a solution and get things back on track. As depicted in Figure 12, such setbacks had an impact on the individual CSP members, irrespective of whether they were more "self" or "other" oriented.

Figure 12: Impact of partnership adversity on individuals



4.8 Emotional responses to adversity

Respondents were unhappy about the challenges they encountered in relation to their CSPs - a natural human response when something doesn't work out as hoped or planned. The primary emotions conveyed during periods of adversity were anger and sadness, also

communicated as frustration, disappointment, and unease. Table 15 presents a selection of emotional responses that respondents expressed during the study.

Table 15: Emotional responses to adversity

Concept / component in theoretical model	Definition / description of concept	Types of emotions witnessed during study	Examples from data
Emotional response to adversity	Description of the initial emotions expressed by partnership practitioners when confronted with internal or external adversity in their partnerships	The key emotions included anger, sadness which were expressed primarily as frustration, disappointment, unease, and fatigue.	*"If you don't put fire under everyone's butt every single day, nothing happens!" (P73)* *"So we're all frustrated by these delays. It seems like every time it looks like there's a way forward then something else comes up." (P33)* *"I often sit and sort of think - why am I so tired, I haven't done a lot today, why am I so tired? And it's because I'm so tired of dealing with these egos and trying to second guess them the whole time." (P24)* *"You get tired bashing down doors all the time." (P24)* *"So, that was like treading on eggshells. It's difficult." (P14)* *"I couldn't understand why should the programme be derailed but it became obvious that P41 and the MEC had a different agenda with the hospital visit. I would assume it also builds the profile of Tower mining. But I think those kind of things should have been discussed openly and upfront that everybody knows about it. GrowBiz is the legacy of leaving educated people, people that can grow economies and people that can take care of health and talk to others about it. For me it was a let-down that we had to cut that out of the programme. I tried pushing that until the last minute…" (P71)* *"We could be so much further ahead if we had more resources…" (P83)* *"Crown Health was not transparent…I think it is just stupid! Why keep people busy with internal costs? They made stupid plans – not leading anywhere…it is like being on a bicycle and the bicycle is not going in any direction." (P34)* *"All of a sudden it seemed like we were stuck in between, having to deliver far more than what our (partnership) proposal entailed!" (P81)* *"This time I felt very let down." (P81)*

For many their emotions were openly shared during interviews and informal conversations. Robert, for example, spoke on behalf of all CSP members explaining, "We're all frustrated by these delays. It seems like every time it looks like there's a way forward then something else comes up."

Such sentiments were common among all recipients, however, during their interviews, altruistically natured CSP members were generally more vocal, spoke longer, and expressed more emotion about their dismay during their interviews than their instrumentally natured counterparts. This appeared to be related to the fact that they were typically the individuals

who had conceived of the idea behind the CSP and were often most emotionally invested in their success. They also played an important role in rallying partners and keeping the initiatives going, which clearly demanded both effort and time.

For example, Nick's voice rose as he complained about the risk aversion of certain partners stating, "The first thing is all these egos you have to massage. And then there's analysis paralysis like we have with [our NGO partner]. For months and months, it's this total analysis paralysis. You've got to keep pushing, pushing, pushing!". Vincent appeared defeated as he lamented how tired he was from "dealing with all the egos" and "bashing doors down all the time". He expressed his disappointment about the hurdles he was facing with vulnerability, saying "I think that's why I'm so sad at the moment because I just can't find a solution, I just can't find a solution".

For some respondents, emotional reactions were displayed during meetings and events. This was the case for several CSP members from different organizations who travelled together by car to a CSP launch event which was over 500KM from Pretoria. On the day of travel, one respondent (P71) expressed sarcasm as she mentioned to the others that their private sector partner was "flying with the Minister". Another colleague then remarked that even though the company's private plane had 10 seats, no invitation had been extended to SANFA or Unite Health to accompany them. This seemed to irk them since SANFA had secured the Minister for the event, and after learning he was tired from a busy week, suggested he fly with the Tower Mining CEO. Such informal comments indicated a certain power imbalance in the partnership, as well as resentment towards Tower Mining who they felt was dominating the event even though their financial contribution was no higher than that of the other company partner, Unite Health.

The next morning at the venue, a Unite Health representative expressed his annoyance at the overwhelming signage and visibility for Tower Mining, and immediately took a standing banner for the company from his car and marched into the hall to put it up. As the event progressed, a SANFA representative was clearly disturbed by Tower Mining's unilateral change in the day's programme, rushing around, speaking privately to the Minister, and trying to find a way to maintain the community visit, yet she didn't succeed.

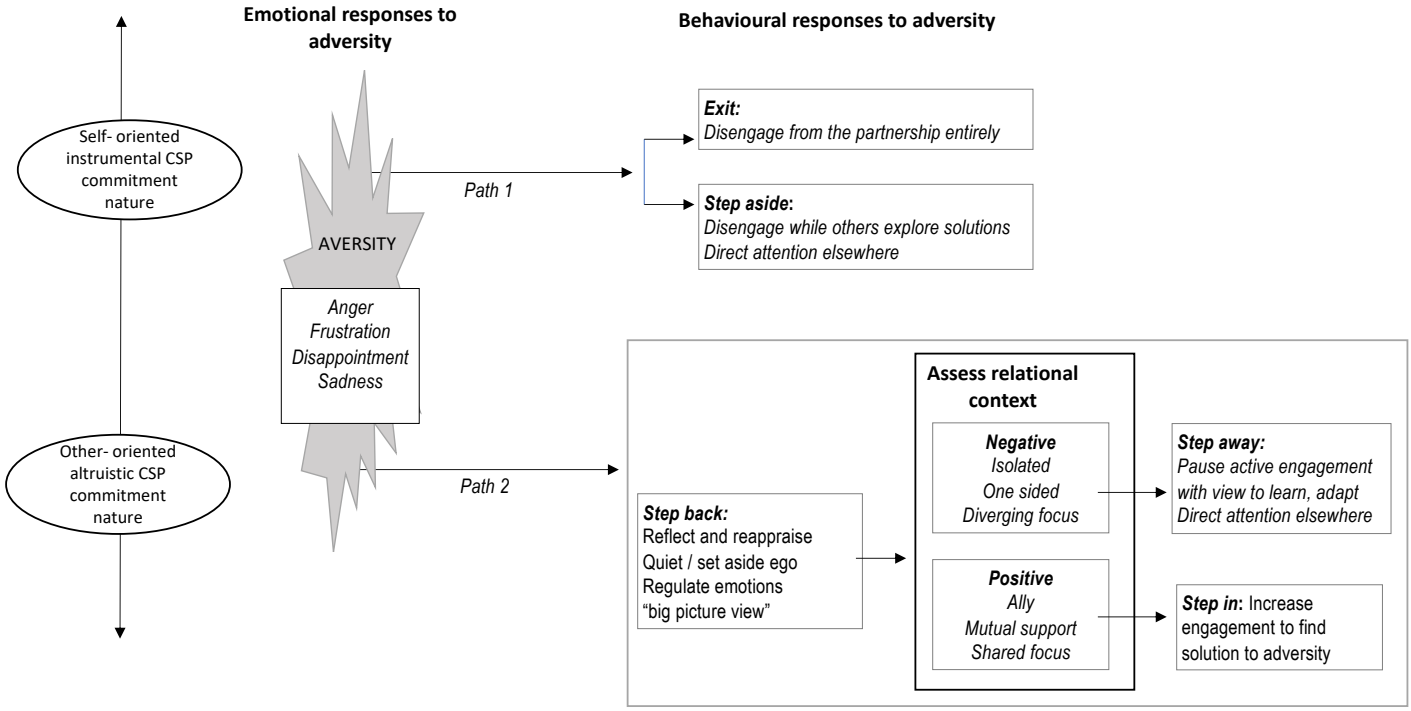
Their frustration was palpable, and I expected that it would impact on their commitment to the CSP which it seemed to, initially. However, as is explained in the following section, despite similarity in emotional responses to adversity among all respondents, my study revealed unexpected differences in partnership practitioners' behavioural responses to adversity which related directly to whether their CSP commitment natures were instrumental or altruistic.

4.9 Behavioural responses to adversity

As my study progressed, I identified different behaviours in response to partnership adversity, especially as it came up again and again. My analysis revealed that these behaviours varied depending on whether individuals were instrumentally or altruistically committed to the CSP. Partnership practitioners whose CSP commitment was more instrumental (i.e., self-oriented) tended to disengage from the partnership to varying degrees when confronted with adversity. Some of these respondents decreased their engagement in the CSP and directed attention elsewhere, seemingly waiting for others to manage the challenges. I labelled this behaviour as taking a *step aside.* Others disengaged entirely from the partnership, a response I labelled as *exiting* the CSP. In one case, the exit of the individual was also the exit of their organization from the CSP. In other cases, the individuals who exited the CSP were replaced by new representatives from their organization.

Partnership practitioners whose commitment was more altruistic (i.e., other-oriented) exhibited an unexpected behavioural response, whereby they reflected on and reappraised the adverse situation, consciously quieting or "setting aside their ego" and relativising the situation with respect to "the big picture". I labelled this self-reflective process as taking a *step back.* They also considered the relationships with both internal and partner colleagues in the CSP at that point in time to determine the extent of support they had to address the adverse situation. I labelled this as *assessing the relational context*. Depending on this assessment, participants exhibited two different behavioural responses. The first was to increase their activity, rally their partners, and proactively look for solutions, a response which I labelled as taking a *step in*. The other was to pause active engagement, and direct attention to other priorities, but with a view to learn, adapt, and increase activity when circumstances allowed. I labelled this response as taking a *step away*. Apart from those who exited the partnership, the behavioural paths were iterative and are depicted in Figure 13.

Figure 13: Behavioural responses to adversity



4.9.1 Path 1 – Self-oriented behavioural responses to CSP adversity

As described earlier, respondents who predominantly exhibited a strong self-orientation and instrumental nature of commitment to the CSP, were considerably engaged in the initiation phase of the CSP. Their commitment was generally strategic and tactical, and they were hopeful that the CSP would quickly get off the ground and bear results. However, once repeated instances of adversity started to arise, these respondents began to disengage. As depicted in Figure 13 some simply *stepped aside* expecting others in the partnership to sort out the challenge. Others *exited* the partnership entirely, a response which was associated with a strong allegiance to their organizations or their careers, and which unlike the others in the model, did not iterate over time. In some cases, these responses of exiting or stepping aside were openly shared by the study participants themselves. In others, they were revealed

over time or identified through interviews with other CSP members. Table 16 provides an overview of these responses.

Table 16: Behavioural responses exhibited by self-oriented CSP practitioners

Concept / component in theoretical model	Definition/Description of component	Examples from data
Exit	Refers to total disengagement and exit from the partnership	*We "couldn't get the costing right", and "'it didn't make business sense". (P14)* *"There comes a time when you need to be realistic about it and say, if it's not going to work, rather walk away and be honest about it." (P14)* *"I know what it is. It's the same frustration that I have coming from an entrepreneurial background. I mean [the CSP] has been 18 months and eventually Peter just said – Stuff this!" (P73 speaking of his colleague who exited)*
Step aside	Refers to the process of decreasing involvement in the partnership, either informally or formally, and relying on other members of the CSP to sort out/address the challenges - effectively devoting less time/effort towards the CSP	*"I don't know if I'm ready to continue." (P23)* *"It seemed like he had done nothing" (P42 – speaking of his colleague who had disengaged from CSP related activity)* *"I just don't think he's got the same handle on it, the same understanding of it and perhaps the same drive and ability and maybe the authority to make it happen" (P83 – speaking of his colleague who had stepped aside)*

For example, when one CSP was facing a new set of hurdles due to unexpected regulations, Robert acknowledged that he did not have the capacity to sort it out, and therefore was relying on the others in the partnership to find a solution. This was reaffirmed by his partner colleague (P83) who lamented that Robert was not as engaged or proactive as his predecessor and that "there was a crisis that we needed to get resolved… and it didn't get resolved".

The stepping aside behaviour exhibited by Robert was not surprising because nearly all study participants had multiple projects and tasks they were attending to. Robert had a completely separate position in his organization and had been asked to take on the role in the CSP after his predecessor's departure. It was therefore frequently a question of prioritizing what made most sense at the particular time, which was driven by the tactical layer of commitment that all respondents shared. However, the prioritization of organizational or career goals as the primary focus commitment target within the context of the CSP appeared to make it relatively straightforward to determine whether respondents' primary objectives were being achieved and facilitated decision making.

For example, Robert had explained that his commitment to the CSP was driven by his desire to fulfil his boss' expectations. Yet he also understood that his boss' CSP commitment was driven by a desire to promote sustainability of their NGO/SE, and there had been no real progress towards this objective. As adversity continued to arise, Robert explained that his boss' CSP commitment was waning.

> I am fearful that [my boss] is gonna get to a point where he says it's no use in us trying to get this off the ground. We've tried this now and it's been so many months and every time we see this moving forward, we get to another challenge. I'm fearful that he's gonna reach a point where he says leave it, let's drop everything.

This combination of waning commitment of his boss and lack of any progress towards a sustainability benefit for their organization appeared to justify Robert's behaviour of stepping aside and letting other CSP members take the lead in sorting out the challenges they were facing.

Sandra exhibited similar behaviour within her CSP. During a meeting with the other key partner, the discussion centred on how to obtain buy-in from local government health authorities, as well as the specific steps required. Sandra, who had the strategic relationships and understood the community realities, was essential for this process. Yet her partner appeared to be caught by surprise when she voiced her relatively fragile commitment to the CSP saying, "if we keep on delaying, I am not sure if I will be able to support this*".* During her interview a while later, she explained that her NGO's funding for the community care workers was running out and if the project didn't start soon, it would do nothing to help them. She also emphasized how "she had no support" and was very overworked. Approximately seven months later, a partner colleague (P83) relayed that the CSP had been "dormant" for some time but was starting to rejuvenate because Sandra's NGO had received new external

funding. When asked about Sandra, the colleague explained that she was still at the NGO, but a new person had assumed her role in the partnership. Sandra had therefore stepped aside and ultimately exited the CSP.

Another example is Wanda who had exited her CSP during the study and explained pragmatically that “they couldn’t get the costing right”. She informed her dismayed NGO partner in an email that “it didn’t make business sense” for her organization. In addition to the financial perspective, she recounted how the level of effort required was not acceptable, saying “It’s not that it won’t work, it’s just going to take you so much longer and it’s going to take so much more effort to make it work”. Wanda’s clear instrumental focus and tactical reflections enabled her to “walk away and be honest about it” and rather “focus on other projects”. The NGO partner’s (P34) view was different, however. They felt that Wanda and her company had been the “problematic partner”, who had hindered the original concept of the CSP from succeeding, because they were “not willing to compromise”.

Peter’s exit from the CSP also reflected a self-oriented and instrumental nature of CSP commitment. His departure was surprising, especially since he had been considerably engaged in the project at the beginning and other CSP members relied on him. Yet, Nick’s perspective on his partner’s departure illustrated that Peter’s focus was less on the social goal and more on his own career progression.

> I know what it is. It's the same frustration that I have coming from an entrepreneurial background, working with corporates. If you don't put fire under everyone's butt every single day, nothing happens and eventually Peter just said - look I've had it, I can do better somewhere else - stuff this!

The insight from Nick, who had exhibited a clear other orientation throughout the study was especially interesting because although he admitted that he has the same frustrations as Peter, he repeatedly asserted that he never gives up, a point that was underscored by two colleagues who worked closely with him. Nick's assertion was about more than only one specific CSP, but other respondents with an altruistic CSP commitment nature had also mentioned their innate optimism and inability to give up. This led me to examine the behavioural responses of other-oriented study participants in more depth to understand what facilitated them to sustain their commitment through repeated instances of partnership adversity. This enabled the identification of the stepping back process, as well as the important role of the relational context for these individuals since it determined whether they stepped in or stepped away. These elements come together in the second pathway in Figure 13 and are further described in Table 17 below.

4.9.2 Path 2 – Other-oriented behavioural responses to CSP adversity

The second behavioural response path that I identified was more complex and resulted in partnership practitioners either stepping away or stepping in, depending on the relational context during the situation of adversity. As described earlier in this chapter, study respondents encountered several episodes of adversity as the partnerships shifted and evolved over time. An overview of all components in this path is provided in Table 17.

Table 17: Behavioural responses exhibited by other-oriented CSP practitioners

Concept / component in theoretical model	Definition/Description of component		Examples from data
Step back	Refers to the internal process an individual engages in which enables them to regulate their emotions and shift their perspective about the situation of adversity. This includes cognitive reflection, reappraisal and/or reframing of the situation and partners, consciously quieting or "setting aside" the ego, and often shifting the focus more to the big picture and long-term view of the CSP and social goal.		*"I need to constantly remind me that the project is bigger than individuals. It's about the bigger intent and the bigger opportunity. Then the individual egos, the typical corporate ego, become secondary. That doesn't come naturally." (P51)* *"We supposed to have [met] that morning then the flight was delayed and then life happens. Then community stuff happens. But even then, it's always subservient to the bigger reason why we're there. All the other stuff, the small stuff is creating big issues but it's not why we're here, why we're there for the day or for the campaign." (P51)* *"Maybe we weren't as detailed and as disciplined and as rigid as we should have been in the planning of this thing. We probably weren't. We can't point a finger at other people…" (P83)* *"Maybe I'm not making my passion coherent and explaining sufficiently why my five thousand patients are more important than the next guy's five thousand patients." (P24)* *"We should have had more physical meetings with all parties together in one room. I think that was critical because then a lot more could have happened." (P71)*
Assess relational context Refers to how the individual assesses the relationships and support he has within the CSP during moments of adversity, which can be both members of their own organization or a partner organization.	*Negative*	Refers to a negative assessment of the relational context; i.e. limited support, poor communication, uneven or lack of commitment / shared focus	*"P33 is just not a P53." (P83 following turnover of a CSP member)* *"You know we can't drive their agenda, we can't drive their engagements in what they need to do in order to make this sustainable. We can only be in charge of what we do." (P83)* *Expressed her view that her partner and their company were "problematic" and "not willing to compromise" (P34).* *"It's frustrating so as I say some people just see it and they bite, other people, they just can't see it." (P24)*
	Positive	Refers to a positive assessment of the relational context; sense that there is mutual support, an ally and/or confidante, and a shared focus, sense of purpose and commitment to the social goal	*"There's gonna be tough times and it's how you go through it. I mean there were some difficult conversations and there were easy conversations. But there was always respect and there was always understanding from where you come from." (P51)* *"it's really a long-standing relationship and it's a trusting relationship and it's really a relationship saying that we're in it for the long haul." (P51)* *"Both of our dreams are actually to make a difference in this world that we live in and particularly in our country. So, if you ask me what my role is, I think that I'm the Yin to Nick's Yang and he's the Yang to my Yin. So together we have managed to create a really cool structure that can take us forward." (P83)* *"The thing is if you just get that relationship right it just rolls…Then everyone feels empowered and everyone's in the same team." (P42)*
Step away – with a view to return	Refers to the process of pausing engagement in the partnership, generally informally, and effectively devoting less time/effort towards the CSP – generally directing attention to other tasks, projects, objectives. Typically viewed more as a pause to regroup, and adjust, and described as a lull in the partnership.		*"It was probably okay that it didn't go whoosh and deliver as it needed to. 'Cos maybe we needed to have a deeper understanding of some of the components which have been revealed through some of the other things that we've been engaged with. And I do feel that…it's a great level of comfort and reassurance for me that things happen as they need to happen. The fact that Healthy Townships didn't happen when it did is probably okay. Maybe we needed that to drift a little bit and get a little bit more understanding". (P83).* *"So, although there's been a lull, the lull has shown there's a demand. And now in a way I can now say over a year period it's not died down. It's in fact increased." (P34)*
Step in	Refers to the increase in proactive and typically prosocial engagement to try to resolve tension and/or conflict, address the existing or expected challenge(s), identify potential solutions, and take steps to overcome the adverse situation, event or episode and get the partnership back on track which may include adjusting strategy, plans, partners etc.		*"…so this is another hurdle, another barrier, another problem and we've just got to find our way past it, but we remain attached to each other to do it"* (P83) *"For it to work, start getting off the ground there has to be champions out there that say - I believe in this and I'm passionate about it and I want to make this work and I see the value of it and I'm going to drive that, whatever gets in the way, I'm gonna move through those things and be focused on the outcome I'm trying to achieve" (P83)* *"Things progress better if you "fly under the radar" (P34)* *"Just keep navigating the obstacles… it is easier to ask for forgiveness than for permission…" (P24)* *"Faith and adaptability, that is what it takes" (P12)* *"You find in these partnerships, people take it to a certain level but there's no risk appetite. No one wants to step out of the circle and actually be the one flagged if something goes wrong. I'm prepared to take that risk and suffer the consequences because I know the risk I took was for a good reason." (P73)* *"I don't moan, I don't complain, I just go out there and do it." (P73)* *"I don't give up very easily at all. I always tell everyone that's why I wear long pants, because I've got no skin on my knees from grafting and begging and banging doors down." (P11)*

a. Stepping back

Stepping back consisted of reflecting on and reappraising the adverse situation, quieting one's ego, taking the perspective of others, and reminding oneself of the big picture objective that they were working towards. This process was demonstrated by several other-oriented study participants, but was most compellingly conveyed by Dan, just after a partnership launch event. Together with Beth, Dan very much drove the CSP, and during the days prior, had demonstrated a clear leadership role overseeing things, guiding others, and preparing for the event. Yet on the actual day, which included multiple meetings, presentations and ceremonies, Dan's behaviour was surprising. He continuously (and even physically) stepped back, to ensure others, notably Beth and a junior colleague from his company, received visibility and opportunities to speak, rather than himself.

Meanwhile, as mentioned earlier in this chapter, Dan was upset by how his partner had changed the agreed programme at the last minute to suit their organizational interests, monopolized national and provincial ministers, dominated the public relations, and underplayed the investment of his own company in the partnership. He vented his frustration during the event to me and other partner colleagues yet remained visibly calm during all the presentations and ceremonies.

That evening Dan's exhaustion was palpable. He spoke about the events of the day and spontaneously shared how he consciously reminds himself about the goals and opportunities of the partnership, which enables him to process and manage challenging situations such as the one that had just occurred.

> I need to constantly remind me that the project is bigger than individuals. I could turn around and say [my company] was cold shouldered today, our 50% contribution wasn't read to the recognition that it should be, the PR exercise in the communities and all of that, but it's not that… it's about the bigger intent and the bigger opportunity.

Dan went on to explain how maintaining the bigger picture perspective of the interest and sustainability of the CSP requires conscious management of both the individual and the organizational egos.

> … the individual egos, the typical corporate ego, become secondary. That doesn't come naturally. You know right down to there's just one-sided branding or there's not enough cover anymore or whatever. If one follows the typical corporate understanding of that, it could be conflict rather than partnership and it will end. So, I was asked today whether I was happy with all of that…. I wasn't happy, but I can throw my toys, and that's the end of the partnership. And it's not about me, what my feelings are.

This description demonstrated a conscious awareness of his ego and the emotions that had been triggered, and an ability to make them "secondary" in order to partner effectively. Dan emphasized that this is "difficult but it's part of passing it forward, of building the new relationship". When asked whether he or Beth had voiced their frustration to their counterpart, he explained they hadn't, because they didn't want to derail the event.

Nonetheless, Dan remained visibly annoyed and admitted that although his commitment to the business to business partnership model was strong, he wasn't sure if he would continue partnering with Tower Mining. He felt that his company had "done their part" in "starting the fire" and now they could take it forward. This statement was a shift from what Dan had said prior to the event and demonstrated that even though he had stepped back (both

physically and emotionally) on the actual day, he was still disturbed enough to want to step away from this constellation of partners.

Three months later, Dan's update was surprising as he was indeed still partnering with Tower Mining and had just seen his counterpart the week before. When asked what had shifted since the event, his response was "you can't sweat the small stuff" which indicated that he had effectively quieted his ego and surmounted his negative emotions in the interest of the bigger picture. He also mentioned that although there had been no formal debrief from the event, "an honest conversation" had enabled them to clear the air and "set things right" and now they were working well together.

Comparative analysis of such behaviours across cases, revealed that consciously *stepping back* to reflect upon and reappraise events in view of the bigger picture goals, was an important behaviour that helped altruistically natured respondents sustain CSP commitment through adversity. It enabled them to quiet or "set aside" their egos and regulate the difficult and generally negative emotions that arose during challenging situations. Rather than criticizing their partners, these CSP practitioners had an ability to take their partner's perspective. They could effectively put themselves in the other person's shoes, as well as show empathy and forgiveness and recognize their own contribution to the situation.

For example, a few months after the CSP launch event Beth recalled how upset she had been about the dominance of Tower Mining and the last-minute change in the programme. Yet, she explained how lots of the challenges were "due to miscommunication". She demonstrated an ability to take her partners' perspective when she explained that she understood that he needed to "manage his own internal stakeholders". She showed understanding, saying that

she felt like he was learning and driving positive change in his company. This was important to her since she saw her purpose as “empowering others”.

Max also exhibited awareness and empathy for his new NGO counterpart’s circumstances when he shared that the CSP had made little progress since encountering government hurdles a few months earlier. He was able to see things from his partner’s perspective saying, “they’ve been busy” at the NGO. He recognized that Robert had a separate full-time role to manage, which was not the case for his predecessor. Max further acknowledged that at his own organization they also could have done things better.

> Maybe we weren't as detailed and as disciplined and as rigid as we should have been in the planning of this thing. We probably weren't. When [his predecessor] was there we were. We can't point a finger at other people.

Max also clearly articulated the important role of self-reflection in the stepping back process. He explained that often, when partnering challenges are experienced, they were too complex to really determine why they had happened, but that the individual ego then gets in the way. Max emphasized that people who work in such CSPs need to “get past” their ego and ensure they prioritize the bigger picture objective of improving patients’ health and welfare.

> “You know when something doesn't gel you need to interrogate it and think why. And often it is almost impossible to delve that deep down into the situation to find the truth, the reality, the fact…. And what it’s really about is ego, it's self-centeredness…you have to get past your ego because if the goal of this is to put the spotlight on you and how good you are and what you've achieved, etc. you've lost sight of the patient and it's going to distort your focus.”.

This self-reflective nature of stepping back was also described by Ian who shared how he reacted to a proposed shift in the CSP’s strategy that he did not agree with. Ian recalled, “At

first I was kind of offended and then I kind of internalised that and said like - why am I offended by that?". He went on to explain how he wrote a reflective piece for himself which enabled him to understand why he was triggered and reaffirmed his commitment towards the bigger picture objective.

Stepping back was therefore an important self-reflective behaviour that helped respondents to reappraise and relativize the adverse situation against the bigger picture, taking into account their partner's context, as well as their own contribution to the situation. It assisted them to quiet their egos, as well as understand their triggers and assuage negative emotions. This process facilitated them to sustain their CSP commitment, provided of course that they still believed the partnership could strategically contribute to the social goal.

Yet continued data collection and analysis revealed that stepping back was not sufficient to enable respondents to step in and continue supporting the partnership. For example, as described further below, both Max and Uma went through lengthy periods where they disengaged from their CSPs and attended to other projects, effectively *stepping away*. However, the way they described it as a "lull" (Uma) or a "dormant period" (Max) while they reassessed, evolved the concept, or found new partners, was different from their instrumentally committed counterparts who had stepped aside or literally exited the CSP.

Similarly, they gave distinct reasons for why they had stepped away which often related to a lack of capacity or peer support. As Max emphasized "there were always so many pots on the fire and not enough hands". Deeper analysis revealed another critical component on the behavioural path through adversity that study respondents with an altruistic CSP commitment

nature embodied. This was to *assess the relational context* and determine whether it was positive or negative.

b. Assessing relational context with co-workers

Throughout my study, other-oriented respondents emphasized the importance of people to such partnerships. Max explained that you "have to have the right people with the right tools, doing the right thing at the right time for the right reasons". Uma likened partnership to "a marriage" emphasizing that she needed to "be able to work with that person". Chris specifically recounted his own experience with Dan and Beth in dealing with adversity.

> If the interpersonal relationships are strong and healthy, then certain stumbling blocks can and will be overcome. In my experience, always even, it actually boils down to what is the relationship between me and Dan, me and Beth? And if there's a challenge coming from outside, how do we together deal with that challenge. Or if there's a challenge within the partnership because of unclear roles and responsibilities, or other things, then on the back of relationships, that can be dealt with.

On the flip side, Nick reflected how he sees some people "straight away as dodge" and explained that "if you're uncomfortable, you back away" from the partnership. Such insights indicated that these and other altruistically committed CSP practitioners were sensitive to relational context in the CSP, and regularly assessing it. Furthermore, temporal analysis revealed that the outcome of their assessment at different stages in the partnership influenced whether they would step away from adversity, or step in.

c. Influence of negative vs positive relational context

Max had demonstrated tremendous commitment to Healthy Townships throughout the first nine months of data collection. He volunteered to address challenges on numerous occasions, coordinating meetings, and rallying partners and stakeholders with passionate descriptions

about the project and its potential. Several months after the NGO member of the CSP changed, and in the face of multiple external challenges to the partnership, his energy and focus on the CSP had waned. He appeared deflated by the bureaucratic hurdles facing the partnership and the fact that they still hadn't found a new site for the container. He acknowledged that his counterpart was "engaged" but lamented that it was at a different level than his predecessor saying, "I just don't think he's got the same handle on it, the same understanding of it, and perhaps the same drive and ability and maybe the authority to make it happen".

At that point, Nick was out of the country for an extended period and Max lamented how he was neglecting strategic things because he was too busy "managing the small stuff". He emphasized that it was a "massive job" which was "hugely amplified" since his colleague and ally Nick, who he described as the "yang" to his "yin", was not there. Taken together it was clear that for Max, the relational context at that stage of the partnership was negative, with insufficient support and uneven commitment. This was influencing him to *step away* from the CSP which consisted of pausing active engagement and shifting his attention to other priorities and projects where there was more scope for progress.

Approximately seven months later Max's attention was diverted by a big proposal with other partners which had the same aim of improving health services in disadvantaged townships. He explained it was a "shinier object" with great scale potential, and when asked about Healthy Townships, he couldn't fully recall how events had played out in the preceding months. Yet, it was also evident that he had not completely lost hope for Healthy Townships. Indeed, he expressed his relief that Nick was back and explained that things were moving again, and demand was there. He was also quite philosophical about the fact that Healthy

Townships had been dormant for a while saying that “things happen as they need to happen” and they now had new perspectives and had learned things that would make it better.

On the other hand, his mood and energy shifted as he smiled and spontaneously explained how much he “loved” working with the two women in the new partnership.

> They push me, I'm so much better with them than I am with [P33]. That's not fair, that's just a component of information, it's saying what it is. They're on it. That means that if I want to draw them in to make this thing work - and there's a real good reason to do this - I need to be on it as well.

These comments revealed how the negative relational context had led Max to *step away* from Healthy Bodies, whereas the positive one in the new CSP encouraged him to engage more actively there.

These findings were further illustrated by Uma’s experience with Healthy Bodies which conveyed how a positive relational context, and ideally a supportive ally, facilitates practitioners to step in, and overcome adversity. Uma’s CSP went through a long “lull” after one of the partners exited. Although she did not lose hope, Uma openly shared how isolated she felt and admitted that she had also disengaged considerably since she had no support. More than six months later, a renewed energy and vigour emanated from Uma as she explained how a young proactive woman, who had benefited from the project, was now helping her with Healthy Bodies. The presence of this internal ally and support had visibly shifted things and reinforced Uma’s commitment and confidence. She explained that “the lull has shown there's a demand*”* and partners were now coming to her to help design a new approach. She concluded by saying “I actually don't think it is possible to be successful with

something like this alone" because you need different "vantage points", as well as moral support.

These two cases underscored how a positive relational context enabled altruistically natured respondents to step into the repeated challenges that such CSPs often encounter, whereas a negative one led them to step away, but retain a hope and intention to adapt as necessary and re-engage as appropriate. The relational context was therefore an instrumental factor that influenced whether partnership practitioners were likely to sustain their CSP commitment through the challenges that inevitably arise in such partnerships. As Max remarked, there are "people who share a passion and who share a vision" and "if you can connect those folks together, there's a chance."

d. *Stepping in*

Over the course of my study, a sub-set of study participants repeatedly *stepped in* to the diverse challenges they faced. Stepping in consisted of increasing proactive engagement; proposing solutions; rallying partners during meetings; and taking concrete steps or action to adjust plans, resolve challenges, and shift things back on track. As described above, it was facilitated by a positive relational context, but it also appeared to be driven by an innate solution orientation and risk tolerance that, as noted in Figure 10, altruistically natured CSP members shared.

For instance, once he had returned from his trip abroad, it took Nick only a few weeks to find a new site for the container that could not be dropped several months before due to the community backlash incident. Max expressed his admiration explaining that "Nick went 'hooding' and unearthed as God knows how he does, a new site" in a much better location.

Indeed, all partners were relieved by Nick's return, since he got things back on track in a way that they were unable to do. It was a clear reflection of Nick's way of operating that he had explained prior to the whole container episode. He doesn't wait for permission, but rather just goes out and does things, driven by his purposeful commitment.

> You find in these partnerships people take it to a certain level but there's no risk appetite. No one wants to step out of the circle and actually be the one flagged if something goes wrong. I'm prepared to take that risk and suffer the consequences because I know the risk I took was for a good reason.

Several other-oriented study participants voiced similar views as Nick, stating that "it's easier to ask for forgiveness than permission" (P24) and "things fly better under the radar" (P34). These respondents shared a firm solution orientation and high level of optimism which were also reflected in Max's comments on how he deals with challenges.

> If there are problems you've got to find a solution, that's what it's about. I really believe that and if you focus on the solution then there's always something positive 'cos there's always something to work towards… a solution! If you focus on the problem it's a bit of a bummer.

At the same time, Max clarified that identifying a solution was not easy. The CSP's bigger picture objective of improving health in disadvantaged communities was complex and required considerable effort, as well as flexibility.

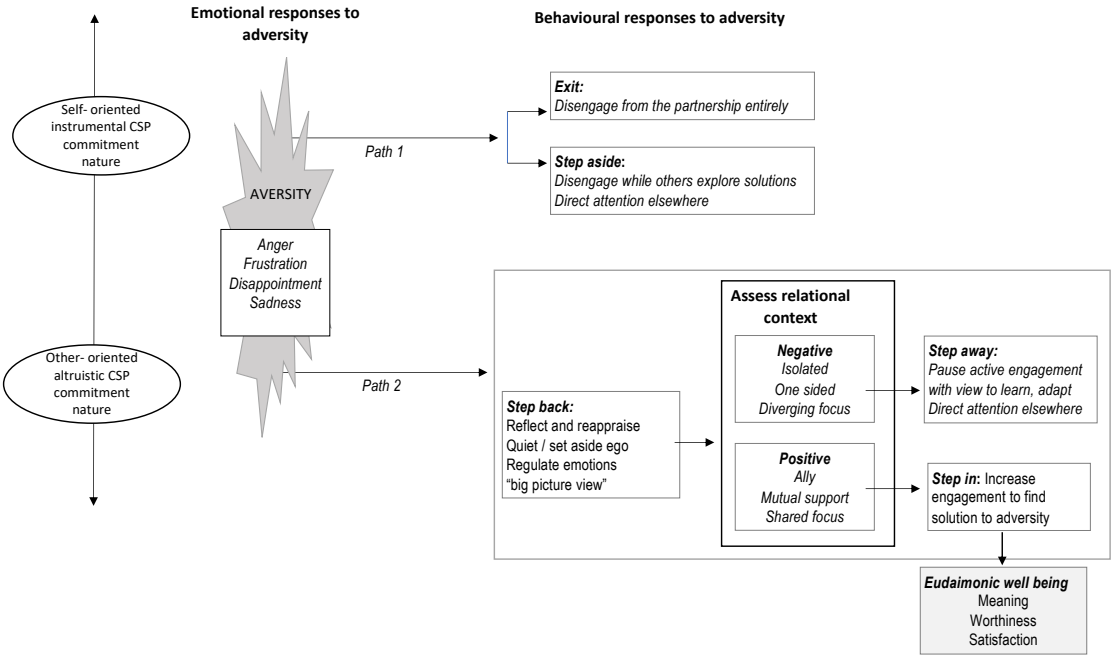
> If it was an easy solution, it would have been done and we would have waxed it and moved onto the next problem. But it's such a multi-faceted problem that it needs committed, patient, creative, adaptive responses to get to the solution. So, we've got to do what needs to be done and get there.

Leo reaffirmed this perspective when he described how he acted as a "champion" within government for his CSP because he believed in the innovative model it was promoting and the benefit it could provide for "greater society". He explained that without his backing, the

CSP "would have fallen flat", and "years of work would have been gone". He admitted however that it was not an easy process to gain support and scale, saying "faith and adaptability, that is what it takes".

These findings indicated that *stepping in* to adversity was a conscious decision. It was driven by the purposeful layer of commitment and necessitated faith, solution orientation and a tolerance for risk. As depicted in behavioural path 2 of Figure 13, stepping in was enabled by i) stepping back to remind oneself of the big picture and ii) a positive and supportive relational context. Sustaining CSP commitment and stepping in were clearly hard work and demanded a lot of effort. My question then was, why? What kept these people going through repeated instances of partnership adversity? What was in it for them, as an individual? Comparative analysis of study participants' responses to such questions revealed the important individual benefit of *eudaimonic well-being* which is indicated in Figure 14 below.

Figure 14: Individual benefit from sustaining CSP commitment



4.10 Individual benefit from sustaining CSP commitment

An enlightening finding from my study was the explanation for why several altruistically committed CSP practitioners continuously stepped in to overcome the adversity they faced in their partnerships. As described throughout this chapter, it clearly related to their commitment towards the social goal and serving others. However, my analysis revealed that sustaining CSP commitment also generated a significant personal reward of increased eudaimonic well-being. The APA dictionary of psychology defines eudaimonic well-being as "the type of happiness or contentment that is achieved through self-actualization and having meaningful purpose in one's life". [14] It has its foundation in Artistotle's *eudaimonia* which refers to acting in accord with virtue and is generally understood by scholars as relating to purposeful engagement, meaning, authenticity, and personal growth (Bauer et al., 2008; Deci & Ryan, 2008; Huta, 2016; Huta & Waterman, 2014; Ryan & Deci, 2001; Ryff, 2019). As indicated in Table 18, study participants who had stepped in and sustained CSP commitment through adversity expressed this benefit with considerable passion and authenticity. Their descriptions of the emotional reward they felt linked closely to the purposeful layer of CSP commitment described earlier in this chapter. As such, the benefit of enhanced eudaimonic well-being appeared to validate and reinforce the different aspects of the purpose driven commitment layer through a positive feedback loop.

[14] https://dictionary.apa.org/eudaimonic-well-being

Table 18: Individual benefit from sustaining CSP commitment

Concept / component in theoretical model	Definition / description of concept	Model Pathway component with description		Examples from data
Individual benefit from sustaining CSP commitment	Description of the emotional reward that respondents expressed following the process of stepping in to address the adverse event, most notably when a solution or pathway forward had been found and implemented	Eudaimonic well-being	Refers to the happiness or contentment that is achieved through having a meaningful purpose in one's life; emotions expressed include satisfaction, meaning, joy, fulfillment, the sense of achieving something worthy and making a difference	*"I would be lying if I'm not saying that it gives me great satisfaction that we actually pulled this off" (P12)* *"it's hard work but it is fulfilling to actually see it coming together." (P71)* *"It's flipping exciting, the reward to see things happening that you can't even plan and think." (P51)* *"…I'm having an impact. And when I go to bed I have more of a challenged heart and kind of like feel better about what I've done, and I enjoy it." (P42)* *"it's so rewarding and gives me a zest for life and I look forward to it every morning when I get up." (P73)*

Max, for example, laughed as he responded to the question of what keeps him going in such partnerships.

> I'm nearly 60, what am I doing here with these kind of things? It's just so weird. But the point is - why do we do it? 'Cos it's fulfilling, it gives meaning, it's worthy, it's got potential to do good for people who are taking strain, in my country, on my continent, fellow human beings. Why should they have such a hard time? Let's see what we can do and it's worthwhile. It's hard but that's cool. Hard's not bad. You learn, you grow, it gives meaning.

This sense of fulfilment and meaning reaffirmed his belief that engaging in such CSPs had the potential to address the complex problems facing his country. It therefore motivated Max to sustain his CSP commitment, even though he regularly lamented the challenges they were dealing with and the fact that he was tired and overworked. Uma conveyed a similar perspective as she described how her continued commitment to Healthy Bodies, despite all the challenges, "gives purpose" and "meaning" to her life and just feels like "the right thing to do".

Others spoke about the satisfaction that they got from such collaborative efforts and how much they enjoyed it. Dan, for example, reflected how, despite the challenges, working in

such partnerships gives him “freedom to be”. He used the Afrikaans word for fun to explain how he felt after events such as the CSP launch saying, in spite of all the frustrations that happened, “The fact that I'm getting [home late] tonight, exhausted, it's not work. So today wasn't work for me, it was lekker”. He further emphasized that the “spin off is at on the personal level” and tomorrow he and his partners would wake up knowing that “something good happened.”

Nick, who repeatedly stepped into CSP challenges and engaged proactively on behalf of his partners, emphasized how this work gives him “a zest for life”. Leo expressed a similar emotional reward, ending his story about the major setbacks he and Ian had overcome together with a wide grin and declaring “I would be lying if I'm not saying that it gives me great satisfaction that we actually pulled this off”.

Ian, for his part, described the enjoyment benefit he derived from his work in the partnership saying, “Everyday I'm having an impact. And when I go to bed I have more of a challenged heart and kind of like feel better about what I've done, and I enjoy it”. He and his partners had endured numerous setbacks to get government buy-in for the CSP, but as a regular surfer, he likened the feeling to catching a wave explaining that “it's like swimming in the ocean, it's chaotic and anything can happen. But if you catch a wave, it's the best feeling in the world. So I guess it's the enjoyment factor that I get out of this".

The passion with which these respondents shared the above insights revealed that they felt their lives were worthy, meaningful, and making a difference for others. Although their resilient CSP commitment was driven by a higher purpose which was greater than themselves, they also clearly benefitted from an emotional reward of enhanced eudaimonic

well-being. Indeed, the emotional reward that they derived from sustaining commitment through adversity appeared to validate their purpose driven orientation, since they were able to witness the positive impact of their work once the hurdles had been overcome.

Furthermore, these respondents had not only engaged in multiple partnerships, but they were also the ones who tended to conceptualize and drive them. They were also the individuals who spoke passionately about the "vastness of what can be achieved" through partnerships (Nick); the fact that the "end result" of the partnership is often more positive than the "intended outcome" (Leo); and that by enabling "like minded energy to gel, [partnerships] can be bigger than the atom bomb" (Dan). These patterns indicated that stepping in and surmounting challenges in such CSPs, actually reinforced these respondents' belief in the intrinsic value of partnering. Therefore, as indicated in Figure 14, the individual benefit of enhanced eudaimonic well-being that is derived from sustaining commitment through adversity serves to validate and reinforce the purposeful layer of CSP commitment.

4.11 Nascent findings

The longitudinal design of my project enabled me to observe how partnership practitioners in the same CSP responded differently to adversity depending on their priority focus commitment target, CSP commitment natures and layers, and relational circumstances. Except for those who exited the partnership, the behavioural paths in Figure 9 were iterative and repeated regularly. My ongoing comparative analysis revealed some nascent findings that related to my model but were too tentative to include. I introduce these briefly here and discuss them further in the future research directions section of Chapter 5.

4.11.1 Enhanced collaborative capacity and competence?

The first of these nascent findings indicates another potential reinforcement effect of the altruistic commitment pathway related to enhanced collaborative capacity and competence. The act of *stepping back* reflected study participants' ability to empathize with their partners' context and prioritize the common good. *Stepping in* required a supportive relational context and a robust solution orientation. As indicated in Table 1 in Chapter 2, relational intelligence, solution focus and other characteristics such as patience, active listening and consensus building around shared goals are considered fundamental for brokering and maintaining partnerships. They were frequently demonstrated by the study participants who had stepped in and proactively found solutions for CSP challenges.

For instance, at every CSP meeting, Max actively listened to each partner's concerns before skilfully reminding them of their shared higher goal of enhancing patient welfare which he described as "the sharpest point". Another example is Nick, whose goal orientation and adept people skills enabled him to resolve a CSP challenge that had plagued his partners for several months in a matter of weeks. Hence the process of effectively sustaining CSP commitment through multiple instances of adversity may actually strengthen general cross sector partnering capacity and competence.

4.11.2 Factors that may lead to a shift from Path 1 to Path 2?

The second nascent finding relates to whether, when and why partnership practitioners might shift from the instrumental to the altruistic CSP commitment pathway for a specific CSP. As described in earlier sections of this chapter, the pathway that each study participant aligned to was determined by their prioritization of three key commitment targets of employing organization, career, or social goal *within the context of the CSP,* and which reflected a more "self" vs "other" orientation towards the specific partnership under study. I did not, however,

examine all the factors that drove this orientation, and whether with changing circumstances or influences, there could potentially be a shift. This possibility was witnessed in the case of three respondents who displayed a strong self-orientation and instrumental CSP commitment nature at the beginning of my study, and over time appeared to shift towards the altruistic CSP commitment pathway. The reasons for this appeared to be two-fold, firstly their own organizational circumstances, and secondly the influence of their altruistically committed counterparts.

For example, Quinn's priority focus commitment target at the start of the CSP was clearly organizational, i.e., to obtain funding and support towards his NGO's sustainability. Several months later, his organization's funding situation had shifted for the better and he was no longer in such need. Within that period, however, I also witnessed how his trust in the Plaka Foundation CSP members had grown, and how they had managed to overcome his inherent scepticism of partnering with the private sector or corporate foundations. This was reflected during an interview several months after the project had started, where he stated, "What one does feel when you talk to these Plaka Foundation guys is that they are really committed to social development. You get that feeling and that's where you can connect".

He went on to share his longer-term objective for Healthy Townships which centred around scaling the initiative and promoting fruitful collaboration towards a higher goal.

> My dream is that we can really strengthen this and roll this out to many sites we are working in and look at this as part of the triangulation between public and private sector, the public and community, the private and community. So, you bring it all together, so you have a greater feeling that we all in it together.

There was therefore a notable shift in the motivation behind his commitment at the initiation of the CSP compared to later on in my study.

A similar shift was observed in Oliver. At the beginning of my study, he was extremely vocal about how the CSP needed to support his company's selfish, profit-driven interests. Over time, however, he expressed more and more admiration for the work of Nick and Max who were altruistically committed to the CSP. His narrative shifted towards how "doing good" and demonstrating impact in communities helps to differentiate the company from their competitors and strengthen employee loyalty and retention. These were still organizationally focussed goals, but his commitment to supporting the CSPs that the company was involved in had clearly grown. This was evident when Max emphasized near the end of my study that "Oliver and I would go to war together".

Eric was the third study participant who exhibited a shift in CSP commitment nature during my study. He appeared to be influenced by Dan's constant focus on passing the passion for partnering forward. Following the Healthy Mining Communities launch event, Eric had gained significant support and buy-in from his company's leadership for the work that he was doing, which indicated that ensuring clear organizational benefit was perhaps no longer the highest priority. His shift in focus was evidenced by a comment made at the end of his interview three months after the event.

> What is quite new to me in terms of dealing with partnerships is looking beyond yourself to say - how do I inspire others to follow suit, how do we amplify this, how do we multiply this, what are the forums where we have a sphere of influence that we can go there and plant a seed or that we can go there and demonstrate a value proposition that should be attractive enough for various private sector entities to want to go back and do themselves.

A few months later Dan happily shared how he, Eric and Beth were deepening the partnership and expanding health services even further by building a wellness centre right by the border near the mining community. This development indicated that the previous tensions

caused by their differing priorities in relation to the partnership were no longer posing a challenge. These preliminary findings open up avenues for additional research which are described in Chapter 5.

4.12 Chapter conclusion

In this chapter I have described what I found in response to my core research questions of "what shapes individuals' CSP commitment?" and "how is CSP commitment sustained through adversity?". My findings underscore the complexity of CSP commitment and reveal how the nature of an individuals' commitment to the partnership varies between instrumental (self-oriented) and altruistic (other-oriented). This important distinction influences how individuals manifest their commitment to the partnership, and whether they tend to sustain it through challenges or not. As such, my findings reveal the rationale behind CSP commitment, as well as the conditions that promote its resilience through challenges. In the following chapter, I discuss how these findings relate to existing knowledge and research, and present both practical implications and future research directions.

Chapter 5 - Discussion

5.1 Chapter introduction

Research on cross sector partnerships (CSPs) has typically taken the perspective of the organization (meso-level) and given considerable attention to the partnership challenges that often lead to disappointing results and frustration for those involved (Bryson et al., 2006, 2015; Gray, 1989; Huxham & Vangen, 2000; Koschmann et al., 2012; Nguyen & Janssens, 2018; Powell et al., 2018). Partner commitment to the CSP has been emphasised as essential to overcoming adversity (MacDonald et al., 2019; O'Leary & Vij, 2012; Venn & Berg, 2014; Villani et al., 2017), yet has not been examined at the micro-level by partnership researchers, despite the recognition that it is individuals who participate in and steer such partnerships, not their organizations (Battisti, 2009; Vogel et al., 2021). Similarly, although several scholars have highlighted the pivotal role of individuals in facilitating CSPs to identify pathways through adversity (Manning & Roessler, 2014; Purdy et al., 2017; Vangen & Huxham, 2003; Venn & Berg, 2014), empirical research and understanding of these individuals, i.e., the partnership practitioners, is scarce (Sloan & Oliver, 2013; Stott & Murphy, 2020; Venn & Berg, 2014). The partnership literature therefore lacks explanation for *why* and *how* individuals commit to CSPs, as well as what enables them to sustain CSP commitment through the challenges that typically arise.

On the other hand, the commitment literature offers extensive insight regarding individuals' commitment at work. As a construct, workplace commitment has been studied for decades (Klein, Becker, et al., 2009), yet most research examines commitment in relation to employees and their employing organizations (Klein, Molloy, et al., 2009; van Rossenberg et al., 2018). In recent years, scholars have recognized that the contemporary workplace is very

different from the one of the past, with a growing number of people working in temporary and cross boundary settings and navigating multiple commitment targets simultaneously (van Rossenberg, Cross, et al., 2022; van Rossenberg et al., 2018). They acknowledge the need for more insight on individual commitment within these more fluid and dynamic organizational contexts (Klein et al., 2022; van Rossenberg, Cross, et al., 2022; van Rossenberg et al., 2018), of which CSPs are a good example (Kolk, 2014). Similarly, while there is considerable understanding of the benefits of commitment for the target in question, and most notably for the employing organization (Meyer et al., 2004; Meyer & Maltin, 2010), there is limited knowledge of how individuals themselves benefit from sustained commitment to various targets (Chris et al., 2016; Meyer & Maltin, 2010).

Recognising the opportunity to contribute to both partnership and commitment literatures, my study focused on the micro-level of cross sector partnerships (CSPs) and examined what shapes individuals' commitment to these collaborative endeavours. The empirically developed model of my findings (Figure 9) presents how the nature of individuals' CSP commitment differs depending on which of three key commitment targets (employing organization, career, or social goal) they prioritize in the context of the partnership. In distinguishing between those who are *instrumentally* vs *altruistically* committed to the CSP, the model outlines two iterative pathways through adversity which result in four different behavioural outcomes of *exiting, stepping aside, stepping away* or *stepping in*. Critically, the model illustrates what enables certain partnership practitioners to sustain CSP commitment during adversity and *step in* to address collaborative challenges, whereas others do not. Finally, it identifies how the process of sustaining commitment through partnership adversity enhances eudaimonic well-being for the individual. This beneficial reward both validates and reinforces their purpose-driven bond towards cross sector partnering.

This chapter begins by presenting the theoretical contributions of my study to both the partnership and commitment literatures. I discuss how my findings relate to existing knowledge in each field and draw on insights from other domains to articulate their broader significance. I then present the practical implications of my study, highlighting their potential value for different stakeholders who engage in, or contribute towards, partnering for development. I conclude the chapter by discussing the limitations of my study and proposing directions for future research.

5.2 Theoretical contributions

The findings from my longitudinal, person-centred study of individuals' commitment in CSPs contribute to scholarly knowledge in the following ways. In relation to the partnership literature, I enhance micro-level understanding of the human and emotional side of cross sector partnering, from the perspective of the partnership practitioner. I provide empirical insight on *why* individuals commit to CSPs and illustrate *how* this influences behavioural responses to adversity. I also provide additional understanding of the pivotal role of relational context in supporting individuals to overcome partnership challenges.

In relation to the commitment literature, I shed light on the interplay of different commitment targets within the complex, cross boundary and socially oriented workplace setting of cross sector partnerships and demonstrate how altruism facilitates commitment. I convey the conditions that support partnership practitioners to sustain their CSP commitment through adversity, as well as the benefit that they derive from doing so. The following sections elaborate on these contributions in more detail and draw on insights from other literatures that informed my analysis, notably in relation to perspective taking, emotion regulation and eudaimonic well-being.

5.2.1 Contributions to the partnership literature

Partnership scholars agree that the extant literature provides only a limited understanding of the micro-level of cross sector partnerships (Kolk, 2014; O'Leary & Vij, 2012; Sloan & Oliver, 2013; Venn & Berg, 2014; Vogel et al., 2021). Prior research has revealed the importance of relational interactions in CSPs (Huxham & Vangen, 1996; Kolk et al., 2010, 2015; le Ber & Branzei, 2010a), with several studies highlighting particular relational contexts and practices that either facilitate or hamper productive collaboration (le Ber & Branzei, 2010a; Nguyen & Janssens, 2018; Patnaik et al., 2020; Powell et al., 2018; Sloan & Oliver, 2013). Other studies have determined that specific "enthusiastic individuals" often play a critical role in such CSPs (Venn & Berg, 2014, p. 404), stepping in as conveners, bridging agents, intermediaries or intrapreneurs and supporting partners to overcome challenges (Huxham & Vangen, 2000; Manning & Roessler, 2014; O'Leary & Vij, 2012; Purdy et al., 2017; Vangen & Huxham, 2003; Venn & Berg, 2014). Scholars have also outlined the specific skills and attitudes that such individuals typically embody, suggesting that a certain level of competence or collaborative capacity facilitates individuals to partner effectively (Babiak & Thibault, 2009; Bryson et al., 2015; O'Leary & Vij, 2012; Vangen & Huxham, 2003).

What existing micro-level partnership research does not explain, however, is *why*? Why are certain individuals "enthusiastic" about their CSPs? What explains their commitment towards these collaborative endeavours? What enables them to keep on going as they confront the wide array of challenges that scholars have identified as being almost inherent to the partnering process? What is going on beneath the surface for them?

This gap in understanding is acknowledged by partnership and management scholars who call for more studies on the human, emotional and relational aspects of such partnerships (Albats et al., 2020; Battisti, 2009; Bode et al., 2019; Y. Liu et al., 2017; Stott & Murphy, 2020). They recommend drawing from the fields of organizational behaviour and psychology to enhance such micro-level research (Y. Liu et al., 2017) and emphasize a need to remain open to unexpected discoveries (Howard-Grenville et al., 2019).

a. Enhanced understanding of what drives partnership practitioners to commit to CSPs

My study findings contribute directly towards this need for enhanced understanding of the human and emotional side of cross sector partnering. In identifying how partnership practitioners' CSP commitment is shaped, I go a step further than the extant literature and explain *why* certain individuals engage more proactively and concertedly in CSPs than others. Indeed, I demonstrate that while all partnership practitioners embrace the bond to the CSP, and are therefore committed to it, they do so for different reasons. I leverage concepts and understanding from the field of workplace commitment to reveal how the prioritization of three different work-related commitment targets (employing organization, career and social goal) *in the context of the CSP* determines whether an individual approaches the partnership with a more instrumental/self-oriented or a more altruistic/other-oriented orientation. This important distinction fosters the *nature* of an individuals' commitment to the specific CSP, which as outlined in my theoretical model (Figure 9), has implications for how they engage in relation to the partnership, notably when confronted with adversity.

Critically, my findings demonstrate that the nature of an individual's CSP commitment is not necessarily a direct translation of what they prioritize in their lives. Most of the partnership practitioners in my study sample exhibited a strong purpose-driven commitment towards the

social goal of improving public health, and many had specifically chosen to work in professions, sectors and organizations that facilitated this objective. The nuance lies in which target individuals prioritize *in the context of the CSP*. At its most basic, those with an *instrumental CSP commitment nature* focus on deriving something from the CSP, whereas those with an *altruistic CSP commitment nature* focus on serving the CSP in the interest of the social goal. In this regard, it is important to clarify that an instrumental nature of commitment is not analogous to an instrumental bond as conceptualized by Klein et al. (2012). The commitment nature serves to describe the rationale behind the individual's volitional bond to the CSP.

Existing CSP research recognises the three commitment targets of employing organization, career and social goal as interests that need to be balanced by those who work in such partnerships (Eden & Huxham, 2001; Huxham & Vangen, 2005; Stadtler, 2011; Venn & Berg, 2014). The long-standing assertion in the literature, is that a clear organizational or resource benefit promotes most active engagement in a CSP (Clarke & MacDonald, 2019; Wood & Gray, 1991). Since the majority of partnership research is at the meso level, individuals are generally viewed as acting on behalf of their organization. This is reinforced by traditional understandings of reciprocity and social exchange which dictate that individuals will commit to the partnership provided they obtain something of value in return (Blau, 1964; Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005; di Domenico et al., 2009; Homans, 1961; Kolk et al., 2010; Muthusamy & White, 2005; Weber et al., 2021). One would therefore expect the instrumental nature of CSP commitment to dominate, whereby partners come to the table with a focus on the extrinsic value of the CSP and how it will serve them, in addition to the social goal. My study findings confirmed that this is indeed the case for many partnership practitioners, and the instrumental pathway at the top of my theoretical model depicts this.

The fact, however, that an almost equal portion of my study participants demonstrated an altruistic nature of CSP commitment, as reflected in the bottom pathway of my model, counters this traditional understanding of what promotes cross sector collaboration. Similarly, the lack of any clear patterns or dominant CSP commitment natures across types of sectors, organizations or roles indicates that there is indeed something deeper going on beneath the surface.

My findings therefore enhance scholarly understanding by providing empirical insight into the partnership practitioners who embodied an altruistic nature of CSP commitment, and who, in several cases, held a low allegiance to organizational and/or career goals. These were the "enthusiastic" individuals who "ignited" the collaboration and acted as conveners, visionaries, intermediaries and bridging agents within their CSPs. Their CSP commitment was driven by a clear prioritization of the higher purpose social goal combined with a belief that partnering across sectors was the right strategy to achieve it. While they acknowledged the tactical reasons for engaging in the partnership, they also exhibited an often passionate conviction in the larger purpose of partnering across sectors to achieve the social goal. Depicted in my model as the *purposeful layer* of CSP commitment, it is additional to the *tactical layer* that all partnership practitioners embody and reflects a belief in the intrinsic value of partnering.

The combination of the altruistic CSP commitment nature and purposeful CSP commitment layer promoted practitioners' proactive, solution-oriented action in service of the partnership, rather than their employing organization. Such action is reflective of pro-social and organizational citizenship behaviour, whereby the CSP is the organization of reference (Brief & Motowidlo, 1986; Podsakoff et al., 2000; Podsakoff & MacKenzie, 1997) and reaffirms

findings by commitment scholars that affective commitment towards a target leads to more proactive behaviour in support of that target (Belschak & den Hartog, 2010).

My findings also lend deeper insight and empirical evidence for recent partnership research which suggests that a pro-social and relational approach towards cross sector collaboration can foster longer lasting and more transformational partnerships (Stott & Murphy, 2020; Weber et al., 2021). Weber et al. (2022) identify pro-social giving as an important contributing factor to lasting CSPs, but do not explain the reasons behind it. Stott and Murphy (2020) distinguish between the extrinsic and intrinsic value of partnering, which correspond to a more instrumental vs integrative motivation to engage in such CSPs. They conceptualize that an *integrative* stance, whereby the CSP is seen as having value as an end in itself, is conducive to driving transformational collaboration for the SDGs. They emphasize, however, that moving towards the integrative stance necessitates a deepening of relational values within partnerships and greater recognition of interpersonal connections. My findings illustrate how an altruistic nature and purposeful layer of CSP commitment give rise to pro-social behaviours, as well as an integrative stance to partnering.

My study therefore provides empirical evidence for *why* people embody the attitudes and behaviours that scholars have identified as conducive or even essential for addressing adversity (Manning & Roessler, 2014; Purdy et al., 2017; Vangen & Huxham, 2003; Venn & Berg, 2014). This is not to say that individuals who exhibit instrumental CSP commitment do not contribute towards problem solving or overcoming challenges. Especially at the initial phase of the partnership they are also considerably engaged. The distinction becomes apparent once repeated challenges arise, which is when my study revealed that those who prioritized organizational or career goals in the context of the CSP were more likely to exit or

step aside from active engagement in the CSP. The question then was what enabled the other CSP members to sustain their commitment to the collaborative endeavour. This is where my other key contribution to the partnership literature lies.

b. Insight into self-reflective practices that promote sustained CSP commitment

My second contribution to the partnership literature is the identification of self-reflective practices that partnership practitioners with an altruistic nature of CSP commitment engage in when faced with CSP challenges. As indicated in the second pathway of my model, the internal process of mindfully *stepping back* to reflect on, cognitively reappraise and relativise the adverse situation with respect to the bigger picture, acts as an important enabler for sustaining CSP commitment. *Stepping back* involves aspects of perspective taking (Longmire & Harrison, 2018; Ng et al., 2021), emotion regulation (Gross, 2002), and a conscious quieting of both individual and organizational egos (Bauer & Wayment, 2008; Wayment & Bauer, 2017).

Psychology scholars define perspective taking as a "cognitive attempt to consider another's viewpoint" and distinguish this from empathy or "empathic concern" which is defined as "an emotional response to another's hardship" (Longmire & Harrison, 2018, p. 894). They highlight how perspective taking in negotiations is more effective than empathy and contributes towards integrative outcomes and enhancing joint gain (Galinsky et al., 2008). My findings reveal how altruistically committed CSP members engage in perspective taking once they encounter challenges, and notably with respect to interactions with their instrumentally committed counterparts. These individuals exhibit an ability to understand their partners' organizational situation, which is often very different to their own, and this helps them to defuse their frustration or dismay in relation to the adverse event and regain focus on the bigger picture objective of the CSP.

Existing partnership research highlights empathy as an important partnering competence that helps to strengthen interpersonal relationships and enhance trust, especially during challenging times (O'Leary & Vij, 2012; Powell et al., 2018; Sloan & Oliver, 2013; Vangen & Huxham, 2003). My analysis indicates that perspective taking is equally, if not more, effective in enabling partnership practitioners to overcome friction and re-engage with partners in a productive manner. My findings also lend empirical evidence for management scholars' assertion that individuals engage in cognitive appraisal perspective taking to promote trust and collaboration across boundaries, a process that involves both individual and interpersonal emotion regulation (M. Williams, 2007).

Emotion regulation refers to the processes that are used to "influence which emotions we have, when we have them and how we experience and express them" (Gross, 2002, p. 282). Psychology scholars have identified that different strategies of emotion regulation result in vastly different outcomes (Gross, 2002; McRae & Gross, 2020). Suppression, whereby individuals inhibit their emotion-expressive behaviour has been shown to have largely negative affective, cognitive, and social consequences (Gross, 2002). On the other hand, cognitive reappraisal, which entails "changing how we think about a situation in order to decrease its emotional impact", is associated with decreased negative and increased positive emotion experience and expression (Gross, 2002, p. 281). Management scholars have highlighted how positive emotion regulation can spark proactivity, as well as the ability to learn from failure (Lebel, 2017; Shepherd et al., 2011). As psychology scholars explain, such *positive reappraisal* can also lead to a shift in how adversity is perceived (Garland et al., 2015a). Garland et al. (2015) propose *Mindfulness to Meaning Theory* (MMT) to "provide a causal account for how mindfulness might promote the sense of eudaimonic meaning in the face of adversity"(Garland et al., 2015b, p. 377).

Existing relational level research on CSPs implies some individual emotion regulation behaviour since it conceivably supports - and may be a precursor to - some of the relational engagement practices that are effective in resolving emotionally laden CSP challenges (Nguyen & Janssens, 2018; Powell et al., 2018; Sloan & Oliver, 2013). There is no explicit mention of such individual level emotion work in these processes, and Sloan and Oliver (2013) explain that the expression of negative emotions is critical in stimulating relational work to build trust. Yet my study indicates that self-reflective cognitive reappraisal is a conscious process that altruistically committed partnership practitioners engage in when dealing with negative emotions related to CSP challenges, and that it is driven by their strong allegiance to the higher purpose social goal. This does not mean that these individuals do not express or articulate their negative emotions – my findings clearly showed that they do. It is more about when, where, and with whom they express these emotions, which is guided by their objective of limiting potential impact on the CSP. Furthermore, my findings reveal that these same individuals' awareness of how the individual and/or organizational ego can detract attention from their priority objective of the social goal, leads them to engage in a conscious effort to "quiet" the ego and focus on this higher purpose and the meaning they ascribe to it.

As explained in Chapter 3, psychology scholars typically define the *ego* as *the self* which includes affective evaluations of the self, such as self-esteem, as well as considerations of the self in relation to others (Bauer & Wayment, 2008). These two understandings relate to mainstream definitions of the ego such as "your sense of your own value and importance" (Oxford Learners Dictionary[15]); "your idea or opinion of yourself, especially your feeling of

[15] https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/ego?q=ego

your own importance and ability" (Cambridge Dictionary[16]); and "the self especially as contrasted with another self or the world" (Merriam Webster[17]). The idea of a quieter vs a noisier ego corresponds to the whether an individual transcends or exudes egotism and self-importance (Wayment & Bauer, 2017). The quiet ego balances self-interest with concern for others and interprets one's current situation in relation to how things develop over time (Wayment & Bauer, 2017). The noisy ego exudes self-importance and prioritizes the self-interest, often demonstrating a need for attention and validation of self-worth (Wayment & Bauer, 2017).

My findings revealed that other-oriented partnership practitioners were firmly aware of the ego and recognized how a "noisy" ego could derail partnership success. They lamented the individual and organizational egos of current and past partners and explained how they consciously got past their own egos in order to focus on the social goal, a process which is integrated in the *stepping back* component of my model. The quiet ego is an umbrella concept which brings together psychological constructs of perspective taking, inclusive identification, detached awareness, and growth mindedness (Bauer & Wayment, 2008; Wayment & Bauer, 2017). Scholars also associate the quiet ego with self-compassion and a desire for personal growth (Wayment & Bauer, 2017), both of which were exhibited by this subset of partnership practitioners. Quieting of the ego is also referred to as "ego development" and is considered to promote personal growth and resilience, as well as enhance eudaimonic well-being (Bauer et al., 2008, 2011; Wayment & Bauer, 2017). This insight on how quieting the ego actually "feels good" relates to my finding on the beneficial reward that partnership practitioners

[16] https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/ego
[17] https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/ego

derive from sustaining CSP commitment (Bauer et al., 2011). This is discussed further in the following section of this chapter on contributions to the commitment literature.

Taken together, the different self-reflective practices that altruistically natured partnership practitioners engage in as part of the *stepping back* process*,* enable them to surmount negative emotions that arise during adversity and sustain their commitment to the CSP. The combination of stepping back, and then either stepping in or stepping away could potentially be described as a "mindful dance of partnering" through adversity. It is facilitated by the deliberate prioritization of the partnership and social goal combined with an understanding of the need for a supportive relational context to successfully engage. This is analogous to how individuals who dance in pairs or groups (partnerships) must all know and adhere to one choreography and style (social goal), and require trust, support and constant communication with their fellow dancers to ensure synchronization and effective delivery of challenging moves (positive relational context) (Bell & Shea-Schultz, 1998; Chatterjee & Cardillo, 2021; Vidrin, 2020). While this metaphor of a "mindful dance" is not specifically included in my model, I believe it holds relevance and opportunity for practice, as described in the practical implications of my findings later in this chapter.

c. Affirmation of the pivotal role of relational context

My third contribution to the partnership literature is to affirm the pivotal role of relational context and illustrate the decisive influence it has on individuals' responses to adversity. Extant partnership literature emphasises the importance of the relational context and specific relational practices in supporting CSPs to navigate friction (Battisti, 2009; le Ber & Branzei, 2010a; Nguyen & Janssens, 2018; Patnaik et al., 2020; Powell et al., 2018; Sloan & Oliver, 2013; Stott & Murphy, 2020; Vangen & Huxham, 2003). Yet the literature focuses more on

the relational practices and interactions rather than the individuals themselves, conveying practices that are conducive to building trust (Patnaik et al., 2020; Vangen & Huxham, 2003), managing diverging interests (Powell et al., 2018), or attenuating emotionally charged incidents (Sloan & Oliver, 2013). There is comparatively limited insight on what is needed for partnership practitioners to *feel* supported in the partnership, and what happens if they do not.

My study therefore contributes to the literature by providing more insight on what constitutes a positive relational context from the partnership practitioners' perspective, illustrating how it is relates to a perception of shared focus and mutual support and is described by some as a "gut feeling". Critically, my study also demonstrates that altruistically committed CSP members are astutely aware of the need for a positive relational context and regularly assess whether it is present in the partnership. Indeed, as indicated in the altruistic pathway of my model (Figure 9), my longitudinal findings demonstrate how in the absence of sufficient support or an encouraging ally, even the most "enthusiastic" convener or bridging agent will temporarily *step away* in the face of CSP challenges. On the other hand, when support and mutual engagement are there, individuals feel supported which promotes more energy and engagement and enables them to *step in* to overcome adversity.

5.2.2 Contributions to the commitment literature

Commitment scholars recognize that the workplace has evolved with cross boundary and temporary organizational settings becoming more frequent, and more individuals aspiring for purposeful and meaningful work (Bingham et al., 2013; Geldenhuys et al., 2014; Klein et al., 2020; van Rossenberg, Cross, et al., 2022; van Rossenberg et al., 2018). The commitment literature calls for more research in these contemporary workplace settings (van Rossenberg,

Cross, et al., 2022; van Rossenberg et al., 2018), and acknowledges there is insufficient understanding of commitment to higher purpose targets (Bingham et al., 2013) and the way in which feelings of altruism may enhance commitment (Klein et al., 2020). While conceptual knowledge of how individuals navigate multiple commitment targets is growing, empirical research in this area remains relatively limited and more insight is needed on how commitment evolves over time (Klein et al., 2012, 2022). Furthermore, while much is known about how commitment targets such as organizations and teams benefit from a committed workforce (T. E. Becker et al., 2009; Klein, Becker, et al., 2009; Klein, Molloy, et al., 2009; Meyer et al., 2004; Meyer & Maltin, 2010), less is understood about the benefits generated for the committed individuals themselves (Meyer & Maltin, 2010; Meyer & Morin, 2016). Such gaps in knowledge have led to calls for longitudinal research and more interpretive, person-centred studies as a complement to the quantitative, variable-centred studies that typically dominate the commitment literature (Klein et al., 2020, 2022; Meyer et al., 2013, 2021; Meyer & Morin, 2016; Moran, 2009; van Rossenberg, Cross, et al., 2022; van Rossenberg et al., 2018). My exploratory, micro-level study responds to these calls and contributes to the commitment literature in several ways as described in the following sub-sections.

a. Interplay of commitment targets and role of altruism in enhancing CSP commitment

By examining individuals' commitment in the context of CSPs, I provide empirical insight on the commitment construct within a cross boundary and temporary workplace setting. CSPs are recognized by partnership scholars as a unique organizational form (Koschmann et al., 2012; Seitanidi, 2008), and by definition are formed through the joining of several different organizations and sectors, often on a temporary basis (Crane & Seitanidi, 2014). Furthermore, the fact that CSPs focus on achieving a social goal, in this case improving the health of

disadvantaged and underserved communities in South Africa, enables my study to shed more light on workplace commitment within a higher-purpose context. The four CSPs included in my study were all in their initiation phase at the start of data collection, and the individuals who worked in them (i.e., the partnership practitioners) had other roles and responsibilities that were independent of the partnership. Hence, engaging in the CSP was typically an additional, and often voluntary responsibility, which makes it a separate workplace commitment target.

My study enhances understanding of commitment in this complex and often fluid setting by identifying three common CSP-related commitment targets of employing organization, career and social goal and providing a comparative analysis of how partnership practitioners prioritize them in the context of the partnership. I reveal the important interplay of these three different targets and illustrate in my theoretical model (Figure 9) how the prioritization of a self-oriented target (employing organization or career) vs the other-orientated target (social goal) influences how individuals commit to a separate target, in this case the CSP.

The fact that nearly half of my study sample prioritized the social goal as their focus commitment target in this complex, cross boundary setting reaffirms scholars' recent identification of altruism as an important antecedent of commitment (Klein et al., 2020). Indeed, my findings contribute to this development in the commitment literature by providing empirical evidence for how feelings of altruism promote commitment to a unique inter-organizational workplace target. I illustrate how CSP commitment was often driven by a deeply personal bond to the higher purpose goal, which superseded individuals' bond to the organization or to the goals of the organization that they represent. This focus on the social goal fosters an altruistic motivation for CSP commitment which is reflected in the way they

explain their engagement in the CSP, as well as in the attitudes and tendencies they exhibit (see Figure 10), many of which reflect components of collaborative capacity (see Table 1). Similarly, my findings that partnership practitioners with an altruistic CSP commitment nature displayed more emotion in relation to their engagement in the partnership and were more likely to sustain CSP commitment through adversity provide additional empirical evidence for Klein et al.'s (2020) insight that socio-emotional explanations of commitment are associated with stronger bonds than instrumental explanations. This difference in intensity of commitment is demonstrated by my conceptualization of the purposeful layer of CSP commitment which, as indicated in my model, is additional to the tactical layer (see Figure 9). The purposeful layer reflects the idea of service for the greater good and relates to concepts of virtue ethics, eudaimonia, and spirituality (Chawla & Guda, 2010; Grant et al., 2018; Houston & Cartwright, 2007; Huta & Ryan, 2010; Kolodinsky et al., 2008; Pandey & Gupta, 2008). The behaviours which I identify as demonstrative of the purposeful layer indicate a very high level of commitment, and as described in Chapter 4, often went above and beyond what would typically be expected of an individual in that position.

b. Evolutions of commitment over time and conditions that promote its resilience

The longitudinal nature and person-centred focus of my study enable me to contribute empirical insight on how commitment evolves over time, as well as the conditions that promote its resilience. My findings demonstrate that in the early phases of the CSP, both instrumental and altruistically natured CSP members were considerably engaged and committed to making the partnership work. However, as multiple situations of adversity began to arise, there were marked differences in behavioural responses which are depicted in the right-hand side of my model (see Figure 9). I found that the CSP commitment of all partnership practitioners was affected by adverse events, and that more frequent or longer

lasting challenges led to greater wanes in commitment. As described earlier in this chapter, however, and as indicated in the lower pathway of my model, the act of *stepping back* supported altruistically committed CSP members to cognitively reappraise the adverse situation and regulate negative emotional responses. The ability and willingness to consciously step back is therefore the first condition that promotes resilience of commitment in this cross boundary, higher purpose oriented workplace setting.

The second condition has been identified by partnership scholars as essential for partnership functioning and relates to the importance of supportive relational interactions within the CSP (Battisti, 2009; le Ber & Branzei, 2010a; Stott & Murphy, 2020; Vangen & Huxham, 2003). As indicated in the lower pathway of my model, individuals with an altruistic CSP commitment nature required a positive relational context in order to sustain CSP commitment and proactively *step in* to respond to adversity. Typically, this entailed having at least one other person in the partnership, who acted as an ally or supportive colleague towards the work of the CSP.

This finding extends the commitment literature by revealing that relational factors that promote team commitment are similar and equally as important for sustaining commitment to the cross boundary organizational form of CSPs. Existing studies by commitment scholars demonstrate that team commitment is positively correlated with perceived team support (Bishop et al., 2000; Sheng et al., 2010), trust (Sheng et al., 2010), satisfaction with co-workers (Bishop & Scott, 2000), and perceived task interdependence (Bishop & Scott, 2000). They have also identified that strong team commitment leads to enhanced team performance, as well as altruism, i.e., extra-role behaviour that is not rewarded by the organization (Neininger et al., 2010). CSPs are not generally presented as teams in the partnership

literature, and they carry an important distinction from more typical workplace teams in that the members come from different organizations and sectors. My study however demonstrates that there are clear parallels between these two workplace commitment targets in terms of how commitment is fostered.

c. Benefit of sustaining commitment for individuals: enhanced eudaimonic well-being

My third contribution to the commitment literature is to explain how individuals benefit from remaining committed through adversity. Research on the effects of workplace commitment on the individuals themselves is relatively limited (Chris et al., 2016; Meyer & Maltin, 2010). Scholars have explored it in relation to the organization using the multi-dimensional construct of commitment that distinguishes between affective, normative, and continuance commitment (Chris et al., 2016; Meyer & Maltin, 2010; Meyer & Morin, 2016). Existing studies demonstrate that strong affective commitment to the organization is typically associated with positive health and well-being for employees, as well as a better ability to manage or avoid stressors (Meyer & Maltin, 2010). The effects on employees of normative and continuance commitment to the organization are less well understood (Meyer & Maltin, 2010). Furthermore, scholars acknowledge that the question of how commitment to other workplace related targets influences employee well-being merits intentional examination (Meyer & Maltin, 2010). Scholars have offered a theoretical framework to examine the relationship between commitment and well-being which recognizes that differences in type of commitment may result in either hedonic or eudaimonic well-being (Chris et al., 2016; Meyer & Maltin, 2010). However empirical research in this regard is limited, and scholars call for more exploration on this aspect of commitment (Chris et al., 2016; Meyer & Maltin, 2010).

My study therefore contributes to the commitment literature[18] by offering empirical evidence for how individuals benefit from their commitment to a cross boundary, socially oriented workplace target. My findings illustrate how sustaining CSP commitment and *stepping in* to overcome partnership challenges enhances eudaimonic well-being for partnership practitioners. Eudaimonic well-being is understood as relating to purposeful engagement, meaning, authenticity, and personal growth (Bauer et al., 2008; Deci & Ryan, 2008; Huta, 2016; Huta & Waterman, 2014; Ryan & Deci, 2001; Ryff, 2019). Words such as these were often used by study respondents as they described the reasons why they purposefully and proactively engaged to support the CSP, even when difficult. Their verbal and non-verbal expressions of satisfaction when obstacles were overcome demonstrated that sustaining CSP commitment through adversity generated a sense of well-being.

Furthermore, my findings convey how the sense of meaning and growth that individuals derived from steering their CSPs through challenges and achieving their objective of helping others made them feel that their efforts were both justified and worthwhile. These sentiments reaffirmed their higher purpose orientation towards the social goal, as well as their belief that partnering was the appropriate strategy to achieve it. My study therefore demonstrates how the beneficial outcome of enhanced eudaimonic well-being both validates and reinforces individuals' purposeful layer of commitment to the CSP. This is illustrated in the feedback loop in the second pathway of my model (Figure 9).

In summary, my study contributes to both partnership and commitment literatures by describing how certain partnership practitioners engage in a deliberately "mindful dance" of

[18] I should note that my study differs from prior research in this area since it applies a unidimensional rather than multidimensional definition of the construct. owever, the unidimensional definition aligns most closely with affective and normative mindsets of commitment and should therefore be interpreted accordingly (Klein et al., 2012, 2022; Meyer & Maltin, 2010).

stepping back and *stepping in* when confronted with CSP adversity. The purposeful, altruistically motivated commitment of these individuals to their CSPs helps to overcome challenges and generates enhanced eudaimonic well-being. This beneficial reward both validates and reinforces these individuals' commitment to partnering across sectors for the social goal.

5.3 Practical implications

Throughout my research project, a key objective has been to promote the practical relevance of my findings. Based on my interactions with partnership practitioners, both within and outside of my study sample, I have identified several ways in which my findings may contribute towards the practice of cross sector partnering. These are presented in relation to four important stakeholder groups who I consider to have both an interest and an opportunity to enhance effective collaboration for development.

Partnership practitioners: My findings demonstrate that CSP commitment is influenced by the prioritization of three other CSP-related commitment targets and that this orients individuals' engagement in the partnership, notably in response to adversity. I also reveal that self-reflective practices and positive relational context function as enablers that support individuals to proactively *step in* to challenges rather than *step aside* or *away*. My study therefore extends practitioner literature which has highlighted the importance of reflective practice for partnership brokers by demonstrating that specific reflective practices are equally important for CSP participants, and actually support them to sustain CSP commitment through adversity (Hundal, 2016). The insights from my study can inform the development of a self-assessment tool which may be used to promote self-reflection and awareness of individuals' own reasons for engaging in the CSP and the impact that may have

on partnership functioning. By gaining knowledge of the different workplace commitment targets that relate to CSPs, and understanding of the various pathways through adversity, practitioners themselves can determine what they are prioritizing and why. For smaller partnerships, bridging agents (Manning & Roessler, 2014) or intermediaries (Venn & Berg, 2014) may instigate and support such a reflective process, whereas for larger partnerships it could be led by external partnership brokers (Hundal, 2014) or members of backbone organizations (DuBow et al., 2018) who are specifically engaged to facilitate and support the CSP. Use of such an assessment tool would acknowledge the critical role of individuals in CSPs and help reveal why certain CSP members are more or less committed to the partnership, as well as what steps might be taken to shift this. Gaining deeper understanding of the CSP members themselves would complement insights gleaned from the use of other assessment frameworks that aim to evaluate and improve partnership functioning such as *The Partnering Initiative's* "Partnership health check" tool (The Partnering Initiative, 2020).

Partnership brokers, bridging agents and intermediaries: In partnerships that have dedicated partnership brokers, bridging agents or intermediaries, my study findings may assist these individuals to support their partnerships more effectively through episodes of adversity. Promoting understanding of the various CSP-related commitment targets and how they influence CSP commitment can provide shared language and facilitate honest reflection and dialogue around partners' diverging interests and expectations. Sharing information in an authentic and facilitated process can help to promote perspective taking of different partners' circumstances as well as generate renewed focus towards the common, higher purpose social goal. Similarly, by providing evidence of the benefits of a pro-social, altruistic partnering approach for lasting CSPs (Weber et al., 2021) and individual eudaimonic well-being, partnership brokers may promote the quieting of both individual and organizational egos

within the CSP. Conscious action to enhance interpersonal relationships among CSP members may support wider adoption of an *integrative stance* to partnering, whereby individuals acknowledge the value of partnering in itself (Stott & Murphy, 2020). Based on prior theoretical research, this could conceivably lead to more transformational outcomes for the SDGs (Stott & Murphy, 2020).

Organizational leaders: For organisations that are involved, or envision engaging in CSPs, my study provides insight on conducive personal characteristics, interests and aptitudes that influence how individuals commit to CSPs and the way in which they respond to adversity. While many of the skills and attitudes had already been identified by partnership scholars (see Table 1), the distinction between a self vs other orientation may assist organizational leaders in identifying and selecting appropriate staff to represent the organisation and help steer the CSP. While this may depend on the organization's "real" reasons for engaging in the CSP, my interactions with organizational leaders in my study sample are what led me to identify this potential contribution. One COO described it as whether individuals are more "pocket" vs "heart" oriented, whereby those who prioritized the pocket were focused on what they could derive for themselves, and those who were heart oriented prioritized the aim of serving the greater good (P63). He emphasized that in such partnerships, "heart" oriented people were the ones who served the organization best. My findings reaffirm and support his assertion, provided of course that the organization's over-arching objective is to ensure that the CSP they engage in succeeds.

Management educators: Business and management schools around the world play an important role in shaping the skills and mindsets of future leaders, many of whom may contribute towards sustainable development, be it within private, public, or non-profit sectors.

The UN's Principles of Responsible Management Education (PRME) initiative recognizes the influential role of management educators and aims to drive thought leadership to "transform management education and develop responsible decision makers of tomorrow to advance sustainable development".[19] Cross sector partnerships, despite their challenges, remain an important vehicle for addressing complex development problems. Leveraging my findings to advance education within management and business schools on the "mindful dance of partnering across sectors" would therefore align with and support the objectives of PRME. Integrating the metaphor of a "mindful dance" also opens avenues for creative content delivery which could include mindfulness and embodied learning techniques (Ergas, 2019; Macedonia, 2019). Offering such a course would promote deeper understanding of the introspective and relational aspects of social partnering and build the capacity of future managers, policy makers, and multisectoral leaders to effectively partner for sustainable development.

5.4 Limitations and directions for future research

As with any research, my study has several limitations. Firstly, it was conducted in one geographic region, South Africa, and focused on one social issue, public health. Although my study sample was diverse, it did not encompass a broad range of international partnership practitioners, and there could conceivably be cultural biases or historical factors that influenced the research findings. Furthermore, health is a specific domain whose practitioners may be more or less altruistically inclined due to their professions and personal backgrounds. On the other hand, my research questions examined the general phenomenon of commitment in CSPs and were not concerned with contextual issues specific to health or South Africa. Similarly, the diversity in occupations that were present among altruistically committed CSP

[19] https://www.unprme.org/about

members indicates that being a health professional was not a decisive factor for determining the nature of CSP commitment. Individuals involved in education, biodiversity, or social protection could conceivably be equally as other-oriented as those who work in public health. These insights give reason to believe that my findings are also relevant for partnerships focused on other geographies and issue areas. Further micro-level research on commitment in CSPs will enrich and deepen my study findings, and studies that encompass different countries and social issues are especially encouraged. For example, exploring individuals' CSP commitment in countries located in the global south vs global north, and across issues such as education, gender inequality and climate change will undoubtedly provide additional insight.

Secondly, the fact that I focused on relatively small CSPs that were in their initiation phase and which operated primarily at sub-national levels may have had an impact on the types of individuals involved and their level of partnering experience. A similar study on large established CSPs that operate at national, regional, or global levels, and which have more members and a dedicated partnership broker or backbone organization may yield different results. Future research is therefore encouraged to explore how individuals' commitment in larger and more established partnerships is both shaped and sustained, notably in the face of adversity. Furthermore, the limited number of study participants and use of qualitative methods and an interpretive lens enabled considerable depth, but less breadth in my study. Future research on similar questions but using larger study samples and quantitative methods is therefore encouraged. Considering demographic differences such as age and sex of CSP members may provide additional insight on factors that influence how and why individuals sustain CSP commitment through adversity. Indeed, in my study, I noticed that altruistically natured CSP practitioners often spoke about their "life experience" when describing what was

behind their "other" rather than "self" orientation. This indicates that age, or stage of career/life, may play a role in the way individuals approach such partnerships.

Thirdly, my study identified and considered partnership adversity from the perspective of the study participants, and focused on analysing responses to adversity, rather than the adverse events themselves. Although a range of different types of adversity are included in my findings, I did not seek to categorize or analyse the differentiating factors or measure adverse events against a scale of intensity or impact since this was not the focus of my research questions. These limitations point to opportunities for future research to unpack in more detail the characteristics of adverse events that partnership practitioners face and explore to what extent behavioural responses might differ depending on the type, intensity, and duration of the adverse event. The exploration of adverse events in CSPs could also consider the levels at which they occur (micro, meso and macro) and examine how partnership practitioners address them, as well as the implications or trickle effects that ensue within, between and across these levels. Prior research on partnership challenges offers some useful frameworks to start from (Ayala-Orozco et al., 2018; Babiak & Thibault, 2009; Berger et al., 2004; Gray et al., 2022; Gray & Purdy, 2014).

Fourthly, my study views commitment from a generally positive lens and focuses on how it enables practitioners to overcome partnership adversity and what effects it has on the individuals themselves. My study did not, however, comparatively assess whether the CSPs with more altruistically natured partnership practitioners had better overall outcomes than those with more instrumental CSP members. Future research in this regard is therefore required and could be undertaken across multiple levels and types of CSPs. For example, a large-scale mixed methods study conducted by a team of commitment and partnership scholars could assess CSP members' commitment using Commitment System Theory (CST)

(Klein et al., 2022) or Latent Profile Analysis (LPA) (Meyer et al., 2021) and compare that with CSP performance as measured by one or more of the existing CSP impact frameworks (Austin & Seitanidi, 2012a; van Tulder et al., 2016; Vestergaard et al., 2021).

There is also an opportunity for future research on how the welfare of the individual, their organization or even the partnership might be impacted when an individual is "over-committed" to the CSP. Such research could build on existing studies related to external and pro-social commitment targets (Bingham et al., 2013; Siders & George, 2001), as well as studies that explore competition vs compatibility of multiple commitment targets (R. E. Johnson et al., 2009; Meyer et al., 2021). Furthermore, research on whether individuals remain committed for too long, or for the wrong reasons, is also encouraged and could draw on existing management research in this area (Drummond, 2014). Examining the antecedents and implications of "over-commitment" of individuals to CSPs may reveal additional insight on power dynamics and relational interactions in such partnerships (Gray et al., 2022; Nguyen & Janssens, 2018) . There is also scope to explore the interplay of individual and organizational CSP commitment and whether over-dependence on highly committed individuals may actually hinder institutionalisation and embeddedness of the partnership within the organization (Seitanidi & Crane, 2009). Such explorations of the potential "dark side" of phenomena that are typically viewed as positive can be very instructive. They also appear to be of growing interest in the management literature as evidenced by research on the dark sides of resilience (Mahdiani & Ungar, 2021), visionary leadership (Ateş et al., 2020), and organizational citizenship behaviour (Soran & Şeşen, 2014).

Fifthly, while my study provided initial insight into the commitment of partnership practitioners, additional exploratory research on the human and emotional side of these individuals is encouraged. For example, given the recognition that CSP members often act like "social intrapreneurs" (Venn & Berg, 2014), future research may draw insights from the study of entrepreneurs and examine partnership practitioners from a range of different lenses such as human and social capital (Davidsson & Honig, 2003), identity (Fauchart & Gruber, 2011; Mmbaga et al., 2020), or personality traits (Rauch & Frese, 2007). Recent theorizing on the relationship between entrepreneurship and eudaimonic well-being (Ryff, 2019; Shir & Ryff, 2021) indicates there may be significant parallels in the way certain partnership practitioners and entrepreneurs both approach and experience their work. Examining the extent to which engaging in the process of social partnering may promote individuals' eudaimonic well-being could draw on and contribute to the relatively new research area of psychology of sustainability and sustainable development (di Fabio, 2017; di Fabio & Rosen, 2018).

My nascent finding on how CSP members' self-reflective practices and resilience of commitment through adversity may enhance such individuals' collaborative capacity also merits further exploration, both within and across CSPs. This could be achieved through longitudinal studies that assess collaborative capacity of CSP members at the initiation and at various moments in time across one or multiple partnerships. It could also take the form of a large-scale quantitative study that includes partnership practitioners from a broad range of CSPs and assesses collaborative capacity against years of partnering experience, as well as number or duration of adverse events they have surmounted. Frameworks for how to assess collaborative capacity for such research may draw from my own findings, as well as from insights offered by partnership scholars, as consolidated in Table 1 of this dissertation

(Babiak & Thibault, 2009; Bryson et al., 2015; O'Leary & Vij, 2012; Stott & Murphy, 2020; Vangen & Huxham, 2003; Vogel et al., 2021).

Furthermore, the "stepping back" process that is included in my model opens up avenues for research on whether there is a relationship between "inner work" and cross sector collaboration. Inner work relates to Carl Jung's concept of individuation and is considered to have both psychological and spiritual principles (Stein, 2005; Welwood & Francisco, 1984). In modern parlance, inner work is understood as the ongoing reflective practice to increase awareness of oneself and others, gain a deeper sense of purpose, and promote positive change[20]. Several partnership practitioners who I engaged with outside of my study to explore the resonance of my findings raised the need for mindful self-reflection and inner work which indicates that more intentional exploration is needed. Scholars of transformation have also highlighted the need for inner work in order to drive transformational change through such partnerships.[21] Exploring whether inner work may support individuals to "step up" and create a space for honest dialogue in the face of partnering conflict could be a fruitful line of inquiry and extend existing insights on conducive relational practices and effective negotiation in CSPs (Baksi, 2018; Powell et al., 2018).

Existing research indicates that mindfulness and spirituality can enhance job performance and increase commitment and productivity of employees (Dane & Brummel, 2014; Karakas, 2010), as well as strengthen their sense of community and connectedness in their organizations (Karakas, 2010). Scholars conceptualize that mindfulness can help individuals to broaden awareness and overcome adversity (Garland et al., 2015a) and call for more

[20] https://www.innerworkforsocialchange.org/what-is-inner-work-for-social-change
[21] Keynote address of Professor Iaon Fazey at CSSI 2022 Symposium, June 2022. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LRnoVhDSpwI

longitudinal studies to explore the impact of workplace mindfulness over time (Dane & Brummel, 2014). They also highlight a need to examine whether mindfulness training actually enhances mindfulness in the workplace (Dane & Brummel, 2014). Building on these lines of inquiry, future partnership research could include development of an action research programme to explore whether promoting mindfulness and/or spirituality in one or more CSPs might generate similar positive outcomes for the members of the partnership, as well as the partnership itself. The combination of action with research is considered well suited for studying innovative processes and supporting transformative change (Somekh, 2005). There may also be scope for a large-scale quantitative study that evaluates several different partnerships according to a scale of transformational or systems level change and then examines the extent to which the CSP members engage in "inner work" or mindful self-reflection to assess whether there is any correlation.

My second nascent finding on when and why individuals shift from the instrumental to altruistic pathway of CSP commitment also offers scope for additional study. Future longitudinal research could explore both organizational and relational dimensions to unpack the critical factors that lead to such shifts. For example, examining evolutions in CSP members' organizations over the course of the partnership from resource and leadership perspectives may reveal important insights in terms of what drives individuals to prioritize their organizational goals in the context of the partnership. The relational dimension can be further illuminated through research that examines the number, nature, and duration of interactions between individuals with different CSP commitment natures and explores what aspects are most influential in leading individuals to shift pathways. Prior research on trickle effects of CSPs may provide a good basis to start from (Kolk et al., 2010, 2015).

In summary, while my study provided much needed insight on why and how partnership practitioners commit to CSPs, the combination of study findings and limitations also reveal numerous avenues for future inquiry. Many of these relate to other disciplines and literatures, some of which are relatively nascent in management and organization studies. I thus reaffirm scholars' insights that the study of social partnerships is inherently interdisciplinary (Austin, 2014), and encourage researchers to retain a spirit of exploration and discovery.

Chapter 6 – Conclusion

My micro-level study explores individuals' commitment in cross sector partnerships (CSPs) for development. Such partnerships are considered as strategic vehicles for addressing complex development issues, yet their inherent paradox leads to challenges that are often difficult to surmount. CSP scholars and practitioners recognize that commitment to the partnership is essential, and that specific individuals are often the key to their success. Commitment scholars acknowledge the workplace has evolved and that more understanding of commitment to meaningful work and within cross boundary settings is required. I therefore leveraged insights from both partnership and commitment literatures to examine what shapes partnership practitioners' commitment and how it is sustained through adversity.

My study findings provide critical insight into *why* and *how* certain individuals *step in* to overcome CSP challenges. I distinguish between an *instrumental* vs *altruistic nature of CSP commitment* and illustrate how it influences partnership practitioners' orientation towards the partnership, and whether they *exit, step aside, step away or step in* when confronted with adversity. I further reveal how altruistically natured, purpose driven CSP members engage in a self-reflective process of *stepping back* when dealing with partnership challenges. This enables them to reappraise the adverse situation against the "bigger picture" and proactively *step in* to address it, provided they feel supported by a positive relational context. My iterative process model depicts two different commitment pathways through adversity and illustrates how stepping back and stepping in enable individuals to resolve CSP challenges and enhance their eudaimonic well-being. Taken together the combination of stepping back and stepping in may be described as a "mindful dance" that facilitates partnerships to overcome situations of adversity.

My research contributes to both partnership and commitment literatures by shedding light on the human and emotional side of partnering and illustrating the interplay of multiple workplace commitment targets within a cross boundary setting that is oriented towards a higher purpose. I associate my findings with multiple literatures as I articulate a series of opportunities for future research to further enhance understanding of partnership practitioners and commitment to higher purpose causes. Finally, I propose contributions towards partnership practice which I hope may capacitate and inspire CSP members and stakeholders to engage more mindfully in the dance of cross sector partnering.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Original interview guide: Formal semi-structured interviews conducted between 2017-2018

QUESTION	FOLLOW UP / PROBING	OBJECTIVE OF QUESTION / WHAT TO PROBE FOR
INTRO Been on your website – have done your research – but you are working on this and I would really like your perspective… 1. Please tell me a bit about your partnership with x and y organizations working on health in South Africa: • What are the objectives? • How was it initiated? • What does each partner bring?		Warm up question looking for a brief overview of the partnership – the answers to which will be cross checked with the respondents to from the other partner organizations, as well as official partnership documents.
2. What is your role in the partnership? How and when did you take it on?	- How are you supported?	Trying to understand how the individual perceives his or her role in the partnership – and whether taking on the role was voluntary or designated by others. Already looking for indications of the level of interest/commitment to the partnership and whether there is any relation to how the role was ascribed to the individual.

3. How does the partnership function? How is this working for you?	- What makes it function well or badly? - What do you think could change within the partnership to make it function better? - What are the key factors that make the partnership work well?	Trying to cross check what is listed in official partner documents and from other interviews and also determine the individual's views on how it is functioning, whether it works for him/her, (time commitment etc) what some issues might be around communication and trust, and what could be better.
4. How would you describe your relationships with the people and organizations you partner with?	- Who are you closest to and why? - What types of interactions do you have?	Looking to determine interpersonal relationships and how they potentially influence the functioning of the partnership, as well as the individuals' commitment
5. What are your expectations of the partnership? For the community? For your organization? For yourself?	- Which are most important to you? - How do your expectations relate to the stated objectives of the partnership?	Exploring what motivates the individual to invest in the partnership, and to what objectives he/she aligns most closely.
6. How do you articulate your expectations of the partnership and with whom? Within your own organization? Within the partnership?	- What has hindered/assisted you in this process?	Looking to understand to what extent expectations are explicit or implicit – how they relate to the individual, organization and partnership – and whether they potentially evolve…expect to learn about frequency and openness of communication and indications of trust, support and shared commitment
7. To what extent are your expectations shared (agreed) with your partner colleagues?	- How do you know?	Trying to understand the alignment of expectations across the different representatives of the different partner organizations and explore commitment levels across partners

8. To what extent are your expectations of the partnership being met? How do you determine this?	- What do you think could be improved? How? - Who are the key role players? - What can you do?	Aim to determine how the individual perceives and measures whether the partnership is achieving its goals, and understand how this influences his/her commitment and actions
9. What do you see as the key successes of the partnership? Why ? What role did/do you play in achieving them?	- Would your partners agree?	Trying to determine the individual's perception of what constitutes success in the partnership – and how he/she contributes to, and evaluates this?
10. What types of challenges do you or have you faced in the partnership? How do you and your partners generally work to overcome them? What keeps you going?	- What causes those challenges? - Can you tell me a specific example?	Trying to hear about the various hindrances to the partnership and the ability and commitment of the respondent and his/her partners to overcome them, as well as the motivation behind it.
11. How much time do you devote to the partnership? Do you find this sufficient? Why or why not?	- How does the time and effort you invest relate to the value you are getting from the partnership?	Looking to determine the workload involved, how the individual perceives it, as well as the level of individual commitment towards this effort.
12. Is there anything else you would like to share about your experience with partnering?	- Why is this important to you?	Giving an opportunity for them to speak openly.

Appendix 2: Observation guide used to support writing of field notes

TYPE OF OBSERVATION: covert/non covert- participant or non participant[22]

EVENT TITLE:
DATE:
DESCRIPTION:

CONTEXT:

PARTICIPANTS:

WHO IS BEING OBSERVED:

WHAT IS BEING OBSERVED /

- Roles within the CSP
- Level of engagement and interest
- Attitudes and behaviours
- Informal associations and relationships among members
- Engagement with other members' - time spent, views expressed, suggestions made
- Communication types and patterns, both verbal and non- verbal
- Emotional expression / energy levels

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS:

[22] All observations for this study were overt and non-participant.

	AS A GROUP	Participant 1	Participant 2	Participant 3	Participant 4	Participant 5
What roles– formal & informal						
Level of engagement/interest						
Attitude and behaviour						
Informal associations and relationships						
Engagement with other people's time / view suggestions						
Hierarchies?						
Communication types and patterns - verbal						
Non verbal communication						
Emotional expression / energy levels						

REFLECTIVE NOTES:

Appendix 3: Excerpts from analytic memos

Date	Memo Title	Excerpt of content
2018.01.15	Buzz words: highlights coming out of formal interviews	Some words and themes have been revealing themselves through the first interviews- I am considering some of these as potential codes since they came up across different people • Values • Passion • Commitment • Partners being committed • Alignment of interests • It's all about people • Honesty • Putting cards on the table • Trust • Reliability • Sustainability • Agility • Viability • Authenticity • Reciprocity Next steps: 1) Begin coding for these themes 2) Adjust some of the probing questions in interviews to ensure I explore such themes in upcoming interviews
2018.11.28	Brainstorming on model concepts?	thinking of a matrix. or a theoretical model which brings these things together… instrumental vs affective or altruistic commitment… ? utilitarian view of partnerships vs purposeful or almost spiritual view of partnership and hedonistic vs eudaimonic well being that is derived from partnering and the associated behaviours… which seem to reflect ability to set ego aside...

		and how these then influence the partners' ability to respond to adversity - most committed as champions - or martyrs?
2019.05.10	Takeaways supervisor meeting 7 May 2019	Key takeways based on discussion with Ralph 1) Context vs focus: on case summaries of the partnerships - we reconfirmed that my cases are the individuals - and the partnerships are basically the setting - and context. Like Verona for Romeo and Juliet - and I am studying the people - not the partnership - however - having the insights on the process of the partnership is useful - but I don't need to make that my focus. - from now on it is more about the inflection points in commitment for individuals. 2) prioritize for depth - with regard to the mammoth task of case summaries of individuals - he agreed that the format of my case summaries were great - but that I can't do 15-20 page case summaries for all my 20-25 respondents - rather choose around 8 -12 - and base that on intuition - and go into those in the same detail as Max- but they must still have diversity in the sample - and for the remaining - I should at least do my table of factors - which both he and Tim found very interesting - and Ralph even said that it could be the "thing" that I have found… so I obviously need to focus in on that. 3) don't worry about the literature right now - and just delve deep into the data - so that I really find what patterns are emerging. As I explained about certain respondents and how the commitment seems to evolve and shift over time he helped me to see that the inflection points are the gold … ie. if I can identify and pull out some patterns in terms of events or happenings or situations that cause the commitment to shift - either in intensity or type - and can pull out what seems to mitigate or influence - then that will be interesting. 4) Process study… we discussed potential models for how to depict the data - we seemed to move towards the process idea - in other words that I look at how the individuals commitment is shifting… and goes up and down in a curve over time… and try and identify what the mitigating factors are - the most important one seems to be relationships. So in my monster Excel sheet the idea is to also add a column to analyze how relationships and other factors relate to what seem to be the commitment inflection points 5) complexity of interplay between mitigating factors - which influences commitment to what ? I need to be clear about what the target of the commitment is - I am looking at commitment to the partnership… not commitment to the cause - it is clear that the two very often seem to merge and go together - but as Max´s shift clearly demonstrated - if the productivity and relationships of the partnership deteriorate, and another option is on the table that has better "working relationships" and bring more satisfaction and well being - then his commitment to the partnership will wane- because he has seen that he can achieve his bigger objective better elsewhere at this moment – but he retains hope for the existing one nonetheless… he does not completely abandon it.

		6) scale of how it fits together - I am seeing internal and external events/happenings/situations that seem to influence inflection points in the commitment - and I am also seeing a difference in terms of how much leeway a person will give - depending a bit on the level of their ego - and selfish objectives - whether for themselves or their organization or both.
2019.11.12	Reflections on feedback from PRC 05 update	Research update during PRC 5 went well - prepared quite last minute -. And Ralph, Warren and Tim were all there and seemed to think that there was a lot there. Based on their input I need to reflect on the following 1) what about growth and purpose from working in the partnership - intrinsic joy from working in the partnership itself? (need to look for more quotes in this regard about why people engage in the partnership itself - he was relating the example to his wife even) - I explained how I had respondents who said "partnering is fun" and similar types of statements. 2) Nature of partnership - the collective action - and looking at the notion of "free riding".. this relates to Dan's comment about "paying it forward" but for the moment it hasn´t really gotten to the point of free riding - but now in retrospect I realize that the free-riding aspect- or lack of balanced contribution- is what bothered two of my other respondents - in the sense that nothing was moving - and this relates to the sense of lack of shared commitment 3) need to be aware of my own biases about commitment - that commitment to partnering is "good" when in fact, depending on the state of the partnership, it may not be good. Dark side of commitment?? Ralph commented that some of my data appeared to demonstrate "cognitive" reflection - which is something that I haven't looked at in depth….I need to explore this further and identify relationships and interactions something that I can now explore - the cognitive plus the emotive - and how the instrumental /cognitive has an impact on commitment to the partnership - but not so much on commitment to the social goal… 4) Exploring adversity in more depth – different responses to adversity – need to go back to the data and reflect further - I am thinking that forming some sort of decision tree - or process that takes into account the short and long term, plus the cognitive vs emotional driven (which is related to the focus on social goal vs individual/org level goal) - plus the question of whether there are other options or not… and whether they want to keep at it or not - if there is an ally who supports them - either internal or external, and then there is also the founders syndrome going on a bit too… either for the project or for the organization...
13.09.2021	Reflecting on the emotional layer	I am realizing that the emotional or purposeful layer of commitment is linked to three levels: 1) the social goal - and this is something that even people with an instrumental nature display… and in reality - the emotional layer of commitment is more because the partnership is tightly coupled to the social goal… ie the way they approach the partnership is linked to the social goal… whereas for the others- the partnership seems to be more tightly coupled with the organization… - this relates back to Klein's work - so I think that I can actually integrate this my writing

		1) the people - the relationships - and this relates to L Stott's 2020 Sustainability article where she speaks of relational intelligence - and the fact that partnerships are about relationships Stott, L., & Murphy, D. F. (2020). An inclusive approach to partnerships for the SDGs: Using a relationship lens to explore the potential for transformational collaboration. *Sustainability (Switzerland), 12*(19). https://doi.org/10.3390/SU12197905 this is especially the case for people like Max and Uma whose adversity had a lot to do with people… as well as Dan and Beth - who displayed a real ability to put themselves in others' shoes (Eric).. when taking a step back. 3) The partnership as having value as an end in itself - which means that it is a valuable investment - and linking back again to Stott's article about instrumental vs integrative and extrinsic vs intrinsic value… this is especially the case for Dan and Beth… who therefore seems to have the strongest emotional connection to partnerships… The emotional layer is also very critical in terms of how it relates to the stepping back… because it enables them to continue and move towards eudaimonic reward. whereas the others remain at the instrumental level and tactical commitment for the CSP - although they get frustrated and they develop cynicism …