Towards a Practice Turn in Critical Management Studies:
Manifesting a Dream through NGO Engagement with Corporate Social Responsibility

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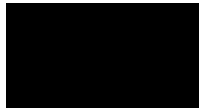*For my Grandmother,*

Joyce Taylor

Acknowledgements

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I would also like to express my heartfelt appreciation to my friends and family, without whom, this study would not have been possible. Thank you for supporting me to follow what I am most passionate about.

Statement of Authentication

The work presented in this thesis is to the best of my knowledge and belief, original except as acknowledged in the text. I hereby declare that I have not submitted this material, either in full or in part, for a degree at this or any other institution

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Abstract

This research takes an anamorphic gaze on how to influence the development of social responsible business practice by looking at how non-government organisations (NGOs) collaborate with corporations. The study proposed that a strategically motivated type of NGO engagement can uncover new attitudes to the practice of corporate social responsibility (CSR), and offer insights into how the application of Critical Management Studies (CMS) can change from a relatively static analytical exercise to a more dynamic critical form of enterprise practice.

The study challenges the traditional business-centric understanding of CSR. Particularly, it shifts the focus. CSR is often thought of in business terms as a type of practice where corporations have a choice about how they might contribute to society. This is sometimes framed as a corporate duty to contribute to the economy, obey laws, be ethical and philanthropically contribute to society (Carroll 1991). This business-centric perspective of CSR is almost exclusively focused on the corporation and its own imperatives and inclinations to unilaterally address its social responsibilities.

However, the more transformative perspective of CSR adopted in this research allows other sectors of society to contribute to a corporation's socially responsible conduct. Motivated by their own interests, these sectors can be understood to have the capacity to exert a level of influence over corporations. This approach draws on a CSR tradition that Utting (2002) refers to as the 'regulatory frame of CSR'.

The regulatory perspective enables policy based entities, private firms, and civil society organisations to monitor – to "regulate" – corporate activity, to intervene when appropriate and to influence corporations in how they exercise their social

responsibilities. This is depicted in Utting's (2002) three dimensions of CSR: 'command and control', 'corporate self-regulation' and 'stakeholder co-regulation'. The dimension of 'stakeholder co-regulation' forms the frame of this research.

This regulatory perspective of CSR can be understood to have similar principles to Critical Management Studies (CMS). CMS is a research construct that challenges those management activities and practices that appear to subjugate human needs and desires to the institutional profit-seeking tendencies of corporations (Fournier & Grey 2000). Both CMS and the regulatory practice of CSR take a problem-centred focus on the question of corporation behaviour in society; and both have an agenda for change. These similarities draw a connection between the two theoretical frames, and this link provides a channel by which the regulatory frame of CSR could be imagined and understood in the context of CMS.

In this regulatory frame of CSR, the research has focused specifically on how NGOs participated in 'co-regulating' corporations to work together on developing socially responsible business practice. In particular, the study concentrated on how NGOs use collaborative processes to do this. I developed a multi-phased action research framework to provide a scaffold for the collaboration between the NGOs and corporations, and to mitigate some of the risks associated with the NGOs being co-opted to the corporate perspectives. The framework included a synthesis of action learning and appreciative inquiry approaches.

Three NGOs from Australia's social services sector were recruited for the study. Each adapted the Action Research framework to suit their own needs and objectives for their engagement with the private sector. One of the NGOs used action learning and appreciative inquiry processes to support corporations to participate in community projects. Another chose to use appreciative inquiry for the same purpose. In contrast, the third NGO used action learning processes to resolve some of its internal challenges to corporate engagement. The NGOs were found to have drawn on action learning and appreciative inquiry as separate and distinct processes, but in interconnected and complementary ways.

The research revealed that the NGOs were not seeking to 'co-regulate' corporate behaviour in the Utting (2002) tradition: they were not looking to monitor corporate activity and they were not looking to influence it for the purposes of improving the

corporation's social performance. Instead, the NGOs had sought to design and direct the manner in which corporations could participate in addressing community-based aims and objectives. This pointed to the existence of an additional frame of CSR; one that moved beyond the 'regulatory' frames, to adopt a 'developmental agenda' that was more visionary. This type of CSR offered scope to extend Utting's (2002) regulatory-based framework to include a developmental dimension that I refer to as: 'stakeholder-directive co-development'. The developmental frame denotes instances where stakeholders direct corporations about how they can participate in achieving stakeholder objectives.

This study makes a contribution to knowledge by uncovering stakeholder-directive co-development as a new frame of CSR. This new frame offers an opportunity to challenge the dominant, problem-centred perspective of corporate activity adopted in CSR and CMS. The implications of this indicate that the 'problem-centred heart' of these frames may not advance the kind of social change dreamt of by those who pursue CSR and CMS. Through this dissertation I propose that the inclusion of a stakeholder-directive co-development agenda could confer the missing 'link' needed to transform those social dreams into a reality.

Preface

Paulo Freire is the genesis of this research. His work appeals to me because it offers ways of overcoming the ideological and cultural limitations that are often imposed on people by societal values and traditions.

Critical management studies (CMS) has the potential to fulfil a similar objective for organisations and their stakeholders. It has the capacity to transform organisations in ways that honour a diverse variety of people-centred needs. However, CMS has its own limitations: it is said to offer a useful analytical frame, but it lacks practical application.

This research represents my Freirean *dream* to explore the *possibility* that CMS could actually enable organisations to move beyond their *deterministic* economic imperatives, to achieve more people-centred outcomes.

This is my dream about Critical Management Studies

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Abbreviations

CMS: Critical Management Studies

CSR: Corporate Social Responsibility

HREC: Higher Research Ethics Committee

NGO: Non-Government Organisation

UNRISD: United Nations Research Institute for Social Development

Chapter 1:

Enabling the Dream

This chapter introduces the research. It draws specific attention to the concern that has restricted the development of a practitioner-based form of critical management studies (CMS). It argues how CMS has emerged from critical social sciences and discusses its importance and potential.

CMS has the potential to be an effective instrument that can be used to uncover instances in organisations where economic incentives for efficiency often overshadow the needs of the firm's own stakeholder community. It has also the potential to transform those organisations so that stakeholder interests are better reflected in the decisions and initiatives of the firm. While this might denote the potential of CMS, the reality is that it is not being used to fulfil that transformative potential. Its existing application yields pictures of firms, that while important to know, are not enough to change those organisations. The absence of a practical CMS means that the organisational pictures 'drawn' in its name are not manifested into a reality. This is a problem for organisations and their stakeholder communities.

This chapter conveys how the integration of the CMS, corporate social responsibility and action research fields can address that fear and how the integration of that knowledge can build a transformative critical management practice in the public arena.

1.1 Transformative Potential of Critical Management Studies

There is a growing concern amongst some people that critical management studies (CMS) has become an analytical exercise instead of a transformative-corporate practice. I agree with that view. It seems that CMS has become an approach which has been used to help identify instances when an corporation's own needs have superseded the needs of its people. An evaluative tool of that kind, while useful for uncovering unhelpful practices in corporations, does not assist with the actual

transformation of them into healthy ones. This is a problem because it means that CMS is not aligned with the change-orientated objectives of the critical social sciences. More troublingly, it means that CMS is not being used to its fullest potential to develop socially conscious corporations in society. This section outlines this problem. Specifically, it introduces CMS, and presents the reasons why it has not grown into a transformative-organisational practice. The purpose of this is to highlight the impetus for conducting this research project.

A number of scholars have hesitated to define CMS (see Prasad *et al*. 2015; Alvesson, Bridgman & Willmott 2009). This is because CMS has a broad progressive heritage that is based in critical theory. That heritage is focused on identifying and locating the presence of ideological and cultural limits in society which confine people to operate according a pre-defined set social order (Foster & Wiebe 2010). That history is also focused on abolishing those social limitations that constrain those people to think and live in a determined manner (Foster & Wiebe 2010).

Paulo Freire's work is significant for CMS. It is often cited in critical studies and critically based research (see Murphy, Malin & Siltaoja 2013). His pedagogy of the oppressed was written to support the transformation of such limit situations in education and other contexts which constrained people's agency to co-construct their own environments. One of the key elements he identified that was important to transforming those structures was the notion of praxis (Freire 1996). Praxis involved two key components: 'reflection' to recognise the presence of limit situations in society and 'action' to overcome them (Freire 1996). Those elements of praxis typify the transformative objectives of the critical social sciences.

This progressive lineage has contributed to the difficulty in defining CMS (see Prasad *et al.* 2015; Alvesson, Bridgman & Willmott 2009). This is because a definition, even a broad one, can impose a set of boundaries on it (Dilworth 2010). To define something is to impose a set of restrictions upon it and since CMS is informed from a lineage which pushes for the transformation of limit situations, it is paradoxical to think that CMS can be defined because a definition would constrain the approach to reside in a set of limited parameters.

While a definition of CMS would contradict its historic lineage, an absence of one makes it difficult to convey any understanding of the approach to audiences and potential researchers. To overcome that dilemma, Fournier and Grey (2000) identified a set of loosely defined CMS characteristics. Those characteristics were located by searching for common elements in studies that identified with the CMS frame. Fournier and Grey (2000) proposed that CMS studies typically challenge a performance incentive for organisational efficiency: It deconstructs existing processes and practices in corporations which do not account for people-centred needs, and uses reflexivity to achieve those objectives.

While those principles might depict a practice-based orientation, the reality is that CMS has been used in a way to produce theoretical critiques of corporate life. It has not connected to the action objective in the critical social sciences for change. Accordingly, this has produced an incongruence between CMS and the critical traditions which had 'given birth' to it. Forster and Wiebe (2010) drew attention to that view.

They highlight that the two fundamental elements which characterise critical theory – critique and transformation - have not been realised by CMS. For instance, they argue that CMS is aligned to critical theory in the sense that it has been used to critique the crystallised taken for granted ideas and practices which have supressed the realisation of human needs in organisations. However, it is not aligned to the transformative component of critical theory because it has not been used to actually re-construct existing organisational contexts into more helpful, people-centred ones. They conclude that CMS is not aligned to the critical tradition that has informed it and accordingly, is not living up to its '*ethical promise*' to create forms of management practice that meet human needs and desires.

Other scholars share a similar view. Alvesson, Bridgman and Willmott (2009) have drawn attention to the isolation of CMS to academic institutions. They suggest that scholars have successfully used CMS to portray a political view of management to academic audiences but that those same scholars have not had much success actioning their views in the public arena.

This suggests that CMS has been helpful as an investigative and analytical approach, particularly in the context of academic and scholarly fields. However, it has not

grown much beyond that point to become a public practice that can change existing forms of management in organisations. This is a concern as CMS is not being utilised to its greatest potential.

As an analysis tool, CMS can offer a way for researchers to indirectly envisage their 'dreams' for organisations in society. The process of dreaming occurs in CMS when scholars engage in the processes depicted in Fournier's and Grey's (2000) characteristics. It occurs when they challenge the performance incentive of corporations, deconstruct existing processes and practices in corporations which do not account for people-centred needs and when they use reflexivity to achieve that objective. Together those principles encourage scholars and researchers to identify what corporations *'should not do'*. They encourage them to problematise the corporation and context they are focused on. This is important as that view can surface any limitations that may be impeding corporations to manage their firms according to internal and external stakeholder's needs and desires.

These characteristics do not necessarily articulate a conscious process of dreaming. However, dreaming does actually occur when those processes are applied. This is because the identification of what corporations *'should not do'* leads indirectly to an indication of what corporations *'should do'*. Each scholar who identifies the problems of a corporation subsequently produces boundaries of a vision or utopia that they hold for it (Souza de Freitas 2007). The process of dreaming actually occurs when researchers apply the principles of CMS to a case they are focusing on. While CMS is viewed as a critical endeavour, an alternative view would suggest that CMS is a process of dreaming. More specifically, it is a process of envisioning… *possibility.*

While dreaming is an important proponent for change - it is not enough. For instance, the critical heritage that has informed the development of CMS mandates that people pursue their dream. It mandates that they take action to manifest it into a reality.

In this introductory text, I have indirectly offered insights into my own dream for CMS. The articulation of what CMS is not has indirectly conferred what my hopes are for its development. As may be gleamed from the text above, my hope for CMS is that it becomes a publicly accessible tool that can be used to influence actual human-centred change in corporations.

Prasad *et al.* (2015) points to the trepidation of moving CMS to a practice. One of the issues is the potential for co-option (Prasad *et al.* 2015). They indicate that CMS practice would carry a greater risk of co-option than the analytical form. As an analysis tool, CMS provides scope for the researcher to retain some 'objective' distance from the site they are researching. This is in contrast to a practice form which would engage the practitioner closer to the actual site of consideration. That increased intimacy in the relationship between the practitioner and the organisational site could influence how the practitioner views the firm with which they engage. With an increased relational intimacy there is a concern that the practitioner will lose sight of their own goals and objectives and will become compassionate about the corporation's objectives for managerial efficiency and effectiveness. Due to this they suggest that practice forms of CMS, including consultancy could be at risk of reinforcing managerial agendas. Thus, if CMS becomes a practice it will move researchers/practitioners closer to the site they are trying to locate and, subsequently, it will corrupt their capacity to deconstruct those processes and practices that constrain the realisation of people's needs in corporations (Prasad *et al*. 2015). Put succinctly, the fear is that researchers / practitioners will succumb to the performance incentives of firms the closer they are to it.

The concern about co-option has limited CMS to the realisation of its own transformative legacy. It has detained CMS to the realm of academia, to analysis so it exists in a type of 'limbo'.

While co-option is a legitimate risk associated with CMS practice, a fear of it can detain CMS from growing into an effective tool for organisational change. To address this concern, this research focuses on how that risk can be mitigated. Knowledge of how this can be prevented can absolve the fear that arrests the transformative development of CMS. The aim of this endeavour is to enable CMS to flourish into a public practice that can create healthy organisations in society.

However, since CMS has largely been used as an analytical frame it is difficult to discern how the risk of co-option can be mitigated in CMS practice. There is not much precedent to explore that objective. Because of this, the study has sought an alternative engagement context to learn from. This position was represented in Taylor, Coronado and Fallon's (2011) paper which looked to the engagement

between NGOs and corporations as a way to learn more about the potential of CMS. This position has been applied in this study.

Specifically, the research looks to the practice of corporate social responsibility (CSR) and in particular a process called stakeholder co-regulation to uncover strategies for how co-option could be mitigated in CMS. A dominant perspective in the business literature states that CSR involves a corporation's economic, legal, ethical and philanthropic duties to society (Carroll & Buchholtz 2009). One main concern associated with that view, however, is that it ignores how other societal actors also contribute to the co-creation of responsible corporate conduct. To address that concern, this research has broadened the perspective of CSR to highlight how state, market and civil society actors influence corporations to fulfil a diverse variety of stakeholder needs. Thus, this CSR perspective considers how government and policy-based institutions enforce corporations to comply with acceptable standards of behaviour (as in the case of environmental controls on the disposal of chemicals into public waterways). It also includes how civil society organisations apply pressure on corporations to address economic, social and environmental needs (for example, as in the case of environmental protests against mining operations). Chapter 2 discusses this perspective in some depth. A key focus for this research is how non-government organisations (NGOs) influence responsible corporate behaviour. This is discussed in more detail in the section below.

1.2   Drawing a Connection between CSR and CMS

Utting's (2002) concept of stakeholder co-regulation can be seen to make a strong connection between CMS and a CSR practice. The identification of a practitioner context which held similar principles and views to CMS was important because it could offer an opportunity to learn about practice-based concerns in an environment that was actually experiencing them. It would confer a chance to understand the complexities of a practitioner environment and the dynamism of agents operating in that environment. Learning about how co-option could be prevented in such a setting could provide more informed insights for CMS practice than a non-practitioner setting. This section draws the connection between CMS and CSR and demonstrates an alignment of the principles between them.

One of the most dominant perspectives in the CSR literature is that corporations have a unilateral responsibility to manage their affairs in the best interests of all their stakeholders (Carroll & Burchholtz 2009). This includes a duty to address the social, environmental and economic interests of stakeholders in management decisions and practices. One of the main concerns associated with that view however was the concept of greenwash (Greer & Bruno 1996). Some corporations started to abuse their power by projecting a socially responsible image that did not match their firm's lived reality.

Stakeholders responded to this problem by asserting their involvement in the development of a corporation's management initiatives. Their involvement produced a type of social regulation that influenced corporate behaviour in society.

Utting (2002) described that interaction as a type of co-regulation where stakeholders assume responsibility in managing how corporations respond to stakeholder needs. In the context of that frame, this research has focused on how NGOs influence the behaviour of corporations. NGOs are typically thought to embody organisations with a social conscious that fulfil a range of community and advocacy-based functions in society. As Bendell (2000, p.16) states, NGOs are 'groups whose stated purpose is the promotion of environmental and/or social goals rather than the achievement or protection of economic power in the marketplace or political power through the electoral process'. Thus, they represent an entity that can be capable of challenging the economic incentives for efficiency and effectiveness in corporations.

Stakeholder co-regulation is argued to contain a number of similarities to CMS. The first similarity between co-regulation and CMS was the problem-based perspective of corporations in society. Both frames contain an objective to problematise corporate behaviour through the identification of unmet stakeholder needs in corporations.

The second similarity between co-regulation and CMS is the debate around the severity of corporate problematisation. In the CMS literature there was a debate about the degree to which scholars should critique management practice. Fournier and Grey (2000) and Fleming and Banerjee (2015) suggest that scholars should adopt a more radical stance in their problematisation of stakeholder initiatives in firms. This view - termed non-performativity - provides for more radical criticisms of the

structural ideologies that inform organisations. It encourages researchers to adopt an 'objective' distance from corporations so that they can locate the bigger more macro structural issues of concern.

Alternatively, Spicer, Alvesson and Karreman (2009) propose that those radical perspectives could produce forms of analysis that are not relevant and helpful for managers working in organisations. Instead, they suggest that CMS has a duty to produce forms of analysis which managers can use to action change in their organisations. Their view – termed critical performativity - facilitates a more pragmatic critique that is designed to assist managers navigate their immediate organisational contexts and the constraints imposed on those contexts. Specifically, it is designed to support managers to improve their corporation's capacities to meet people-centred needs.

The severity of the critique adopted in the non-performative and critically performative perspectives is similar to the severity of critique adopted in the conflictual and collaborative forms of NGO co-regulation. Conflictual forms of NGO engagement with business provide scope for the NGO to retain some objective distance from the focal corporation. As the nature of the relationship between the entities is conflictual, there is less need to form a close relational connection that is sympathetic to the contexts and constraints of managers in those corporations.

This means that the NGOs can adopt a more radical critique of the corporations they are engaging with. The degree of 'objective' distance retained between the NGO and the corporation is similar to the degree of 'objective' distance which can be attained by a CMS researcher/practitioner in a non-performative analysis of an organisation. This is because the non-performative perspective as explained above provides broad scope for CMS researchers/practitioners to adopt a radical view of the organisation they are evaluating. In this manner, the non-performative perspective of CMS is similar to the conflictual forms of engagement practice between NGOs and corporations.

In addition to the congruency between non-performative CMS and conflictual NGO co-regulation, there is also a congruency between the critically-performative perspective of CMS and the collaborative forms of NGO engagement with business. Collaborative forms of engagement between NGOs and corporations require a less

radical stance to be adopted. The essence of collaboration means that a closer working relationship is required to sustain NGO and corporate cooperation. This means that to some degree, NGOs must take into consideration the contexts and constraints of the organisations they are collaborating with. The objective for collaborative interaction reduces the objective distance that exists between the NGO and the corporation they are working with.

In a similar manner, the critically-performative perspective of CMS reduces the objective distance between the CMS researcher and the organisational site they are analysing. As explained above, the critically performative perspective encourages researchers and practitioners to adopt a pragmatic view of the firm. It requests that they make their analysis more relevant to managers by taking into consideration the organisational challenges managers face in their working environment (Spicer, Alvesson & Karreman 2009). In this way, the critically-performative perspective aligns researchers closer to the site they are analysing. The perspective encourages a more sympathetic view of organisational life than the non-performative one.

Accordingly, critically-performative CMS, like collaborative NGO-business engagement requests that a more intimate and sympathetic view of the corporation be adopted. Its pragmatic orientation encourages critical feedback that is relevant and helpful for managers to action in their organisations.

The similarities between the principles of CMS and CSR co-regulation indicate that co-regulation could be a useful tool to evaluate how CMS can become more practice-based and at the same time, avoid co-option.

The risk of co-option is believed to increase when CMS researchers/practitioners edge closer to the organisational site they are analysing (Prasad *et al.* 2015). This means that a CMS practice would carry with it a high degree of risk. A practice would encourage CMS researchers/practitioners to have some sort of engagement with the site they are evaluating. In the context of a critically-performative practice, however, the risk would be even greater. This is because a critically-performative practice would ask the practitioner to become more intimate with the challenges faced by managers in their organisations. It would require the researcher to co-operate with managers in order to identify change processes that would be relevant and meaningful for their organisation.

This is in contrast to the non-performative critique which could provide scope for the practitioner to still retain some objective distance from the site with which they choose to engage. These types of approaches push for more radical changes to corporate practice. They do not need to be as mindful of the challenges managers face in their workplaces. The approach provides for the practitioner to retain some relational distance from the site with which they are engaging.

Practices of a non-performative disposition could yield important, more macro structural transformations that are significant for the ideological and social progression of organisations. Thus, while there is a possibility of co-option for any type of CMS practice, the critically-performative form would still carry the greatest risk. This is due to the higher degree of relational intimacy between the practitioner and the firm.

Since co-option is one of the main problems to establishing a CMS practice, this research will focus some attention on that concern. Knowledge about how that risk can be reduced can create grounds for the evolution of CMS into a tool for organisational and systemic social change. Since the co-option risk would be greater in the critically-performative type of practice, this thesis focuses on how to limit possibilities for co-option in that frame. As the critically-performative approach carries the greatest risk, knowledge of how co-option can be limited in that frame can also have helpful implications for how it can be mitigated in the non-performativity frame.

However, there is one challenge associated with this venture: CMS has been confined to a limit of analysis. This makes it difficult to ascertain how the risk of co-option can be mitigated in the context of a critically-performative form of practice. The link between the critically performative CMS frame and the collaborative-based stakeholder co-regulatory practice offers a way to address that issue.

Fears of co-option are also associated with the co-regulatory frame. In the context of NGO-business engagement Baur and Schmitz (2012), indicate that NGO co-option is a real problem. They argue that collaboratively based partnerships with the corporations can sway the NGO to adapt to views that are not their own and that are contrary to the very reason why they have chosen to cooperate with corporations. Particularly, there is a concern that NGOs in collaborative relationships with

corporations will lose sight of their own social missions and objectives. Baur and Schmitz (2012) state that a focus on maintaining a relationship with a corporation can distract the NGO from influencing the development of socially and environmentally responsible practices in corporations.

As this NGO co-regulatory practice shares the same co-option concerns as CMS, it can offer a helpful context to learn how that possibility can be prevented. Learning how co-option can be prevented or countered in co-regulation can yield knowledge of how it can be prevented and countered in CMS. This knowledge can provide the grounds to lessen the CMS community's concerns about the practice of CMS. Additionally, it can help to orientate CMS to its higher lineage of the critical public social sciences.

It is important for CMS to transition into a practice – to exceed its own limitations – to become an effective instrument that can manifest into reality the realisation of socially conscious organisations. At the same time CMS needs to overcome the risks of co-option.

This study focuses on how co-option can be mitigated in the context of co-regulation. It looks into how it can be mitigated in collaborative-based relationships between NGOs and corporations. The objective of this focus is to return some insights into how the concern for co-option can be addressed in the context of a transformative CMS praxis.

1.3   Addressing the Concern of Co-option

Freire's (1996) praxis offers a tool that could be helpful to mitigate the potential of co-option in collaboratively based relationships between NGOs and corporations. This construct was born from his educational pedagogy for freedom. It was believed to be helpful for those individuals and groups, whose needs were constrained by oppressive social and cultural structures. The idea of praxis encourages those individuals and groups to change and transform those structures that constrain them. Accordingly, it could be thought of as a bottom-up process for social and cultural change.

As stated earlier, praxis had two components: reflection and action (Freire 1996). Reflection invited individuals to think about how the dominant ideologies, perspectives, norms and taken-for-granted beliefs had subjugated the realisation of their own needs in society (Freire 1996). Action, on the other hand asked those same individuals to intervene in the existing social order in order to rectify those social ideologies, perspectives, norms and taken for granted beliefs which had imposed limits on the lives of those individuals (Freire 1996).

The complementary processes of reflection and action were thought to offer useful tools that could mitigate the potential of NGO co-option in business collaborations. This is because the combination of reflection and action together encourages individuals to problematise their existing social reality and to re-create it.

The essence of problematisation is believed to be important as it prompts a questioning type inquiry into the way things have been done in the past and whether those processes have in effect ignored the realisation of human-centred needs and desires in society. That questioning insight could protect against the possibility of co-option in NGO-corporate relationships because it requires users to continuously question whether their own needs have not been met. If processes and practices are continuously questioned according to how they ignore people's needs then a conscious awareness is established of how different agendas and regimes may be subjugating those individual's needs. That awareness can ground individuals to remembering the goals and objectives they would like to see attained. This is why the notion of problematisation can offer some protection against the prospect of co-option. It does not let individuals forget their own needs amidst the diversity of dominant regimes and agendas. The awareness that problematisation can bring offers a justification for exploring it as a potential tool to counteract co-option in NGO-corporate relationships.

While problematising the assumed reality can offer a useful strategy to ground individuals to their own desires for social change, it does not confer encouragement to affect that change. This is why the praxis element of action is needed to realise the individual's desires in society. Actioning that understanding is important to ensure that dominant agendas and regimes do not supress people-centred desires. It is for that reason that both reflection and action processes of Freire's (1996) praxis are

important. Together, they can foster an awareness of human-centred needs and they can encourage the manifestation of those needs into reality. This is why Freire's (1996) construct of praxis has been identified as a potential tool that could confer some protection against the risk of co-option.

This research investigates how Freire's (1996) construct of praxis can address the concerns of NGO co-option in collaboratively based relationships. Correspondingly, this investigation can offer some insights into how co-option can be prevented in a CMS type practice – particularly, the critically performative form.

1.4   Capturing Praxis via Action Research

Action research offers a useful methodological approach to capture the processes of reflection and action in the context of collaborative NGO-corporate relationships. While action research can be thought of as its own distinct process, in this study it has been used as an umbrella term which describes a set of processes which engage participants in a process of inquiry and reflection (Reason & Bradbury 2008). That process usually follows a cycle with phases such as 'planning' the research, 'actioning' the research, 'observing' what occurs during the process, and 'reflecting' on whether the action implemented fulfilled the initial reason for pursuing that research (Kemmis & McTaggart 1987).

To help capture the essence of Freire's (1996) praxis this research adopted two forms of action research: action leaning and appreciative inquiry. Action learning, as a process of inquiry, can be understood to help capture the essence of problematisation while appreciative inquiry could be helpful to capture the process of action in his praxis.

Action learning invites participants to reflexively explore concepts, themes or challenges that are important to them and to consider how that knowledge can inform their engagement with those concepts, themes or challenges (Dilworth 2010). Appreciative inquiry is different to action learning in that it invites participants into a positively framed conversation to reflexively discover the strengths of an organisation or system, dream about new initiatives embedded in those strengths and

design how those strengths can lead to an alternate organisational or systematic destiny (Cooperrider, Whitney & Stavros 2008).

Both of these collaborative learning methods were included in the research proposal to support the development of NGO and business relationships. Specifically, the purpose of the action learning forums was to create a space where the members of the NGO could critically reflect on their corporate partnerships. Alternatively, the purpose of the appreciative inquiry forum was to create a positively charged space where the NGO's critical reflections could be acted on, in dialogue with those corporate partners.

Together these collaborative inquiry processes can be thought to facilitate the Freireian (1996) notion of praxis: reflection and action. For instance, the methodological strong points of action learning and appreciative inquiry can be ascertained from a comparison of their structural characteristics. In action learning, a strong emphasis is placed on the aspects of issue problematisation and individual and group reflexivity (Dilworth 2010). This focus suggests that the method is predisposed to consider first, the role of learning and, second, the role of actionable change. By comparison, appreciative inquiry is structured according to a developmental process where three of its four characteristics (dream, design and destiny but not discovery) are predominately focused on creating a change agenda. This suggests that the method has a stronger emphasis on actionable change instead of reflective learning. Thus, the unequal distribution between action and learning, in each method, can draw attention to the strengths of each approach. For instance, action learning with its equal focus on action and learning can form a useful approach where a critical reflexivity forms the dominant research objective. To the contrary, appreciative inquiry, with is dominant focus on facilitating a change agenda, might present a useful approach where actionable change forms the dominant research objective. The strengths of each approach can be used to capture the reflection and action notions of praxis in the context of NGO and business relationships. Thus, the alternating use of action learning and appreciative inquiry could help to facilitate the process of reflection and action in an engagement context.

This research focuses on how those methods can be used to capture the components of praxis and, subsequently, how they can be helpful for addressing the possibility of

NGO co-option in collaborative business relationships. Learning from the NGO's experience could offer insights into how to build a transformative CMS practice.

1.5   Research Question

To assist the objective outlined above, I proposed the following research questions to guide the process:

Questions 1: In the context of stakeholder engagement and co-regulation, how do NGOs use the notion of reflection and action to influence their engagement with their corporate partners?

Question 2: How can the reflection and action engagement processes NGOs use to influence corporations inform a transformative critical management practice?

The first research question could produce insight into how NGO's apply Freire's construct of praxis to their engagement with corporations. An exploration of that application, against the potential for co-option, could yield how the processes of reflection and action keep NGOs aligned to their social goals and objectives. That knowledge can point to whether reflection and action processes could constitute effective transformative practices for corporate responsibility.

The second question builds on the first by considering what CMS could learn from the NGO's application of praxis. Specifically, it considers how the NGO's use of reflection and action could uncover helpful processes that could also be useful for a transformative CMS practice.

1.6   Thesis Outline

This thesis has seven chapters in addition to this introduction. An overview of each chapter is provided below:

Chapter 2 – Connecting CSR and CMS

This chapter explores how public, private and third sectors contribute to the development of socially responsible business practices. It is focused on how governments, corporations and communities 'regulate' business activity using measures that hold corporations answerable for their behaviour. This focus has been

termed the 'regulatory' frame of CSR and it forms a dominant perspective in the management literature. An emerging area of that regulatory focus is how NGOs co-regulate business practices. This forms the focus of this research.

In addition to exploring the regulatory frame of CSR, this chapter also draws a connection between the regulatory perspective of CSR and the critical frame of CMS. Both constructs were discovered to hold similar objectives that were orientated towards challenging the profit-centric notions of business.

The similarities between the regulatory frame of CSR and the critical frame of CMS provide scope to draw a logical link between the two constructs. That link is drawn on in Chapter 7 to imagine how the strategies used by NGOs to influence socially responsible business activity could be useful to the frame of CMS.

Chapter 3 – Taking an Action Research Lens to Stakeholder Co-regulation

Chapter 3 extends the discussion on the regulatory perspective of CSR by narrowing the focus on how NGOs '*co-regulate*' businesses. It applies an action research lens to address the conflictual and collaborative engagement styles NGOs use in their relationships with the private sector. The application of that lens points to a complementary relationship between conflictual and collaborative engagement approaches. It highlights how both forms of engagement are needed to co-regulate corporate behaviour.

Chapter 4 – Exploring NGO Engagement with Business

Chapter 4 identifies the methodology and methods of the study. It outlines the details of an action research proposal that was used to aid discussions about how reflexivity could support an NGO's engagement with its corporate partners. That proposal integrated both the action learning and appreciative inquiry frames to capture the elements of 'reflection and action' of Freire's (1996) praxis.

Chapter 5 - NGO Reflective Learning for Corporate Engagement

This is the data chapter. It introduces the three participating NGOs which engaged in the research. It also outlines how the NGOs modified the reflective learning program (presented in Chapter 4) to suit their own needs and objectives. The chapter presents how the two smaller NGOs focused their learning programs on their relationships

with their corporate and government partners. It also illustrates how the larger NGO focused its relationship on its own capacities to maintain and develop its corporate partnerships.

Chapter 6 –Uncovering a New Type of Engagement: Stakeholder-directive Co-development

This chapter explores how the three NGOs collaborated with their corporate partners via the application of their reflective learning programs. It suggests that the '*regulatory*' perspective of CSR discussed in Chapter 2 and advanced in Chapter 3 does not adequately capture the reasons why the NGOs in this research chose to collaborate with businesses

The NGOs appeared to adopt directive-type roles when they designed how their corporate partners engaged with their clients. The NGOs also offered facilitative support for the corporation's participation in the community. This interaction represented a different type of approach which also had the capacity to influence business activity. It appeared that the NGOs had adopted a type of directive co-development approach where they participated in the development, design and facilitation of a socially responsible agenda. Based on that discovery, this chapter offers an alternative concept for understanding how NGOs influence responsible corporate behaviour. That concept has been termed '*stakeholder-directive co-development'*, and it captures the engagement that had taken place between the NGOs and the corporations in this research study.

Chapter 7 – Using NGO-directive Co-development to Reframe CMS

Chapter 7 discusses how the discoveries made in this research could offer a practical turn on the frame of critical management studies (CMS). It looks to how NGOs critically engage with business and imagines how that practice could be useful to the frame of CMS

The chapter highlights how the inherent function of CMS to challenge business-centric activities and practices that constrain a diverse variety of human needs has remained largely in the space of academia. CMS is not fulfilling its objective to transform organisations.

This chapter argues that the strategies NGOs use to influence responsible business practices could be transferable to the frame of CMS. This transfer of knowledge has the potential to shift the frame of CMS from an academic exercise into a politically motivated practice for business transformation.

Chapter 8 – A Praxis for CMS

In conclusion, this chapter points out the importance of both '*stakeholder co-regulation*' and '*stakeholder-directive co-development*' for the understanding and practice of CSR and CMS. It shows how the inter-connectivity of those frames is important for the development of a much larger macro change cycle for social responsibility. It also addresses how a 'development-based' approach could help to mitigate the potential for co-option in CMS.

In addition to this, the chapter also advocates for the inclusion of '*stakeholder-directive co-development*' under the frame of CSR. It suggests that an addition should be made to the regulatory perspective of CSR so as to capture those instances where NGOs seek to co-develop social responsibility instead of participating in an act to regulate it.

1.7   Chapter Conclusion

This chapter introduced the theoretical basis and methodology for the research. It conveyed why it was important to address the concern of co-option in collaborative relationships between NGOs and corporations. Due to the similarities between CSR and CMS, insights into how co-option can be mitigated in collaborative NGO-business relationships can provide understanding as to how co-option can be addressed in a CMS practice. This knowledge can address the concerns voiced about, and can provide an impetus for moving CMS beyond the academic realm to a public-based practice. A public CMS can offer an effective tool to support the creation of responsible organisations in society.

The following chapter commences the journey into the realm of CSR and the nature of the relationships between NGOs and corporations. It articulates the regulatory perspective of CSR and presents the reasons why stakeholder co-regulation is

required in the context of business, society and government relationships. It also further discusses the connection between CSR and CMS.

Chapter 2:

Connecting CSR and CMS

This chapter presents the conceptual frame of the research. It explores two theoretical frames: CSR and CMS. In doing so, it challenges the conventional understanding of CSR as a business-centric pursuit and, instead, highlights that CSR has been attended to by each sector of society: government, business and communities. This focus depicts a society-wide perspective where governments, businesses and communities contribute to the development of socially responsible business practices. Thus, the focus in this dissertation could be thought to represent a societal view of CSR instead of a business-centric one.

In addition to exploring how different sectors contribute to socially responsible business conduct, the discussion also draws a connection between the perspective of CSR in this dissertation and the critical frame of CMS. Both constructs have been discovered to hold similar objectives which aim to challenge or question corporate practices that constrain a diverse variety of human needs. This link between the frames provides scope to situate the research in the context of both CSR and CMS.

2.1 The Regulatory Frame of CSR

CSR is often thought of as a business term. It is understood to be a type of practice where corporations positively contribute to society in some way (Carroll 1991). The widely cited definition in the business literature states that corporations have a duty: to contribute to the economy, to obey laws, to be ethical, and to philanthropically contribute to society (Carroll 1991). This perspective of CSR encompasses a normative stance of what the corporation should do, and the corporation's position in society (Lee 2008). It represents a business-centric view where the focus is placed on the corporation and its own capacities to be socially responsible.

The perspective adopted in this dissertation challenges the business-centric view. Particularly, it shifts the focus. It is concerned with how all sectors of society contribute to socially responsible business conduct.

Over the years, governments, corporations and communities have each contributed to defining socially responsible business conduct (Utting 2002). Governments have done this with the implementation of laws, policies and legislation (Bredgaard 2004; Utting 2002) while businesses have adopted their own evaluation of economic, social and environmental performance (Utting 2002). Additionally, communities have used social and environmental advocacy campaigns and established collaboratively based partnerships with corporations (Utting 2002; Utting 2005a). From these examples, it could be thought that through their engagement with business, each sector holds some sort of intent to monitor and actively intervene in business practices. This perspective could be thought of as a 'regulatory' approach because it is focused on how each sector of society exerts influence and control over business conduct (Utting 2002).

This regulatory frame of CSR contains a change agenda. For instance, the different engagement methods used by governments, businesses and communities can call corporations to account for behaviour that does not take a diverse variety of needs into consideration. By doing so, the social pressure applied from those engagement methods can influence corporations to alter their activities according to each sector's needs and desires (Utting 2002). Thus, this perspective could be seen to be an approach where different sectors of society police corporate activity according to their own needs and objectives (Utting 2002).

The regulatory perspective of CSR forms the frame of this research. This chapter presents information about how each sector of society draws on the regulatory approach in its engagement with corporations.

2.2 Policy Approaches to Corporate Regulation

Command and Control was the dominant approach to corporate regulation in the 1960's and 1970's (Utting 2002). This approach explored how the state and other authorities determine, through the creation of and enforcement of laws and

regulation, how companies must act (Utting 2002). It represented a top-down approach to corporate social responsibility because the legislature, determined for the corporation, what its minimal operating and behaviour standards were (Reed 2013). The perception of the state and corporate actors appeared to be that corporations were rational, innovative profit making entities while government and policy makers sought to impose regulation on corporations for what it deemed to be the public good (Bredgaard 2004). This approach to corporate regulation was challenged in the 1980's by an ideological shift towards perspectives of market deregulation and smaller government (Utting 2002; Sinclair 1997). The command and control approach was criticized for being resource intensive, inefficient and limiting innovation (Sinclair 1997). This was because it required a sufficient amount time, people and capital to develop, enforce and monitor all policies which mandated how corporations should behave. As a result, this limited the amount of autonomy corporations had to conduct their operations as they and their stakeholders saw fit. Thus, policy appeared to be the dominant approach used by the state and other authorities who regulated how corporations were required to operate and behave.

The ideological shift towards market deregulation and the resource intensive challenges associated with the command and control approach influenced the state and other authorities to seek alternative forms of regulation. This included a broadening of the focus from how the state could control corporate behaviour to include a focus on the market economy and how it could also present an effective form of regulation over corporate operations and conduct (Utting 2002). A focus on the market was understood to create space for corporations to self-regulate themselves based on the wants, needs and ethical views of their stakeholder communities (Utting 2002). This spectrum between command and control and corporate self-regulation informed a number of different ways in which the government engaged with business. In particular, it informed new methods of state engagement that work with the economic principles of the market. Bredgarrd (2004) highlights some of these state initiatives to include: regulative programs, motivation programs, persuasion programs, and public activity programs (see Table 2.1)

	Regulative Programs	Motivation Programs	Persuasion Programs	Public activity Programs
Dominant policy instrument	General rules	Economic incentives	Communication	Organisation
Positive motivation	Permission/ contract/ rights	Subsidies/ Grant	Information/ Encouragement/ Appeals	Expansion of public services
Negative motivation	Prohibition/ Command/ Control	Tax/ Dues/ Fines	Misinformation/ Discouragement/ Threat	Reduction of public services
Means of control	Behavioural control	Incentive control	Attitudinal Control	Supply Control
Implementation problems	Resistance to policy and violation of norms	Uncertain effects and coordination problems	Low efficiency and control	Success depends on attractiveness/over- or under- investment possible/exclusion of the 'needy'

Table 2.1 Forms of State Engagement with Business (Bredgaard 2004, p.385)

These initiatives represent some of the different top-down methods used by the State to work with the governing principles, of what could be considered, a regulatory spectrum of command and control and market forms of regulation. According to Bredgaard (2004), Regulative programs force corporations to comply with State polices about what it determines to be the minimum behavioural standards of corporations in society. On the other hand, Motivation Programs use financial and economic incentives to encourage corporations to engage with State initiatives. Persuasion Programs use activist approaches such as information dissemination, dialogue, and encouragement to place pressure on corporations to adopt State proposals (Bredgaard 2004). Finally, Public Activity Programs aim to support the capacity constraints of corporations to engage in socially responsible business conduct (Bredgaard 2004). While these top-down methods have been considered separately in this discussion, it is likely that the State adopts a range of these approaches to support the corporate uptake of social responsibility.

This discussion highlights how the State's engagement in corporate social responsibility has evolved since the 1960's. It draws attention to how the State engaged, and how it continues to engage, in the creation and re-creation of socially

responsible corporate conduct. Since the ideological shift in the 1970s and 1980s, the State and its regulatory authorities have discovered alternative methods to engage with business. These have moved from command and control approaches to include other forms that work with the economic regulatory principles of the market (Bredgaard 2004). This discussion demonstrates that State regulation does not just use a command and control approach to mandate what is and what is not responsible in the marketplace. Instead, it highlights how the State has adopted other market-based methods for its engagement with business. Thus, the concept and practice of corporate social responsibility continues to be influenced by top-down State perspectives. This means that corporate social responsibility is not just a business concept. It is a product of creation from the engagement between the State and business sectors.

Next, there is an exploration of the corporate-centric approach to CSR. Specifically, the following section highlights how CSR has evolved in the context of the private sector. This is to provide insight into how corporations have viewed their role and sense of place as organisations in society. It is to also to highlight some of the challenges associated with the principles of market-based regulation and how those challenges have opened up the need for top-down and bottom-up regulatory forms to engage in the co-creation of corporate social responsibility.

2.3   Corporate-centric Perspectives about Social Responsibility

Corporate self-regulation of business activity is understood in the management discipline to be corporate social responsibility (Utting 2002). It represents a form of voluntary regulation which can be adopted by corporations to monitor and manage the impacts of business decisions on individuals, groups and communities in society (Utting 2002). This section explores how corporate perceptions of social responsibility have changed over time and how those perceptions have informed current methods of corporate engagement with different sectors of society. The purpose of this discussion is to highlight how corporations engage with the concept of corporate social responsibility and to draw attention to some of the regulatory gaps, which have emerged from the corporate-centric approach. The discussion

illustrates that, while corporate social responsibility can be understood from a corporate-centric perspective, other forms of regulatory engagement with business are needed for the reconceptualisation of what responsible corporate conduct is and how social responsibility is implemented in business decisions and initiatives. This section begins by discussing how corporate social responsibility conceptually moved from a macro perspective where the focus was on a corporation's social obligations to society, to an organisational perspective where the focus was on the corporate benefits and returns yielded from engagement in socially responsible initiatives (Lee 2008). It further explores the theories and concepts that have emerged from the organisational perspective about how corporations engage with their communities.

Corporate perspectives adopted a macro-social focus to the concept of corporate social responsibility in the 1950's (Lee 2008). This meant that corporate social responsibility was explored on the basis of why it was required for society instead of why it was required for the corporation (Carroll & Shabana 2010; Lee 2008). The concept was given particular meaning from deliberations about the power managers wielded over different sectors of society. For instance, in 1953, Bowen (2013) recognised that business decisions and actions did not just impact the shareholders of the firm. Rather, they impacted a range of individuals and groups in rather complex and emergent ways. Bowen (2013, p.3) states:

> "The decisions and actions of the businessman [sic] have a direct bearing on the quality of our lives and personalities. His decisions affect not only himself, his stockholders, his immediate workers, or his customers – they affect the lives and fortunes of us all"

It was due to the broad impact of business decisions on society that Bowen (2013) argued that business had an obligation to consider the "social consequences" of their decisions and actions. Thus, the approach to corporate social responsibility which emerged at that time appeared to be formed from a sense of ethical or moral duty to manage the corporation in a way that takes into account how business decisions and actions can affect different sectors of society (Carroll & Shabana 2010; Lee 2008). In particular, it invited corporations to consider a complex perspective of the impacts of business activity. This perspective of social responsibility soon became popular amongst the business community. Business leaders appeared to believe that they held a social obligation to society. As Levitt (1958, p.42) states:

"So what started out as the sincere personal viewpoints of a few selfless businessmen [sic] became the prevailing vogue for them all … Everybody is in on the act, and nearly all of them actually mean what they say!"

This viewpoint suggests that it became popular for corporations to serve the public interest instead of serving just their profit-centric duties to its shareholders (Levitt, 1958). Businesses appeared to have adopted a broader focus about their sense of place in the economy. Their concern it seemed was on how corporate practices could impact the macro-social environment. During that period of the 1950s and 1960s, there was no connection between CSR and a firm's financial performance (Lee 2008; Carroll & Shabana 2010). This suggested that the self-regulation of corporate behaviour was formed from concerns about the amount of power and influence that corporations held over society and how that power and influence could be ethically balanced through the conception of responsibility (Carroll & Shabana 2010; Lee 2008).

Criticism also emerged in the 1950's and 1960's to contest the moral and ethical uptake of corporate social responsibility. Arguments warning about the potential dangers of corporate engagement in social affairs were made popular by Theodore Levitt (1958). Among their criticisms were arguments which suggested that corporations were only capable of holding narrow unsocial views. This was because they were understood to operate in a restrictive market-based economic paradigm. As a result, there were fears that corporations would be unable to fully comprehend the needs and complexities of social issues due to the limits of dominant economic perspectives (Davis 1973). There were also concerns that corporations, which chose to engage in social responsibility, would be capable of moulding society according the corporation's own profit-centric needs (Levitt 1958). This was feared to create a single governing group or ideology over society (Levitt 1958). These perceived dangers convinced Levitt (1958) to ascertain that corporations should only focus on fulfilling its own economic goals which were to maximise profits. This perspective represented a shareholder theory of social responsibility. It maintained that each sector of society (public, private and the third sector) had separate and distinct operating goals that were congruent with each sector's operating paradigm and that each sector should remain faithful to attaining those goals and objectives (Levitt 1958). Under this perspective, corporations were expected to leave social issues for the public and third sectors to address.

Amidst these different perspectives there was a conflict between the economic interests of the corporation and the social interests of managers of corporations. It seemed that social responsibility was conceptualised to mean corporate engagement in social issues that went beyond the immediate financial and organisational concerns of business (Carroll & Shabana 2010; Lee 2008). It meant that the economic and financial goals of firms were removed from the definitions and practice of social responsibility. It seemed that there was a negative connotation assigned to the profit seeking imperative of firms because the act of profit generation was not considered a manner in which corporations could make a social contribution to society (Levitt 1958).

2.3.1 The Business Case for CSR

The business case for corporate social responsibility began to emerge in the 1970s as a response to the criticism the private sector received from its engagement in social affairs. The business case, as it has been represented by Carroll and Shabana (2010) is a corporate-centric argument about why corporations should engage in socially responsible business practices. It draws attention to a relationship between socially responsible behaviour and corporate financial performance (Carroll & Shabana 2010; Lee 2008). This was an attempt to reconcile the social obligations of firms with the criticisms received from individuals such as Levitt (1958). This attempt opened up a third space where social responsibility was conceptualised in connection to shareholder interests and financial returns (Wallich & Mcgowan 1970; Carroll & Shabana 2010; Lee 2008). Specifically, the perspective suggested that corporations could engage in social affairs so long as it was congruent with the shareholder interests and the economic goals of the firm (Carroll & Shabana 2010). Thus, the corporate-centric approach to social responsibility shifted from a macro-social focus where responsible corporate conduct was viewed as an ethical obligation to society to include an organisational level focus where responsible corporate conduct was conceptualised in the context of the corporation's financial needs (Lee 2008).

This attempt at reconciliation provided scope for the legitimisation of corporate social responsibility in a market economy (Carroll & Shabana 2010). This was because it went some way to including the shareholder theory of the firm under the frame of corporate social responsibility (Carroll 1991). The convergence of social

interests with business interests was reflected in the argument that a strong social environment could support the longevity of business operations (Carroll & Shabana 2010; Lee 2008). Corporate responsibility was viewed as a practice that could support the long-term sustainability of business (Lee 2008). It became an approach that could appeal to the financial and ethical goals of corporations (Carroll 1991). This third space created scope for further discussion about what corporations could reap from their engagement in socially responsible conduct. Table 2.2 highlights how corporate-centric perspectives about social responsibility have shifted since the 1950s.

	50s & 60s		90s
Level of Analysis	Macro-social	→	Organisational
Theoretical Orientation	Ethical/Obligation	→	Managerial
Ethical Orientation	Explicit	→	Implicit
Relationship between CSR & CFP	Exclusive/No discussion	→	Tight coupling

Table 2.2 Development of Corporate-centric Perspectives about Social Responsibility (Lee 2008, p.56)

The emergence of the business case transformed how corporations conceptualised the concept of social responsibility. In particular, a stronger link was made between a corporation's social obligations and its financial performance (Carroll & Shabana 2010). The theories and perspectives about CSR, which emerged in the context of the business case, reflected that link. They included an economic element in the conceptualisation of corporate responsibility. Thus, this perspective provided scope for businesses to consider both their social obligations and their financial obligations under the one frame of social responsibility (Carroll 1991; Carroll & Shabana 2010). Accordingly, this altered the perception of the corporation as a service to society by the inclusion of the notion that the corporation could be a service to itself.

This shift in focus was reflected in Carroll's (1991) four part definition of corporate social responsibility. Specifically, corporate responsibility was conceptualised to encompass a corporation's economic, legal, ethical and discretionary/philanthropic duties to society (Carroll 1991). Economic responsibilities were the foundation upon

which all other dimensions of social responsibility rest (Carroll 1991). They encompass the firm's financial and profit needs (Carroll 1991). Legal responsibilities, on the other hand, recognise the firm's requirement to comply with the laws and regulations of the state and other national and international authorities (Carroll 1991). While positioned after the economic aspect, legal responsibilities are understood to co-exist with economic responsibilities. This is because, when combined, these aspects represent the fundamental necessities for a business to legitimately operate in a country or across multiple countries. As the third dimension of the definition, ethical responsibilities capture the socially desired expectations of corporations to comply with the norms, values and expectations of different individuals and communities in society (Carroll 1991). Ethical responsibilities are positioned after legal responsibilities because they represent those social expectations which have not yet been codified into law but which inform the social construction of what is considered responsible corporate conduct (Carroll, 1991). Lastly, philanthropic responsibilities encompass what different individuals and communities desire of corporations as actors in society (Carroll 1991). This can include the donation of time and resources to partner organisations such as public, private and not-for-profit organisations (Carroll 1991). Figure 2.1 provides a visual representation of Carroll's (1991) definition. These dimensions are not considered to be distinct forms of social responsibility. Instead, they represent dimensions that make up the whole notion of corporate social responsibility.
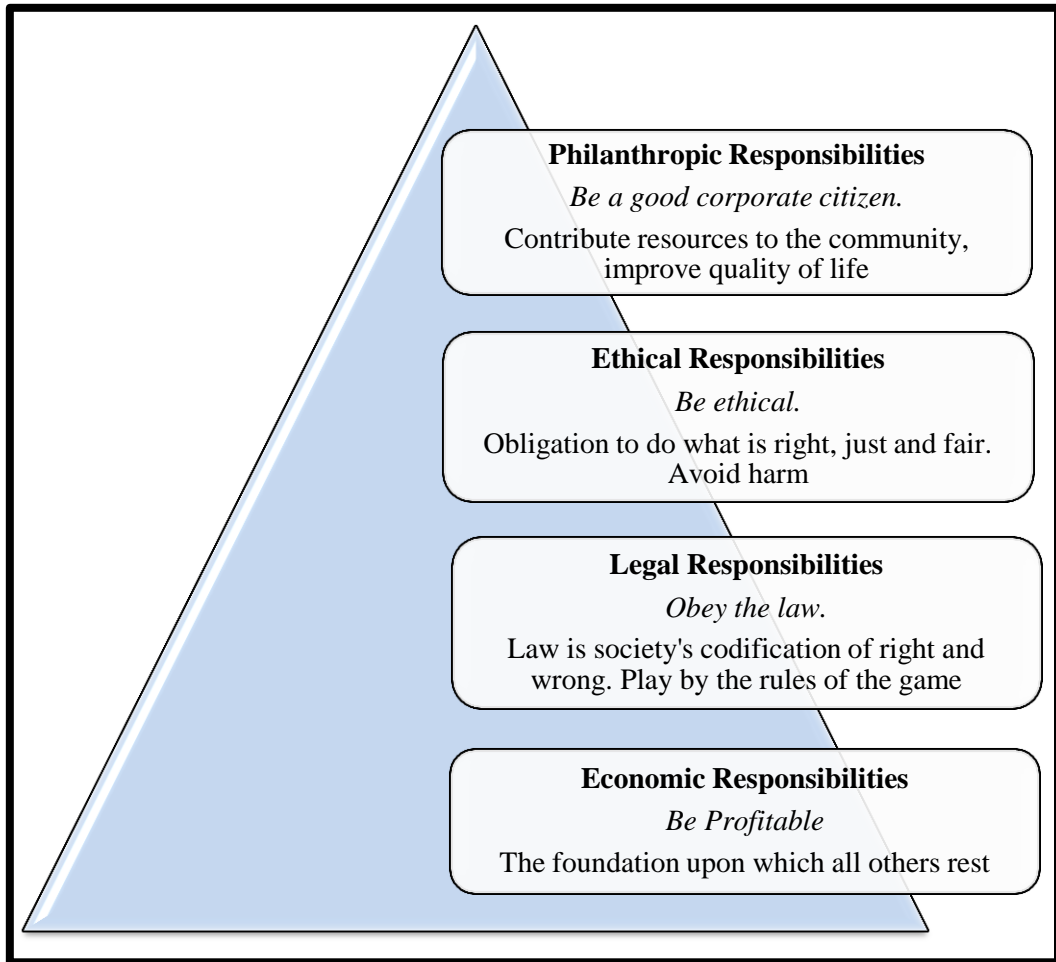
Figure 2.1 Dimensions of Corporate Social Responsibility (Carroll 1991, p.42)

The position of the economic dimension as the first responsibility to be considered by the corporation was fundamental for the reconciliation of the economic and social obligations of the firm. This was because it recognised the most basic need of a corporation's sustainability: to be profitable (Carroll 1991). If corporations were expected to engage in other forms of social responsibility such as legal, ethical and philanthropic duties to different individuals and communities, they must first make a profit (Carroll 1991). Thus, the inclusion of an economic focus in the definition highlighted how social responsibility could be approached without jeopardising the long-term viability of the company (Carroll 1991). The economic responsibility became the foundation upon which all other forms of social responsibility rest (Carroll 1991) .This definition reflected how the corporate-centric perspectives of social responsibility shifted to an organisational context where the financial and organisational goals of the corporation are considered in the context of other macro-social issues (Lee 2008).

Carroll's (1991) four part definition of corporate social responsibility shares a common thesis with the stakeholder theory of the firm. This states that the corporation should be managed in the interests of any group or individual that can influence the organisation or can be affected by its activities (Freeman 1984; Crowther 2008). This approach was born in the strategic management literature in response to the growing demands that were being placed on businesses from globalisation (Laplume, Sonpar & Litz 2008; Freeman 1984). The premise was that a stakeholder approach could enhance firm performance by mitigating the impacts that individuals and group concerns could have on the longevity of the firm (Freeman 1984; Laplume, Sonpar and Litz 2008). Stakeholder theory is understood to bear a relationship with literature focused on corporate social responsibility because it takes into account the relationship between business and ethics (Laplume, Sonpar and Litz 2008). It does this by broadening the focus of managers by encouraging them to consider in their decision making processes a multiple set of individuals and groups that have an interest in how the firm is managed (Carroll 1991). It invites management to go beyond the shareholder theory of the firm by advocating that business should be managed in the interests of all individuals and stakeholder groups (Freeman 1984).

Inherently, Carroll's (1991) model contains the same thesis. This is because it reconciled what could be understood as a dichotomy between the economic obligations of the firm and its social obligations. By including both types of obligations in the one definition of social responsibility, Carroll (1991) argued that corporations should be managed in the interests of a range of different stakeholder types. This is because the definition provided scope for the inclusion of these different stakeholder types. For instance, the economic, legal, ethical and philanthropic responsibilities could be expected by different types of stakeholders (Carroll & Buchholtz 2009). Economic responsibilities may be expected to support the perspectives of corporate shareholders, legal responsibilities influenced by the State and other governing authorities, ethical responsibilities by all stakeholders and philanthropic responsibilities by local communities (Carroll 1991; Carroll & Buchholtz 2009). This understanding seems to imply that corporations should be managed in the interests of all stakeholders instead of the few that have a financial stake in the firm (Carroll & Burchholtz 2009). This premise reflects Freeman's

(1984) perception of how firms should be managed strategically. The similar theses between Carroll's (1991) understanding of social responsibility and Freeman's (1984) understanding of strategic management create scope for each approach to inform the other.

The limitations of the stakeholder approach have been described in the strategic management literature. The premise that the corporation should be managed in the interests of all stakeholder types was understood to instil a sense of complexity in the decision-making processes of managers (Mitchell, Agle & Wood 1997). It was claimed that the satisfaction of all stakeholder interests was idealistic because different conflicts were understood to arise from competing stakeholder interests (Crowther 2008). Thus, there was a sense of ambiguity about in whose interests the corporation should be managed and which stakeholders to which the corporation should pay attention (Mitchell, Agle & Wood 1997). An attempt to simplify this complexity was made by Mitchell, Agle and Wood (1997). They proposed a framework that would help identify the salient stakeholders of a corporation based on a set of specific attributes.

Mitchell, Agle and Wood (1997) developed a stakeholder typology to support the identification of salient stakeholders. Their framework had the capacity to reduce the field of stakeholders to which corporations would need to pay attention. From their perspective, a stakeholder is someone who possesses one or more of the attributes noted as power, legitimacy and urgency in relation to the corporation. An individual or group is deemed to have a powerful claim if they have the ability to influence the corporation according to their own set of interests. Also, an individual or group is viewed as having a legitimate claim if they are socially accepted as having a stake in how the corporation is managed (Mitchell Agle & Wood 1997). Finally, a person or group is understood to have an urgent claim if they require something important from the corporation in a limited amount of time (Mitchell Agle & Wood 1997).

Possessing any combination of these characteristics is linked to the importance or salience of the stakeholder relationship (Mitchell, Agle & Wood 1997). If a corporation determines that an individual or group has none of these attributes then, according to the framework, they are not identified as a stakeholder of the corporation. However, if an individual or group is identified as having one of these

attributes, then they would be classified as a latent stakeholder of the firm (Mitchell, Agle & Wood 1997). Latent stakeholders are understood to possess a passive stance in how they engage with the firm. Additionally, if an individual or group possesses two of the attributes then they are deemed to be expectant stakeholders of the firm. This stakeholder group is characterised to take an active stance in how they engage with the corporation (Mitchell, Agle & Wood 1997). Lastly, if an individual or group possesses all three attributes, then they are ascribed the descriptor of a definitive stakeholder which is deemed to be of the highest importance in the three forms of salience. This level of importance, assigned to stakeholders by corporate managers, can change according to the acquisition or relinquishment of these three attributes (Mitchell, Agle & Wood 1997). The different classifications of stakeholder types is featured in Figure 2.2.
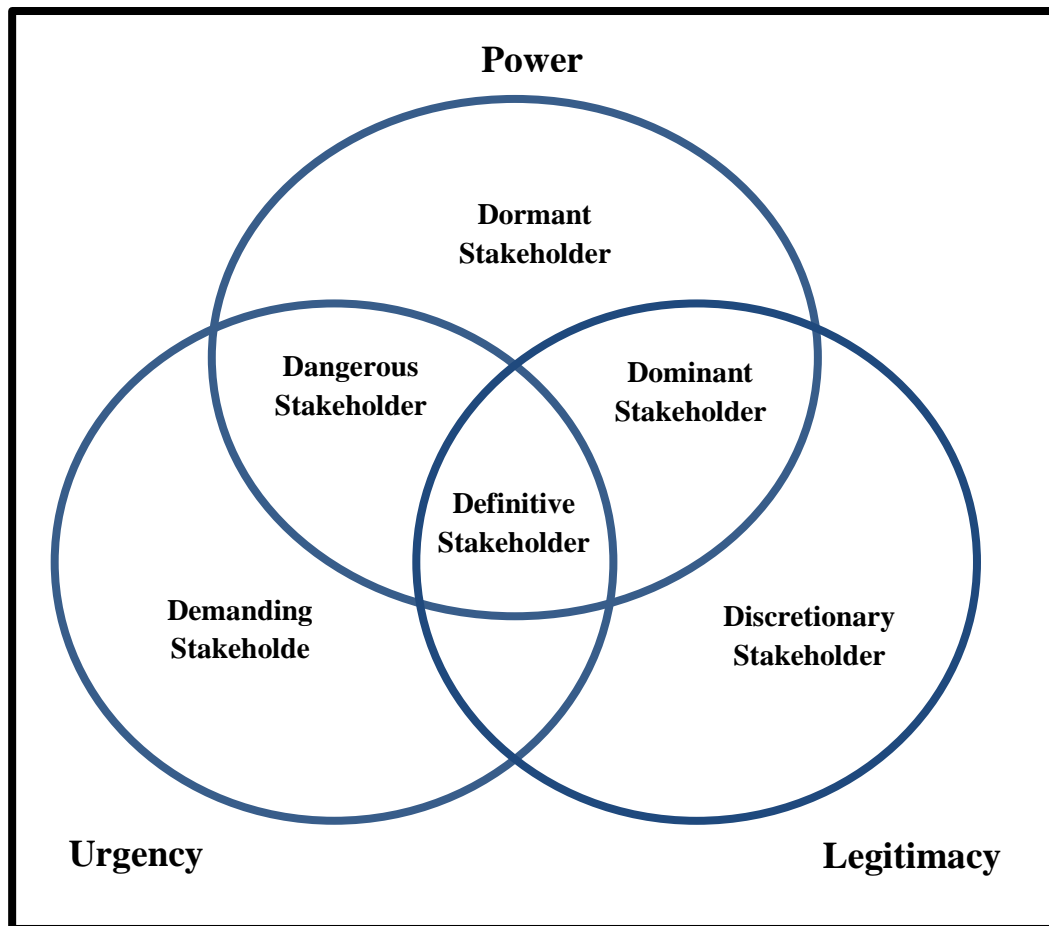
Figure 2.2 Types of Corporate Stakeholders (Mitchell, Agle & Wood 1997, p. 874)

Mitchell, Agle and Wood's (1997) typology builds on Carroll's (1991) notion by providing a method for corporations to identify the stakeholder interests with which the corporation should be managed. Specifically, it provides a framework for sorting out the perceived level of importance of each stakeholder claim to the corporation. Specifically, this can provide a helpful tool to ascertain the level of importance of competing stakeholder claims (Mitchell, Agle & Wood 1997).

Preble's (2005) six step process model (Figure 2.3) synthesises the stakeholder management literature into a useful, step-by-step formula that corporations can follow in their own practice. The model adopts a logical sequence of steps which move from stakeholder identification and salience and proceed to strategy development and implementation and finally, the evaluation of stakeholder management performance. This model offers a useful depiction of how corporations could be thought to logically manage the interests of a diverse variety of stakeholders (Preble 2005).

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│  ┌───────────────────────────────────────────────┐  │
│  │        Step 1. Stakeholder identification      │  │
│  │          -Primary, Public, Secondary           │  │
│  └───────────────────────────────────────────────┘  │
│                                                      │
│  ┌───────────────────────────────────────────────┐  │
│  │  Step 2. General nature of stakeholder claims  │  │
│  │             and power implications             │  │
│  │           -Equity, Economic, Influencers       │  │
│  └───────────────────────────────────────────────┘  │
│                                                      │
│  ┌───────────────────────────────────────────────┐  │
│  │      Step 3. Determine performance gaps        │  │
│  │          -Define stakeholder expectations      │  │
│  │           - Conduct performance audits         │  │
│  │                 - Reveal gaps                  │  │
│  │        -Explore stakeholder influence strategies │ │
│  └───────────────────────────────────────────────┘  │
│                                                      │
│  ┌───────────────────────────────────────────────┐  │
│  │      Step 4. Prioritise stakeholder demands    │  │
│  │  -Determine stakeholder salience (power,       │  │
│  │          legitimacy, urgency)                  │  │
│  └───────────────────────────────────────────────┘  │
│                                                      │
│  ┌───────────────────────────────────────────────┐  │
│  │    Step 5. Develop organisational responses    │  │
│  │            -Direct communication               │  │
│  │           - Collaboration/partnering           │  │
│  │            -Set performance goals              │  │
│  │        -Develop policies/strategies/programs   │  │
│  │              -Allocate resources               │  │
│  │          -Revise "Statement of purpose"        │  │
│  └───────────────────────────────────────────────┘  │
│                                                      │
│  ┌───────────────────────────────────────────────┐  │
│  │        Step 6. Monitoring and control          │  │
│  │    -Continually check stakeholder positions    │  │
│  │          -Evaluate strategic progress          │  │
│  │       -Conduct social/environmental audits     │  │
│  └───────────────────────────────────────────────┘  │
│                                                      │
│    Repeat                                            │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
```

Figure 2.3 Comprehensive Stakeholder Management Process Model (Preble 2005, p. 415)

Ethical implications arose from the corporate-centric approach to corporate social responsibility and self-regulation. This is because the perspective put the corporation

in a position of power to determine what responsible corporate conduct was and how that conduct could be implemented and monitored. Consequently, this approach positioned the corporation as the governing authority to decide what was acceptable corporate behaviour for the rest of society. It also placed corporate stakeholders to assume a submissive position of power where trust would need to be conferred to corporate managers about their knowledge, judgment and practice of what was right, just and fair (Dommen, cited in Utting 2002).

2.3.2 Challenges associated with the Business Case for CSR

The discrepancies of this approach were made explicit when some corporations were discovered to have used the concept of corporate social responsibility as a means to advance a corporate-centric agenda over its stakeholders. This misuse of power pointed to some of the fallacies associated with a corporation's regulation of its own business practices. Examples of these fallacies include: Engaging in the rhetoric of social responsibility to advance core business activities (Coronado & Fallon 2010), forcing corporate decisions on stakeholder communities (Banerjee 2007), and engaging in promotional practices of social responsibility that do not match the reality of day to day business conduct (Utting 2002).

In their discussion about the treatment of indigenous peoples by large Australian mining companies, Coronado and Fallon, (2010) draw attention to how corporations can engage in a rhetoric of corporate social responsibility to advance an established business agenda. Specifically, they highlight how a public representation of a mining company had positioned it to seek to use a socially responsible reputation as a way to forward the continuity of its core mining operations. Their analysis demonstrates how managers can use social responsibility as a mechanism to manage the firm in the interests of shareholders as opposed to how managers can use social responsibility as a mechanism to manage the firm in the interests of all or salient stakeholders. Furthermore, their analysis points to how a focus on manager's perceptions of what is right, just and fair can mask the practice of social responsibility as a facilitative practice where the firm is managed in terms of what stakeholders deem as right, just and fair.

Banerjee (2007) also draws attention to another example where a corporation was discovered to have imposed the decisions of its managers over the decisions of its stakeholder community. In his research about stakeholder perceptions of mining on indigenous land, Banerjee (2007) discovered that a mining company was forwarding its core business agenda to mine on the land despite the reservations and objections raised by the traditional owners. The traditional owners did not want the corporation to mine on the land. However, the corporation proceeded with its plans and hired a consultant, to engage with the community, to find out how it could be done. This finding illustrates another example where a corporation was discovered to have engaged with the language and discourse of social responsibility such as community engagement and consultation, but in reality chose to forward an alternative agenda which was focused on furthering the core business functions of the corporation. This case shows one of the fallacies which had emerged from the corporate-centric approach to corporate social responsibility: i.e. how rhetoric and discourse could inadvertently help to further the practice of firm management in the interests of those who own the company instead of those that engage with the company.

Another fallacy which emerged from the corporate-centric approach to social responsibility was 'greenwash' (Greer & Bruno 1996). It was a term given to a process whereby a corporation would promote a socially responsible image that was not consistent with to the day to day reality of its business practices. Utting (2002) draws attention to some examples of greenwash from work completed by the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD) on corporate codes of conduct. Specifically, he points to how codes of conduct written and promoted by some corporations had failed to be implemented and practiced by the people in them. It seemed that the organisational capabilities to support the integration and translation of those codes into business activity were not present. While responsible business activity was promoted, it did not represent the actual reality of the processes and practices that the people adhered to in the corporation. Thus, the language and discourse of responsible business practice can act as a promotional or marketing tool to project a positive image of the corporation that is beyond its actual business practice.

These fallacies highlight the challenges associated with the corporate-centric approach to CSR. Theories about stakeholder salience place managers in a position

where they can give more attention to those stakeholders that they deem to be salient and less attention to those who are perceived not to carry such claims. This means that not all stakeholders, who are identified by the firm, are considered equal in the decision making process of corporations. Specifically, what has been shown in the examples from Coronado and Fallon (2010), Banerjee (2007) and Utting (2002) is that the language and discourse of the ethical and philanthropic dimensions of Carroll's frame of social responsibility have been used in a way to mask the dominant focus on core business operations. More specifically, they demonstrate how less salient stakeholders have been placated with the rhetoric of the ethical and philanthropic dimensions of responsibility while the highly salient stakeholders have determined how the firm will be managed. These examples highlight how the stakeholder theory of the firm has been misused to practice the shareholder theory of the firm.

The concept of salience places power in the hands of managers to determine, first who is important to the corporation and second the sequential order of importance of stakeholder claims to the corporation. With a shift in focus on social responsibility to the organisational level, the perception of salience is skewed to consider first what the corporation can reap from engaging in social responsibility as opposed to what society can gain from socially responsible business practices. This skewed perception appears to have influenced some firms to have re-conceptualised the dimensions of social responsibility according to its perceptions of those stakeholders it deems to be most salient.

This discussion has drawn attention to the challenges associated with the corporate self-regulatory frame of social responsibility. Specifically, the regulatory gaps and limitations which can emerge from the stakeholder approach were presented. This was to highlight the need for other forms of top-down and bottom-up co-regulatory practices that can hold corporations to account for their engagement with the concept and practice of social responsibility. The next section investigates the bottom-up approach to social responsibility. In particular it explores how non-government organisations participate in the development of responsible business practices.

2.4   Stakeholder and NGO Co-regulation

This section explores how bottom-up approaches to corporate regulation can fill the gaps associated with top-down and corporate-centric forms. The discussion above explored how the winding back of the State had provided scope for business to adopt a stronger role in the regulation of its own decisions and actions. However, a number of challenges arose from that approach. Some corporations were discovered to have used the concept as a marketing tool to publically mask their practice of the shareholder theory of the firm. Thus, corporate-centric approaches to corporate social responsibility could be thought to have lost to some extent their legitimacy with the broader public. Bottom-up approaches provided a third way that could fill this regulatory gap. Utting (2002), for instance, classifies these approaches under the one frame of 'stakeholder co-regulation'. This is understood to occur when stakeholders participate in the development of socially responsible business practices.

It provides a helpful frame to explore how stakeholder engagement with business can support the co-regulation of corporate discourse and practice of responsible business conduct. The dominant focus in the frame of stakeholder co-regulation appears to be on how civil society organisations engage with business and how they participate in holding corporations to account for the impact of its decisions and actions on society.

Civil society, also termed the third sector, encompasses the networks and associations of individuals, whose structural organisation draws a distinction from state and market-based entities (Teegen, Doh & Vachani 2004). These organisations are characterised by voluntary membership and operate according to common community interests, needs or causes (Yaziji & Doh 2009). A dominant focus in the discourse of stakeholder co-regulation appears to be on the engagement between NGOs and corporations (see Utting, 2002). NGOs form one type of third sector association and are understood to focus on service or advocacy activities for a particular social or organisational cause. Yaziji and Doh's (2009) framework, illustrated in Table 2.3 classifies the typologies of NGOs according to these dimensions. NGOs are understood to occupy one or more dimensions in this framework at any given time.

Beneficiary	**Self**	Alcoholics Anonymous Chess Clubs	Labor Unions Trade associations
	Others	Salvation Army CARE	WWF Amnesty International
		Service	**Advocacy**
		Type of Activity	

Table 2.3 Non-Government Organisation Classification Typology (Yaziji & Doh 2009, p. 5)

Stakeholder regulation has filled the gaps associated with corporate-centric approaches to social responsibility. Bendell (2000; 2005) for instance draws attention to how stakeholders and civil society actors have challenged instances where corporations have violated human and civil rights, contributed to the destruction and pollution of the natural environment, and where they have played a role in the stunted growth of social development. Various challenges to corporate behaviour can come in a number of forms. Utting (2005a, pp. 377-378) has listed some of the engagement forms NGOs use to regulate business practices. These include:

- Watchdog activism
- Consumer activism and fair trade movement
- Shareholder activism and ethical investment
- Litigation
- Critical research, public education, and advocacy
- Eclectic activism
- Collaboration and service provision

The first six of the listed forms of civil society engagement with business could be understood to adopt a type of confrontational approach. This is because those categories identify scope for advocacy processes to form a dominant focus for the dialogue and engagement with business. To the contrary, the last category – collaboration and service provision – draws attention to a less confrontational approach. This category identifies scope for cooperative processes to form the dominant focus for dialogue and engagement.

As can be seen from Utting's list of co-regulation strategies (2002), there are multiple avenues that can be used to confront corporations about their behaviour. Examples include the different forms of activism, advocacy and litigation. Collaborative-based co-regulation however, does not appear to have the same representation when it comes to articulated strategies for engagement. For instance, 'collaboration and service provision' was the only theme used to represent all forms of NGO-business cooperation. This could suggest that collaborative forms of co-regulation are an under-researched area in the context of CSR.

Burchell and Cook's (2006; 2008) research can provide insight into an emerging form of collaboration between NGOs and corporations. Their research focuses on the dialogic interactions between market and civil society actors. They highlight that this type of engagement is useful for NGOs and businesses to understand each other's perspectives, values and challenges. However, it is questionable regarding the attainment of actual tangible outcomes for both parties. Their study 'Corporate Responsibility Action through Dialogue Learning and Exchange (CRADLE)' offers insight into the perceptions of NGOs and corporations towards dialogue. From their analysis, they found that dialogue was perceived to cover a range of different engagement processes such as information dissemination through to deeper discursive arrangements between NGOs and corporations (Burchell and Cook 2006).

One point of contention they found for NGO-business dialogue was the impact of power relationships on that collaboration. They discovered that the unequal power relationships between corporations and NGOs were inhibiting the possibility for effective and constructive dialogue. The NGO respondents in Burchell and Cook's (2006) study indicated that the most effective form of engagement with the private sector involved some kind of facilitation by a third party agent. This was contrary to

the corporate respondents in the study who indicated that direct, one-on-one engagement with NGOs was more effective. The results of that project suggest that a key challenge for NGOs was the discursive dominance of business interests over their corporate relationships. More specifically, it suggested that the level of control assumed by corporations over their engagement with NGOs was limiting the capacity for NGOs to influence business decisions and practices. This finding indicates that the power relationships between market and non-market actors present a key challenge for NGOs looking to influence corporate behaviour through collaboration.

Another key challenge NGOs faced in their relationships with corporations was the cultivation of constructive dialogue. The absence of a discussion about the goals and objectives for a relationship was found to produce unhelpful and disappointing forms of interaction. This finding could suggest that one of the key barriers for successful engagement is the articulation of the NGO's vision and objectives for its corporate relationships.

The challenges highlighted above present some of the concerns about collaboration as a type of co-regulatory practice. More specifically, they point to the confusion about how cooperative arrangements between NGOs and corporations could yield responsible business behaviour in society.

In the context of confrontational approaches, stakeholder engagement with business can have the capacity to socially de-legitimise those corporations which have engaged in socially unacceptable behaviours. This means that they can influence the social perception of corporations in the broader public by drawing attention to how corporate behaviour failed to meet a set of social expectations that society had for firms (LaFrance & Lehmann 2005). For example, this can be done through awareness raising processes and advocacy based campaigns that have an aim to bring to the broader public attention those corporate violations of socially acceptable ethics and behaviours. Accordingly, this can influence how stakeholders continue to engage with those corporations in the future.

Additionally, stakeholders and civil society organisations also engage in accountability processes which can challenge the disparities between socially responsible corporate discourse and socially responsible business practices. A reflection conducted by Taylor, Coronado and Fallon (2011) explored the

engagement between environmentally focused NGOs and Australian-based mining corporations. In that reflection, they explored how civil society organisations, and in particular, NGOs, could hold corporations to account for 'greenwash' practices. In an example, they draw attention to an instance where members of an environmental NGO challenged the manner in which minutes were taken by corporate representatives in set of consultative meetings between the NGO and an Australian mining corporation. Members of the NGO were concerned that the minutes were written in a manner which publically reflected that relations were cordial between the parties when in fact it was not. The NGO was able to apply social pressure on the representatives to alter how the minutes were taken and the need to accurately record any disagreements amongst parties about the issues or topics raised.

This illustrates how stakeholder participation in corporate accountability processes can draw attention to corporate violations of ethically acceptable standards of behaviour about how corporations engage with stakeholder communities and how corporations engage with the discourse and rhetoric of CSR. This highlights the power that stakeholders and civil society organisations can have over the regulation of corporate decisions and practices: in particular, their capacity to influence the legitimacy of corporations as responsible corporate citizens by engaging with how the broader public views the corporation and how they engage with the corporation.

In the same way that stakeholders and civil society organisations can impact the de-legitimisation of corporations via various accountability and regulatory regimes, they can also influence the legitimisation of corporations as responsible corporate citizens via their engagement in the development and verification of socially responsible corporate practices. This forms another function of the stakeholder co-regulation frame of CSR. Utting (2002) draws attention to the recognition that some large corporations had about the limits of corporate-centric forms of social responsibility and the strategic need to engage in multi-stakeholder partnerships as a way to manage the legitimisation of their responsible business practices.

NGO engagement with corporations could add a form of credibility to the corporation's reputation as a social actor. This was because many conceptual definitions and social perceptions of NGOs had positioned them to be independent bodies that were focused on attaining a particular set of social development goals for

their communities (Baur & Schmitz 2012). According to these perspectives, the social construction of the NGO could be thought to represent an organisation which operates for 'the public good' or for a set of 'universal values' (Baur & Palazzo 2011). Under this assumption, NGOs could be viewed as having the capacity to critically monitor and regulate corporate decisions and actions in their positions as independent organisations, focused on the public good.

Positive experiences of NGO engagement with business can add to the verification of the social perceptions of corporations and the social expectations of corporations. This is contrary to negative experiences of NGO engagement with business which can highlight a disparity or gap between the social perceptions of corporations and the social expectations of them. While a negative experience can de-legitimise the acceptance of a corporation as a socially responsible agent, a contrary view might suggest how a positive experience can add to the legitimacy and credibility of a corporation as a socially responsible agent.

However, critical of this perception are studies which highlight how NGOs have been co-opted into losing their independence in their engagement with business.

Baur and Schmitz (2012), for instance draw attention to examples where the views of NGOs have been influenced by the dynamics of collaboratively based relationships between the private and third sectors. Specifically, they highlight how a NGO's needs or goals for its engagement with business can overshadow its mission, values and role as an accountability agent. In an example, they draw attention to the engagement between the NGO, Save the Children and the soft drink corporations, Pepsi and Coca Cola. Specifically, Save the Children was engaged in a childhood anti-obesity campaign called 'Healthy Kids' (Baur & Schmitz 2012; Neuman 2010). A key advocacy focus of this campaign was its support for a tax on soda. In what seemed like a quick change of position, Save the Children decided to withdraw its advocacy and support for this tax (Baur & Schmitz 2012; Neuman 2010). The decision to withdraw support was speculated to be due to a conflict that had arisen from the financial support Save the Children had received, and were further seeking to receive, from soft drink maker's Pepsi and Coca Cola. This funding supported the NGO's humanitarian work in the United States and overseas (Baur & Schmitz 2012).

This example can highlight how the mission, values and mandates of NGOs can be influenced from its engagement with business. Thus, while NGO engagement with business can support the legitimisation and credibility of CSR, a critical view might suggest that there could be scope for a convergence of views to emerge between NGOs and corporations. This view points to the need for NGOs to adopt critical approaches in their dialogue and engagement with business, so to avoid the risk of co-option.

2.5 Similarities between CSR and CMS

The regulatory frame of CSR presents a number of similar characteristics to CMS. These include: a focus on the question of corporate behaviour in society and a focus on an agenda for change. These aspects suggest that the two theoretical frames share a set of parallel objectives, which will be discussed in this section.

As mentioned before CMS is a research approach used to challenge management activities and practices that subjugate human needs and desires to the institutional profit seeking tendencies of corporations (Alvesson, Bridgman & Willmott 2009). It is focused on questioning instances where organisational efficiency and effectiveness is pursed to the detriment of social and environmental interests (Alvesson, Bridgman & Willmott 2009).

A few attempts have been made to define the characteristics of CMS. However these are viewed with some degree of caution (Alvesson, Bridgman & Willmott 2009). This is because the development of theoretical characteristics can by default place boundaries around what is to be considered a critical study of management and what is not (Fournier & Grey, 2000; Alvesson, Bridgman & Willmott 2009). This can constrain the field because it can limit a plethora of views that also aim to question unhelpful forms of management (Alvesson, Bridgman & Willmott 2009). Thus, the development of a set of characteristics to define CMS is considered to convey a loose set of guidelines about how researchers 'might' approach exploring management from a critical perspective.

Fournier and Grey (2000) have attempted to identify characteristics which constitute CMS. They proposed that CMS is characterised by a focus on 'denaturalisation', 'non-performativity' and 'reflexivity'.

Non-performativity could be thought of as the critical position adopted in CMS. The notion of performativity relates to a technical view of management where resources are substituted '*in means-ends calculations*' for organisational efficiency and effectiveness (Fournier & Grey 2000, p. 17). Performativity is thus focused on the productivity of the firm and how management can better serve the economic interests of corporations according to 'rational' means. This view could see the sacrifice of human and environmental needs to the profitable performance of the company.

In contrast, the construct of non-performativity challenges that perspective from a diametrically opposed position. Specifically, it challenges those instances where human and environmental needs are suppressed in favour of the production and efficiency of the company (Fournier & Grey 2000).

The term 'non-performativity' had received some attention from scholars who argued that the concept was an unhelpful depiction of the critical position adopted in CMS. They were concerned that the prefix of the term ('non') did not capture the critical intent of the field. They suggested that CMS was concerned with performative forms of management insofar as they also accounted for social and environmental needs. Thus, a different term was adopted which accounted for forms of management that could fulfil the technical needs of the corporation and the social and environmental needs of the firm's stakeholders. Spicer, Alvesson and Karreman (2009) called that term 'critical performativity'. The introduction of that term re-characterised the position in CMS from an anti-business perspective to a more critically-appreciative one.

'Denaturalisation' refers to a process that deconstructs taken-for-granted beliefs and assumptions inherent in an organisation's *status quo* (Fournier & Grey 2009). It is a process which challenges existing knowledge which has been cemented and relied on in organisations. As part of that process 'reflexivity', from a critically performative perspective, is necessary to develop a conscious awareness of the status-quo and how existing systems and structures have prevented the realisation of social and environmental needs in corporations. Reflexivity is also used to imagine how

management and organisations should alter their perspectives and processes to become more inclusive of those stakeholder needs.

Together, critical performativity, denaturalisation and reflexivity are thought to capture some understanding of the aims and objectives of CMS. Those characteristics can help to distinguish CMS from other academic approaches that are required to be critical in nature for academic objectivity. Simply, CMS can be thought of as a form of inquiry that challenges unhelpful practices that constrain a diverse variety of stakeholder needs in organisations.

The following argument builds on the information presented to propose how the regulatory frame of CSR is similar to the characteristics of CMS. The purpose of this discussion is to draw a link between the two different but similar approaches to considering business and management in organisations.

Both the regulatory perspective of CSR and the critical perspective of CMS are concerned with the question of corporate behaviour in society. Essentially, each frame has an objective to question whether corporate activities and practices take social and environmental needs into consideration. More specifically, there is an evaluative tone used to determine whether the profit-seeking tendencies of corporations have taken precedence over the needs and desires of the organisation's stakeholders. This tone is evident in the non-performative and critically performative stance of CMS and the regulatory stance of CSR.

The non-performative and critically performative stance of CMS positions individuals in ways that encourages them to reflect on how the technical forms of management subjugate the needs of others who are affiliated with the organisation. Similarly, the regulatory agenda of CSR positions a societal organisation in a way that encourages it to consider whether corporate activities and practices have answered the needs and desires of social, environmental and economic stakeholders. Thus, both frames could be thought to adopt a questioning approach to evaluate whether the needs of all stakeholders have been met or whether the profit-orientated rationality of the firm has constrained those needs in some capacity.

In addition to the similarity identified above, both the regulatory perspective of CSR and the critical perspective of CMS both share a focus on a change agenda. This is

evident in the denaturalisation objective of CMS and in the regulatory objective of CSR. The notion of denaturalisation is focused on deconstructing embedded ways of thinking about management and organisations in society. In a similar manner, the regulatory objective of CSR exerts societal pressure on businesses to deconstruct practices which do not meet the needs of all stakeholders in society. Thus, it could be through that both frames hold an inherent intent to apply pressure on corporations to change their existing status-quo.

The similarities highlighted above provide scope to draw a parallel connection between the two theoretical frames. Both constructs adopt a similar position to critical business engagement. Both constructs are focused on the deconstruction of unhelpful business practices. This research project is situated in the context of both CMS and regulatory CSR. The high degree of similarity between the frames has made that possible.

2.6   Chapter Conclusion

This chapter presented the theoretical frame of the research. In particular, it drew a connection between the regulatory perspective of CSR and the critical frame of CMS. The similarities between the two perspectives provide scope to situate the research in the context of both. That link between CSR and CMS is drawn on throughout the following chapters.

The next chapter builds on the information presented here, and focuses specifically on how NGOs co-regulate business practices.

Chapter 3:

Taking an Action Research Lens to Stakeholder Co-regulation

This chapter focuses on the confrontational and collaborative methods NGOs use to co-regulate business perspectives and practices. In doing so it identifies a preference in the literature for confrontational forms of NGO-Business relations. The thesis of this chapter challenges that preference by suggesting that favouring one approach above the other can be detrimental for the transformation of the private sector. In particular, it draws on the principles and practice of action research and Freire's (1996) components of 'praxis' to provide the critical reasoning for why both methods should be viewed with equal importance.

Following this, the discussion, investigates how the critical and reflexive capacity of collaborative methods could be enhanced. This points to a literature gap which this research addresses.

3.1   Co-option Concerns about CSR

A radical view in the CMS literature argues that it would be inappropriate to learn from existing CSR practices as those practices largely perpetuate dominant business interests. Banerjee (2014) implies that existing CSR practices such as command and control, self-regulation and co-regulation (see Utting 2002) do not adequately allow for marginalised stakeholders to effectively participate in corporate decisions and practices and they are therefore co-opted to corporate perspectives. A logical inference that can be derived from that position suggests that it would be inappropriate to build a transformative CMS practice from any of those regulatory

forms. This study, however, challenges that view by exploring the concerns associated with that position's pragmatism. It does this by exploring the paradoxical characteristics of that perspective. From that discussion, it is argued that existing CSR practice in the field provides an appropriate form of critical engagement from which CMS can learn.

As outlined above, a more radical view in the CMS literature suggests that the existing depictions of CSR, like Utting's (2002), could represent a form of discursive co-option by private sector interests. It is argued that Utting's (2002) characterisation of CSR as command and control, self-regulation and co-regulation does not adequately allow for less powerful stakeholders to challenge unhelpful business interests (Banerjee 2014). Those interpretations of CSR are argued to confer the continuity of management forms that either consciously, or unconsciously, excludes a number of stakeholder groups from corporate decision-making processes. This is believed to lead to the preservation of questionable corporate 'citizens' in society instead of responsible ones.

That perspective in CMS conflicts with this study. This is because the research seeks to uncover a transformative critical management practice from the frame of stakeholder co-regulation. Accordingly, it means that the study aims to reveal a transformative critical practice from a type of CSR that the radical perspectives deem to be a form of market co-option. Despite the warnings offered by that perspective, this study stands by the argument that stakeholder co-regulation is an appropriate platform from which to build a transformative practice. This is because, paradoxically, the radical position bears too great a risk of 'disempowering' marginalized change agents instead of 'empowering' them. Additionally, the normative nature that characterises that position cannot be removed from the existing forms of CSR practices. This is explored in more detail below.

The radical CMS view on CSR does highlight important insights about the potential perpetuation of oppressive power regimes in society. However, that perspective, due to the strength of its critique, also risks ignoring the progressive and transformative characteristics of the critical social sciences. As explained in Section 1.1, a key objective of the critical social sciences is to challenge the presence of oppressive structural limitations which constrain individuals from realising their own 'freedoms'

in society. The radicalism of the CMS perspective above identifies the institutional power manifestations that can constrain individuals and organisations. However, that same view also deploys limitations on the capacities of the marginalised to change and transform them.

A glimpse of this was evident in Banerjee's (2014, p. 88) critique of the resources and capacities of the civil society sector. He states:

> 'The capacity of activist groups and NGOs to influence both government policy and corporate strategy depends both on the legitimacy and power (level of funding, scope and reach of membership, level of participation in different networks) of particular groups. The extent of direct authority to act or develop policy is limited for these groups'.

That view, while likely in many cases, seems to cast doubt over the self-organising capacities of the civil society sector to address the oppressive manifestations of market interests. This is a concern because it ascribes a limiting situation or view on the power of marginalised groups to participate in transformative social change. It bears a risk of reinforcing a state of powerlessness amongst civil society groups instead of encouraging the empowerment of them. The doubt expressed over the capacity and authority of civil society agents thus contains a danger of trapping the marginalised into further states of oppression. Therefore the radicalism of the CMS perspective could be a danger to itself as it can reproduce the same power imbalances which it inherently dreams to overcome.

It is for this reason that the study has chosen to challenge the radical perspective in CMS on CSR. Utting's (2002) frames of command and control, self-regulation and co-regulation provide an appropriate environment from which to manifest a CMS praxis. The pursuit to work with the existing regulatory environment and its complexities as opposed to 'rejecting it', can reduce the potential for imposing further limit situations on potential change agents in society. Specifically, it can help to ensure that the critical management practice manifested from this study is transformative in character as opposed to socially confining and, ultimately, dangerously limiting.

Another concern about radical CMS perspectives involves the normative nature of their recommendations. Some of the initiatives suggested by those positions seem too far removed from the complexities of the existing CSR environment. For instance,

there have been calls for more 'meta-based' forms of regulation where the development of agencies could give marginalised stakeholder's legal rights to hold corporations to account for social, environmental and economic discretions (Parker & Braithwaite 2003; Banerjee 2014). While a beautiful dream, the manifestation and development of those agencies still has to form from the existing complex interactions between business, society and policy actors. Those recommendations are subject to the existing constraints and complexities of the current CSR environment. They cannot be born from a vacuum. Thus, even radical positions in CMS cannot ignore or dismiss existing CSR practices. There is still an inherent need to work with the existing reality in order to action those normatively held dreams.

One way which CMS can learn to 'work with' the existing CSR environment is to study the complex critical interactions between business, society and policy actors and to participate in that process. Being too far removed from that practice can contradict the progressive intent of the critical social sciences, which is to challenge and alter the existing structural limitations that are imposed on people's freedoms. Any proposals for normative-based ideals which reject the reality of practice can contradict the purpose for which those recommendations were dreamt or created. Accordingly, it calls into question how helpful those proposals are for the actual transformation and de-naturalisation of existing structural limitations.

In the context of CMS, the radical rejection of existing CSR practice known as command and control, corporate self-regulation and stakeholder co-regulation can block opportunities to realise the normative recommendations that have emerged from those radical positions on management practice. This illustrates the importance of acknowledging existing forms of CSR regulation and the importance of learning how to work with those complex realities.

3.2 Confrontational and Collaborative Methods for Corporate Engagement

The success of NGO co-regulation is understood to depend on the balance between both confrontational and collaborative forms of corporate engagement (Utting 2005b). NGO confrontational engagement with business resembles an approach which uses protest and conflict to challenge business and economic interests in

corporations (Nijhof, Bruijn & Honders 2008). Additionally, NGO collaborative engagement with business resembles an approach which uses partnerships to influence the development or refinement of socially responsible initiatives in corporations (Nijhof, Bruijn & Honders 2008). Each approach performs a different function in the context of stakeholder co-regulation. Confrontational engagement functions politically to pressure corporations into adhering to social expectations of responsible behaviour; and collaborative engagement functions to broaden the corporate agenda for socially responsible practices (Utting 2005b). Together, these two forms of regulation monitor the CSR agenda and revise it in line with socially and environmentally accepted business behaviour.

The presence of confrontational and collaborative approaches has not always been balanced. According to Utting (2013), in the 1980s the dominant approach to regulating business practices was adversarial and confrontational. In that period, NGOs were understood to use strategies that could cause harm to a business's reputation if any social transgression had been committed. This changed during the 1990s when the use of collaborative approaches started to gain attention. The presence of NGO-corporate partnerships and NGO-corporate dialogues started to arise when NGOs began participating in conversations with business about the influence of corporate perspectives and practices in society.

The variety of approaches now used by NGOs to regulate corporate behaviour can be understood to fall on a spectrum from confrontational to collaborative engagement with business (Utting 2005a; Utting 2013). This spectrum indicates a variety of strategies now utilised by NGOs to regulate corporate activities. As mentioned in Chapter 2 Utting (2005a, pp.377-378) notes some of these approaches to include watchdog activism, consumer activism and the fair trade movement, shareholder activism and ethical investment, litigation, critical research, public education and advocacy, collaboration and service provision and eclectic activism.

The introduction of collaborative approaches to business regulation arose through an increase in social pressures for more pragmatic, less adversarial engagement forms (SustainAbility 2003; Utting 2000a; Utting 2005a). In particular, there was recognition of a need to move away from the type of engagement which radically criticised social and environmental business irresponsibility, in favour of one which

provided for the co-construction of socially and environmentally responsible business practices (SustainAbility 2003; Utting 2005a). The thought was that radicalised criticism was capable of uncovering what was ideologically and structurally wrong with business but it was less capable of identifying what needs to be improved (SustainAbility 2003; Utting 2005a). This type of criticism led to an unconstructive dialogue that was focused mainly on the 'need for change' at the expense of giving attention to the 'how to change' and the 'what to change' in business. The introduction of the collaborative mindset countered this concern with scope to explore all three aspects of the 'need for change', the 'how to change' and the 'what to change' through the co-construction and implementation of socially responsible business initiatives. However, as stated in section 2.4, there were still some challenges associated with collaborative forms of engagement between NGOs and corporations. The impact of power relationships between NGOs and corporations, and the absence of any goals and objectives for engagement formed key challenges for this type of co-regulation.

In addition to pressures for more collaborative forms of engagement, there was an increased focus in global forums on partnerships between multiple stakeholders (Nijhof, Bruijn & Honders 2008). This increased focus could be thought to have signalled a general attitude in society that partnerships between NGOs and businesses were the new trend in civil society and corporate relations (Utting 2000a; SustainAbility 2003; Utting 2005a). This trend was thought to challenge traditional confrontational engagement methods used previously by NGOs.

3.2.1 NGO Co-option

While the introduction of NGO-corporate partnerships has been recognised in the literature to support a more balanced approach to regulation (between collaborative and confrontational engagement forms), there remains some degree of criticism about the use of partnership relations with corporations. In particular, there appears to be a significant level of criticism about the problems associated with NGO-business partnerships. These problems include the intra-organisational tensions in NGOs about business engagement, NGO co-option, the social construction of partnerships, and the dilution of critical regulation of business activities. Each of these concerns point to the weaknesses associated with collaborative engagement

between NGOs and businesses. It also suggests that partnerships are a weak regulatory tool for influencing corporate behaviour. Each of these problems is considered in more detail below.

The uptake of partnerships as a method for corporate engagement has been understood to cause tensions in and between NGOs (Utting 2000a, SustainAbility 2003; Rowell 1999). In particular, the partnership approach appears to have created a divide amongst the civil society sector by challenging the existing practices of social advocacy and confrontation (Utting 2000a; SustainAbility 2003; Sayer 2007a; Sayer 2007b). Some NGOs that have an inherent focus on the use of advocacy tactics have looked upon the use of partnerships with suspicion (Sayer 2007a). It was thought that partnerships do not possess the same political capacity for social change as confrontational tactics (Utting 2005a; Utting 2005b; Utting 2000a; Sayer 2007a). This perception has influenced a division between individuals who prefer to engage with corporations including those who advocate against business discourse and practices, and individuals who wish to utilise both methods (Utting 2000a). This perceptual divide has manifested intra-organisationally between individuals in an NGO and inter-organisationally between NGOs (Utting 2000a, SustainAbility 2003). Rowell (1999) points to an example where Rio Tinto invited its stakeholders to review its business practices. He discovered that collaboratively orientated NGOs participated in discussions with the company while more confrontational NGOs chose to not participate in discussions (Rowell 1999). This produced tensions that could distracted the NGOs: Instead of focusing on how different engagement methods could influence responsible business behaviour there was a pre-occupation with the political nature of engagement tactics. Thus, the distraction inhibited the capacity of NGOs to co-regulate corporate practices by diverting attention away from business and economic interests. Thus, the uptake of partnerships has been viewed with contention from co-regulatory perspectives because it does not fit with the traditional critical approaches for business engagement.

Perhaps the most dominant concern about partnerships between NGOs and corporations is the potential for NGO co-option. Specifically, it has been thought that the increased level of intimacy between NGOs and corporations will create pressure on the NGO to align its agenda and mission with the interests of its business partners (Baur & Schmitz 2012). This convergence of agendas has been thought to occur

when NGOs become dependent on a corporation's resources in order to sustain itself, or when the NGO has become too focused on sustaining the relationship with a corporation instead of on attaining its own agenda for social change (Baur & Schmitz 2012). A dependency can be created when the NGO becomes reliant on the corporation's resources to survive. An NGO's status of resource dependency can place it in a less powerful position to bargain, negotiate and further its own agenda in partnership with its corporate partner (Baur & Schmitz 2012). This could inhibit the organisation from challenging the corporations discourse, perspectives and practices.

Additionally, NGOs which focus too much on establishing a corporate relationship can unknowingly hinder the development of its own environmental and social agenda (Baur & Schmitz 2012). Focusing too heavily on creating connections and relationships with corporations can carry the risk of diverting the NGO's attention away from its core mission, goal and values. This diverted focus can postpone or permanently alter the focus of the partnership towards corporate interests and away from the NGO's interests. The social pressure derived from creating relationships can impede NGOs from directly challenging the positions and perspectives of people in corporations. This concern about NGO co-option implies that partnerships provide a limited means of engagement for NGOs to co-regulate business behaviour. Specifically, the status of dependency removes power from the NGO to challenge corporate perspectives. Additionally, a focus on creating intimate relationships with corporations can serve to subjugate the mission and objectives of the NGO. Both of these situations have been deemed to reposition the NGO in a constrained capacity to challenge corporate discourse, perspectives and practices.

NGOs and corporations have also received criticism for the manner in which the term 'partner' has been used. Specifically, 'partnership' has been increasingly taken up by NGOs and corporations to describe different forms and types of engagement (Utting 2000b). In the context of co-regulation, partnerships are thought to de-naturalise the dominant managerial perspectives in business about the inclusion of socially and environmentally responsible practices. This objective for engaging in a partnership does not appear to be shared amongst all NGOs choosing to collaborate with corporations. For instance, interactions that were once known as alliances, sponsorships and beneficiary arrangements now appear to fall under the title of cross-sector 'partnerships' (Utting 2000b). The term has therefore become so broad

and all-encompassing that its original co-regulatory objective has become blurred and unclear in the practice of NGO-corporate engagement.

The concern associated with the notion of 'partnership' can be understood to be connected to its co-regulatory function. The loosening of the term 'partnership' could also see a loosening of the co-regulatory function associated with NGO collaboration with business. The intended function of partnerships may be diluted in instances where partnerships resemble limited interactions such as sponsorship and beneficiary-benefactor engagement. These transactions may provide limited capacity to advancement a corporation's social responsibility. This is because transactional arrangements can hinder the NGO from obtaining a deeper dialogue with the corporation about its practices, its perspectives and its own learning about socially responsible business behaviour. Thus, the function of transactional relationships may not fulfil the regulatory capacity that was hoped of partnerships in the context of co-regulation (Utting 2000b).

The final concern about the uptake of partnerships between NGOs and business is about the consequences of collaborative engagement. Particularly, the unease is derived from the thought that entering into more collaborative forms of engagement with business will weaken existing social activist pressures that influence a cultural and political desire for corporations to be socially and environmentally responsible (Currah, cited in Utting 2000a; Utting 2005a). The perception is that collaborative forms of NGO and business engagement will divert resources away from initiatives that are focused on advocating against dominant profit-driven perspectives and practices. This is thought to weaken the critical capacity of society to hold corporations to account for any socially irresponsible behaviour. It is further thought that collaborative forms of engagement will dilute the capacity of civil society to co-regulate business which could correspondingly increase the dominance and power of corporations over social and environmental concerns. This perspective about collaborative notions of NGO and business engagement seems to suggest that there is some level of cynicism about the use of partnerships in the context of stakeholder co-regulation.

While there is recognition of both confrontational and collaborative forms of NGO engagement with business, it seems that one of these strategies is favoured and

promoted above the other. It appears that the use of partnerships between NGOs and corporations presents too many risks for the co-regulation of socially and environmentally responsible business activity. From the discussion above, it can be seen that the collaborative methods can have a number of different outcomes. These methods can: create tensions both within and between NGOs, they can put pressure on NGOs to align their agenda to business interests, cover transactional arrangements that offer limited capacity to fulfil the objective of collaborative co-regulation and they can also dilute the critical capacity of society to hold corporations to account for any misdeeds.

These perspectives imply that partnerships do not possess the same capacity as confrontational methods to critically pressure and influence corporations to alter their business practices. The underlying assumption in the context of co-regulation is that confrontational strategies offer more scope for changing business-based perspectives and behaviour than collaborative ones. Further discussions about NGO co-regulation of business have refocused attention away from the collaborative versus confrontational engagement debate to focus solely in on confrontational regulation. This is reflected in the discussion about corporate accountability.

3.2.2 Corporate Accountability

The collaborative and confrontational methods used by NGOs to engage business offer some capacity to influence the voluntary nature of corporations to be socially responsible. These methods could be understood to support and enhance a corporation's ability to self-regulate its own activities and practices via the feedback provided by civil society communities. While both forms of engagement have received attention in the context of co-regulation, another model has emerged in the co-regulation context which focuses on influencing a corporation's behaviour through more forceful post-voluntary means (Utting 2008). This shift has been termed 'corporate accountability' and it carries a premise through which stakeholders influence corporate activities and practices by making them answerable to stakeholders via more formal legalistic and complaints-based means (Utting 2005a). The initiatives which fall under this model contain confrontational strategies for business engagement. These confrontational strategies enforce corporations to comply with policy, legislation, standards and social expectations of responsible

behaviour (Utting 2005a). This compliance is enforced through consequentialist sanctions should any policies, codes, standards, etc. not be adhered too (Newell 2001; Bendell 2004). Examples of some NGO initiatives which fall under corporate accountability can include: Developing and enforcing standards and codes of conduct and, collating information for legal actions against corporations (Utting 2005a)

The favouritism associated with confrontational strategies for corporate responsibility and the focus on confrontational strategies in the emerging model of corporate accountability highlight an underlying preference for problem-orientated forms of NGO co-regulation. Conflict-focused approaches are problem-orientated because they seek to address only what is 'wrong' with business perspectives and practices. Particularly, there is an underlying objective in those strategies to challenge instances where corporations have not met social expectations of responsibility.

Utting (2005b) suggested that the function of confrontational engagement was to provide the political will needed to correct any instances of corporate malpractice. Thus, the prevailing preference in the context of co-regulation appears to be on correcting the problems associated with managing profit-centric entities. This preference suggests that the problematisation of business is the desired process for denaturalising the structural, ingrained, business-centric perspectives and practices in corporations.

While confrontational strategies may provide the political strength needed to support structural and cultural change for corporate responsibility, they do not appear to offer insight about how corporations might integrate social and environmental concerns into their activities and practices (SustainAbility 2003; Utting 2005b). This insight points to an unbalanced bias for addressing what is 'wrong' with business instead of addressing how business might transform into an organisation that is socially, environmentally and economically responsible.

This thesis argues that too heavy a focus on confrontational approaches might counterintuitively hinder the potential for changing corporate-centric perspectives and behaviours. An understanding of the cyclical processes of action research and a focus on Freire's (1996) praxis can offer some insight into why a dominant focus on conflict-type approaches can obstruct cultural and structural change for corporate

responsibility. The following section explores this insight in more detail. Particularly, it reflects on how collaborative and confrontational engagement methods could be thought to fulfil the cyclical process of action research in the context of co-regulation. Additionally, it explores why a dominant focus on confrontational activism in co-regulation could hinder the pursuit for socially responsible corporations in society.

3.3   Congruencies between NGO Co-regulation and Action Research

The phases of the action research cycle provide a useful mechanism for thinking about corporate self-regulation. For instance, the procedural steps of 'planning', 'acting', 'observing, and 'reflecting' in action research appear to be consistent with those steps depicted in Preble's (2005) model of stakeholder management, discussed at Section 2.2.1 Now, this section introduces the concept of action research and discusses each step in the cycle. Following this, the discussion demonstrates how Preble's (2005) model could be streamlined under the 'planning', 'acting', 'observing' and 'reflection' phases of action research to offer a simplified depiction of how corporations self-regulate their own behaviour using stakeholder management principles.

Action research is a method of inquiry where a group of individuals – also known as a 'set' – investigate a problem or an issue that is of concern or importance to them (Reason & Bradbury 2008). The process followed to investigate the issue includes the following phases: Planning, acting, observing and reflecting (Kemmmis & McTaggart 1987). Together, these four processes make up one complete action research cycle.

The planning phase of action research invites a 'set' of individuals to co-construct a flexible proposal about how they will address a research problem or issue (McNiff 2002). This phase prepares participants by removing a number of uncertainties about how the problem will be investigated. The plan becomes the 'roadmap' that informs the set: what the research is about, what the project aims and objectives are, and how the group will conduct the research. The plan therefore becomes a tool to support the group in the fourth phase of the research in the set's later reflections about whether

or not the proposed objectives of the research were obtained from the set's actions and if not, why not?

The second phase of the cycle, termed 'action', is where participants implement the proposal they constructed in the first phase of research, and the actions undertaken by the set are guided by the strategies and objectives featured in the proposal (McNiff 2002). While the set is guided by the listed strategies, they are also momentarily responsive to the environment in which they conduct the research. The set adjusts the proposed plan to accommodate the constraints, limitations and restrictions placed on the research from environmental, structural and cultural factors.

The third called 'observation' is where the set makes a record of what occurred at the time the action was implemented (McNiff 2002). These observations are mindful about how environmental factors influence action. These observations are inductively orientated where the observers take note of emergent ideas and insights about how the planned action was actually implemented in practice. The observers look for the impact that the planned action had, and whether or not it fulfilled the objective for conducting the research, and why?

The final phase in the action research cycle is 'reflection'. This occurs when the set seeks to make meaning from what they observed from the informed action (McNiff 2002). There is sometimes an inclination to build theory at this stage about the research issue or problem. If the set decides that the intended action, derived from the action research cycle, did not resolve or address the set's research issue, then the set can decide to commence another cycle of research, often with revised planning.

The literature discussed in Chapter 2 emphasised that stakeholder management was the dominant approach used by corporations to regulate their own activities and behaviours. Preble's (2005, p.415) 'Comprehensive Stakeholder Management Process Model' (discussed in Section 2.2.1) provided a summarised series of steps corporations can follow to manage their firms in the interests of salient stakeholders. The premise of this discussion is that Preble's (2005) six step model is akin to the four steps of an action research cycle and because of this, the action research cycle can be a useful model for understanding corporate self-regulation. A simplified

version of Preble's (2005) model is presented in Table 3.1. His procedural steps have been re-allocated to align with the four phases of an action research cycle.

This adapted form of Preble's (2005) model reduces the number of procedural steps from six to four but it still follows a cyclical pattern like that featured in the original form. The apparent ease by which Preble's (2005) model can be adapted using the action research 'planning,', 'acting', 'observing', and 'reflecting' phases suggests that the action research cycle can become a useful mechanism for stakeholder management and for thinking about how corporations self-regulate their own practices.

In Table 3.1, steps 1-4 of the Preble (2005) model have been assigned to the action research 'planning' phase, because these four steps involve stages that are devoted to developing a roadmap for how the corporation could identify stakeholders and how it could respond to their needs and concerns. Step 5 of Preble's (2005) model was assigned to the 'action' phase of the action research cycle because it was devoted to actioning plans to meet those stakeholder's needs as identified by the corporation. Step 6 was divided up and assigned to the 'observation' and 'reflection' phases of the action research cycle. This is because different stages in step 6 could fulfil separate functions. The processes for 'continually checking stakeholder positions' and 'conducting social and environmental audits' were assigned to the action research phase of 'observation' because they were considered to fulfil functions for monitoring the progress of actioned stakeholder plans. Finally, the Preble (2005) process 'evaluate strategic performance' was assigned to the action research 'reflection' phase as that process was thought to have offered scope for considering whether the corporation's plans and actions had fulfilled their purpose.

This adaption of Preble's (2005) six steps to align with the four phases of the action research cycle provides insight about which steps fulfill the 'action' and 'reflection' aspects of praxis. In his articulation of action research, Dick (2002) suggests that action research was informed by the two main processes of 'action' and 'reflection'. According to this view, the action research phases of 'planning' 'observation' and 'reflection' advocated by Kemmis & McTaggart (1987) could be thought to be categorised under the one, larger process of reflection.

Action Research Stage	Preble's Stakeholder Management Steps	
Planning	Step 1. Stakeholder identification	• Primary, Public, Secondary
	Step 2. General nature of the stakeholder claims and power implications	• Equity, Economic, Influencers
	Step 3. Determine performance gaps	• Define stakeholder expectations • Conduct performance audits • Reveal gaps • Explore stakeholder influence strategies
	Step 4. Prioritise stakeholder demands	• Determine stakeholder salience (power, legitimacy, urgency) • Assess the strategic importance of various stakeholders
Action	Step 5. Develop organisational responses	• Direct communication • Collaboration/partnering • Set performance goals • Develop policies/strategies/programs • Allocate resources • Revise "Statement of Purpose"
Observation	Step 6. Monitoring and control	• Continually check stakeholder positions • Conduct social/environmental audits
Reflection	Step 6. Monitoring and control	• Evaluate strategic progress

Table 3.1 Modification of Preble's (2005) Stakeholder Management Process Model to Align with Action Research Processes (Kemmis & McTaggart 1987)

This is because they denote processes for considering what is to be actioned or what has been actioned in practice. Correspondingly, the action research phase of 'action' advocated by Kemmis & McTaggart (1987) could be thought to be consistent with the action process denoted by Dick (2002). This is because they both denote processes for implementing and actioning information which had been generated by reflectively based activities.

Dick's (2002) conceptualisation of action research could be thought to be similar to the two processes Freire (1996) highlights in his conceptualisation of praxis. The 'action and 'reflection processes identified by Dick (2002) could be akin to the 'reflection' and 'action' phases of Freire's (1996) notion of praxis.

The adaption of Preble's (2005) model into an action research cycle, and the simplification of the action research cycle into two processes akin to Freire's (1996) praxis - reflection and action - can reveal which stakeholder management processes align to 'reflection' and which processes align to 'action' in the praxis for corporate self-regulation. Essentially, then, Preble's (2005) steps 1-4 and step 6 can be thought to align with 'reflection', according to Dick's (2002) conceptualisation of reflection in action research. Preble's (2005) step 5 aligns with processes for action, with obvious similarities to Dick's (2002) formulation of the 'action' function in action research.

Thus, if Dick's (2002) conceptualisation of reflection and action could be compatible with the notions of reflection and action in praxis, then it could be thought that the completion of Preble's (2005) six steps could lead to the fulfilment of a type of praxis in the context of corporate self-regulation.

Utting (2002), and Coronado and Fallon (2010) had highlighted the problems associated with corporate self-regulation. One of the main concerns was that corporations would engage in a discursive rhetoric that could project a socially responsible image in place of practices which were not so. This concern provided scope to consider how other agents participate and influence the development of socially responsible forms of stakeholder management. The broadening of the focus from corporate self-regulation to stakeholder co-regulation has opened up scope to consider how stakeholders engage with and influence the praxis of corporate self-regulation.

These insights could be thought to highlight problems associated with forms of praxis that do not invite and encourage multi-stakeholder participation. For instance, Preble's (2005) stakeholder management process model could be considered a form of corporate praxis for self-regulation. The concerns of Utting (2002) and Coronado and Fallon (2010) indicate how a praxis of this sort might contribute to misleading and unauthentic social and environmental practices. In that sense it is significant here to consider a form of praxis that responds to those concerns This will be discussed next.

3.3.1 Stakeholder Engagement Praxis

In his text, Freire (1996) divided society into two tiers: those who were 'oppressed' and those who were 'oppressors'. His theory for enacting social change suggested that those who were oppressed were important agents to affect change in those systemic structures which were imposed on them by those who, knowingly and perhaps unknowingly, contributed to the development and maintenance of those structures. Freire (1996) believed that those who 'oppress' were limited in their capacity to enact social change to those structures. He believed that this was because they held some conscious or unconscious desire to preserve a system which benefited themselves and which elevated them to a position above those which the structures constrained.

This position and view may be seen in the context of corporate self-regulation. The implementation of steps in Preble's (2005) model has contributed to forms of praxis that re-produce the systemic *status quo* instead of changing it. This is the case with corporations which engage in the processes of greenwash. Instead of enacting stakeholder management initiatives that cater to a diverse variety of social and environmental needs, corporations engage in processes that preserve the *status quo*. The practice of greenwash gives the impression that corporations are engaging in responsible stakeholder management practices when in fact they are preserving practices that benefit the corporation. Thus, this process could be interpreted as one which preserves the systemic *status quo* instead of changing it to accommodate social and environmental stakeholder needs and desires.

Corporate participation in praxis for self-regulation could lend support to Freire's (1996) view about why those who have the power to oppress, often end up preserving system structures instead of engaging in processes to change and 're-create' them.

The broadening of the focus from corporate self-regulation to stakeholder co-regulation offers scope to understand how those which may be constrained by corporations can influence the praxis of corporate self-regulation. Conceptualising corporate stakeholder management as a four phase process makes it easier to understand how stakeholders might be thought to engage with and influence one or more of those stakeholder management phases.

Based on Freire's (1996) perspective, stakeholders could be thought to be important catalysts who have the capacity to alter the social conditions which constrain or affect them. The consideration of Preble's (2005) stakeholder management model as a type of action research and as a method of praxis can provide scope to understand society's construction of CSR as a cyclical, dynamic changing process. This has offered a model that can be used to understand how stakeholder engagement processes can complementarily influence the entirety of corporate stakeholder management processes. This knowledge can be used by stakeholders to strategically develop engagement initiatives to influence each phase of CSR.

3.3.2 Stakeholder Co-regulatory Action Research

The discussion above likened corporate self-regulation to the four phases of action research. It suggested that the processes corporations adopt to manage stakeholder interests were congruent with the phases of action research. While the cycle could be thought to be similar to the processes corporations use for self-regulation, it seems that the paradigm which informs action research is not.

The criticisms levelled against corporate-centric forms of stakeholder management imply that the process can become exclusionary, and that it can preserve the existing *status quo* for productivity, efficiency and effectiveness. These characteristics appear contradictory to the participatory paradigm that has informed action research practice (see McNiff & Whitehead 2010). While the frame of corporate self-regulation could be thought incongruent with some of the principles of the action research paradigm,

it appears that the frame of stakeholder co-regulation can be thought to be somewhat consistent with them. For instance, there are several congruencies between the action research paradigm and how NGOs co-regulate business activity. These congruencies include a focus on a political objective and an emphasis on democratic decision making.

Action research and NGO co-regulation both share a political objective. Action research is an approach that encourages researchers to problematise the *status quo* of their social environments (McNiff & Whitehead 2010). This process can lead to a discovery of problems or issues that need to be resolved. Participation in such a process could be understood as a political one as it involves the deconstruction of existing cultural and structural knowledge that may be embedded in organisations or systems (McNiff & Whitehead 2010). A change in such knowledge can destabilise the securities that were once offered from the maintenance of the *status quo*. Thus, action research could be understood as a political methodology that contests the power embedded in existing discourses of knowledge.

Co-regulation, like action research, possesses a political objective. The confrontational and collaborative strategies used by NGOs to regulate business practices both contain a change agenda. Each of these approaches aims to influence corporations in different ways. For instance, the objective of confrontational strategies is to present a direct challenge to a corporation's practice via some form of a consequential threat. More specifically, the NGO participates in problematising the firm's ingrained perspectives, discourses and practices. If the firm does not alter the behaviours that stakeholders deem to be socially irresponsible, then those stakeholders can take further action against the corporation. A threat to the sustainability of a corporation can destabilise corporate-centric perspectives and practices. Additionally, it can encourage corporations to alter its attitudes and behaviours according to the perspectives of its stakeholders. Like confrontational approaches, collaborative engagement strategies aim to challenge private sector practices. However, this challenge occurs through a relational and dialogic level with corporations. NGOs using collaborative approaches participate in the design and development of socially responsible initiatives. They are able to integrate a change agenda via their engagement in business decision-making.

Action research and NGO co-regulation share an element of democratic engagement. For instance, action research was built on a democratic orientation where research was to be conducted by a group or by a 'set' of individuals who had an interest in a research issue or question (McNiff & Whitehead 2010). The traditional divisions between the researcher and the researched were challenged in the action research paradigm (McNiff & Whitehead 2010). This held that research was to be conducted 'with' the people being researched instead of 'on' them (McNiff & Whitehead 2010). This meant that the individuals titled 'participants, interviewees and the observed' could become co-researchers in the action research project. It also meant that these co-researchers would hold a claim to the knowledge that was produced from the research (Boylorn 2008). The notion to conduct research 'with' people instead of 'on' people demonstrates the democratic orientation of the paradigm. This is because the power relationships between the researcher and researched become blurred or even dissolve in an action research project. Instead, what remains is a sense of equality amongst all co-researchers to define the research, and to plan, implement and learn from the project. Thus, action research could be identified as a collaboratively based methodology because it is founded on democratic values to involve all participants who have an interest in conducting the research. This means that co-researchers are involved in participating in the planning, action, observing and reflecting cycle.

NGO co-regulation of business activities could also be understood to be a democratic type of corporate social responsibility. The presence of NGOs participating in both collaborative and confrontational engagement with corporations represents a more democratic response to monitoring and influencing business activities. The move from corporate self-regulation to co-regulation involves a shift from corporations as self-determining, self-regulating agents to a type of power sharing with NGOs as important co-regulating agents in the process.

The reliance on corporate self-regulation which occurred during the 1950s (discussed in Section 2.2) was reminiscent of an approach where corporations were viewed to hold the power to make decisions about who it owned a moral duty. The separation of power between those who make decisions and those who were affected by them can be compared to the traditional methods of research where there is a division of power between those who conduct the research and those who the research affects.

The rise of co-regulation, however, represented a shift in how businesses activities were regulated. Co-regulation represented a more democratic process to corporate regulation. Those stakeholders who were affected by business decisions could actively engage in conduct that could alter them. This could be thought akin to the 'co-researcher' nature of action research, where those who are affected by the research have the opportunity to actively participate in the construction of it. Thus, there is a similarity in the division of power between the notions of action research and co-regulation. While the inclusive nature of participation may be different, there is a similarity in the democratic nature of it.

The congruencies between action research methodology and the frame of stakeholder co-regulation provide further assistance in understanding why action research is a suitable mechanism for thinking about NGO engagement with business. Not only do the conflictual and collaborative methods used by NGOs mimic the four processes of action research, but the similarities in the objectives between them also confer reason to consider action research as a mechanism for thinking about stakeholder co-regulation.

3.4   Action Research as a Mechanism for Understanding Co-Regulation

If corporate self-regulation could be thought of as a process that encompasses a four phase regulatory cycle, then logic suggests that stakeholder co-regulation could be thought of as the degree to which stakeholders intervene or participate in that corporate self-regulatory cycle. This is because stakeholder co-regulation is concerned with how stakeholders participate in developing norms and instruments that improve a corporation's capacity to meet its social and environmental stakeholder needs (Utting 2002).

Collaborative and conflictual engagement methods, when considered separately, seem to be less able to influence or intervene in all four phases of corporate self-regulation. However, when considered together, the combination of approaches could influence all four phases of corporate self-regulation. This discussion suggests that NGOs are participating in a larger, macro action research type event for corporate social responsibility.

Collaborative and conflictual engagement forms could be understood to affect different phases of the corporate self-regulatory cycle. It is thought that collaborative approaches position NGOs in a capacity to affect the 'planning' and 'action' phases of corporate self-regulation. In contrast, confrontational approaches have been thought to position NGOs in a way where they can affect the 'reflection' and 'observation' phases of corporate self-regulation. The justification for this has been derived from the criticisms levelled against each form of engagement.

The SustainAbility (2003) report highlighted some of the main criticisms of NGO confrontational and collaborative business engagement methods. One of the main concerns about confrontation was that it did not offer feedback to corporations on how they can be socially responsible. Instead, its concerns were with monitoring corporate activity and providing feedback, often in the form of advocacy, about what private enterprise was doing 'wrong' or how such enterprise was not meeting stakeholder needs. This type of information highlights what is 'unfavourable' about business but it does not offer much insight on what would constitute socially responsible practice. Utting (2005b) in his articulation of the confrontational-collaboration nexus indicated that conflict-based approaches were useful to generate the political social pressure needed to coerce corporations to alter their practices. This suggests that the strengths of the confrontational approach lie in its function to generate political feedback that can pressure corporations to change their behaviour. The pressure derived from confrontation could be thought to influence how a corporation 'observes' and 'reflects' on its own practices.

In contrast, one of the main criticisms about collaborative-based engagement was that it risked the potential for NGO co-option. It was thought that the increased closeness of the relationship between NGOs and corporations would create a type of social pressure that would gently coerce the NGO to align its mission, objectives and activities to those of the corporation. Collaborative approaches were therefore thought to affect the critical and objective capacities of NGOs.

While this highlights a weakness of collaboration, one of the advantages of the approach is that it provides opportunities for NGOs to participate in defining what social responsibility is, and it also provides scope for NGOs to participate in the implementation of socially responsible initiatives. Utting's (2005b) views on this

suggest that collaborative engagement between NGOs and corporations can be useful for developing a 'roadmap' for the implementation of favourable business practices

These qualities indicate that collaborative engagement can afford NGOs scope to influence the 'planning' and 'action' phases of the corporate self-regulatory cycle. This is because NGOs are involved in the co-design and co-delivery of stakeholder management practices.

The criticism about NGO co-option, however, suggest that NGOs using this method may not bear the critical and objective capacity to effectively observe corporate behaviour and to reflect on whether or not the corporation is meeting stakeholder needs. As a result of that criticism, it is thought that collaboration is useful for co-constructing stakeholder management processes: however it is not as useful as confrontation for generating the political pressure needed to affect transformative change in the private sector.

The discussion above established that confrontational and collaborative strategies initiated processes that could influence the phases of corporate self-regulation. This has been depicted in Figure 3.1. Specifically, confrontational strategies were understood to give NGOs scope to influence how corporations 'observed' their own stakeholder management practices and how they 'reflected' on them. In contrast, collaborative strategies were understood to give NGOs scope to influence how a corporation 'plans' its stakeholder management initiatives and how it 'acts' or 'implements' such initiatives. Thus, the strengths of each engagement approach can be thought to support the weaknesses of the other. When considered together, both approaches combine to produce a cycle for the regulation of stakeholder management in corporations.
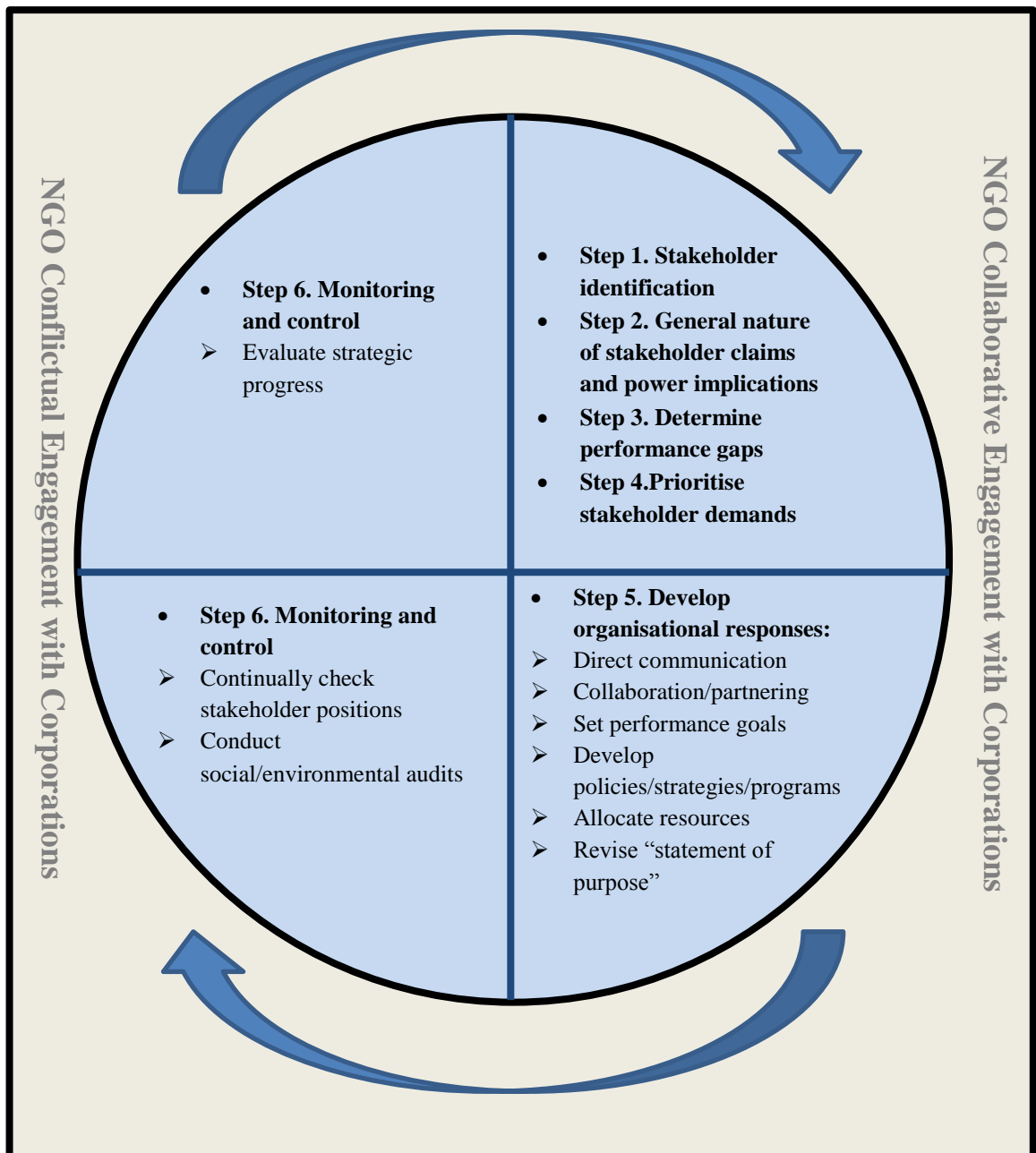
**Figure 3.1 A Depiction of how Different Types of NGO Engagement Influences
Corporate Self-Regulation (Modified from Preble's (2005, p. 415) Model)**

In the preceding discussion, I claimed that stakeholder co-regulation took on more of
the principles and practices of action research than corporate self-regulation. It was
shown that stakeholder co-regulation was a more democratic approach to corporate
social responsibility. Additionally, it was thought to contain an inherent political
objective for challenging the *status quo*. Considering these congruencies between co-
regulation and action research, and considering how NGO engagement strategies
combine to form a larger regulatory process, it can be suggested that NGOs are

actually participating in a macro-type action research event for corporate social responsibility.

3.5 Balancing Confrontational and Collaborative Engagement Strategies for Business Co-Regulation

The literature on corporate social responsibility and stakeholder co-regulation (discussed in Section 2.3) was discovered to contain a bias towards confrontational tactics. It was found that collaborative approaches were too risky due to the potential for NGO co-option and they did not possess the same critical capacity as confrontational-type approaches to regulate business conduct.

Contrary to this view, this thesis argues that having too heavy a focus on confrontational tactics can cripple the capacity of the civil society sector to regulate the perspectives and practices of private entities. Freire's (1996) process of 'praxis' can provide some support for this.

Paulo Freire was a Brazilian educator who was focused on developing a pedagogy for freedom and liberation. The notion of 'praxis' was a central component of that pedagogy. In his work as an educator, Freire (1996) had reflected on how history and culture had shaped and defined the ways people lived. He saw that history and culture instilled a set of norms and coded information about how people should live, what they should do, how they should act and what they should accept. These instilled understandings had created a set of ingrained structures which had socially confined people's thoughts and actions in society. Freire (1996) saw this as a form of dehumanisation because human freedom had fallen victim to historically defined beliefs and knowledge. People acted according to historical precedent instead of looking beyond the limits of it.

The notion of 'praxis' represented a political endeavour to liberate humanity from its past. It encompassed two elements. The first involved 'reflection' on how historical and cultural discourses had constrained human freedom. The second element involved taking 'action' on those discursive structures in order to transform them. Thus, the process of praxis offered a way for individuals to become consciously aware of how history and culture had shaped and defined who they were and how

they lived. It also offered a way for individuals to consciously challenge that knowledge, which had previously confined them. This process presented a way for individuals to liberate themselves from the depths of discursive instruction, and praxis became a political pursuit for freedom and liberation from society's social structures.

Praxis has some commonalities with the regulatory frame of CSR and the critical frame of CMS discussed above. Both frames and praxis share a connection in the sense that there is a focus on identifying instances where discourses of knowledge have constrained human freedom. In regulatory CSR as well as CMS there is a realisation that human rights, needs and freedoms can be constrained by the discourses of business effectiveness and profitability. There is an inherent aim in CSR and CMS to uncover occurrences where efficiency and effectiveness have overshadowed the realisation of social and environmental needs in organisations. This focus is similar to the one assumed in Freire's (1996) praxis. An inherent assumption of it is that human freedom had fallen victim to the social instruction of historical and cultural knowledge. One of the aims of the process was to uncover those instances and raise conscious awareness of them. Thus, it could be thought that the regulatory frame of CSR, the critical frame of CMS and Freire's (1996) praxis share a common set of assumptions about how types of knowledge can constrain the realisation of people's own needs and desires. Additionally, it could also be proposed that those elements share a desire to uncover instances of discursive oppression through the process of reflexivity.

In addition to the similarity identified above, it could be understood that the regulatory frame of CSR, the critical frame of CMS and Freire's (1996) praxis all share an inherent political agenda for change. For instance, in regulatory CSR and CMS, there is an objective to alter corporate practices that constrain a diverse variety of stakeholder needs. This is similar to the 'action' element of praxis where there is an agenda to take action against oppressive systemic structures that have been formed from the historic past. It could therefore be assumed that CSR, CMS and Freire's (1996) praxis have a progressive social focus for change.

Freire's (1996) discussion of praxis can offer the necessary logic to understand why favouring conflict style tactics can hamper the capacity of the civil society sector to

regulate private sector entities. Particularly, the similarities between the frames and Freire's (1996) praxis provide scope to imagine how Freire's (1996) logic can be realised in the context of CSR and CMS.

Freire (1996) made the case that both 'reflection' and 'action' were necessary components to liberate humanity from the discursive structures and embedded practices of the past. He said that if either one of those aspects were missing, then the other would correspondingly suffer. More specifically, it is thought that without the presence of each, humanity would be preserved in the discursive structures of history instead of bearing a capacity to socially re-construct it. While 'reflection' can offer insight into how embedded forms of knowledge can constrain individuals, it does not do anything to alter it. 'Reflection' in the absence of action is thought to be meaningless because it does not transform that which constrains individuals. Similarly, while 'action' can affect change, it does not do so from an informed consciousness. Action for action's sake could contribute to the dehumanising reproduction of history instead of the re-construction of it. From an exploration of Freire's (1996) logic, it makes sense that both elements are needed to make transformative change that is of a liberating quality.

The two components of praxis, Reflection and action, could be understood to correspond to different phases of an action research cycle. For instance, the planning, observation and reflection phases could relate to the 'reflection' function of Freire's (1996) praxis. This is because those phases invoke an individual's reflective capacities about the problem or issue being addressed. Additionally, the 'action' aspect of action research can relate to the 'action' phase of praxis. This is because that phase requires individuals to implement a course of action to resolve the problem or issue that was reflected upon. Thus, it can be thought that an action research cycle fulfils both of the elements considered necessary for progressive social and transformative change.

The same logic of Freire's (1996) praxis can be applied to the context of NGO co-regulation. In previous sections of this chapter, the discussion suggested that both collaborative and conflictual engagement styles had mimicked a type of action research event for corporate social responsibility. For instance, confrontational approaches were discovered to allow scope for NGOs to influence the 'observation'

and 'reflection' phases of corporate self-regulation, and collaborative strategies were thought to provide scope for NGOs to influence the 'planning' and 'action' phases of stakeholder co-regulation.

In the context of Freire's (1996) logic, it seems necessary to suggest that both confrontational and collaborative strategies are necessary for the transformative regulation of the private sector. If confrontational strategies were favoured over collaborative ones, then Freire's (1996) logic would suggest that co-regulation would lack the intervention necessary to liberate corporations from the unhelpful discourses that subjugate stakeholder needs for profit and efficiency. This is because confrontational approaches were discovered to affect the reflective capacity of corporate self-regulation but were less able to affect the 'action' capacity of it.

Correspondingly, if collaborative-based strategies were favoured over confrontational ones then Freire's (1996) logic would suggest that co-regulation would lack the critical consciousness necessary to uncover helpful corporate discourses of knowledge and practice. This is because collaborative approaches were discovered to affect the 'action' aspect of the corporate regulatory cycle but considering criticisms of co-option were less able to affect all three reflection phases of corporate regulation.

It therefore appears that a combination of both collaborative and confrontational-based methods are necessary to realise the notion of praxis or 'reflection and action' in the context of NGO co-regulation. This thesis provides the critical support for Utting's (2005b) view about the need for both collaborative and conflict methods for corporate social responsibility. Indeed, it justifies why one form of engagement should not be favoured above or beyond the other.

3.6   The Research Challenge

While the risk of co-option will always be present in the context of collaborative partnerships between NGOs and corporations, there is still scope to better appreciate how that risk can be reduced. The criticisms about collaborative engagement methods can enable understandings about how the critical and reflexive nature of collaborative engagement can be improved. The methodology of this project presents

a response to that challenge. It explores how a combination of problem-based and appreciative forms of inquiry can support the engagement between NGOs and their corporate partners.

In the same way Freire's (1996) logic points to the necessity for both confrontational and collaborative approaches to business engagement, so it can too point to the necessity for confrontational and collaborative forms of CMS. Chapter 2 traced a set of similarities between CSR and CMS. These similarities allowed for a connection to be drawn between these frames. This was important because it provides scope for a development in one frame to be explored and imagined in the context of the other.

The need for confrontational and collaborative engagement methods can also be understood in the context of CMS. This can be viewed in Fournier and Grey's (2000) concept of non-performativity and Spicer, Alvesson and Karreman's (2009) concept of critical performativity. The preference for non-performative forms of CMS may, in the context of Freire's (1996) logic, be detrimental to the field.

The same arguments made about confrontational approaches to NGO-business engagement have been made about the non-performative stance of CMS. In particular, the non-performative stance has been criticised to position researchers in a capacity to identify what is wrong or negative about business and management. It seems to be less able to position researchers in a way where they can propose what alternative practices should be in place (Spicer, Alvesson & Karreman 2009). It was thought that non-performativity was less inclined to engage with the 'contexts and constraints of management' (Spicer, Alvesson & Karreman 2009, p. 545). Thus like confrontational approaches in NGO co-regulation, the non-performative stance could be thought to strengthen the position of the researcher in the observational and reflective phases of the corporate regulatory cycle.

Similarly, the arguments about the critically performative stance in CMS could be likened to the arguments for collaborative forms of NGO co-regulation. Critically performative CMS is concerned with the views of management practitioners. There is an intention to locate instances where existing forms of management can be challenged and altered for the realisation of human needs in organisations. Additionally, there is also intent to participate in the identification of 'potentialities' or alternative forms of management practice. So, like collaborative approaches in

NGO co-regulation, the critically performative stance could be thought to strengthen the position of the researcher in the 'planning' and 'action' phases of the corporate regulatory cycle.

The increased intimacy between researchers and their participant's views could, like collaborative NGO-business engagement, lead to forms of co-option where the critique of the researcher is persuaded by the care for the practitioners views, context and constraints. It could therefore be thought possible that the observational and reflexive capacities of researchers may be influenced by the increased intimacy of the researcher-corporate relationship.

In the same way confrontational and collaborative approaches are necessary for NGO co-regulation, it can be thought that both the non-performative and critically performative positions are required for CMS. This is visually represented in Figure 3.3 in the broader context of the alignment between Preble's (2005) steps of stakeholder management and the action research process. For transformative change, non-performativity is needed to objectively identify instances where oppressive, technical forms of management constrain human needs, and critical performativity is needed to engage in the practical transformation of business and management practices.

Discovering how the critical and reflective nature of NGO-business collaboration can be improved could also have a direct bearing on CMS. The research could be understood to give meaning to the critically performative frame of CMS. Thus, this study could be thought to fulfil two objectives: The first is to see whether reflective learning can increase the critical capacity of collaborative engagement methods, and the second is to ascertain what that means for the critically-performative frame of CMS.

Reflection   **Planning**

Non-Performative Frame of CMS

- **Step 6. Monitoring and control**
  - Evaluate strategic progress

- **Step 1. Stakeholder identification**
- **Step 2. General nature of stakeholder claims and power implications**
- **Step 3. Determine performance gaps**
- **Step 4.Prioritise stakeholder demands**

- **Step 6. Monitoring and control**
  - Continually check stakeholder positions
  - Conduct social/environmental audits

- **Step 5. Develop organisational responses:**
  - Direct communication
  - Collaboration/partnering
  - Set performance goals
  - Develop policies/strategies/programs
  - Allocate resources
  - Revise "statement of purpose"

Critically Performative Frame of CMS

Observation   **Action**

Figure 3.2 A Depiction of How Different Performativity Positions could Influence Corporate Self-Regulation (Modified from Preble's (2005, p. 415) Model)

3.7   Chapter Conclusion

This chapter focused on the confrontational and collaborative methods NGOs use to 'co-regulate' business perspectives and practices. The preference in the literature for confrontational forms was challenged using an appreciation of the principles and practices of action research and the components of Freire's (1996) praxis.

The literature which criticised collaborative engagement methods for co-regulation sought to discover how the critical and reflective capacity of those engagement forms could be improved. This research meets that challenge by exploring how problem-based and appreciative forms of inquiry can support the engagement between NGOs and their corporate partners. The exploration of this topic has provided insights into how co-option can be mitigated in the critically performative frame of CMS.

The following chapter presents the methodology of the research. It discusses how problem-based and appreciative forms of inquiry were used to support NGO engagement with business.

Chapter 4:

Exploring NGO Engagement with Business

This chapter explores how the research addressed the challenge of NGO co-option. In particular, it explores how the combination of problem- and strength-based inquiry can strengthen NGO reflexivity in the context of stakeholder co-regulation.

An action research proposal which incorporates action learning and appreciative inquiry is presented in this text. Action learning is a problem orientated form of inquiry used to identify challenges in an organisation or system, and it is used to resolve those challenges in a reflexive way. On the other hand, appreciative inquiry is a strength-based perspective which focuses on the strengths of an organisation or system and it works to integrate those strengths in an alternate organisational form.

The purpose for developing the action research proposal was to provide a document that could be used to commence discussions with NGOs about how reflexivity could support their engagement with corporations. This chapter explores the specific details of that proposal and it outlines how NGOs were approached about their participation and engagement with the research.

4.1 Ontological and Epistemological Frame

This research adopts a constructivist orientation because it is concerned with how individuals shape and create their own social realities. As stated in Chapter 2, this project is interested in how the intersections of society, government and business contribute to the development of responsible stakeholder management practices. A fundamental assumption of that view is that corporate activities and practices are shaped and influenced by the different sectors of society. Thus, this research could be

thought to adopt a constructivist orientation in its pursuit to understand and explore the socialisation of CSR in society.

While this research adheres to a constructivist orientation, it also adopts a critical approach in its interpretation of CSR. The regulatory frame of CSR and the critical frame of CMS each focus on challenging instances where stakeholder needs have been subjugated by discourses for efficiency and effectiveness in corporations. Each frame is focused on deconstructing those practices that constrain human needs and desires. This research could therefore also be thought to adhere to a critical orientation in its exploration of how society, government and business create and re-create socially responsible corporate practices.

4.2   Introducing Action Research

The discussion in Chapter 3 commenced an explanation of the notion of action research in the context of regulatory CSR and CMS. This section builds on that discussion to articulate how action research has been understood in the literature and in practice.

In the literature, action research has largely become an umbrella term or frame to depict a number of collaborative inquiry processes and practices (Herr & Andersen 2015; Reason & Bradbury 2008). It has been characterised as containing a set of qualities and values that describe a family of approaches for participatory research and practice (Reason & Bradbury 2008). Some of those approaches include research methods such as: participatory action research (PAR), action science, action learning and appreciative inquiry (Dick 2004).

According to Reason and Bradbury (2008 p.4), action research is thought of as:

> A participatory process concerned with developing practical knowing in the pursuit of worthwhile human purposes. It seeks to bring together action and reflection, theory and practice, in participation with others in the pursuit of practical solutions to issues of pressing concern to people, and more generally the flourishing of individual persons and their communities.

This definition captures many of the elements characteristic of action research. However, there is one element that does not appear to be explicitly stated in the definition: that is, the cyclical nature of action research. On this basis, a review of the

characteristics of action research is presented below. These characteristics have been further refined into a working definition of action research for this project.

Some of the elements of the research approach include its cyclical nature, participatory focus, its emergent nature and political nature.

- Cyclical nature

Action research can be understood to follow a series of learning cycles that are focused on addressing a problem, challenge or objective that have been defined by a group of individuals, often referred to as a 'learning set' (McNiff 2002). These cycles combine phases of reflection and action to attend to a problem, challenge or objective (Dick 2002). The phases of 'planning', 'action, 'observing' and 'reflecting' discussed in Chapter 3 are typically thought to depict the cyclical phases of action research. However, those phases could be understood as a loose guide for the pattern of reflective and action-based processes that usually occur under this frame of research. There are other participatory-based processes that fall under this frame of research but they do not conform specifically to the 'planning', 'action, 'observing' and 'reflecting' sequence. Appreciative inquiry is an example of this. The phases could therefore be thought of as an inquiry-resolution process which demonstrates how reflection and action can be adopted in a cyclical manner.

- Participatory focus

As discussed in Chapter 3, action research does adopt a participative orientation to inquiry. The traditional boundaries between the researcher and the participants are often relaxed to the point where participants can become 'co-researchers' in a project. Dick (1997) identifies that the degree of participant involvement can vary from informant to co-researcher types of engagement. While there is this variation, the action research community generally encourages the use of collaborative and participative process when conducting research (see McNiff & Whitehead 2010).

- Emergent nature

Action research focuses on addressing an issue or challenge that has been identified by a learning set. The knowledge produced from this could be thought to be emergent and specific to the context under consideration (Dick 2000). This is

because it is concerned with the unique culture, history and constraints of the set's environment. The knowledge and solutions derived from the research represent a direct response to that unique learning environment. Action research therefore produces emergent forms of knowledge that are reflective of the specific characteristics of the set's own learning context.

- Political nature

Action research also has a political agenda for change (McNiff & Whitehead 2010). It can deconstruct the *status quo* embedded in organisations and systems, and it can do this using either problem- and/or strength-based inquiry. For instance, problem-orientated inquiry encourages researchers to critically reflect on what the challenges or problems of an organisation or system are, and it encourages them to alter those practices (McNiff & Whitehead 2010). Conversely, appreciative types of inquiry encourage researchers to design helpful processes and practices that are based on the strengths of an organisation or system (Cooperrider, Whitney & Stavros 2008). Thus, action research can be thought of as a political process because it encourages researchers to change the *status quo* and the embedded forms of power retained in that *status quo*.

The discussion above indicated that action research is an umbrella term or frame used to depict a number of collaborative inquiry methods for research. While this has been the typical understanding conveyed in the literature, it could also be said that action research could be conceptualised as a method in its own right. The characteristics described above provide sufficient detail to inform how the process can be applied and practiced. This dissertation adopts this approach and proposes that action research also operates as a research method to address challenges that occur in organisations and communities. Action research is a frame that describes a family of participatory inquiry methods such as participatory action research, action science, action learning and appreciative inquiry (Reason & Bradbury 2008; Dick 2004).

On this basis, the working definition of action research for this project is featured below.

Action research is an umbrella term used to describe a family of participatory inquiry approaches for research and practice. Each approach

adopts one or a number of phased cycles that encourage researchers to reflect on a problem, challenge or objective in an organisation or system and then invites them to address that problem, challenge or objective in practice. The knowledge produced from such research could be thought to be responsive to the unique historical and cultural environment of the phenomenon being researched and the researchers. Action research contains a political agenda because it encourages researchers to challenge the existing *status quo* and power relations embedded in organisations or systems.

4.3   Why Action Research was used in this Research

There are three reasons that justify the selection of action research as a methodological approach in this project. There was need for a method that could address the actual practice of collaborative engagement between NGOs and corporations, need for an approach that could support the reflective capacity of NGO and corporate engagement and there was need for an approach that is congruent with the discoveries made in Chapter 3 about co-regulation as a macro version of action research in practice. Each of these reasons is explored in more detail below.

This project is focused on the practice of collaborative engagement between NGOs and their corporate partners. It is interested in how reflective learning can support the manner in which a NGO co-regulates corporate activities and practices. This focus required a research approach that could engage with the actual practice of collaborative processes occurring between NGOs and corporations. Action research provided that potential. This is because it focuses on building knowledge about how to resolve a particular challenge or objective that is being faced by a set of individuals. Additionally, it is focused on integrating actions, based on that knowledge, to address the challenge or objective.

In contrast, other social research methods such as interviews, surveys, questionnaires and observations did not offer that potential. For instance, those methods are useful for understanding the phenomena under investigation, and are helpful at capturing thick descriptions of some complexities of the social world. However, they are less helpful at initiating change because they carry no 'action-based' intent for social impact. Action research on the other hand, does have a participatory agenda. As

stated above, action research methods not only seek to capture thick descriptions of the social world, they also seek to draw on those descriptions as a foundation from which to initiate transformative social change. Therefore, action research could be thought of as an approach that is not only capable of building theory, but one that is also focused on applying that theory to lived practice. This method offered a way to participate with the actual engagement processes between NGOs and their corporate partners.

In addition to exploring how reflective learning can support collaborative forms of engagement between NGOs and corporations, this research is also concerned with how the risks of NGO co-option by corporate agendas could be mitigated by reflexivity in the field. The literature discussed in Chapter 3 noted that the increased intimacy between NGOs and corporations could present some risks for corporate social responsibility. In particular, it was discovered that a focus on establishing a working relationship may impact the focus of the NGO to further its own social goals and mission in the context of the corporation (Baur & Schmitz 2012). Similarly, a focus and a commitment to the working relationship between partners can have the potential to induce a form of social pressure on the NGO to realign its social goals and agenda to that of the corporation (Baur & Schmitz 2012). Problem-orientated forms of reflection could be thought to offer some protection against this concern because it positions participants in a manner where they can problematise their environment and where they can identify issues or challenges that are being faced. Action research was understood to offer a useful methodological approach to meet this concern because it denotes a number of collaborative inquiry processes that make critical reflection a key priority. For this reason, action research was identified as a useful methodology for this project.

The discussion in Chapter 2 highlighted that corporate self-regulation, on its own, could not accommodate a participatory form of action research in practice. This is because it represented an exclusionary approach where corporations assume responsibility for making decisions about their activities and practices on behalf of their stakeholders. This contravened a democratic and participatory principle that so many action researchers advocate. It is generally recommended and encouraged that action research should include those individuals and groups which the project affects (McNiff & Whitehead 2010). This principle is not evident in the practice of

corporate self-regulation because it excludes the voices of stakeholders about how corporations should be managed.

Conversely, stakeholder co-regulation does depict a more participatory type of engagement for social responsibility. This frame represents an inclusive practice where stakeholders influence corporate decisions about in whose interests the corporation should be managed. They also influence how corporations meet those stakeholder interests in practice. Thus, this type of engagement allows a more participatory form where decisions which concern stakeholders are influenced by stakeholders. The discussion in Chapter 2 showed that the combination of confrontational and collaborative engagement methods could influence and affect all four phases of the corporate self-regulation cycle.

The influence of NGO confrontation and collaboration on corporate self-regulation could be understood to depict a practice-based example of action research. This is because it represents a more democratic version of stakeholder management that follows all four phases of 'planning', 'action', 'observing' and 'reflecting'. Thus, NGO co-regulation could be thought of as a type of action research that naturally occurs in practice between NGOs and the private sector. Despite the argument that co-regulation resembles a type of action research in the field, the presence of power relationships between parties does limit and restrict the capacity of NGO engagement and participation in that process. Sections 2.4 and 3.1 draw attention to this point..

This discovery of a macro action research type event in the context of stakeholder co-regulation pointed to a natural methodological approach for this project. Action research was thought to form a natural alignment with the cyclical processes taking place in the field. In that sense, the approach represented a congruent methodology to the context of stakeholder co-regulation. This is why it had been chosen as an appropriate frame to guide the design of this project.

This section pointed to the three reasons which justify the choice to adopt an action research approach in this project. Specifically, action research was found to be a method that could engage with the actual practice of NGO-business collaboration. Additionally, it offered problem-orientated forms of inquiry that might challenge the potential for NGO co-option. Finally, it is taken to represent a practice that was congruent with the action research processes occurring naturally in the context of

CSR and stakeholder co-regulation. The next section discusses how action research was integrated into the project.

4.4   Core and Thesis Action Research Studies

This research has been influenced by Zuber-Skerritt and Perry's (2002) understanding of core and thesis action research projects. Their view provides a way to resolve the perceived conflicts between the institutional requirements to make an original contribution to knowledge and the social requirements to address the challenges faced by the individuals who want to engage in the project. According to Zuber-Skerritt and Perry (2002), action research in the context of PhD candidacy can be understood as the amalgamation of a core action research project and a thesis action research project. Table 4.1 represents the specific characteristics of each type.

Core action research project	Thesis action research project
	Plan and design of the thesis • Defining the research problem • Thesis design and rationale • Literature survey • Internet search • Justification and methodology
Action i.e. field work • Identifying workgroup's thematic concern • Planning/acting/observing/reflecting on professional and organisational practices and learning • Report verified by participants	
	Observation in the thesis • Description of research process and procedure • Analysis and evaluation of results of action (content and process in the light of the literature review
	Reflection in the thesis • Analysis of reflections by the practitioners • Reflections by the candidate • Conclusions from the research • Knowledge claims and limitations • Suggestions for further research

Table 4.1 Relationship between Core and Thesis Action Research Projects
(Zuber-Skerritt & Perry 2002, p. 176)

The core action research project is developed with practitioners 'in the field'. Specifically, it is focused on meeting the needs and objectives of those practitioners. Conversely, the thesis action research project forms a separate but related project to the core. It is focused on meeting the formal institutional requirements to make an original contribution to knowledge. Additionally, it is developed by the researcher, in the context of their research community

The separation of projects is helpful as it allowed me to cater to the needs of the research practitioners while at the same time providing the institutional requirements of candidacy. This delineation provided scope for the core project to address the

concerns of the NGO practitioners, and the thesis project to address concern of co-option.

The concern which this thesis action research project aims to address, is how the risks of NGO co-option can be mitigated with the use of reflective learning practices. This knowledge can provide insights into how co-option can be mitigated in a CMS practice. Conversely, the concern that the core project will address will be decided by the NGO practitioners that want to engage with the project.

This section has outlined how action research can be understood in the context of PhD candidacy. It pointed to how the interests of candidacy and how the interests of individuals who engage with the study can be addressed using the core and thesis action research projects. The distinction between a core project that takes place 'in the field' and a thesis project that takes place in the context of an academic research community has delineated some of the complexities associated with navigating how action research can be understood in this project.

4.5   Positionality of the Action Researcher

Her and Anderson (2015) provide a useful framework to understand the position to be take in the study by the action researcher. This can be used to identify the relationship an action researcher can have to participants in the project, and it can help to locate the relationship of an action researcher in the context of the project. The framework which is depicted in Figure 4.1 represents a continuum that shows the degree to which an action researcher is positioned as an insider and as an outsider to the project. It ranges from an insider study where the action researcher studies their own practice, to an outsider study where the researcher studies others who are part of the project.

Her and Anderson (2015) suggest that the last phase 'Outsider(s) studies insider(s)' does not really constitute an action research project because it reinforces the divisive boundaries between researcher and participant that is more akin to traditional forms of scientific research.

In the context of this project, the action researcher could be thought of as an 'outsider in collaboration' with insiders. This is because I was seeking to collaborate with NGOs in the core project of this study.
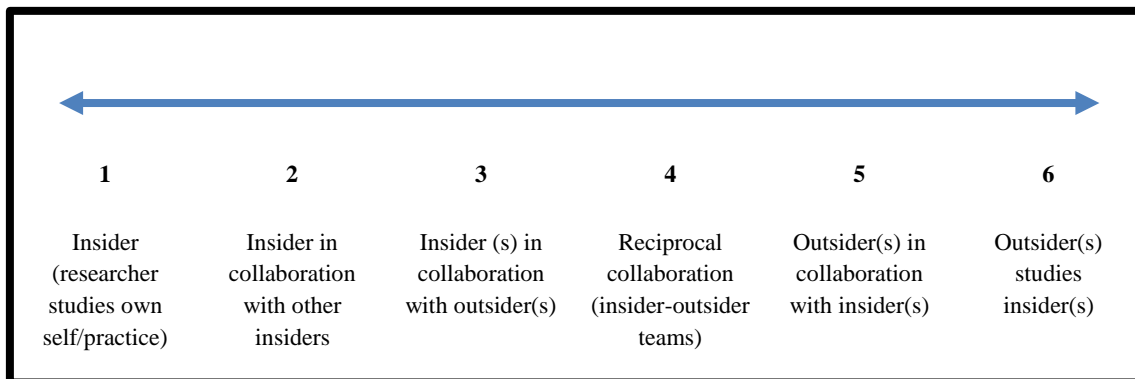
1	2	3	4	5	6
Insider (researcher studies own self/practice)	Insider in collaboration with other insiders	Insider (s) in collaboration with outsider(s)	Reciprocal collaboration (insider-outsider teams)	Outsider(s) in collaboration with insider(s)	Outsider(s) studies insider(s)

Figure 4.1 Her's and Anderson's (2015, pp. 40-41) Continuum of Researcher Positionality

Stringer's (2007) understanding of the action researcher role can inform how an outsider can collaborate with insiders in a research project. He suggests that the action researcher can facilitate the commencement of the project, and they can support the participants to locate issues of concern that they want to address (Stringer 2007). In this capacity, the action researcher acts as the catalyst for the collaborative inquiry project (Stringer 2007).

In response to the challenges identified in the literature, this project developed an action research proposal that could be used as a tool to start a series of conversations with NGOs about how reflective learning can support the maintenance of their corporate relationships or the development of their corporate relationships.

The use of an action research proposal in this way could have the effect of informing a broad focal area for the core action research projects with the NGOs. This is because it represents a reflexivity design that is orientated to the NGOs engagement with corporations. As a consequence, the proposal could have the effect of influencing the direction of discussions about how reflexivity can support NGO-corporate relations. However, while the proposal could have had that risk it was meant to act as a discussant item only. It was developed to support the realisation of the core action research projects with NGOs and it could be altered or changed

according to how the NGOs wanted to utilise reflective inquiry for their corporate engagement purposes.

However, should the NGOs choose to follow the design outlined in the proposal, then the design could still be thought to be flexible enough to cater to the specific engagement needs and objectives of the NGOs. This is because the learning proposal did not depict or ascribe a challenge for the NGOs to resolve. Instead, it outlined a process that could support the challenges that NGOs may have been facing in their corporate relationships. The proposal still offered scope for the NGOs to locate challenges that they wanted to address in the context of their corporate relationships.

Therefore, while the proposal may have influenced a broad focal area of the core action research projects, it was not meant to prescribe how reflexivity could support NGO-corporate relations. However, if NGOs chose to follow the design depicted in the proposal then it still allowed some degree of input to identify the engagement concern or issue that an NGO sought to address.

In the context of this project, I intended to collaborate with NGOs on a project that could be formed from discussions about reflexivity and NGO-corporate relations. In this capacity I expected to be a catalyst for the development of the collaborative inquiry projects with NGOs.

4.6   Facilitating the Core Action Research Projects

Chapter 3 highlighted that the strengths of NGO collaborative methods were that they could influence the 'planning' and 'action' phases of corporate self-regulation. These methods were discovered to be effective at influencing how corporations identify their stakeholders and how they develop plans to address those stakeholder needs. The methods were found to be effective at influencing how corporations fulfilled such needs in practice. While those aspects could be considered as the strengths of collaborative engagement, concerns do remain over how well an NGO adheres to its social mission and agenda in the context of its corporate relationships.

The literature on NGO-business collaboration suggests that NGOs may become distracted from their own goals and objectives by their relationships with corporations (Baur & Schmitz 2012) It was suggested that the NGO's own mission

and agenda could become co-opted by a desire to develop or maintain a particular relationship with corporations. This is understood to present a risk for stakeholder co-regulation because it affects how NGOs influence the 'planning' and 'action' phases of corporate self-regulation. NGO co-option can limit how a NGO furthers its own social agenda and mission in the context of those 'planning' and 'action' phases. This is because a co-opted agenda carries more of a risk for addressing relationship concerns rather than addressing the NGO's social objectives, and this could leave scope for the corporate agenda to dominate the 'planning' and 'action' phases of stakeholder management.

Given the challenge discovered in the literature about how the risks of co-option can be mitigated in the context of NGO-business collaboration, this research sought to learn how reflexivity could address that challenge. It is proposed that reflexivity could offer a useful tool to help mitigate some of the concerns of co-option. This is because it can encourage the development of a conscious awareness of how the embedded assumptions and taken for granted belief structures combine to perpetuate the *status quo*. Additionally, reflexivity can encourage a critical interrogation of the *status quo* via processes for its deconstruction. Thus, reflexivity was understood to offer a type of inquiry that could challenge the *modus operandi* of NGO-business collaborations. This can be helpful for exposing instances where the social mission of NGOs has been impacted by the relational pressures for collaboration and partnership. For this reason, this research seeks to understand how reflexivity can support NGOs for co-regulation.

This research developed an action research proposal that could be used to start a conversation with NGOs about how reflexivity could support their own engagement with corporations. Careful attention was paid to the development of the proposed research design. This is because the design would need to respond to the concerns of co-option while at the same time ensuring that the relationships between NGOs and their corporate partners were respected. Additionally, the design would need to incorporate cycles of reflection and action to fulfil the expectations of an action research project.

To meet the first set of challenges, the research integrated a combination of problem- and strength-based forms of inquiry into the design. Problem-orientated inquiry was

used to address the concerns of co-option. This is because it can facilitate critical reflection that can question the existing processes and practices of NGO-business engagement. Correspondingly, strength-based inquiry was selected to address the ethical concern for the future maintenance of the NGO-business relationship. This is because it can stimulate a positive discussion about the NGO-business relationship in a way that would be non-threatening to its sustainability.

Two methods of action research were drawn on to capture the perceived need for problem- and strength-based inquiry. Action learning was identified as a method that could encourage critical reflection about the challenges NGOs face in their engagement with their corporate partners; and appreciative inquiry was identified as a method that could stimulate positive dialogue about the future development of the NGO-business relationship. Thus, action learning and appreciative inquiry formed the methods that could respond to the perceived needs of the reflective learning design.

Action learning is often conveyed as a process where a number of individuals come together to assist each other reflect on the challenges or issues they each are experiencing (Pedler & Burgoyne 2008; Dilworth 2010). That team of individuals is referred to as a learning set. The set assists each individual to reflect on the unique challenge or issue they are experiencing and to identify strategies on how that issue or challenge can be addressed in practice (Pedler & Burgoyne 2008; Dilworth 2010). In this type of action learning 'everybody brings a problem' to reflect and learn about (Dilworth 2010). However, this popular understanding of action learning has not been adopted in this study.

Instead, this research articulates action learning as a team-based, dialogic approach to inquiry which uses the reflexive capacity of individuals to solve organisational problems (Dilworth 2010). Action learning has been interpreted as a process where the set of individuals are all focused on addressing the one issue or challenge (Dilworth 2010). The traditional precepts of action learning outline a minimally structured, democratic setting which enables participants to self-govern their own action learning experience (Dilworth 2010). This process usually involves a facilitator who can initiate the process and assist the team with any requests raised during the meeting (Marsick & O'Neil 1999). However, this role was expected to

remain minimal with an intention of allowing participants to democratically control how they would reflect on an organisational issue and how they would develop solutions to solve it (Dilworth 2010). Thus, the purpose of this approach was to empower participants by placing them at the centre of the learning experience (Dilworth 2010).

The problem focused approach in action learning could be understood to produce a strong emphasis on the concept of de-naturalisation. In CMS, de-naturalisation refers to a process which aims to disrupt the naturalised or embedded forms of knowledge of an organisation (Fournier & Grey 2000). This means that action learning and its problematisation of an organisation's issue could have the capacity to influence team members to challenge organisational processes and perspectives, as well as the taken for granted assumptions of their environment. This is because the process contests the operating *status-quo* of the organisation and invites opportunities for participants to collectively reflect on and re-construct their environment (McNiff & Whitehead 2010). Subsequently, a strong focus on this form of questioning inquiry could be expected to lead to a type of knowledge, that when actioned could lead to notions of emancipatory-based reform (McNiff & Whitehead 2010).

Appreciative inquiry is a process used by small to large groups of individuals to reflexively develop alternative forms of management that are based on the strengths of an organisation or system (Ludema & Fry 2008). The process was developed in opposition to the problem-orientated nature of organisational development approaches which includes action leaning (Ludema & Fry 2008). The premise of appreciative inquiry was to restrict or limit potentially negative dialogue which contested or enhanced the system's problems (Whitney & Trosten-Bloom 2010). Positively charged dialogue was thought to create an enhanced commitment from individuals for the implementation of a shared organisational vision. The dominant approach to appreciative inquiry is structured according to Cooperrider, Whitney & Stavros's (2008) four-D developmental cycle; discover, dream, design, and destiny. Specifically, the process invites a group of people to collectively discover the strengths of an organisation or system, dream about new initiatives which are embedded in those strengths, and produce a design that incorporates those initiatives into an alternate organisational destiny (Cooperrider, Whitney & Stavros 2008)

The strength-orientated notion of appreciative inquiry can be understood to denaturalise the dominant management perspectives in an optimistic way. Instead of the direct confrontation of a system's *status quo*, appreciative inquiry aims to discover the strengths contained in an organisation's naturalised processes, and use them to re-develop alternate organisational forms. This opens the *status-quo* up to reflection on new management possibilities (Cooperrider, Whitney & Stavros 2008).

While action learning and appreciative inquiry could be helpful to mitigate the concerns for co-option and the concern for the sustainability of the NGO-business relationship, a third challenge remained as to how the design could incorporate cycles of reflection and action to fulfil the conditions of an action research project. It could be thought that both action learning and appreciative inquiry already do this because they both include phases which follow the reflection-action pattern. However, when comparing the two methods, it was discovered that the methodological strong points of each approach could be combined to produce a stronger reflection-action effect. This is discussed in more detail below.

The methodological strong points of action learning and appreciative inquiry can be ascertained from a comparison of their structural characteristics. In the description of action learning above, a strong emphasis is placed on the aspects of issue problematisation and individual and group reflexivity. This focus suggests that the method is predisposed to consider first, the role of learning, and second, the role of actionable change. By comparison, appreciative inquiry is structured according to a developmental process where three of its four characteristics (dream, design and destiny) are predominately focused on creating a change agenda. This suggests that the method has a stronger emphasis on actionable change instead of just reflective learning. The unequal distribution between action and learning, in each method, has drawn attention to an opportunity to consider a project which draws on the strong points of each approach. For instance, action learning could be drawn on where critical reflexivity forms the dominant research objective, and appreciative inquiry could be drawn on where actionable change forms the dominant objective. This discovery highlights how different methods of action research can complement each other.

In the discussion above, action learning was identified as a potential method that could help mitigate some of the concerns about NGO co-option. Secondly, appreciative inquiry was also identified as a potential method that could help to strengthen the relationship between NGOs and corporations. Finally, the methodological strong points of each approach highlighted how each approach could be combined to produce a strong cyclical-type reflection and action affect that is characteristic of action research.

The considerations identified above were drawn on to produce an action research proposal that could be used to catalyse the core action research projects with NGOs. Specifically, action learning could be used to support the NGOs learning of its corporate relationships and appreciative inquiry could be used to support the NGOs and corporation's learning of its future relationship together.

The reflection/action effect could be realised by combining each approach in an alternating sequence of phases. For instance, action learning could be drawn on to support the NGOs reflexivity of its corporate relationships. Appreciative inquiry could be drawn on to support the NGO's actions on its corporate relationships. The diagrammatic representation of this action research proposal is featured in the following section. It represents a response to the points raised in this section.

A graphical representation of the action research proposal is featured in Figure 4.3. The proposal has made the suggestion of action learning as a forum which could support the NGO to address an issue or concern about its corporate relationships. Additionally, it has suggested appreciative inquiry as a forum which could support the NGO to utilise that knowledge in its dialogue with its corporate partners. A detailed explanation of the suggested research stages are featured in the next section.

4.7 Stages of the Core Action Research Proposal

The action research proposal features four stages. These are outlined below in Figure 4.3. As stated earlier in this chapter, the action research proposal was used to commence a discussion about how reflexivity could support the NGOs to address an issue, objective or challenge in the context of their corporate relationships. It was not used to ascribe a course of inquiry on the NGOs.

As can be seen from Figure 4.2, the proposal incorporates a single NGO and three of its corporate partners. This approach offers scope for the NGO to use inquiry based methods to further their own goals and objectives in the context of their corporate relationships. The addition of multiple partnerships was incorporated into the proposal in the event that the NGOs wanted to use reflexivity to support the development of several of their relationships.
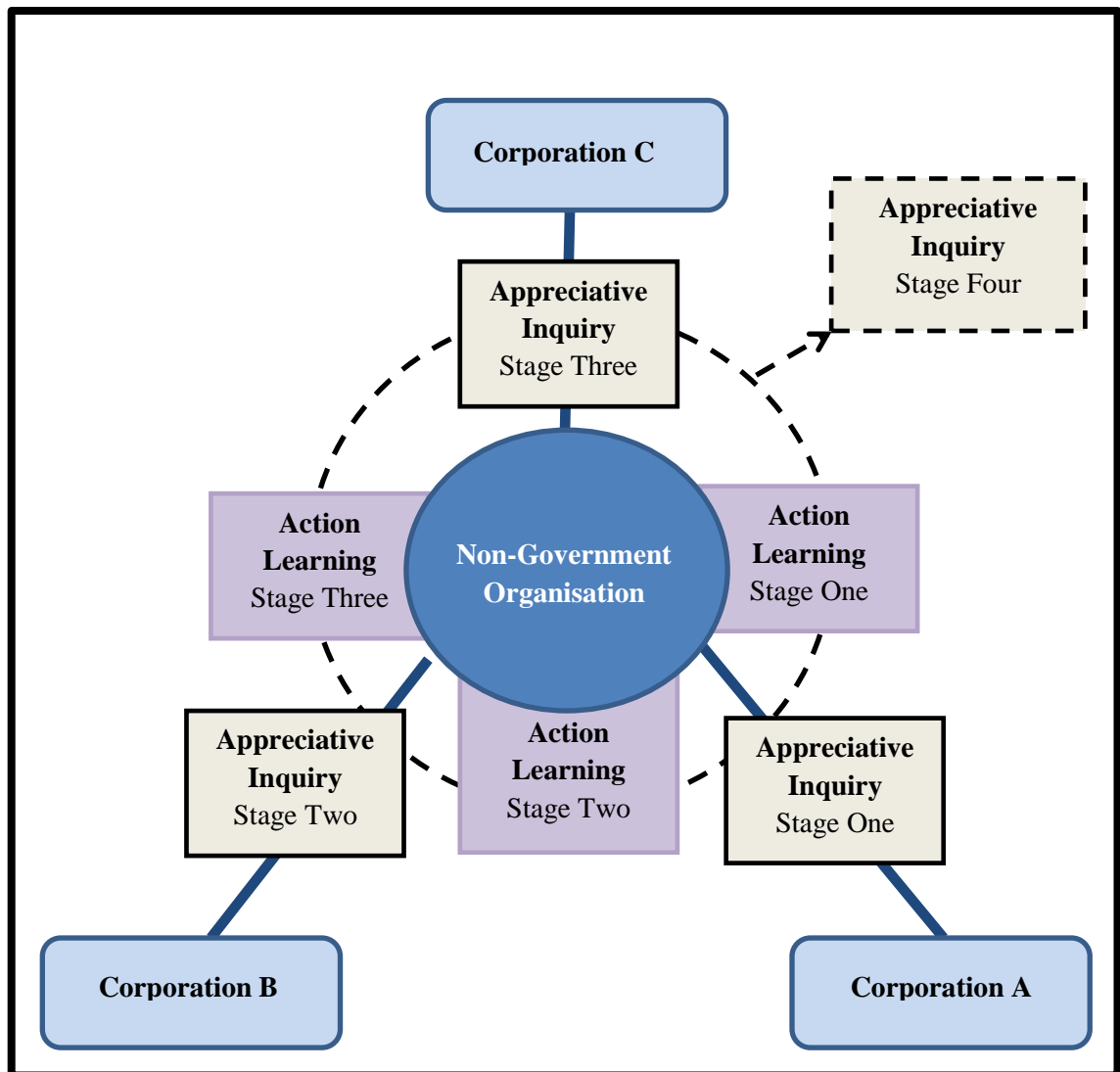

Figure 4.2 Core Action Research Proposal

The proposal above presents an alternating series of action learning and appreciative inquiry forums. That depiction demonstrates how two seemingly opposing types of inquiry could be used in a way to support the engagement processes amongst organisations and their partners.

- **Action Learning Stage One**

The purpose of the action learning focus group is to invite the NGO to reflect on a problem, issue or challenge they are currently experiencing in their relationship with Corporation A and how that knowledge can be used in the following appreciative inquiry forum with that corporation.

The action learning process was expected to last approximately 60 minutes. This process was meant to take place at the NGO's site. The dialogue of the forum will be recorded and transcribed for analysis.

- **Appreciative Inquiry Stage One**

The purpose of the appreciative inquiry forum was to provide an opportunity for the NGO to design an alternative relational destiny with Corporation A. It can draw on the knowledge that was developed from the previous action learning forum to assist that process. The application of appreciative inquiry to the relationship was expected to highlight the strengths of the NGO's connection, in a context, focused on the relationship's strategic engagement possibilities.

Three participants from the NGO and three participants from Corporation A were invited to form the appreciative inquiry focus group. The appreciative inquiry process was expected to last approximately 90 minutes. It was planned to take place on neutral ground to reduce the possible influence of the site's location on the group's dialogue. However, if this arrangement was inconvenient, the process could be held on a site location. The dialogue of the focus group needed to be recorded and transcribed for analysis.

- **Action Learning Stage Two**

The purpose of the action learning focus group was to invite the NGO to reflect on a problem, issue or challenge they were currently experiencing in their relationship with Corporation B and how that knowledge could be used in the following appreciative inquiry forum with that corporation.

The action learning process was expected to last approximately 60 minutes. This process was planned to take place at the NGO's site and, as in other phases, the dialogue of the forum would be recorded and transcribed for analysis.

- **Appreciative Inquiry Stage Two**

The purpose of the appreciative inquiry forum was to provide an opportunity for the NGO to design an alternative relational destiny with Corporation B. It could draw on the knowledge that was developed from the previous action learning forum to assist that process. The application of appreciative inquiry to the relationship was expected to highlight the strengths of the NGO's connection, in a context that was focused on the relationship's strategic engagement possibilities.

Three participants from the NGO and three participants from Corporation B were invited to form the appreciative inquiry focus group. The appreciative inquiry process was expected to last approximately 90 minutes and to take place on neutral ground to reduce the possible influence of the site's location on the group's dialogue. However, if this arrangement was not convenient for the participants the process could be held on a site location. The dialogue of the focus group was to be recorded and transcribed for analysis.

- **Action Learning Stage Three**

The purpose of the action learning focus group is to invite the NGO to reflect on a problem, issue or challenge they are currently experiencing in their relationship with corporation C and how that knowledge can be used in the following appreciative inquiry forum with that corporation.

The action learning process is expected to last around 60 minutes. This process will take place at the NGO's site. The dialogue of the forum is to be recorded and transcribed for analysis.

- **Appreciative Inquiry Stage Three**

The appreciative inquiry forum was intended to provide an opportunity for the NGO to design an alternative relational destiny with Corporation C. It could draw on the knowledge that was developed from the previous action learning forum to assist that process. The application of appreciative inquiry to the relationship was expected to highlight the strengths of the NGO's connection, in a context that is focused on the relationships strategic engagement possibilities.

Three participants from the NGO and three participants from the corporation were invited to form the appreciative inquiry focus group. The appreciative inquiry process was expected to last approximately 90 minutes on neutral ground to reduce the possible influence of the site's location on the group's dialogue. However, if inconvenient, there was the option for process to be held on the NGO's or corporation's location. The dialogue of the focus group was to be recorded and transcribed for analysis.

- **Appreciative Inquiry Stage Four**

For stage four, all participants were invited to reflect on their appreciative inquiry experience and to identify those inquiry aspects which positively contributed to the engagement between organisations.

Stage four also aimed to encourage reflection on how participants could use or adapt appreciative inquiry to their future negations. This was intended to promote the sustainability or future self-governance of this development process should those organisations wish to apply it to subsequent engagement processes.

All NGO and corporate representatives who participated in the preceding action learning and appreciative inquiry forums were invited to the last appreciative inquiry forum.

The time allocated to this process was 90 minutes, and it was expected to take place on neutral ground. However, as in other phases, if this arrangement was seen as inconvenient, it can be proposed to be held on an NGO's or corporation's site. The dialogue of the focus group was to be recorded and transcribed for analysis.

4.8 Identifying Potential Participants

Purposive and snowball sampling were used to locate potential NGOs that would fit with the context and scope of co-regulation. One of the aims of the thesis action research project was to learn about how NGO co-option could be mitigated in collaboratively based NGO-corporate relationships. Accordingly, it needed NGOs which

Had a head office in New South Wales, where the researcher was located and the NGOs needed to have: performed service-based roles and a history of collaborative engagement with their corporate partners

The study also included large and small NGOs to understand how size could influence the complexity of corporate engagement. It aimed to understand how access to resources impacted NGO engagement with business. Two small NGOs and one large NGO participated in the study. This is discussed further in Chapter 5.

Those conditions defined above were specified to attract NGOs which held collaborative-based partnerships with corporations. While a majority of NGOs perform a combination of advocacy and service roles (see Yaziji & Doh 2009) those NGOs which were predominantly advocacy-focused were excluded from the study. This is because advocacy-focused processes were assumed to carry a greater risk of initiating more adversarial and conflict-based relations between NGOs and corporations, which was not the focus of this research. Thus, the inclusion of service-focused NGOs was specified as a condition in the study because it was thought that those NGOs might hold more collaborative relations with the private sector.

There was some degree of difficulty associated with recruiting NGOs to participate in an action research study. During that phase, it became apparent that some NGOs were hesitant to engage with the action research proposal. Small NGOs, in particular, seemed concerned about the amount of time and resources they would need to participate in the reflective learning processes. The number of focus groups described in the invitation to participate (see appendix 1) seemed to deter the smaller NGOs from engaging with the research. While the core action research proposal (see figure 4.2) was intended to act as a guide, the description in the invitation of the size of that proposal seemed to concern the smaller NGOs.

In contrast, the larger NGO did not appear to be deterred from the project. On the contrary, they seemed keen to engage with the reflexive learning processes in their entirety. While keen, there were some problems associated with the suitability of the proposal for that NGOs engagement needs. This is discussed in some further detail in Chapter 5. However, the contrast between the recruitment of the smaller and the larger NGOs points to some degree of difficulty with the recruitment of organisations into projects using action research.

It suggests that any future invitations to engage with action research approaches may need to correspond to the perceived size of the organisation and the constraints that organisation may be facing. This means that invitations which depict smaller-scale action research proposals may be more attractive to smaller organisations. This does not mean that smaller NGOs might not find larger scale action research projects useful. On the contrary, one of the advantages of action research is that it is an adaptive process and can be changed according to the needs and desires of those who engage with the approach. However, for the purposes of attracting organisations to participate in action-orientated studies, the description of the size of the project is something that might need to be taken into consideration during the recruitment of organisations.

4.9   Data Analysis for the Frame of CSR

During the data collection phase of the thesis action research project, it became evident that the NGOs were not seeking to 'co-regulate' their collaborative partnerships with corporations. Due to this, Utting's (2002) notion of co-regulation was not used as a frame to analyse the data except so far as to draw a clear distinction between the NGO-corporation engagement depicted in the literature and the new engagement style the NGOs were using to influence business practices. As it was evident that the NGOs were using a new approach, the data was inductively coded into a set of themes to best reflect and describe those alternative processes. Those themes included:

- **Theme 1: NGO Mission, Values and Objectives**

Source: NGO websites, annual reports and focus group data

Organisational websites and reports were sought to verify the information that the NGO participants had provided from the focus group discussions. The data collated under this theme offered insights into each NGOs own goals and objectives. It was important to collect this information as it provided a values 'baseline' from which to understand or to interpretively 'measure' the degree of potential NGO co-option by business interests.

- **Theme 2: Participation in the Design and Development of Stakeholder Management Initiatives**

Source: Focus group data

This theme provided a way to discern how much of the conversation about stakeholder management initiatives was dominated by NGOs in their partnerships with corporations. The degree of discursive dominance by NGOs and corporations offered insight into the power relationships between the two parties. Specifically, it revealed the degree to which NGO interests were supressed by market interests.

The collation of data under this theme captured the degree of initiative that was adopted by NGOs in the design and development of stakeholder initiatives in corporations. It revealed how pro-active or how responsive the NGOs were to co-constructing responsible business behaviour. Accordingly, this theme was key to uncovering the new pro-active approach of CSR, which I have called 'stakeholder-directive co-development'. This concept is explored in Chapter 6.

- **Theme 3: NGO Perceptions of Corporations**

Source: NGO websites, annual reports and focus group data

This theme captured how NGOs viewed the role of corporations in society. This information was necessary to distinguish between the frame of stakeholder co-regulation and the new proposed frame of stakeholder-directive co-development. The perspective of co-regulation carries an inherent assumption that corporations are important change agents in society, however, they need to be monitored, regulated and socially controlled by multi-stakeholder engagement. That approach also assumes that corporations need to be consistently adjusted towards a path of socially responsible conduct. Accordingly, the perspective carries a pessimistic view of the corporation in society.

The data categorised under theme 3 captured a more 'optimistic' view of the firm in society. This information was important because it further distinguished stakeholder-directive co-development from stakeholder co-regulation. This theme described a view of corporations as important change agents that could contribute to the fulfilment of social, environmental and economic needs in society. Thus, this theme

was important to define the assumptions of the stakeholder-directive co-development approach, and how those assumptions were distinct from those made in the literature about stakeholder co-regulation.

- **Theme 4: NGO Co-option**

Source: Focus group data

This theme was included to capture instances where market interests may have impeded on the capacity of the NGOs to further their own social missions and agendas. It was important to discern if adaptations of the action learning/appreciative inquiry praxis, featured in Chapters 4 & 5, were able to offer some degree of protection against the possibility of NGO co-option. Thus, it captured data that could address if those action research processes were effective methods to support the attainment of NGO's goals and objectives in the context of corporate partnerships.

- **Theme 5: Processes used by NGOs to Influence Responsible Business Practice**

Source: Focus group data

This theme captured the practice of stakeholder-directive co-development. Specifically, it provided information about how NGOs directed and co-developed business initiatives for community needs and objectives. That information was important to describe how the directive co-development practice was distinct from the practice of co-regulation. Thus, while themes 2 and 3 unveiled the new frame of stakeholder-directive co-development, theme 5 was necessary to offer insight into how that approach was actually practiced in the field. Thus, it captured strategies of how stakeholders guided the design and development of responsible management initiatives in corporations. The inclusion of theme 5 offered a more holistic and complete picture of the new approach and specifically how it was applied by NGOs in partnerships with corporations in the field.

That data offered potential insights into how other stakeholders could use or adopt more directive co-developmental processes in their engagement with corporations.

4.10 Data Analysis for the Frame of CMS

Information under the themes 1-5 above provided an opportunity to understand the developmental approach NGOs had used to achieve their own goals and objectives in the context of their corporate partnerships. Thus, that information offered important insights into the theory and practice of corporate social responsibility. However, as this study is also focused on the construction of a critical management practice from CSR, the data in the themes above underwent a second form of analysis to uncover meaning for the frame of CMS. The information below highlights how each theme was analysed for the purpose of building a transformative critical management praxis.

- **Theme 1: NGO Mission, Values and Objectives**

Information collated about the NGO's provided a way to compare how the NGO's goals and objectives were similar to the goals and objectives of CMS scholars. The similarities between the two offered some validation that NGO-corporate engagement was an appropriate context from which CMS could draw. It justified the pursuit of learning from NGO-corporate collaborative partnerships.

- **Theme 2: Participation in the Design and Development of Stakeholder Management Initiatives**

Data under this theme described the developmental approach NGOs had adopted in their engagement with corporations. More specifically, it drew attention to the pro-active quality that defined NGO business collaborations. That approach was analysed in the context of CMS to learn how pro-active intervention strategies could complement the inherent reactive disposition to analysis in CMS, particularly in the performativity characteristic in CMS view on business behaviour. This is because it is focused on locating instances in corporations where market-based needs have superseded the needs of its people. Thus, this suggests that some type of malpractice must occur before it is considered by CMS scholars. Accordingly, the performativity notion in CMS has a reactive disposition because that frame of analysis is invoked after some form of misconduct has occurred. The pro-active approach adopted by the NGOs was therefore analysed according to how similar interventionist strategies could complement the reactive quality of performative-based CMS.

- **Theme 3: NGO Perceptions of Corporations**

Theme 3 described the assumptions NGOs made about corporations in the context of the directive co-developmental approach. While the analysis of theme 2 offered new insights into a pro-active developmental intervention practice, the data under theme 3 provided a more complete 'picture' of the assumptions behind that approach. That information further clarified the parameters of the developmental approach. This was necessary to understand how that intervention practice could be re-produced in the context of CMS. Thus, the data collated under this theme was analysed to build a more holistic understanding of the developmental approach.

- **Theme 4: NGO Co-option**

Data collated under theme 4 was analysed according to how well the developmental approach protected against the possibility for NGO co-option. This knowledge was key to ascertain whether the developmental approach would be a helpful addition to the frame of CMS. Section 1.1 highlighted that one of the main reasons CMS had been detained as a theoretical approach was due to the potential for practitioner co-option. It was believed that a critical management practice would reduce the 'objective' distance between the practitioner and the site with which they engage. This was assumed to carry a greater risk of co-opting the practitioner's focus from human-centred needs to market-based needs. To protect against such risks, CMS has been confined to occupy a theoretical realm instead of a practical one. This suggests that any proposal for a critical management practice would need to show some degree of protection against co-option if it is to be endorsed or considered by the CMS community. The data under theme 4 therefore offered understandings about how well the developmental approach could protect against the influence of dominant market-based agendas. Thus, the analysis of theme 4 provided insights into the usefulness of developmental intervention for the frame of CMS.

- **Theme 5: Processes used by NGOs to Influence Responsible Business Practice**

The data under theme 5 provided information about the actual methods of practice NGOs used to influence responsible stakeholder management processes in corporations. This information was analysed in the context of CMS to learn how

developmental-based intervention could be actioned. Those methods were key to informing the construction of a transformative critical management praxis.

4.11 Research Scope

The project focused on a limited number of case studies that were each bounded by a NGO and its business, society and government relationships. The small sample size meant that the results of the study could not be generalised to larger populations. However, the results have led to theoretical and practical insights into the engagement between NGOs and their corporate partners and how reflexivity might be drawn on to mitigate the potential of NGO co-option in collaborative NGO-corporate relationships.

In this research project, there was a reduction in the objective distance between the researcher and the participants. This is because I acted as a catalyst for the development of the core action research studies with NGOs. Specifically, I participated in the construction of the action research proposal, engaged in discussions with NGOs about reflective learning and their engagement with corporations, and I acted as a facilitator in the action learning and appreciative inquiry forums. Accordingly, my own bias did contribute to the socially constructed nature of the project and the data collection methods. Chapter 5 for instance, explains how the NGOs and I altered the action research proposal to suit the NGO's engagement challenges. Appreciative inquiry was not used as a method of inquiry in all case studies. Section 5.3.3 posits that appreciative inquiry was an appropriate approach to address the engagement needs between NGOs and corporations. However, it was less suitable for exploring the internal barriers NGOs had to their engagement with corporations.

This engagement was intended to celebrate the potential of action research and the possibilities for researcher involvement in the study, in order to contribute to the development of CMS praxis.

4.12 Steps Taken to Ensure Ethical Research Practice

The ethical conduct of this project was guided by the Australian National Statement on Ethics Conduct in Human Research (National Health and Medical Research Council 2007). This sets out a series of standards and principals which inform the ethical design and review of a research project involving human participants (National Health and Medical Research Council 2007). In accordance with these guidelines, this project obtained approval from the Western Sydney University Higher Research Ethics Committee (HREC) before data collection involving human participants began.

Ethical Issues of particular concern to this project include the following:

- **Voluntary, informed consent:** Participation in this study was voluntary. Informed consent was attained by providing potential participants with information on the research before the data collection process began. Appendix 1 provides a copy of the research invitations that were sent to the NGOs and the corporations. Individuals were offered a copy of an approved information sheet, which is presented in Appendix 2. This information highlighted the study's topic, purpose, benefits, risks, confidentiality and consent procedures. That source also provided individuals with the research panel's contact information if further information on the study was required. Individuals were asked to sign a consent form as a condition to participate in the core action research projects. A copy of those consent forms can be found in Appendix 3.

- **Forums and confidentiality:** Due to the nature of the inquiry forums, participants were in a position where they would know about the identity, responses and employers of other individuals that also participated in the discussions. Confidentiality was attained by informing those participants of this nature, and by asking them to agree to keep all information about participants, their organisations, and the forum dialogue confidential.

- **Participant confidentiality:** This aspect was attained by using pseudonyms in place of participant and organisational names. Contextual data that was also deemed inappropriate or which could be publically linked to a specific research participant was also removed from this dissertation.

4.13 Chapter Conclusion

This chapter presented how the research responded to the challenge of NGO co-option in the context of stakeholder co-regulation. It proposed the development of an action research study with NGOs about their engagement with corporations.

The reflexivity design featured in this chapter was constructed to act as a tool to start a series of conversations with NGOs about how problem- and strength-based inquiry methods could support the advancement of the NGO's own goals and objectives for their partnerships.

The following chapter explores the core action research projects. It builds on the information presented here to describe how three NGOs engaged with the research, and it looks specifically at how the NGOs engaged with the research proposal and how they modified it to suit their own needs and objectives.

Chapter 5:

NGO Reflective Learning for Corporate Engagement

This chapter describes how the research methodology developed according to the needs, objectives and perspectives of the NGO participants. Additionally, it also draws attention to the suitability of reflexivity processes in the context of NGO and business relationships.

Three NGOs were recruited to engage with reflective learning processes to support the development of their corporate relationships, as part of this study. These NGOs included: Creative Minds childcare centre, Sensory Navigations, and Vibrant Community Services. A description of each NGO's engagement and participation with reflective learning is presented below.

5.1   Case Study I: Community Childcare Support

This section introduces the first NGO - Creative Minds childcare - that choose to participate in the research project with the researcher. (The name is a pseudonym to preserve the anonymity of the research participants). The section explores the story of the NGO's participation in the study and the learning design with which the organisation decided to engage.

Creative Minds childcare was a small NGO, located in Sydney, New South Wales, Australia. It provided before and after school care, and holiday and vacation care, to children aged 5-12 years. The centre provided a diverse variety of activities and programs for children to engage and participate in during their time at the centre. Those were designed and developed in consultation with the children and their

parents as a way to support the needs of families in the local community. The staff members aimed to create and foster a relaxed, fun and collaborative environment where the children could discover and explore their own interests.

In addition to the school, holiday and vacation care options offered by the centre, Creative Minds was different from other childcare facilities because it provided extra child support services. A report made available on the centre's website highlighted that the centre catered to children who had special needs or who had experienced emotional and social difficulties arising from their home and living environments. These extra services included the provision of food and nutritional support, such as breakfasts and dinners, and appropriate monitoring and management of the children's emotional and social needs. Mark highlights this in the statement below:

> Seeing these kids eat, and then still be really hungry because they haven't eaten or seeing that these children are having dinner and that it will be the last meal that some of them will eat till the next morning [Malcolm – Creative Minds, Action Learning Discussion]…

The statements above indicate that Creative Minds' overarching aim and objective is to support the needs of the children in their local area.

Besides this, a number of the families, who sent their children to Creative Minds, could not afford the fees associated with the cost of childcare. However, Creative Minds still catered to those families. As Malcolm says "We'll never not take a child because their family doesn't pay…so we'll always take everyone in…we're a service for the children"

This statement indicates that the mission of the childcare centre was to provide care and support to all children in the local area, regardless of their family's financial position and status.

5.1.1 Organisations Engaging with Case Study I

As illustrated in Figure 4.1, Creative Minds had six corporate partners, Legal Eagles Pty Ltd, Animations Pty Ltd, Constructacon Pty Ltd, International Bank Pty Ltd, Smart Bank Pty Ltd and Copy Care Pty Ltd and an intermediary partner, Cross-sector Connections. The centre's website indicated that two of these six corporate relationships were from the banking and finance industry. The other corporations were from affiliated industries including law, information technology, construction

and development and children's entertainment. Of these corporate relationships, Creative Minds and Cross-sector Connections had four connections in common. Both the centre and the intermediary had a relationship with Legal Eagles Pty Ltd, Copy Care Pty Ltd, Smart Bank Pty Ltd and International Bank Pty Ltd. Those shared connections could suggest that the intermediary may have played a role in the establishment and development of those corporate relationships for the centre. However this assumption cannot be confirmed from the information featured on the websites of Creative Minds and Cross-sector Connections'.

The other two corporate partnerships the centre had with the private sector – Animations Pty Ltd and Constructacon Pty Ltd – indicated that the centre held a set of capabilities, which it used to establish and develop relationships on its own with the private sector.
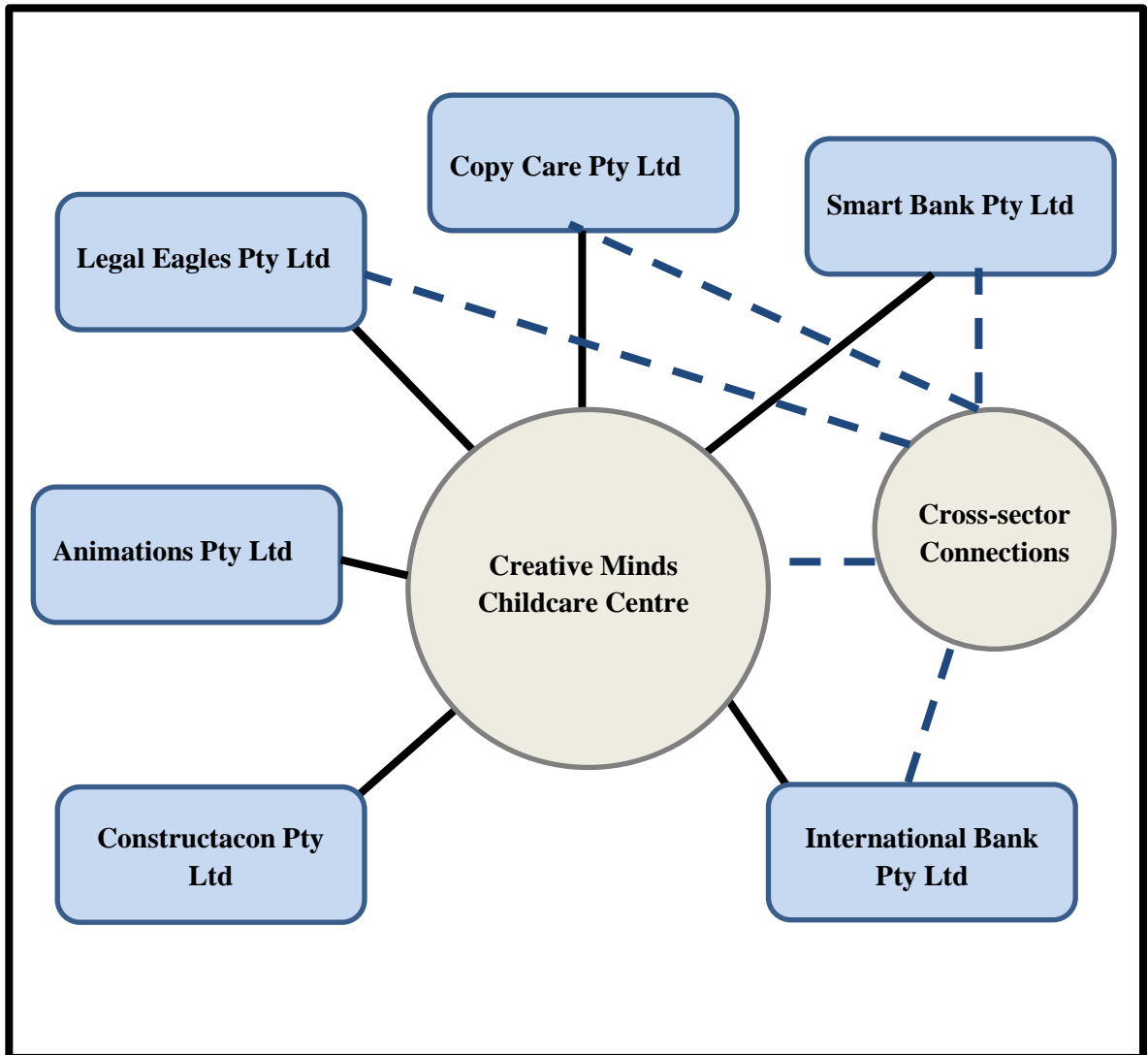
Figure 5.1 Graphic Representations of Creative Minds Corporate Partners

The financial report available on the centre's website indicated that three of its relationships were more prominent than the others. Those partnerships included the centre's relationship with the intermediary, its partnership with Legal Eagles Pty Ltd and its relationship with Smart Bank Pty Ltd. Those partnerships were inferred to be more prominent because the centre chose to make a special mention of them in their report.

A note of thanks was conferred to the intermediary, Legal Eagles, Pty Ltd and Smart Bank Pty Ltd for "consistent and ongoing support". This statement could suggest that Creative Minds had a history of engagement with those organisations. The inclusion

of the intermediary in that special mention could also indicate that the intermediary might have had a role in supporting the longevity of those corporate relationships.

From an analysis of that report, it appears that the childcare centre had a dominant focus on the financial and philanthropic dimensions of its engagement with the private sector. For instance, terms such as 'benefactors' and 'sponsors' were used to describe the type of relationships that existed between the centre and four of the seven partnerships listed in Figure 4.1: Smart Bank Pty Ltd, Legal Eagles Pty Ltd, Animations Pty Ltd and Cross-sector Connections. In particular, it is important to note that the centre only discussed the financial contributions of those four partnerships and it did not include information about the three other corporate partners of Creative Minds' (Copy Care Pty Ltd, Constructacon Pty Ltd and International Bank Pty Ltd). Additionally, it did not include information about the other types and forms of non-philanthropic engagement the centre had with the private sector.

This transactional perspective about corporate relationships might have been adopted for the purposes of producing a financial report. However, that perspective could also indicate that the centre had a dominant focus on the transactional and philanthropic dimensions of engagement with its corporate relationships as opposed to the other, non-transactional and non-philanthropic dimensions of engagement. This could indicate that the centre valued the financial contributions of the private sector over the other non-philanthropic forms of engagement or support which corporations have also been understood to provide.

5.1.2 Recruitment of Organisations Engaged in Case Study I

There seems to be two reasons why Creative Minds decided to engage with the research project. The first appears to be to support the relationship the centre had with the intermediary organisation and the second was to explore how reflexivity could support how the centre's response to its funding challenges. This section explores each of these motives below.

In the recruitment phase of the core action research study, I contacted Cross-sector Connections, the intermediary NGO operating in the network, to inquire about whether they might like to participate in the research or whether any of the NGOs in

their network might be interested in engaging with the study. At the time, Cross-sector Connections mentioned that they did not have the resources to participate in a large project of this nature. However, they did mention that they would forward the invitation to participate to a few of their community partners which they felt would have the resources to do so.

Malcolm, one of the managers at Creative Minds responded to that invitation and expressed his interest to participate in the research. We agreed to meet at the childcare centre to talk more about the study and the organisation's attitude to engaging with the study.

In that meeting it became apparent that Creative Minds responded to the invitation as a way to reciprocate the support which the intermediary had shown the centre. During that meeting, Malcolm mentioned that they had a lot to do with the intermediary NGO. It seemed that their interest in participation was a way to assist and support Cross-sector Connections. Perhaps this was because the research invitation and information was sent to the childcare facility from one of the members/employees of the intermediary. After I explained what the project involved, Malcolm, seemed to be committed to participating in the project. It seemed as if he had already made up his mind about engaging with the research before that meeting. This appeared to be due to the existing ties between the childcare facility and the intermediary NGO and this provided my entry into their network.

This insight into why the NGO engaged with the research project seemed to be further confirmed at a meeting with Creative Minds' management committee. The decision to engage appeared to have been made when a connection with the intermediary organisation was evident. In the management committee meeting, Malcolm introduced me to the committee members and mentioned that I was going to do a research project with their organisation. His language implied some degree of certainty about their organisation's decision to participate. A phrase such as "going to do" suggested that he had already made the decision that I was going to conduct the study with their organisation. When the opportunity arose, I discussed the research project with the committee members. However, some of them had concerns about the amount of time it would take to participate in the research and those concerned committee members asked the other members if they had time to engage

with the project. At a later point in the discussion, Malcolm mentioned that I was sent to Creative Minds through the intermediary NGO. My affiliation with Cross-sector Connections seemed to have had some influence on the committee's decision to participate, as the tone of the conversation changed from a seemingly dismissive and hesitant tone to an accepting one.

These reflections suggest that the relationship between the childcare centre and the intermediary was an important element which influenced the centre to engage with the study. This suggests that the appeal to engage in reflexivity was based less on the learning program for cross-sector engagement and more on the existing relationship each of these organisations held with the others.

After the decision to participate was made, the centre decided to focus its reflective learning program on exploring their organisation's funding challenges and how its business, community and government partners financially and non-financially supported the organisation. As Richard, the centre's treasurer, says *"From my point of view its money, but I think all [the centre's partners are] very important to us"*. This decision broadened the scope of the initial reflective learning proposal to include a complex focus on how organisations, in different social sectors, supported the needs of the centre. Thus, this case study highlighted the challenges associated with how NGOs engage with business in the broader context of their other business, community, and government relationships.

This discussion drew attention to the reasons why Creative Minds decided to engage with the research project. It highlighted how the partnership network, instead of the reflective learning proposal, was a major influence in the NGO's decision to participate. This suggests that the childcare centre may have seen its engagement as a way to reciprocate the support that the intermediary had shown the centre, instead of seeing the opportunities that Creative Minds could reap from engaging with the aims, objectives and scope of the project itself. The next section explores how the decisions of the childcare facility informed the centre's reflective learning design.

5.1.3 Reflective Learning Program

The centre decided that it would trial one sequence of alternating discussions in the reflective learning program to learn how reflexivity could support the organisation.

This sequence included one action learning discussion, to be held with individuals of the centre, and one appreciative inquiry discussion, with individuals of the centre and the centre's partners. Figure 5.2 has a graphic representation of this learning design. The decision to trial this sequence of discussions was made before the decision about the focus of reflexivity.

It seemed that the centre was sceptical about how reflexivity could support the organisation. In particular, the decision to trial the program suggested that the centre wanted to evaluate the outcomes of the initial sequence of discussions before considering its further engagement with organisational reflexivity. This insight suggests that the childcare centre was sceptical and unsure about how reflective learning could support their organisational needs and objectives.

The action learning forum was conducted with three individuals from the childcare centre and was focused on exploring the centre's financial challenges. Richard points to those challenges in the statement below.

> About a third of [families] really cannot pay [for childcare]. They haven't got the funds so we're talking about [a large sum] of fees which we cannot collect. That [deficit] is what our [government partner] covers…So if we can't get that [funding from the government partner], then we would stop. We would have difficulty in keeping [the centre] going until we could find another source of money…Over the years we have been very short of money [Richard – Creative Minds, Action Learning Discussion].

The three participants from Creative Minds proceeded to explore how its business, community and government partners financially and non-financially supported the organisation.

The individuals of Creative Minds decided that they wanted to take their knowledge and reflections from that action learning discussion into an appreciative inquiry discussion with a government partner. Unfortunately, due to time and resource constraints that government partner decided that it could not participate in the research. Instead, Creative Minds decided to participate in an appreciative inquiry discussion with its intermediary partner. The focus of that discussion was to appreciate the relationship that each organisation held with each other. It included two individuals from the childcare centre, one individual from the intermediary organisation and the researcher.
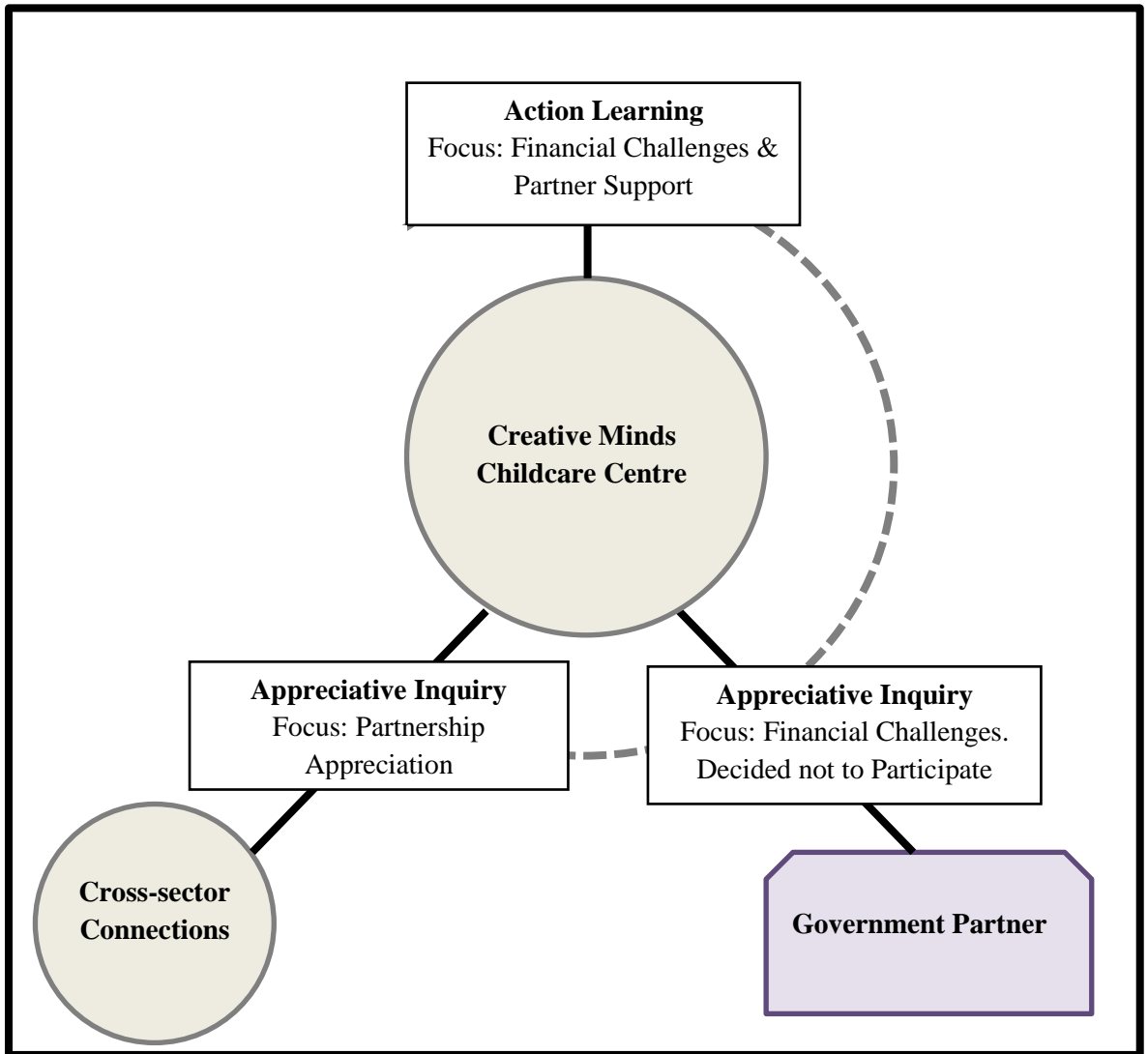
Figure 5.2 Creative Minds Reflective Learning Design

The core project with Creative Minds seemed to have provided a space for the organisation and Cross-sector Connections to articulate what factors made a corporate volunteering event successful for the community and for their corporate partners. It also provided a space for those two NGOs to plan the events they would like to run in the future. In this respect, reflective learning could be thought to have facilitated a space for the NGO to evaluate past community-corporate engagement performance and articulate how they would like the intermediary's corporate partners to engage with them in the future. This seemed to support a process that is different from co-regulation, and this different kind of process can be conceptualised as 'directive co-development'. This term will be discussed later in Chapter 6. Directive co-development is a process in which the involvement of the NGO in the research

can be understood to open a space for NGOs to assess community-corporate programs against the needs of the NGO's community. While the core project could be thought to have supported this directive co-development role adopted by Creative Minds and Cross-sector Connections, the focus of the NGO's core project was quite different. This is reflected in the discussion below.

The action learning discussion with Creative Minds provided a space for the NGO to identify the challenges associated with the organisation's financial sustainability. In particular, the participants articulated their perspectives on how the childcare centre was externally funded by the public and private sectors. They seemed to be content with the financial and non-financial support they received from the private sector. However, they were less content with the financial support they received from a government agency in the public sector. Some of the frustrations explored in the discussion were the mixed signals the NGO received from the different departments of the government agency about the level of financial support it could provide to the childcare centre and the application processes the NGO consistently had to go through to secure financial funding.

In the action learning discussion, Creative Minds explored how different departments in the government organisation provided different levels of support for the childcare centre. The finance department of the government organisation was perceived to be less supportive of the community organisation's supply of funding while members of the management board were very supportive of the government funding. This is evident in Malcom's statement below:

> [That department in our government partner] will turn to us and say 'no, you need to be financially viable, you need to be this and that' and even when we're …ticking all the right boxes they're still saying no. They're either throwing more things at us or just plain out denying saying 'there's no need'. That's what I think and that's even meeting with them. They have no problems telling me that they say no to funding us and that's one of our supporters apparently. [That department's attitude is] totally different … to the [board's attitude of us] [Malcolm – Creative Minds, Action Learning Discussion].

The uncertainty which was generated from the contradictions in the interactions with the government partner was added to by the uncertainty of the agencies funding processes and procedures. Government funding for community projects was offered

on a year to year basis, and it was subject to conditions and criteria determined by the granting government agency. As Richard says:

> The difficult thing is that, you know a group like this needs certain funding. We need to feel comfortable that we've got money coming in. This [application] is always every twelve months. We have to put an application in, in April [and] we get a response in August. So between April and August we really don't know whether we're going to go another twelve months [Richard, Creative Minds, Action Learning Discussion]

This funding process also contributed to a degree of uncertainty in Creative Minds about the longevity of its organisation. This was because the funding was not always guaranteed. Instead, it was subject to the agencies discretion about whether Creative Minds would qualify for funding or not.

Creative Minds decided to invite the government partner into a discussion to articulate the challenge they faced with their engagement with the government agency. However, due to time and resource constraints, they were unable to participate at that time. Instead, Creative Minds invited the intermediary, Cross-sector Connections, into an appreciative inquiry discussion.

As mentioned before, Cross-sector Connections is a not-for-profit organisation which had brokered engagement between the childcare centre and the private sector. The broker had even facilitated engagement between the employees of its corporate partners and the children of the childcare centre. The purpose for inviting the broker organisation into the appreciative inquiry discussion was to identify and appreciate the strengths and opportunities out of the collaborations between them and their corporate supporters. This was perceived to be a way to encourage further engagement between the centre and the broker's corporate partners.

In the appreciative inquiry discussion, the organisations together explored the characteristics which contributed to the successful engagement activities between the children of the centre and the employees from the private sector. This is illustrated in Ellen's statement below. Ellen was a corporate partnership manager at Cross-sector Connections.

> And [the children]… like to do things that they can take home as well. Or make things for their parents [or brothers and sisters]…Yeah and the outings – Like, to be able to go to the zoo… gets [the children]… out of the local area. You were saying a lot of them stay in the suburb. Like, everything's here for them. And if they don't have the money [they won't be

able to experience the activities that other children, from more affluent families, do] [Ellen – Cross-sector Connections, Appreciative Inquiry Discussion]

In her statement, Ellen highlights the types of activities between Creative Minds, Cross-sector Connections and the private sector, that the children enjoyed. She said the children liked making art and craft items with the corporate employees. She also mentioned that the children enjoyed the days where the corporate employees accompanied them on excursions to attractions such as the zoo. These activities and excursions offer an experience to the children that they might not have had due to the low socio-economic situation of some families in the area. This engagement highlighted to the corporate employees the broader social implications that the children and their families in their local communities face.

Additionally, Creative Minds and Cross-sector Connections also together discovered the characteristics that led to less successful engagement activities between the children and the employees. This is evident in Ellen's statement:

> Once there was a circus day and that was the one time that we've had feedback from [corporate] volunteers saying that they felt like the children were [out of control]… and it was because they were so excited … But the… [Corporate volunteers] just felt that the [external third party] provider… weren't able to control [the children]…. But, that's when… [The staff at the childcare centre] needs to help with that because yeah the [corporate] volunteers can't [supervise the children] [Ellen – Cross-sector Connections, Appreciative Inquiry Discussion]

In her statement, Ellen explained that the less successful activities between Creative Minds, Cross-sector Connections and the private sector were the events where there was minimal supervision of the children. The corporate employees did not find these events enjoyable as they could not successfully engage or talk with the children. In that sense the process highlighted aspects on how to improve the engagement between the corporate employees and the centre.

While the reflective program was less successful at attaining what the childcare centre initially wanted to achieve with the government partner, it still provided a space for the NGO to air its appreciation for the intermediaries support. Specifically, it opened a space for the NGO to articulate the characteristics of the successful and less successful activities for child and corporate employee engagement. This reflective understanding offered both organisations an informal plan for future engagement activities which they could co-ordinate together. Thus, it could be stated

that Creative Minds' core action research project had supported its capacity to co-lead the future development of some of its community-corporate partnerships

The purpose of this section was to highlight how Creative Minds' engaged with the initial reflective learning proposal and how it altered the proposal to suit the needs and objectives of the childcare centre. This section presented a short overview of the specific features of Creative Minds' reflective learning design. The next two sections explore the narrative of the learning journeys with two other NGOs, and how reflective learning supported their engagement challenges and objectives.

5.2   Case Study II: Disability Care

This section introduces the second NGO – Sensory Navigations – that chose to participate in the research project with the researcher. Specifically it explores the story of the NGO's participation in the study and the learning design with which the organisation decided to engage.

Sensory Navigations is a medium sized NGO in Sydney, New South Wales, Australia that supports the day-to-day and long term needs of adults who have multiple disabilities. The organisation adopts a person-centred approach to identify and understand the needs of adults with dual sensory disabilities and how those needs can be met. As Bella says:

> So I believe I've taken [Sensory Navigations] in a direction that some of my colleagues would give their own arm for… They've gone to more expansion and taking anybody whether they meet their needs or not. I've stayed focused with a vision that we only take in people with dual sensory loss and so we're a small specialist service.[Bella – Sensory Navigations, Appreciative Inquiry Discussion]

Some of the services that have been offered to adults include the provision of accommodation/housing, learning and training support, employment opportunities and facilitated engagement and interaction with local communities.

In addition to the services listed above, Sensory Navigations also advocates for people with disabilities. This includes promoting the story of the organisation to all sectors of society, respecting the dignity of people with disabilities and encouraging the development of research to support those individuals.

5.2.1 Organisations Engaging with the Case Study II

A webpage dedicated to information about corporate engagement highlights that the disability centre had engaged with 11 corporations and one intermediary organisation called Cross-sector Connections. Six of the eleven corporate relationships were from the banking and finance industry. The remaining corporations were from industries such as real-estate and property, legal services, information technology sector and the transport industry. See Figure 5.3.
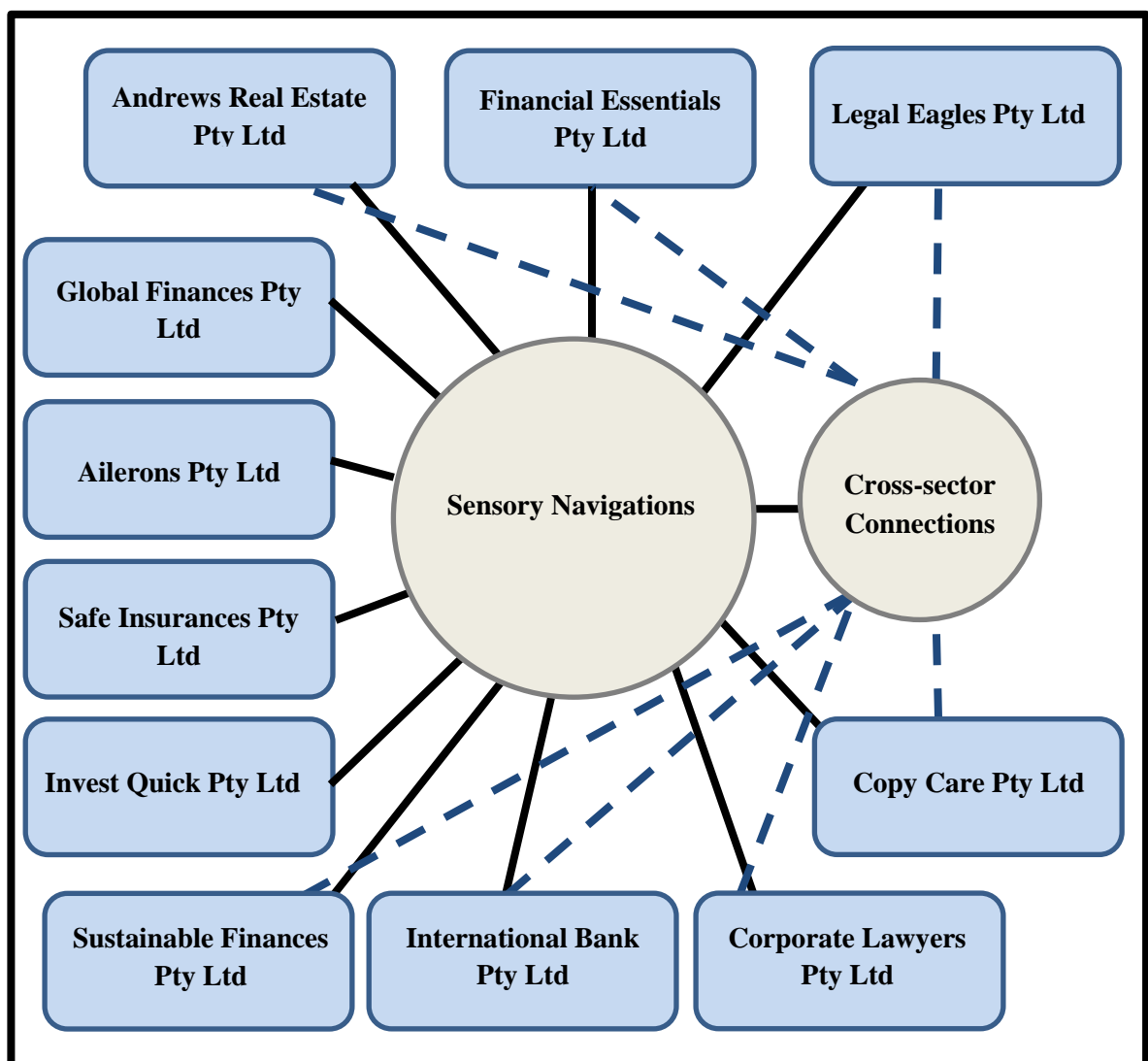

Figure 5.3 Graphic Representations of Sensory Navigations' Corporate Partners

While eleven partners were mentioned on the centre's website, one of those corporations – Finance Essentials Pty Ltd – appeared to more prominent. In the news

and activities page for the year 2011, the reference to Finance Essentials Pty Ltd exceeded the number of references made to the centre's other corporate partners. Additionally, in the 2012 events and activities webpage, Finance Essentials Pty Ltd became the sole corporation which Sensory Navigations made reference too. This suggests that the disability centre's relationship with Finance Essentials Pty Ltd had grown and deepened beyond the scope of its other relationships with the private sector. The webpage also suggests that the centre had targeted the financial company as the main agent in its cross-sector engagement strategy.

The eleven corporations which the centre reported to have engaged with all appear to be corporate partners of the intermediary. In fact, Sensory Navigations did not seem to have corporate relationships that were outside the scope of the intermediary's private sector network. Thus, it appears that Sensory Navigations developed its relationships with the private sector through its connections and engagement with Cross-sector Connections. This could suggest that Sensory Navigations had found value in Cross-sector Connections' corporate networks.

Sensory Navigations had engaged with the private sector via the intermediary's donation, networking and volunteering services. Specifically, the corporate partners appear to have administered their capital donations to Sensory Navigations through Cross-sector Connections. These were sizeable donations administered to fund house and garden renovations at the centre. Cross-sector Connections also managed and facilitated volunteering events between corporations and the NGO. These events were also focused on home and garden renovations and maintenance. In particular, they invited corporate volunteers to repaint homes which accommodate and cater to adults with a disability. Additionally, they invited the volunteers to maintain the gardens which surround Sensory Navigations.

Cross-sector Connections covered the recruitment of corporate volunteers, the delivery of safety instructions and disclaimers and the facilitation and co-ordination of the renovations at the centre. Sensory Navigations, on the other hand, informed the corporate volunteers of the centre's mission and purpose and how they were supporting the NGOs objectives. Thus, it seemed that Cross-sector Connections managed the processes which were not part of the core services of the disability centre.

Sensory Navigations also participated in networking events that were organised and managed by Cross-sector Connections. This could suggest that, in addition to its participation in the fundraising and volunteering programs, the disability centre was also keen to engage with the intermediary and its private sector network about its mission and purpose

Finance Essentials Pty Ltd

Finance Essentials Pty Ltd is a financial insurance and security company, located in Sydney, New South Wales, Australia. Its services provide security to financial lenders against the loss of income associated with loan and mortgage schemes. The company does this by insuring against the event that borrowers cannot pay back the full amount owing on their loans. Additionally, Finance Essentials Pty Ltd also offers extra security to lenders through programs which support borrowers through the financial and emotional stress of managing mortgage loans repayments. Some of these services include managing repayment and refinancing arrangements, providing advice about when to seek financial counselling and support, and the modification of loan and repayment conditions for borrowers.

The corporation's ethical and philanthropic CSR initiatives appear to be aligned with its finance and housing focus. More specifically, the corporation appears to have targeted its support towards community organisations which provide housing and accommodation to people in need. Additionally, their initiatives also appear to be focused on supporting NGOs which can provide counselling and emotional support to people who are experiencing financial difficulties. They also have participated in mentoring activities with high school students about money and financial matters.

To fulfil these initiatives, Finance Essentials Pty Ltd had partnered with several different organisations. Among these were two intermediary broker NGOs which facilitated engagement and connections between the corporate sector and the community sector. The two intermediary NGOs which Finance Essentials Pty Ltd had partnered with included Cross-sector Connections and Bright Futures. Donald's statement below highlights the brokered connection between Sensory Navigations and Finance Essentials Pty Ltd.

> That's how we got in touch with Sensory Navigations in the first place…the brilliant thing about Cross-sector Connections is its reach because we're a

> small arm of a global company … [The links that Cross-sector Connections have] gives us the ability to participate…and it's brilliant because we want to participate and … what we can contribute … is substantial so that's why I think the [three-way partnership] works well..[It] is mutually beneficial to all three. [Donald – Finance Essentials Pty Ltd, Appreciative Inquiry Forum]

The statement above indicates that Cross-sector Connections facilitates linkages between Finance Essentials Pty Ltd and local community organisations. Bright Futures, on the other hand, also facilitated corporate-community connections. However, those connections were concentrated on mentoring programs where corporate employees could support school students with their learning and educational needs.

In addition to its engagement with the Intermediary NGOs, the finance company also held partnerships with three other community organisations. Two of those organisations, called here Sensory Navigations and Youth Lodgings, were focused on providing housing and accommodation support to individuals in need. A detailed organisational profile of Sensory Navigations is included in the section above. Specifically, this NGO provided accommodation and residential care to adults with multiple disabilities. In contrast, Youth Lodgings, provided accommodation to young adults who had experienced mental health issues or who had experienced some sort of social disadvantage. Finance Essentials Pty Ltd sponsored these organisations and appeared to engage with them for housing maintenance needs. The third community organisation which Finance Essentials Pty Ltd had partnered with was Mentabiliity. This community organisation provided counselling support to individuals who sought their services. The company referred its borrower clients to Mentability if they had experienced any emotional or financial stress associated with their mortgage loan repayments. Financial Essentials also provided funding support to this NGO to support the ongoing nature of its counselling services.

Cross-sector Connections

Cross-sector Connections, mentioned above, is an intermediary NGO, located in Sydney, New South Wales Australia that is focused on brokering connections between the private-sector and the third-sector. This brokerage occurs through the provision of its corporate-community facilitation services where its corporate partners are connected with its community partners through the provision of

engagement services. Some of its corporate facilitation services include workplace giving programs, volunteering programs and network and engagement programs.

The workplace giving programs provide opportunities for employees of corporations to give to the community through regular or one off donations from their take home pay. Campaign materials are provided to interested corporate partners to help them raise awareness about the community giving initiative and how staff can become involved. In contrast, the intermediaries volunteering programs provide opportunities for corporate employees to donate their time to participate in community activities and projects. Donald, from Finance Essentials Pty Ltd, describes his experience at a corporate volunteering event which was run by Cross-sector Connections and Sensory Navigations:

> We started doing that last year and… I attended that [volunteering event at Sensory Navigations]. There were residents there all day participating or getting involved in the sense that they were around and people could talk to them and they could talk to people. So that's another testament, I guess to our relationship in that it's fully integrated through bringing the residents in. …Given their sensory situation…They're not just on the sidelines watching. [Donald – Finance Essentials Pty Ltd, Appreciative Inquiry Forum]

The various programs run by Cross-sector Connections cater to the various skills, experience and capabilities of corporate staff. They include activities such as physical and labour-based projects such as gardening and home maintenance for those in need, and social engagement initiatives such as mentoring and coaching programs.

The third facilitative service offered by the intermediary included its networking and engagement initiatives. There appears to be two different types of engagement initiatives. The first aims to encourage employees of different corporations to connect with each other and to share knowledge about how they encouraged staff involvement in the intermediary's giving, volunteering and network-based programs. The second type of engagement initiative was a learning forum where representatives from corporations and community organisations would be invited to share their knowledge and experience about specific focus areas.

The intermediary NGO has over 23 corporate partners from industries such as banking, finance and accounting, information technology, pharmaceuticals, energy, law and insurance. These partners are listed prominently on the organisations

website. In contrast, the community organisations which the NGO partners with are less prominent on the Intermediary's website.

5.2.2 Recruitment of Organisations in Case Study II

Like Creative Minds, Sensory Navigations was also a community partner of the Intermediary NGO, Cross-sector Connections. An employee of Cross-sector Connections offered to forward the invitation to a few of its community partners which might be interested in the research, and would have the time and resources to participate.

Thus, the decision about who to forward the invitation to participate in the research was made, according to the views of the perspectives of Cross-sector Connections. Sensory Navigations was a recipient of that invitation and the CEO made contact with me about the project. It was decided that a meeting would be set up to discuss the research further. That meeting was held between the CEO of the NGO and me. It was focused on exploring the reflective learning proposal and how that proposal could be modified to suit the aims and objectives of the disability centre.

The CEO made a decision that they wanted to participate in an appreciative inquiry focused discussion to further support the development of its relationship with Finance Essentials Pty Ltd. However, the relationship it had with Finance Essentials Pty Ltd was to a large extent brokered and facilitated by Cross-sector Connections. Due to this multi-stakeholder relationship, a decision was made to hold an appreciative inquiry focused discussion between Sensory Navigations, Cross-sector Connections and Finance Essentials Pty Ltd.

From the recruitment of the disability centre, it was evident that a strong division of power existed between the CEO of the organisation and the other employees, volunteers and consumers of the organisation. Specifically, it appeared that the centre was guided largely, based on the views and opinions of the CEO. This could be inferred from the manner in which decisions were made about the centre's participation in the project. For instance, decisions about how the organisation would participate and who in the organisation would participate, were made by the CEO alone. Other employees, volunteers and consumers in Sensory Navigations were not

included in those decision processes. Thus, this suggests that the organisation was hierarchical in the way it was managed and strategically run.

The CEO and I discussed who in Cross-sector Connections and who in Finance Essentials Pty Ltd might like to take part in the project. An invitation to participate in an appreciative inquiry style discussion was forwarded to those individuals. Each of those recipients accepted the invitation, and a forum was set up on the premises of Finance Essentials Pty Ltd to appreciate the strengths of the relationship and how those participants would like that relationship to develop.

5.2.3 Reflective Learning Program

The CEO from Sensory Navigations decided that it wanted to participate in an appreciative inquiry style discussion with its corporate partner: Finance Essentials Pty Ltd and the Intermediary NGO: Cross-sector Connections. This learning design is featured in Figure 5.4
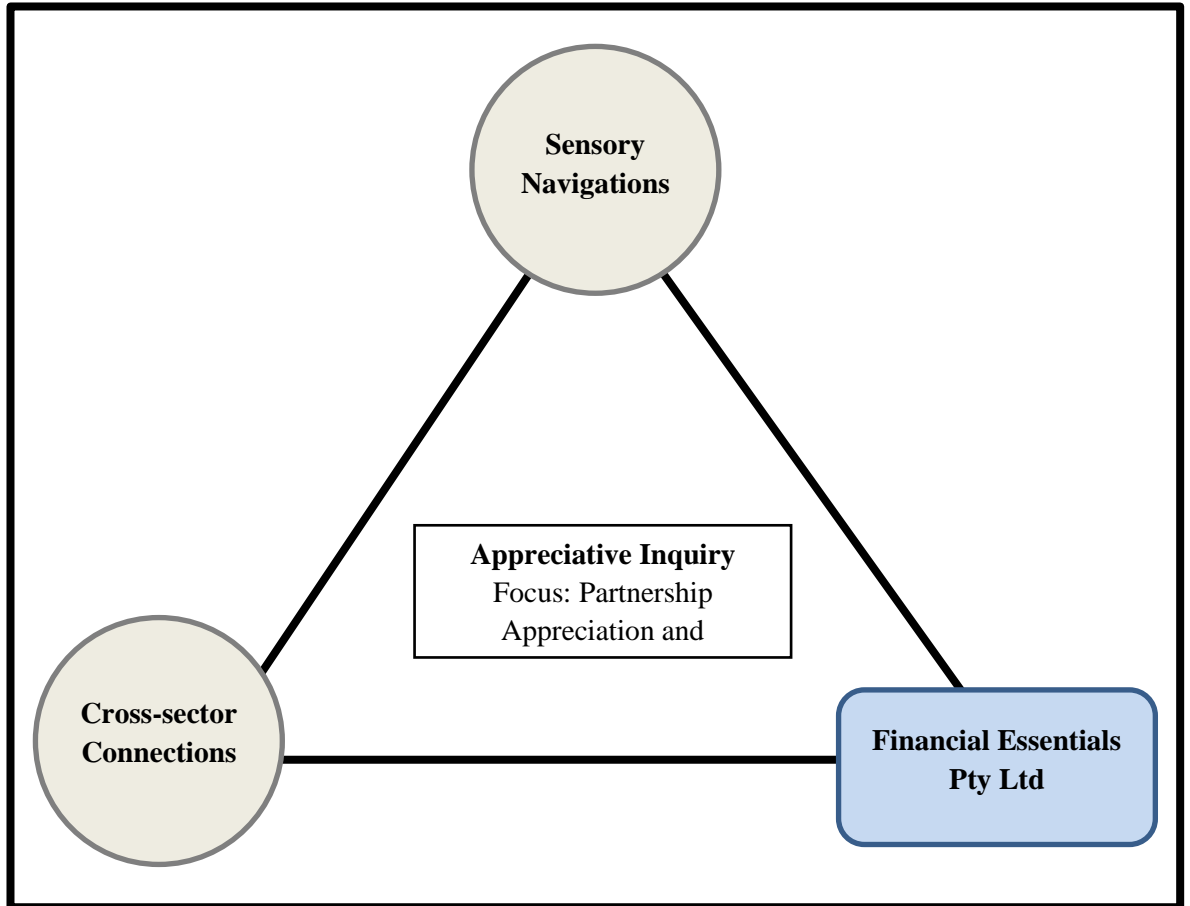
Figure 5.4 Sensory Navigations Reflective Learning Design

The appreciative inquiry style discussion was conducted with the CEO of Sensory Navigations, a partnership manager from the intermediary NGO and a communications and community engagement manager from Finance Essentials Pty Ltd. The discussion was focused on appreciating the strengths of the relationship and exploring how those organisations could engage with each other in the future.

The appreciative inquiry discussion in Sensory Navigations core project seemed to provide a space for the NGO to appreciate the relationship it held with Cross-sector Connections and Finance Essentials Pty Ltd. It also opened a space for the NGO to brainstorm future engagement possibilities between the three organisations.

The strength-based focus of the discussion seemed to encourage Sensory Navigations to reflect on how the tri-relationship had contributed to community-centred needs. Bella, CEO of Sensory Navigations, articulated that the tri-relationship had supported the NGO to meet the needs of the residents that consume the organisation's services and had conferred a form of social legitimacy to the NGO's

brand. In the context of the social services sector, both community and corporate support appears to have increased the demand for the NGO's disability services. This is reflected in the quote below:

> I'm now interviewing four parents for the first 4 houses. I mean that's a fifty percent increase and it's all based on what they have seen that Cross-sector Connections and Finance Essentials Pty Ltd have done at Sensory Navigations. I mean our group homes are amazing. They're all focused on sensory disability. It's just amazing and they talk about our corporate partners and community groups that we're involved with [Bella – Sensory Navigations, Appreciative Inquiry Discussion]

Bella's reflections indicate how corporate support, facilitated by the intermediary, had supported the NGO's community and additionally, the capacity of the NGO to attract new consumers. The language was community-centric in nature because it was focused on how the partnership had supported community needs. It was not focused on how the partnership had 'fixed' the corporation's socially responsible performance.

In addition to accommodating a forum for community-centric dialogue, the appreciative inquiry discussion seemed to have opened a space for the NGO to explore how it would like the intermediary and Finance Essentials Pty Ltd to support it in the future. In the statement below Bella had conveyed how she would like Cross-sector Connections and Finance Essentials Pty Ltd to develop a link with similar organisations focused on disability and sensory loss.

> I did visit the [disability services] organisation in London while I was overseas and met the CEO there and we had… an instant rapport and I'd like to actually promote what Sensory Navigations does globally…I mean Sensory Navigations is not in a position to start opening offices but with this cloud technology – as soon as I heard about all that – where you can have these links with other like organisations so that's one of – where I see too that possibility with Cross-sector Connections in that link too. [Bella – Sensory Navigations, Appreciative Inquiry Discussion]

The statement above suggests that the core project had created a space for the NGO to articulate how it would like to build on the existing engagement processes between the organisations. In this respect, the strength-based discussion could be thought to have accommodated the NGO's intent to engage corporations in community-centric agendas.

Thus, the strength-based approach of the appreciative inquiry discussion appears to have created an environment for the NGO to explore how corporations had met

community needs. It also appears to have created an environment for the NGO to articulate how it would like its corporate partners to support it in the future. In this regard, the appreciative inquiry discussion could be thought to have opened a forum conducive to community-driven socially responsible management practices.

5.3 Case Study III: Social Support Services

This section introduces the third NGO – Vibrant Community Services – that chose to participate in the research project with the researcher. Specifically it explores the story of the NGO's participation in the study and the learning design with which the organisation decided to engage.

Vibrant Community Services is a large NGO, located in Sydney, New South Wales, Australia. It offers a variety of services to individuals and families who are unable to live independently on their own. Specifically, the community services organisation caters to people who are experiencing financial difficulties and/or who are experiencing difficulties participating in the broader community. The organisation adopts a person-centred approach to explore each individual's needs, and tailors an appropriate response to meet those needs. Examples of individual needs that are currently being met include mental health concerns, housing, accommodation issues, education, training and job support.

5.3.1 Organisations Engaging with Case Study III

The NGO's corporate partners were from a number of different industries. These included hospitality, music, energy, communications, transport, legal services, insurance, philanthropy and banking and finance. While there was a number corporate partners from different industries, the NGO had more partners from the banking and finance sector. This could suggest that the NGO might have been focused on securing monetary-based relationships over the other types. See Figure 5.5.

The NGO appeared to have a number of different structured and unstructured engagement options which the private sector can choose to participate in. The structured options include: opportunities to choose to financially support the NGO's

programs and services that are congruent to the interests and values of corporations and their employees, opportunities to participate in its workplace giving programs where an amount, identified by an employee, is deducted from that employee's take home pay each week, options to engage in corporate volunteering activities where employees of corporations can donate their time to participate in NGO projects and the unstructured options include opportunities which arise from discussions between the NGO and its corporate partners.
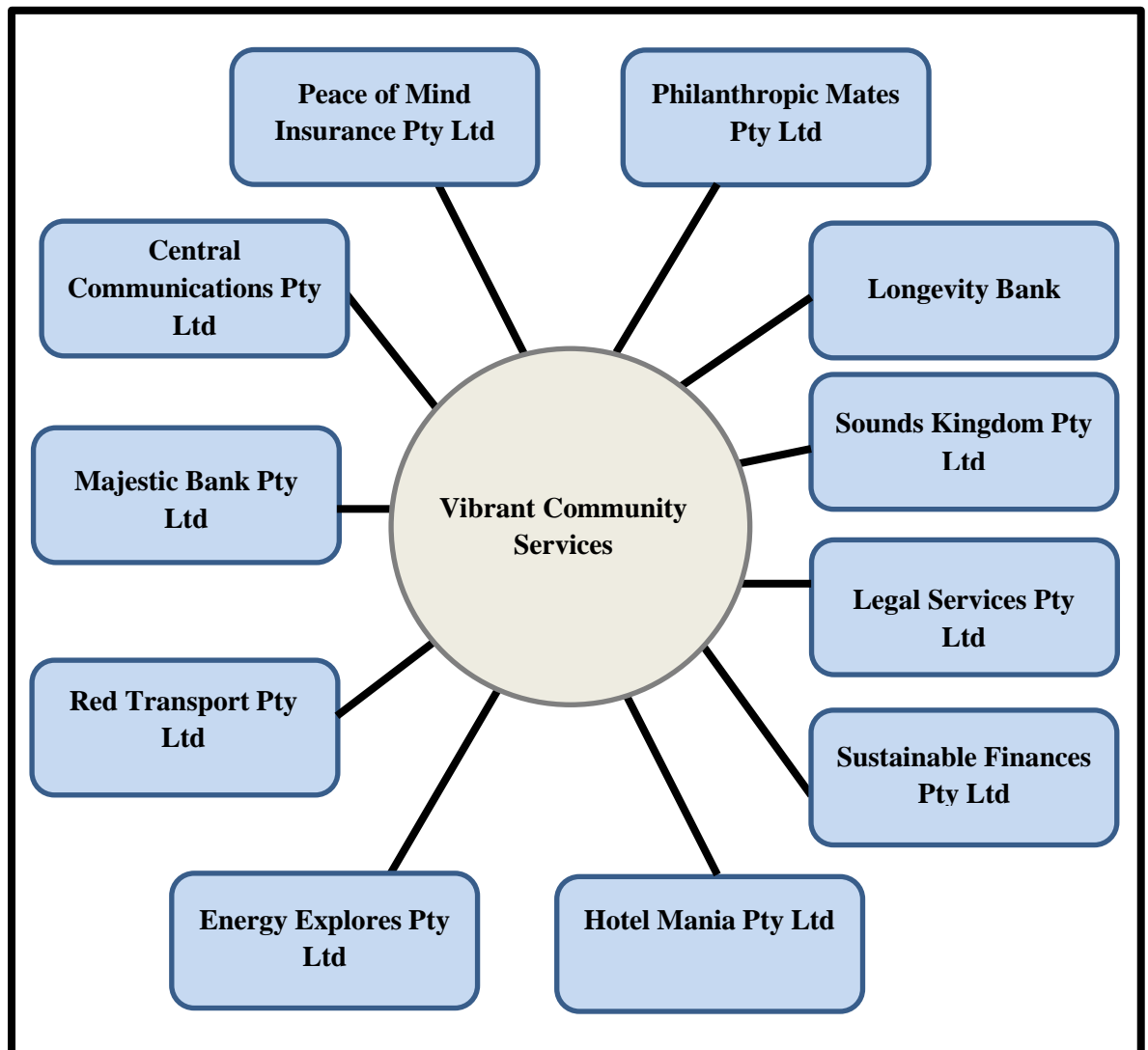

Figure 5.5 Graphic Representations of Vibrant Community Services' Corporate Partners

The organisation appears to have a department dedicated to the recruitment and management of its corporate partnerships. From an analysis of the options listed above, it appears that the engagement between the NGO and the private sector is

predominantly compromised of financial transactions. For instance, a majority of their structured engagement options are focused on raising capital from the private sector. There only appeared to be a minimum number of structured options which cater to the non-financial forms of corporate engagement. This could suggest that there is a dominant focus on developing partnerships to secure extra funding and capital for the NGO.

5.3.2 Recruitment of Organisations in Case Study III

Vibrant Community Services was the third NGO which engaged in a core action research project. A decision was made to purposefully recruit a large NGO because it could provide insight into how the size of an organisation could influence the design and implementation of reflective learning processes for cross-sector engagement. More specifically, its reflective learning project could offer some contrast to the reflective projects of the smaller NGOs (Creative Minds childcare and Sensory Navigations). Thus, after the childcare centre and the disability centre had each decided to participate in a core action research project, a decision was made to send an email invitation to a large services-focused NGO.

After three weeks, a partnership manager responded to the invitation and expressed interest in participating in the project. They were particularly interested in how the project could support the development and maintenance of its corporate partnerships. An agreement was made to meet with the partnership manager and the team of individuals that manager worked with. This meeting was dedicated to a discussion about the project, the reflective learning proposal and how the NGO wanted to engage with that design and alter it to suit the NGO's own needs and objectives.

In that meeting, the team of individuals decided that they wanted to follow the reflective learning proposal and were open to changing in the design based on their engagement challenges. I had a conversation with each of the individuals in the corporate partnerships team about how the NGO engaged with the private sector and the challenges associated with that cross-sector engagement.

5.3.3 Reflective Learning Program

The discussions with the individual team members were helpful to learn about some of the assumptions embedded in the proposed learning design. Particularly, it was discovered that the team members were facing a series of internal challenges in their engagement with the private sector. This discovery was important because it highlighted that the proposed learning design may not capture the needs and objectives of the NGO. This is because, the design was orientated towards addressing the challenges faced in the relationship between the NGO and its corporate partners. It was not orientated to addressing the internal challenges that NGOs may be experiencing in their engagement practices. Thus, those conversations were helpful to ascertain whether the combination of action learning and appreciative inquiry could fulfil the NGO's engagement objectives, which indirectly contributes to the understanding of NGOs role in corporate social responsibility.

Since learning about the NGOs engagement needs, it became apparent that the agreement to follow the proposed action research proposal would need to be modified to include a focus on the NGO's internal engagement constraints. This is represented in Figure 5.6.
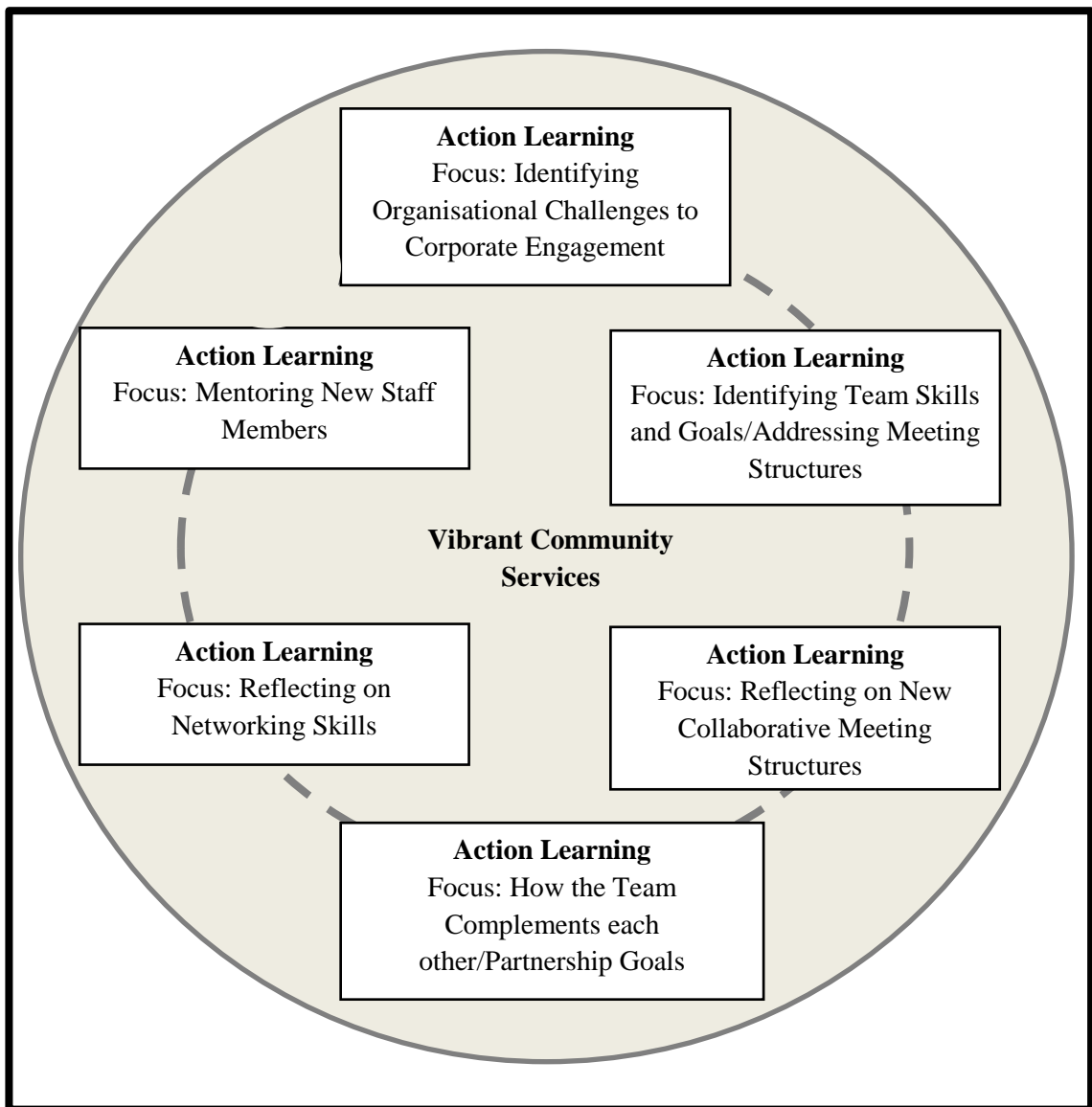
Figure 5.6 Vibrant Community Services Reflective Learning Program

The core project with Vibrant Community Services provided a space for the NGO to effectively organise itself for the management and development of its corporate partnerships. Particularly, it seemed to have supported the NGO to develop a set of internal competencies for attracting private sector support. This is reflected in the discussion below

In the Vibrant Community Services case, the action learning discussions provided a space for the NGO to identify the challenges associated with its own organisational capacity to maintain its existing relationships with its corporate partners and develop new relationships with the private sector. In particular, the NGO realised there were minimal issues associated with its external engagement with its corporate partners

and numerous internal issues associated with its ability to maintain and develop corporate partnerships. One of several challenges explored over a series of action learning based discussions, was the high level of organisational staff turnover and the impact that this was having on the participant's ability to fulfil their assigned duties. For instance, each member of the team was assigned a dual duty to maintain the NGO's existing relationships with corporations and to develop new relationships with the private sector. Due to the high levels of staff turnover, the team members had found it difficult to fulfil the relationship development part of their assigned roles. The participants suggested that this was because relationship development with the private sector was an objective which required a stable set of staff to attract, develop and foster new relationships over a lengthy period of time. This is illustrated in Candice's statement. Candice was a corporate partnerships manager in Vibrant Community Services.

> …everyone is saying its good [corporate] account management but that's all it can be...it's sort of very obvious and logical … you need to invest in the staff so that they can stay to do more and get the traction [they need] to do business development. Business development doesn't just happen like that [Candice – Vibrant Community Services, Action Learning Discussion].

The high levels of staff turnover in the NGO were attributed to a lack of engagement and retention processes needed to support the staff members' own professional development and career goals. This is illustrated in Andrew's statement. Like Candice, Andrew was also a corporate partnerships manager in the NGO.

> The problem is that we're given this responsibility and this task and this remit and then just go and do it. And there's no proper induction. There's no proper ongoing training. There's no proper career development plan. There's none of these things that normally engage and retain staff [Andrew – Vibrant Community Services, Action Learning Discussion].

After learning that lack of staff engagement processes had impacted on their own responsibilities to develop corporate relationships, the participants decided to set up their own processes to encourage the retention of existing staff members in the team. In particular, they proposed to reorganise some of their formal duties so that those duties matched the interests of particular individuals. In doing so, they discovered that there was a complementary set of skills and work interests in the team. For example, one member wanted to focus their attention on marketing and communication activities associated with partnership development. Additionally, other members wanted to focus on strategy development, networking and

relationship development. After discovering those skill sets the participants in the team decided to set up an informal co-mentoring process where they could support each other in the acquisition of new knowledge and skill sets for their own career objectives. Thus, the individuals in the team explored what they wanted to learn and some of the skills they wanted to acquire for their future careers in or beyond the organisation.

This informal level of organisation was implemented so that the team could encourage the retention of its existing staff members. The retention of staff was projected to create a consistent and stable environment for the formation and nurturing of new corporate partnerships, enabled by the incentive to remain at the organisation for a period needed to attract, foster and develop new connections with employees in the corporate sector. Thus, in this case, it seemed that the core action research project had created a dialogue inside the NGO about its own capacities for corporate engagement. Additionally, the project also seemed to have provided a space for the NGO to organise itself more effectively to manage and develop its corporate relationships.

Thus, a series of action learning type discussions were pursued. This is because that style of inquiry could focus attention on identifying the internal problems to corporate engagement. Additionally, that approach to inquiry could focus attention on addressing those internal engagement challenges in practice. Thus, the reflective learning journey with Vibrant Community Services included a series of action learning type conversations about addressing the NGO's internal challenges to corporate engagement

When considered together, the three cases helped to highlight the strengths of the appreciative inquiry framework in the context of NGO and business relationships. Particularly, the cases suggested that the strength-based approach was helpful for the face-to-face interaction between the NGOs and their corporate partners. This could be inferred as the approach was the only method that was utilised for the actual conversational exchange between parties. It was not chosen as a method of inquiry for exploring the NGO's engagement needs and objectives. This was particularly evident with Vibrant Community Services. As indicated above, the participants, together with the researcher decided that an action learning-based approach was

more appropriate for addressing the NGO's internal engagement concerns. Thus, while appreciative inquiry formed a fundamental component of the action learning proposal, it was not used in all cases.

5.4   NGO Engagement with the Action Research Cycle

Creative Minds, Sensory Navigations and Vibrant Community Services all had different levels of engagement with the action research cycle. Sections 3.2 and 4.2 highlighted that action research is a reflexive learning process that can be used to address a problem, issue or objective being faced by an organisation or by set of individuals. That process tends to follow a sequence of: planning, action, observation and reflection (see section 3.2 for more information about those processes). All three case studies illustrated the highly dynamic and emergent nature of action research because all organisations engaged differently with the components of that learning cycle.

Section 5.1 and 5.2 showed that the smaller NGOs used the focus group discussions to reflect on some of the issues facing their organisations. They also engaged with the planning phase of the action research cycle to develop strategies about how their corporate partners could support the NGO's community. Vibrant Services on the other hand, proceeded through approximately two complete iterations of the action research cycle in order to develop a series of practical strategies for fostering new corporate relationships. Section 6.2 provides some further insight about the development of those practical strategies.

These cases highlight that action research is a dynamic approach which changes according to the needs of participants. The processes implemented with the smaller NGOs suggest that the reflection-based components of the action research cycle were required more than the action-orientated components. In contrast, the case with larger NGO – Vibrant Community Services – implies that both reflection and action components were required to address that organisation's concerns. Accordingly, this could mean that various sized organisations could have different needs when it comes to praxis.

5.5   Chapter Conclusion

This chapter described how the three NGOs engaged with processes of reflexivity for their corporate partnerships. It introduced each NGO, and identified how of them changed the action research proposal to suit their own engagement needs and objectives.

Discussing how the two smaller-sized NGOs engaged in appreciative inquiry processes to support the development of their corporate relationships and in contrast, how the larger NGO engaged in action learning processes to address the internal challenges it faced to corporate engagement illustrates the potential of action research as a form of CMS praxis.

The following Chapter analyses the content of the core action research projects to understand how NGOs influence socially responsible behaviour in corporations. It uncovers a new frame of CSR which I have termed 'stakeholder-directive co-development'. This new frame offers an alternative approach to stakeholder-corporate engagement which could mitigate some of the fears of NGO co-option.

Uncovering a New Type of Engagement: Stakeholder-directive Co-development

This chapter presents an analysis of the process and content of the core action research projects conducted with NGOs in the field. Specifically, it analyses that information according to the thematic concerns explored in Chapter 2 and 3. It discovers that the regulatory frame of CSR does not adequately capture the type of engagement that occurred between the NGOs and their corporate partners in the projects. It suggests that the NGOs were not seeking to 'regulate' corporate behaviour. Instead, it identifies that the NGOs assumed directing type roles to facilitate connections between their communities and their corporate partners. This type of engagement has been called 'stakeholder-directive co-development' to recognise instances where stakeholders guide the facilitation of socially responsible initiatives. It also explores how this engagement approach might offer some protection against the potential of NGO co-option.

6.1   Challenging Stakeholder Co-regulation

The dynamics of the core action research projects were evaluated against the characteristics of stakeholder co-regulation. Chapters 2 and 3 highlighted that stakeholder co-regulation represented a process where stakeholders monitor corporate activities and practices and where they seek to influence those activities and practices in some way (Utting 2002). This construct depicted a process where stakeholders oversee how corporations meet a variety of stakeholder needs in society (Utting 2002).

The content and processes of the core action research projects with NGOs challenged how the literature conveyed community-corporate engagement for social responsibility. Section 5.4 provides more information about the degree to which each NGO engaged with the 'planning', 'action', 'observation' and 'reflection' elements of the action research cycle.

The study with the NGOs highlighted an alternative perspective about how NGOs collaborate with corporations. The NGOs were not looking to 'regulate' corporate activities and practices, in the way Utting (2002) proposed. Instead, they appeared to be directing the discussion about how corporations could engage with the NGO's community.

A fundamental assumption of the co-regulatory perspective is that stakeholders are concerned with the corporation's own stakeholder management processes. The decision to co-regulate corporate activity via conflictual or collaborative NGO-business relationships is motivated from a desire to 'improve the social and environmental performance of firms' (Utting, 2002 p.4). This assumption depicts a strong focus on the corporation's own processes and practices for social responsibility and how they can be improved. That focus was not evident in the three core action research projects.

The NGOs did not focus attention on the corporation's stakeholder management processes and practices. Instead, the NGOs were engaged in designing and developing proposals for how their corporate partners could engage or support their communities. This approach appeared to be evident in the way each NGO approached their corporate relationships. Creative Minds, Sensory Navigations, Cross-sector Connections and Vibrant Community Services all seemed to lead an agenda to engage corporations in the NGO's processes and practices. This is contrary to the approach assumed in stakeholder co-regulation where a dominant focus is placed on the question of stakeholder management initiatives in corporations.

The action research project with Creative Minds provided some insight into the nature of engagement between the NGO and its corporate partners. An analysis of the content of the reflective discussions suggests that the NGO sought to engage corporations in the resolution of its organisational problems and challenges. This is depicted in Malcolm's statement below. He says:

But Legal Services Pty Ltd, as I'd told, they helped us finance the kitchen… [And] they give us a few donations here and there… [for]…the blinds or the professional development. The member on our [management] committee, [Anna], is fantastic…She's sort of our direct link with the group itself. So she'll…take down a few notes… and [will] go and talk to Legal Services Pty Ltd about it and see what she can do… I also use them occasionally if I've got a technical problem or legal problem which I'm not comfortable with. I'll run it by them. [Anna] usually takes it to one of the partners and will come back with a quick answer for me. So that's helpful [Malcolm – Creative Minds, Action Learning Discussion].

Here, Malcolm states that the NGO liaises with Legal Services via Anna. She was an employee of Legal Services Pty Ltd and she was also a member on Creative Minds' management committee. In this position, she brokered a connection between the NGO and Legal Services Pty Ltd. Malcolm also noted that both he and Anna engaged Legal Services in addressing the legal concerns of the NGO.

The way that Creative Minds engaged with its corporate partner seemed to contradict the construct of stakeholder co-regulation. This is because the NGO appeared to be focused on involving the corporation in meeting the NGO's needs and objectives instead of being focused on 'monitoring' the corporation's stakeholder management activity. That intent was apparent in the NGO's pursuit to involve the corporation in addressing the NGO's legal issues. This action suggests that the NGO's intent was not to 'regulate' Legal Services Pty Ltd processes and practices. Instead, it suggests that the NGO's intent was to engage the corporation in addressing Creative Minds' concerns.

In addition to seeking corporate support with its organisational concerns, Creative Minds also appeared to be heavily involved in designing how corporations could engage with the NGO. This was evident through the NGO's applications for grants. According to Malcolm, manager of Creative Minds',

If different grants come up, I'll apply. A lot of the grants…don't cover…running costs so I'll have to think of a certain program to run [Malcolm – Creative Minds, Action Learning Discussion]

The statement above points out that there are restrictions placed on grants by grantor corporations. It indicates that grantor corporations will not cover the NGO's running costs. While this could be considered an example of how the private sector might dominate the conversation of NGO-corporate engagement, it still appears that the

proposal and design for how the funding will be used to support the NGO's community was largely left up to the discretion of the NGO.

Malcolm's views indicate that NGO-corporate engagement in the form of a grantor/grantee relationship was largely subject to the NGOs proposed design for funding. This would indicate, like the example before it, that Creative Minds was focused on engaging corporations to meet the NGOs needs instead of focusing on the corporation's stakeholder management performance.

The examples above suggest that Creative Minds' did not have a 'regulatory' intent to 'fix' the corporation's behaviour. Instead, it suggests that the NGO was involved in locating instances where corporations could support the NGO's community.

The way Sensory Navigations engaged with the private sector also seemed to challenge the view of stakeholder co-regulation. This was because it too was focused on involving corporations in addressing community concerns. This process however, was largely facilitated by the intermediary NGO, Cross-sector Connections. Bella, CEO of Sensory Navigations, indicates this in her statement below:

> That's right, [Cross-sector Connections] felt [that Sensory Navigations] had a good vision and that we actually articulated our objectives… [Cross-sector Connections]… approached me to just put in [a proposal for what]… I'd felt the residents needed. There was no limit to the funding... It was just purely my vision for if I'd had…a capital donation… Because immediately I said…[that]…we've got people moving into wheelchairs, we've got unmet need, they've being limited. They're not going out into the community because they're wheelchair bound now… and… our houses are not geared up for that… I put in a project summary… of what would flow from that and so [Cross-sector Connections] picked up on that and I mean I was blown away when I got this donation from Finance Essentials Pty Ltd [Bella – Sensory Navigations, Appreciative Inquiry Discussion]

In the acount above, Bella identified that Cross-sector Connections invited Sensory Navigations to submit a proposal for private sector funding. The open-ended nature of that invitation gave decision making power to the NGO to design how it would like the private sector to support its community. In this instance, Sensory Navigations was not focused on monitoring the private sector's practices. Instead, it was concerned with designing how the private sector could support its client's own needs. It had assumed a director-type role in determining how the private sector could support community objectives.

While the intermediary facilitated scope for Sensory Navigations to direct the engagement between it and the private sector, it also ran a set of volunteering programs that further brokered that connection. Fiona, corporate partnerships manager at Cross-sector Connections, indicates this in her statement about the working bees:

> The corporate volunteers can walk away from those [events, such as the working bees] knowing that they've contributed… So that's their little bit of legacy that they're sort of leaving [Fiona – Cross-sector Connections, Appreciative Inquiry Forum]

The working bees were developed in consultation with Sensory Navigations and they formed one of Cross-sector Connections' corporate volunteering programs. The working bee program invited corporate employees to assist the NGO's clients with the upkeep of their homes and gardens. Due to the number of residential houses the NGO managed, the corporate employees were frequently asked to assist clients with the painting and decorating of their homes.

The development of the corporate volunteering programs by the NGOs indicated that they had pro-actively taken the initiative to plan, guide and direct how their corporate partners could support their local communities. They indicated how the corporate employees could 'leave a legacy' in their organisations.

The examples above provided some insight into how the smaller-sized NGOs engaged with the corporate sector. It was apparent that those NGOs were largely leading the discussion about how corporations could participate in community initiatives.

That same type of leadership approach also seemed apparent in the larger NGO-Vibrant Community Services. It also seemed to be heavily involved in constructing proposals for how corporations could partner with it. Candice, a corporate partnerships manager at Vibrant Community Services illustrated that point:

> But the thing with Corporate Services Pty Ltd [is] their chairman wants to work with us. Generally, what he wants is what they do. However, what we have to do is engage the next level down from an operational perspective… [We have to focus on] how we are going to roll it out and how it is going to be effective. How can they engage not just their staff but what they call their customers who are sort of [their] retail outlets? - So all the delivery channels. [Candice – Vibrant Community Services, Action Learning Forum]

In this statement, Candice identified that the NGO had assumed a responsibility to plan how Vibrant Community Services could engage with all the different levels of their corporate partner. It indicated that the NGO had adopted a type of strategic approach to the management of their relationship. The questions articulated by Candice indicated a form of strategic thinking about how the NGO could make their engagement program meaningful to the different layers and networks of the company. Her perspective suggests that Vibrant Community Services was not concerned with regulating corporate initiatives. Instead, Vibrant Community Services was concerned with planning how the company could engage its distribution channels in the NGO's community program. That activity was representative of a type of stakeholder management of the corporation. This is because the NGO was planning how the firm could integrate its internal stakeholders into that community-based initiative.

The examples above indicate that all the NGOs in the study all had a similar engagement approach for collaborating with the private sector. Each NGO directed how their corporate partners could support the development of the NGO's community.

The analysis above suggests that the practice-based reality of NGO-corporate engagement is contrary to the focus of stakeholder co-regulation. This is because the four NGOs were not concerned with questioning of their corporate partner's behaviour. On the contrary, they were concerned with articulating how their corporate partners could support social projects. This approach seemed to have a 'directive co-development' characteristic to it because it involved a pro-active process for strategic community development. This was reflected in the NGO's initiative to envision the future of their corporate partnerships and their initiative to design how their partners could integrate into that vision.

This new development in NGO-corporate relations highlighted a need for a new construct to describe the engagement phenomenon. As the new approach involved directing-type processes for corporate social responsibility, the term 'stakeholder-directive co-development' is proposed. This process describes those instances where NGOs plan, construct, design and implement stakeholder management processes for corporations.

The discussion in this section had drawn on the content of the core action research studies with NGOs to conceptualise how they collaborate with the private sector. The analysis of that engagement suggested that NGOs were not seeking to 'co-regulate' stakeholder management practices. Instead, they had assumed management type roles to direct corporate participation in community projects. The construct 'stakeholder-directive co-development' was developed to capture this cross-sector engagement phenomenon. The following section draws on the analysis presented here to articulate what this means for the context of corporate self-regulation. It analyses how the private sector engaged with the NGOs and it explores the role corporations had assumed in their partnerships with NGOs.

6.2 Corporate Self-regulation

The previous section analysed how NGOs assumed a type of directive co-development role in their relationships with corporations. This section develops that discussion further by exploring how the private sector engaged with the NGOs and how the NGOs had participated in the development of community-corporate partnerships. One challenge associated with this analysis was that the action research projects were largely conducted with NGOs. There was limited corporate participation in those studies. For instance, only one corporate partner had participated in an appreciative inquiry discussion with Sensory Navigations. Thus, the analysis of how corporations had participated in the development of community-corporate partnerships had largely been formed from the accounts of the four NGOs: Creative Minds, Sensory Navigations, Vibrant Community Services and Cross-sector Connections.

While a majority of the viewpoints are community-centric in nature, they can still provide some helpful understanding about how corporations engage with NGOs. These perspectives could offer insights into how firms might regulate their own stakeholder management practices or how corporations might approach the self-regulation of their own community-based initiatives.

An analysis of the viewpoints of the NGOs and of Finance Essentials Pty Ltd suggested that the corporations had adopted 'reviewer-type' roles in their relationships with NGOs, where they would appraise the NGO's engagement

proposals. The role appeared to include defining the limitations of the partnership with the NGO, and evaluating and analysing the feasibility of the NGO's engagement proposals. There did not appear to be much input from the corporations in the design of cross-sector engagement plans. This responsibility was largely left to the NGOs. For this reason, it could be understood that corporations had assumed the role of a reviewer of the NGO's proposals for community-based initiatives.

The core action research project with Vibrant Community Services highlighted how corporations approached the development of their community partnerships. The statement below indicates that the NGO had assumed responsibility for defining and developing a partnership proposal, while the corporation had taken the responsibility for reviewing its feasibility and refining it according to the corporation's capacity to participate.

> I had five [proposals for one of our corporate partners] last year. I found it really difficult. And we would have the same conversation and it would be 'it has to be tangible, intangible' like [a] really fluffy kind of objective and it was like I'm actually nearly at a loss now. I'm at proposal number five and if you don't take this one I actually don't know what else to offer you anymore [Danielle – Vibrant Community Services, Action Learning Forum]

The statement above from Danielle, a corporate partnerships manager at Vibrant Community Services, suggests that even when the corporation did not agree with the proposal as outlined by the NGO, it did not take it upon itself to develop an alternative version of it. Instead, the responsibility for re-designing and re-developing the proposal, to the satisfaction of the corporation, was left to the NGO. It seemed that even though there was disagreement between the partners about the proposed design of the community initiative, the NGO was the organisation which assumed the responsibility for amending it.

It seems that this 'reviewer' role also encompassed a type of 'veto' power where the corporation could choose to disregard or reject the NGO's engagement proposal. This is depicted in Ellen's statement below. She illustrates how the corporation seems to have the final say about whether the proposal can proceed or not. She says:

> We're kind of restricted by what opportunities we have through corporate…it's hard to predict. You know, I could dream up all sorts of things but just because I'd like to do certain days…if there's no [corporate] support there then it can't happen [Ellen - Cross-sector Connections, Appreciative Inquiry Discussion]

In her statement, Ellen, a corporate partnerships manager from Cross-sector Connections, demonstrates that the NGO assumed responsibility for developing community-corporate engagement proposals. She also illustrates the decision making power of the corporation in deciding whether to support the proposal or whether to 'reject the proposal. This view indicates that corporation's reviewer role might also encompass a final assessment about whether to veto the engagement design for the community-corporate partnership.

This 'veto' power also appears to be prevalent in grantee/grantor relationship between corporations and community organisations. Creative Minds draws attention to this in the context of grant applications. Richard, the treasurer of Creative Minds, Says:

> I have got a list of [grants] we done over the years… probably about 80% of them have been 'no'. So it's not a [guarantee]… when we put the papers in. Chances are it's going to be 'no'. There are so many hands out for charity. You've just got to get the right pitch to them [Richard - Creative Minds, Action Learning Forum]

Richard's statement above indicates that a majority of the grant applications made by Creative Minds were rejected by grantor corporations. This demonstrates another element of the 'veto' power that the private sector held in deciding whether to support community sector grant applications.

The examples discussed above illustrate the type of power relationships which existed between the NGOs and corporations. For instance, the 'reviewer-based veto-type' roles those corporations adopted in their partnerships with NGOs suggests that those corporations still retained a high degree of control over their community-based relationships. One danger associated with that position is that NGOs, in order to win financial and non-financial support, might target their community programs towards fulfilling market-based objectives. More specifically, it means that the NGOs might market their community proposals to appease dominant corporate interests. Such actions could constitute a form of co-option because NGOs would be re-positioning their focus from the needs of their communities towards the needs of the market-place. This constitutes a very real risk under the directive co-developmental approach.

A case of co-option could be inferred from the comments from Danielle above. Her comments point to the effects of the unequal power relationships on the development of partnership proposals. While Vibrant Community Services assumed responsibility for designing and re-designing the details of the NGO-business collaboration, the company's consistent rejection of each design could be thought to have altered the scope of the proposal to fit with business interests. As indicated, the business partner did not really provide an explicit goal or objective for the NGO-corporate relationship. They did not 'actively' design and develop the proposal. However, an argument can be made that through the process of rejection and elimination the corporation was able to influence the actual design of the partnership proposal to suit or fit their own market interests. This example shows that co-option can still occur from the influence of that veto-type power that businesses retain within their collaborative community relationships. While co-option could be inferred from this example, the extent or degree of that co-option cannot be ascertained. This is because the NGO still retained responsibility for the re-development of the document and it is not known if or how that document was tailored to market-based interests.

While a case for co-option could be seen in the example above regarding Vibrant Community Services, there was still some level of resistance against the influence of market-based desires or interests. This is discussed in the example below.

One of the challenges raised in the second action learning discussion with Vibrant Community Services was the way corporate partnerships were managed by staff in the NGO. Each individual of the NGO's corporate partnerships team was solely responsible for managing several partnerships with the private sector. That division of work was found to be unhelpful because it stifled creativity in regards to problem solving. Candice highlighted that she was experiencing difficulties dreaming up a new proposal for one of the corporate relationships she managed. After some discussion about the issue, the participants, in the second action learning focus group, decided that they would implement team brain storming sessions where if someone in the team had a problem, then the team would meet to find a resolution to that concern. Reflections about that process in the third action learning focus group provided some information about how resistant the NGO was to co-option.

>That to me really made me think gosh, we've really got to help [Danielle] get out of the volunteering space because her [corporate] partners have become so heavily demanding in volunteering. There's one partnership … and that's all they do … so … that…to me, highlighted the need to pull [Danielle] out of that and as a team [we need to] understand that volunteering certainly is an offering that we have and we're very lucky that we do because of the size that we are. However, its only one of those things [that we can offer our partners] and we need to then focus on other areas, even workplace giving because it is an income stream … so that could be a first point of occasion [when talking with a corporation] as opposed to volunteering. So that came out of [the brainstorming session] for me – that we need to shift that mindset. [Candice – Vibrant Community Services, Action Learning Focus Group]

The statement from Candice above suggests that there was some resistance towards tailoring their corporate partnership proposals to market interests. The team highlighted that corporate volunteering was popular amongst corporations because it provided opportunities for staff engagement. However, for the partnerships management team in Vibrant Community Services, the organisation of those events was time and resource intensive, especially when considered in the context of the number of business relationships each individual was managing. In response to that concern, the team decided to alter the design and development of their partnership proposals to accommodate their organisation's needs. A focus was placed on engaging corporations in other activities that would be less time and resource intensive for the NGO. Thus, this example illustrates how some NGOs are still cognizant of their needs even in the context of market-based concerns.

Additionally, there is also evidence that NGOs do remain focused on their own social goals and objectives despite the veto-type power corporations hold over the administration of grant funding proposals. Malcolm, from Creative Minds illustrates this point in his discussion about the grant application process. He highlights, in the statement below, that he searches for support from organisations that are aligned with the NGOs own mission and services.

>Just because they're supporting one cause and you like 'oh, that's right up our alley – that's exactly what we're doing'. You look at the application successes from the round you put in and its nothing to do with that so you just shot yourself in the foot by going 'Opps!'[Malcolm – Creative Minds, Action Learning Discussion].

That statement above indicates that Creative Minds was focused on aligning potential funding opportunities with their own objectives and services as opposed to aligning the NGOs goals and services with the desires of the market-based financial

provider's. This example indicates another form of resistance the NGOs in this research had to market co-option. While a high risk of market-based influence still exists under the directive co-development approach, the NGOs in the research have demonstrated some degree of resistance towards defining their community projects through corporate interests.

The appreciative inquiry discussion between Sensory Navigations, Cross-sector Connections and Finance Essentials Pty Ltd offered some further insight into why corporations might be adopting 'reviewer' like roles in the development of their partnerships with NGOs. It seemed that corporations may not have had the human resources needed to facilitate engagement between the firm and the community sector. This is apparent in Donald's statement below. Donald was a manager in Finance Essentials Pty Ltd.

> There's a lot to a day and that's why for us, because we're three hundred and twenty eight people we don't' have the resources. We've got the budget dedicated to it but we don't have the resources to put together a day like that because it takes a couple of people. If you added all those hours up including the day itself, it probably takes a week [to organise] [Donald - Finance Essentials Pty Ltd, Appreciative Inquiry Forum]

The statement above indicates that Finance Essentials Pty Ltd had the financial capital available to engage with the community sector but that they did not have the human resources needed to manage and co-ordinate the engagement events. This might indicate a potential contradiction in the corporation's approach to social responsibility. For instance, the decision to set aside capital for community engagement initiatives could indicate a desire to contribute to community goals and objectives. However, the decision to devote very limited human resources to manage and co-ordinate such relationships could suggest an alternative agenda.

The limited human resources devoted to community engagement could indicate why corporations were not able to participate much in the design and development of their community partnerships. It seems that the community sector had performed a majority of the work constructing the community-corporate partnership because the corporate sector claimed that it did not have the capacity. This practice indicates that the community sector might have filled a void in the corporations own community stakeholder management practices.

Limited human resources in corporations for community engagement might provide some insight into why intermediary type organisations have emerged. An analysis of Donald's view above suggests that corporations may not have the organisational capacity necessary to manage its community relationships. This void might have created a space for organisations, such as intermediaries, in which to participate. Fiona's statement below indicates how intermediaries can contribute to the relationship between the private sector and the community sector. She says:

> Buts that's also because I guess we take on a lot of the responsibility around the risk assessment and running the tasks [because]… we've got volunteering managers who are trained in OHS and risk assessment and managing groups and that whole lot as well [Fiona Cross-sector Connections, Appreciative Inquiry Forum]

In this statement, Fiona, a corporate partnerships manager from Cross-sector Connections, indicates that the intermediary NGO assumed responsibility for managing and coordinating volunteer engagement events between the private sector and the community sector. The need for a facilitation agent to coordinate events between corporations and NGOs suggests that those capacities might have been lacking prior to the intermediaries involvement in the relationship. For instance, the limited human capital in the corporate sector for managing community relationships might explain why community-based intermediary organisations have developed skills and capacities to support a corporation's involvement and engagement with NGOs. The rise of the intermediary NGOs could be thought to resemble a community-based response to the limited cross-sector engagement capabilities of the private sector.

An analysis of the views of Vibrant Community Services, Cross-sector Connections and Creative Minds seems to indicate that corporate input might be akin to a form of evaluation where the firms decide to accept, reject, or offer feedback about the details of the NGO's proposed engagement plan. This suggests that the corporation's role in the development of community partnerships may be limited to one where they review NGO engagement plans and where they decide to offer 'feedback' about the proposed feasibility of the plan or whether they decide to 'veto' the proposed engagement plan altogether.

The insights offered by Donald from Finance Essentials Pty Ltd suggest that the reason why corporations might adopt 'reviewer' type roles in the development of

their community partnerships could be due to the corporations own internal human resource deficiencies. He indicated that the corporation he works for had the financial capital for community engagement but that it did not have the human capital to manage the development and maintenance of community relationships. This insight could suggest that the reason why NGOs are adopting directing type roles in the development and design of partnership agreements is because their corporate 'partners' do not have the human resources and capabilities to participate equally in the construction of the engagement proposal. The rise of the intermediary organisation could be thought of as a community-based response to the corporation's resource deficiencies for community stakeholder engagement.

While the insights above might explain the rise of intermediary NGOs and why NGOs appear to have assumed leadership type positions, the interpretation of that information has predominantly been reliant on the NGOs views and Finance Essentials Pty Ltd. Thus, the discussion above might be thought of to convey a potential insight only about the nature of community-corporate relationships.

6.3 The Regulatory Implications of NGO-directive Co-development

This section draws out the implications of the discussion above for the context of corporate social responsibility and stakeholder co-regulation. Specifically, it considers how NGO directive co-development might inadvertently contribute to the social regulation of corporate stakeholder management practices.

The discussion in Section 6.1 highlighted that the NGOs which engaged in the action research projects were not concerned with the question of their corporate partner's stakeholder management practices. Particularly, they did not appear to be concerned with 'regulating' corporate behaviour. On the contrary, the NGOs were focused on locating instances where corporations could participate in addressing community concerns. Additionally, they focused on designing and developing proposals for that engagement. This finding highlighted that NGOs did not have an objective to 'co-regulate' socially responsible corporate behaviour but instead they had an aim to 'co-direct' the construction of it.

While stakeholder-directive co-development could be considered contrary to the regulatory perspective of social responsibility, it still appears that the approach could still have 'regulatory' implications for corporate behaviour. This is because NGOs were still involved and engaged with corporate stakeholder management processes.

All four NGOs (Creative Minds, Sensory Navigations, Cross-sector Connections and Vibrant Community Services) appeared to be predominantly involved in co-ordinating one of the latter stakeholder management stages depicted in Preble's (2005, p.415) process model. Specifically, they appeared to direct the implementation of process 5, 'develop organisational responses' through their co-development of community-corporate partnership agreements and proposals.

The reviewer type roles that the corporations assumed suggested that the corporations did not have much of a role in the execution of 'developing organisational responses'. For instance, the NGOs assumed most of the responsibility for designing how their corporate partners would engage with the NGO's community. In contrast, the corporations appeared to have assumed responsibility for the evaluation of the NGOs engagement proposals. Thus, the construction of the community-corporate partnership agreements were predominantly devised and written from the NGOs perspective. This suggests that the development of organisational responses for stakeholder management were largely directed and guided by the NGOs themselves.

The insights offered from Donald could indicate why some corporations might not be equipped to 'develop organisational responses' for stakeholder management. His statement about Financial Essentials Pty Ltd indicates that the corporation had a capacity to advance the first few stages of community stakeholder management but that it did not have the capacity to advance to the latter stages of community stakeholder management. This was apparent in the corporation's allocation of resources. The allocation of funding to community projects seems to indicate that the corporation had assessed the community to have some degree of stakeholder salience. However the limited human capital dedicated to managing and developing community relationships suggests that the corporation was not equipped to fulfil the stages beyond the identification of salience. Thus, it could be thought that the corporation was dependent on the NGOs to inform, direct and co-ordinate the

development of its organisational responses. This finding suggests that the NGOs were key actors to realising the execution of the latter corporate stakeholder management processes.

Preble's (2005) stakeholder management process model was modified in Chapter 3 according to the four phases of an action research cycle: 'plan, act, observe and reflect'. In the simplified version of the model, the above analysis suggests that the NGOs were involved in directing the 'action' phase of stakeholder management. This is because the action phase corresponds to process 5 'developing organisational responses in Preble's (2005) model (see Table 3.1). Thus, in the context of the modified version, NGOs could be thought to be key actors in realising the 'action' phase of stakeholder management processes. This discovery suggests that the NGOs engagement with corporations had fulfilled an absent capacity in the corporation to 'action' its own communities stakeholder needs. In this sense, it could be thought that NGOs directorship had contributed to the realisation of community stakeholder management practices in the corporation.

Chapter 3 articulated that stakeholder co-regulation could be characterised as the degree to which stakeholders intervene or participate in the corporation's stakeholder management processes. The NGOs, while they had no intention of 'regulating' corporate behaviour, still appeared to drive the 'action' phase of the corporation's community stakeholder management processes. This was apparent in the discussion above which explored how NGOs were key actors in realising the development of an organisational response for community stakeholder management. It is for this reason that NGO directive co-development could be thought to have 'regulatory' type implications for corporate social responsibility.

The NGOs which engaged with the action research studies could still be thought to have collaborative-based relationships with the corporations they engaged with. This is because the NGOs held an agenda to work with the private sector to address the NGOs needs. In this capacity, NGO directive co-development could be understood as a type of NGO-business collaboration. It had an influential impact on the corporation's stakeholder management processes. This was apparent in the NGOs participation in 'actioning' community-corporate partnership proposals and agreements. The NGOs actions had influenced the corporations own stakeholder

management processes for social responsibility. This was done however, with an alternative purpose to the one depicted in the literature about stakeholder co-regulation.

The literature on stakeholder co-regulation suggested that the purpose for stakeholder engagement with corporations was to socially police a corporation's current and/or existing processes and practices. Thus, the aim or objective for engagement was to influence the corporation's stakeholder management processes.

In contrast, the purpose for engaging with corporations in the context of stakeholder directive co-development was to attain community goals and objectives. Thus, the focus was not placed on a corporations practices. Instead, it was placed on how the corporation could support the NGO. The effect of that practice, however, still influenced the corporation's stakeholder management processes.

In comparing stakeholder co-regulation with stakeholder directive co-development it would seem that both approaches have an influential effect on a corporation's behaviour. However, a contrast of those approaches suggests that they both have a different intention for engagement: The focus in co-regulation is to 'fix' socially unacceptable corporate processes and practices. Conversely, the focus in directive co-development is to negotiate corporate participation for the achievement of community goals and objectives

This thesis argues that the exclusion of stakeholder directive co-development from the regulatory frame of CSR would be counter-intuitive. This is because co-development, while it may have a different purpose, can still be thought to have an influential effect on corporate behaviour. For this reason, it makes sense to alter the understanding of the regulatory frame of CSR to accommodate a developmental approach. This research proposes a modification of the conceptual understanding of the regulatory frame of CSR to include space for those practices which may not have a specific regulatory intension but which still produce an influential effect on corporate stakeholder management practices.

Therefore the conceptual understanding of CSR can be re-conceptualised in the following form:

CSR encompasses a plethora of stakeholder activity that has the effect of influencing responsible social, environmental and economic performance in corporations.

This definition removes the focus on an intention to regulate corporate behaviour and instead places it on how stakeholder activities can effect responsible corporate decisions and practices.

6.4   NGO Co-option

Chapter 3 highlighted that the challenge for this research was to understand how reflective learning could mitigate some of the risks associated with NGO co-option in the context of stakeholder co-regulation. The literature suggested that NGOs were at risk of losing their own identities in collaborative-based partnerships with corporations. This was because the increased level of intimacy between NGOs and corporations could create a type of social pressure on the NGO to align its interests with those of their corporate partner (Baur & Schmitz 2012). Additionally, it was thought that focusing too much on establishing and maintaining a collaborative-based relationship could divert the NGOs attention away from its social agenda and mission to regulate corporate conduct (Baur & Schmitz 2012).

This research project was unable to fulfil the challenge posed in Chapter 3. It was unable to learn how reflexivity could mitigate the risks of co-option in the context of co-regulation. This is because the research uncovered an alternative type of engagement occurring between NGOs and corporations. The analysis above described this engagement as a type of stakeholder-directive co-development where stakeholders assume leadership roles to direct and guide corporations on how they can address community goals, objectives and/or how they can participate in community-based projects.

While the research was unable to explore the notion of NGO co-regulation, the literature on NGO co-option still appears to be relevant to NGO-directive co-development. This is because NGOs are still working to pursue collaborative-based relationships with the private sector and accordingly, are potentially vulnerable to the relational social pressures articulated by Baur & Schmitz (2012). Thus, while the notion of co-option could be thought to relate to the notion of co-regulation, it can

also be thought to be relevant for the stakeholder-directive co-development approach. In the context of this approach, co-option could be considered as the degree to which the NGOs directing-type role is affected or influenced by corporate agendas.

One of the concerns about collaborative engagement was that the NGOs focus on their own mission and objectives would be diverted by a focus on building the relationship with the corporation. The NGOs in this research, however, did not appear to have focused too much on building a relationship with their corporate partners. Instead, they seem to have focused on the task of designing the proposals for community-corporate engagement. This was evident in the discussion in Section 6.1. Particularly, it became apparent that the NGOs were concerned with locating instances where corporations could participate in addressing community objectives. This focus suggests that the NGOs attention was fixed on their own goals and objectives instead of on the relationship between partners. Thus, the concern that fostering a corporate relationship could divert the NGO's attention from its own mission and objectives does not seem to apply much here.

The second concern about collaborative engagement was that the power relationship between NGOs and corporations could create some sort of social pressure on the NGO to align its mission and goals with those of the corporation. In the context of the NGO-corporate partnerships, it could be thought that the type of reviewer power corporations held could place pressure on the NGOs to alter their engagement proposals to suit the desires of corporations. There was some indication that this did occur when Vibrant Community Services had altered one of its engagement proposals according to the evaluation offered by the corporation. However, that feedback appeared to have been so indeterminate that it placed most of the power and decision making for re-design and re-development in the 'hands' of the NGO. In this manner the corporation did not enforce a specific course of action on the partnership proposal. Instead, it identified a lose set of 'limitations' for their partnership agreement. In that instance the NGO could still be understood to retain the responsibility for designing an engagement proposal. However, as stated in section 6.2, it was not known if and/or how that document was altered. The corporation's persistent rejection of Vibrant Community Services' proposals could have influenced the NGO to re-design the document according to what it thought were market-based goals and objectives. Thus, further investigation is warranted to

determine how the impact of that veto-type power in the stakeholder-directive co-development approach could potentially co-opt NGO interests.

Despite the reservations above about the power relationships between NGOs and corporations, Section 6.1 and 6.2 suggest that the corporations had not dominated the conversation about the construction of their partnerships with NGOs. On the contrary, the NGOs seemed to be the ones which had dominated the discussion about how corporations could participate in addressing community objectives. For this reason, it could be interpreted that the risk of co-option was somewhat mitigated by the strong directing-type roles the NGOs adopted.

This section addressed the theme of co-option in the context of NGO directive co-development. It discovered that the co-option risk could be somewhat mitigated by the task-centred approach NGOs adopted in their pursuit of corporate partnerships. The following section builds on this discussion to suggest how the directive co-development approach can strategically mitigate the risk of co-option.

6.5   Mitigating Co-option

This research seems to have captured an alternative paradigm of how stakeholders engage with the construct of CSR. The three core action research projects with the NGOs had challenged the regulatory frame depicted in Utting's (2002) perspective. Specifically, it was discovered that the NGOs were not focused on improving corporate behaviour. Instead, they were focused on how they could engage corporations in attaining community-defined goals and objectives. This alternative frame defined as 'stakeholder-directive co-development holds a developmental focus instead of a regulatory one. Instead of placing a focus on the corporation's social performance, the frame seems to have placed an emphasis on the performance for the community's social needs. This was discovered in the core projects with the NGOs. For instance, each NGO was concerned with how corporate support and resources could enhance the capacity of the NGO to fulfil its social goals and objectives (See section 6.1). Thus, the focus in those NGOs was on how corporate support could enhance community social performance.

The emphasis placed on community goals in the directed co-development frame could offer an alternative perspective for understanding how stakeholders engage with the context of CSR. Particularly, it could offer a more pro-active view of stakeholder engagement with CSR instead of a reactive based one.

The regulatory notion depicted in Utting's (2002) conceptualisation of CSR is informed from a reactive disposition. This is because the frame explores how stakeholders can correct the social and environmental performance of firms. This focus could be thought to contain a reactive stance as it is concerned with the fixing of a firms' past performance. Stakeholder engagement is viewed from a reaction to socially unacceptable forms of corporate behaviour. For instance, the will to improve irresponsible behaviour denotes a reactive disposition to fix that which has occurred. Thus, there is a historic disposition to the regulatory construct.

Conversely, the directive co-development frame views stakeholder engagement through a pro-active stance. This is because it contains a developmental disposition that is orientated towards the future. The stakeholder's will to develop and design how corporations can participate in achieving community goals denotes a focus that is not concerned with the past, but one that is concerned with the future. In this sense, directive co-development could be thought to contain a pro-active connotation to it. Utting's (2002) framework has been altered below to include the addition of a developmental paradigm of stakeholder directive co-development.

In the context of the regulatory frame of CSR, this research sought to uncover how the risks of co-option could be mitigated through reflective practice. Instead, what it uncovered was an alternative paradigm that could seemingly offer some protection against NGO/community co-option. The different focus in the approach could be thought to be a reason for why some protection could be conferred to NGOs

The shift of focus from what the corporation is doing wrong to how the corporation can assist community goals and objectives could offer some protection against the risks of NGO co-option. For instance, the concerns in the literature about co-option suggest that there is a risk of the NGOs loosing sight of their own social goals and agenda (Baur & Schmitz 2012). It was believed that the social pressures to build a relationship with the firm might distract the NGOs from re-affirming their views and

opinions about how the corporation can be socially responsible (Baur & Schmitz 2012).

Additionally, it was thought that the need for corporate resources could sway the NGO to adopt business-centric perspectives (Baur & Schmitz 2012). These concerns seem to be mitigated by the shift of focus in the frame of stakeholder-directive co-development. The view associated with that frame seems to re-affirm the NGOs own mission, goals and objectives throughout the development and maintenance of the NGO-corporate partnership. This purpose driven approach can keep community goals as the reason for guiding and co-directing how corporations can participate in achieving community objectives. This purposeful focus on community-centric concerns could be thought to help mitigate the potential risk of NGOs conforming to business-centric views. This is because the focus orientates discourse toward community perspectives, which is in contrast to the discursive focus in the regulatory frame which orientates language to the context of the corporation. Thus, the shift from conceptualising corporate social performance to a type of community social performance would appear to have contributed to a discursive change from the language of the corporation to the language of the community.

Such a discursive focus could be thought to confer some protection against the co-option of the NGOs goals and objectives in the context of private-sector partnerships. This is because it negates the concern of NGOs losing focus on their own social mission and agenda in the context of their relationships with corporations.

When considered in this way, the frame of stakeholder-directive co-development could challenge the existing problem-orientated understanding of corporate social responsibility. Chapter 2 drew a connection between the regulatory frame of CSR and the critical frame of CMS. In particular, each frame was concerned with problematising the existing and current practices of corporations. Additionally, it was discovered that each frame was concerned with deconstructing those practices which do not accommodate a diverse variety of stakeholder needs. The consistencies between the frames offered scope to suggest that Utting's (2002) regulatory perspective of CSR was more aligned towards a critique disposition.

While the regulatory perspective could be thought to adhere to more of a negative disposition, it seemed that the application of that perspective in the field may not be

advancing the kind of change stakeholder's desire. For instance, the concerns about co-option seem to counter the objective for advancing socially and environmentally responsible corporate practice. The problem-orientated view of this approach may be countering the very aim for which the approach had been drawn on to achieve.

Paradoxically, it is interesting to note that the alternative approach, stakeholder-directive co-development, which does not advance a problem-orientated disposition, may confer more protection against the risks of co-option than a problem-orientated frame. The community development focus in the frame of stakeholder-directive co-development in this research seemed to have kept the discursive focus aligned to community aims and objectives instead of corporate ones. In this instance, it seems reasonable to suggest that the traditional precepts of critical approaches may in some instances, not be advancing the kind of social change that they have been designed to attain. An adherence to problem-orientated views may in some cases be doing stakeholders a disservice. This is because the application of those principals may not in all instances return the desired effect for more human-centred systemic change. Due to this, perhaps there is scope to advocate for the broadening of the critical paradigm to consider also – a developmental agenda.

The action research studies with the NGOs highlighted how a developmental agenda could progress the deconstruction of corporate-centric processes in corporations. In particular, the direction conferred by NGOs in co-developing socially responsible practice indicated that there may be an alternative pathway for 'de-naturalising' corporate practices which do not accommodate a diverse variety of stakeholder needs. This developmental agenda deviates from the problem-centred heart of the regulatory frame of CSR by proposing an approach that serves the development and realisation of social and environmental outcomes. While this approach may deviate from the problem-centred heart of regulatory CSR, it may still serve to advance the social and environmental outcomes that NGOs desire. Accordingly, this dissertation advocates for the 'deconstruction' of the dominant problem-orientated nature of regulatory CSR to include also a space for a developmental agenda. This inclusion could give NGOs alternative approaches for the realisation of community goals and objectives in society.

6.6 How Reflective Learning Supported NGO-directive Co-development

The core projects conducted with Creative Minds, Sensory Navigations and Vibrant Community Services all seemed to have supported a capacity to direct the development of community-centric stakeholder management practices. In particular, the nature of the action research projects were such that they were focused on the task of advancing existing engagement processes in the context of community-centric goals and objectives. The inclusion of 'planning' 'action' 'observation' and 'reflection' phases in the core projects could be thought to focus the conversation on the actual task of community-corporate engagement. In this regard the core projects could also be thought to offer some protection against the notion of co-option. This is because both action learning and appreciative inquiry processes opened up scope for the NGOs to articulate what they desired from their relationships with their corporate partners.

The previous section highlighted the literary concerns about NGO co-option. It was thought that a focus on building a relationship with a corporation may distract the NGO from advancing its own mission and objectives in the context of its corporate relationships (Baur & Schmitz 2012). The developmental structure of the reflective projects however, would seem to help mitigate that concern as it focused the conversation on advancing future engagement projects between NGOs and the private sector.

It could be argued that the strength-orientated nature of the appreciative inquiry forums encouraged each party to focus on maintaining their relationships. While that focus could constitute a distraction, in the context of the literature on co-option, the change-orientated nature of appreciative inquiry also encouraged those NGOs to voice how they would like to see their partnerships develop. Sections 5.2.3 and 5.1.3 offer insights into the NGO's visions for their corporate relationships. Thus, while the strength-based focus of appreciative inquiry could be argued to encourage potential co-option, the change-orientated nature of that approach could also be thought to offer some protections against that possibility.

The second concern about co-option was the perceived power relationship between the NGOs and their corporate partners. It was thought that the corporations would exert a dominant social pressure on the NGOs to align their community-centred agendas with those of their corporate partners (Baur & Schmitz 2012). The action research design proposed in conversation with the NGOs could be thought to offer some protection against the dominance of corporate agendas. This is because the action research proposal had positioned the NGOs at the centre of the decision making process. The development of the NGO's action research activities had formed from the NGOs engagement with the action research proposal. Each of the designs had positioned them in a capacity to determine how reflexivity could be used to support their corporate relationships. Section 6.2 provides some evidence for this claim. The action learning program with Vibrant Community Services encouraged the NGOs to re-evaluate how they wanted their corporate partners to engage with their organisation and their communities. They found that corporate volunteering was time and resource intensive for their organisation, so instead, they decided to focus their partnerships on other community programs and activities. In this regard, the designs of the core studies were informed from the perspectives of the NGOs. This could also be thought to help mitigate the potential for NGO co-option by corporate agendas.

The core projects seemed to support the NGOs to direct the development of community-centric stakeholder management practices in corporations. This was achieved because the task-focused nature of the core-projects and the positioning of the NGOs as decision makers had provided some protection against the risk of co-option. Thus, the three reflective learning designs could be thought to have supported the directive co-development approach. This is because the designs supported the advancement of the NGOs objectives in the context of their own corporate partnerships.

6.7   Chapter Conclusion

This chapter analysed the content of the action research studies against the 'regulatory' frame of corporate social responsibility. It discovered that the NGOs did not have an intent to monitor corporate initiatives and practices. Instead, their aim

was to involve the private sector in the realisation of community goals and objectives. In this research, this process was called 'stakeholder-directive co-development'. It describes instances where stakeholders like Creative Minds, Sensory Navigations, Vibrant Community Services and Cross-sector Connections assume responsibility for guiding corporations in how they can support community needs.

In addition to exploring stakeholder-directive co-development, this chapter also conveyed how that approach could confer some protection against the risk of NGO co-option. Before this dissertation draws out implications of that knowledge for the potential of co-option in CMS, it is first necessary to articulate what a CMS practice could function like. Chapter 7 looks to the regulatory frame of CSR and the developmental frame of stakeholder-directive co-development to propose a practical turn on CMS.

Chapter 7:

Using NGO-directive Co-development to Reframe CMS

This chapter portrays how CMS can transition to a critical management practice. It responds to the concern that CMS has become too much of an analytical exercise, without influencing critical practice. The discussion in this chapter aims to elucidate how CMS can move from its 'studies-orientated' analytical focus to a practice-orientated construct that can 'de-naturalise' unhelpful corporate-centric initiatives in organisations. The chapter does this by exploring the methods NGOs used to engage with corporations, and how those methods can offer insight into what 'non-performative' and 'critically performative' forms of CMS practice might be like. It also makes the case for a 'developmental' form of CMS practice, which can address the limitations of the performative CMS frames.

7.1   CMS: Analysis to Practice

CMS offers a useful analytical tool to uncover instances where the corporate-centric notions of business infringe on community and societal needs and the environment. While it can be useful for this purpose some researchers have criticised CMS for being 'excessively academic'. There is a call amongst some scholars to develop the frame of CMS to include a practitioner focus (Foster & Weibe 2010). This dissertation supports that call and looks to the frame of CSR, the notion of action research and the construct of directive co-development to suggest how CMS can move beyond its theoretical frame to also include also a practitioner focus.

Alvesson, Bridgman and Willmott (2009) offered two reasons for the growth of CMS in universities. They suggest that the institutional pressures for academic integrity

and independence have challenged the pro-capitalist views inherent in business schools which favour the preservation of rationalist business thinking. They also suggest that a growing dissatisfaction with positivist views of management in business schools has created space for the emergence of an alternative paradigm of thought: CMS. While CMS has grown through popularity, the application of this approach to the study, research and transformation of business has remained largely in the academic space (Alvesson, Bridgman & Willmott 2009: Foster & Weibe 2010). This academic home which CMS appears to have occupied has attracted the attention of others about its contradictions. They highlight that CMS is not fulfilling its inherent aim and objective to transform businesses. Instead, they suggest that CMS has become an exercise for academic interaction (Alvesson Bridgeman & Willmott 2009). This view highlights the assertion that CMS has become an academic exercise instead of a politically motivated practice (Foster & Wiebe 2011).

Foster and Wiebe (2011) propose that CMS is not fulfilling the elements of praxis that underpin critical theory, which is a foundational element of CMS (as discussed in Chapter 1). Praxis can be conceptualised as an emancipatory practice which contains two elements: The first encourages individuals to reflect on the world in order to become conscious of those oppressive structural forms that constrain or limit the capacity of individuals to realise their own liberating potential. The second element of praxis encourages individuals to take action in the world in order to change those oppressive structural forms into non-oppressive ones (Freire 1996).

Foster and Wiebe (2011) propose that CMS is concerned with problematising oppressive forms of management which constrain human wellbeing. However, they also claim that CMS is less focused on actioning that critique for the reconstruction of an alternate business reality that caters to a diverse variety of human needs. This implies that the existing view of CMS, as politically motivated, pertains to a theoretically based activity rather than a practical transformative practice.

7.2   Performative Perceptions of the Corporation

The principles of non-performativity and critical performativity can inform how researchers analyse the context of management practitioners. Non-performativity is not sympathetic to the constraints faced by managers. It encourages researchers to

identify instances where human needs are subjugated to the needs of efficiency and effectiveness in corporations. Critical performativity, on the other hand, is more sympathetic to the contexts and constraints faced by managers. It encourages researchers to identify processes and practices that can be pragmatically changed in a manager's contextual constraints. These approaches have helped to guide the focus of CMS researchers in their analysis of business. While these concepts may have assisted researchers with the analysis of business contexts, it seems that they might also have the potential to guide how researchers could approach a practical application of CMS.

The discussion about performativity in the literature seems to have originated from Fournier's and Grey's (2000) conceptualisation of CMS characteristics. They identified that CMS studies had three common principles. These included: non-performativity, de-naturalisation and reflexivity (There is a fuller discussion of these in Chapter 1). Their portrayal of performativity suggests that CMS was concerned about those practices that supress human needs and desires in the managerial pursuit of efficiency and effectiveness. This view was later counted by Spicer, Alvesson and Karreman (2009), who proposed that Fournier's and Grey's (2000) view of performativity did not take into account the challenges and constraints faced by management practitioners. Spicer, Alvesson and Karreman (2009) argued that management practitioners would find it difficult to relate to non-performative forms of analysis as that would be too far removed from their work contexts.

Spicer, Alvesson and karreman (2009) offered an alternative approach which they called 'critical performativity'. This alternative was still concerned with those practices that subdue human needs and desires for organisational efficiency. However, it was also concerned with aligning the critique to the contexts and constraints that management practitioners face in their organisational environments. This form of performativity encouraged CMS researchers to produce less radicalised forms of critique to which practitioners could relate. The objective was to identify those instances in management practice that could have 'liberating potential'. Critical performativity was more orientated to producing research that was compatible with the amount of control and influence practitioners have in their work environments.

Critical performativity can enable research that makes a clear connection with the real constraints faced by practitioners in their business environments. Since the development of non-performativity and critical performativity, other CMS scholars have joined the conversation and have refined the strengths and weaknesses of each performative approach. This is reflected in Fleming and Banerjee's (2015) discussion about 'when performativity fails'. They suggest a resurgence of more utopian thinking that comes with more radicalised forms of critique. Their discussion appears to revert back to the non-performative perspective that was originally proposed by Fournier and Grey (2000).

This discussion in the literature about performativity could be thought to follow an antagonistic pursuit. This uncertainty about why each performativity frame should be utilised in research has been helpful to ascertain the strengths and weaknesses of each approach. That debate, while useful for uncovering the strengths and weaknesses of each construct, also seems to be limiting in the sense that it does not consider how the different ideas complement each other in a practical way.

While the critical analytical pursuit could be thought to have yielded important information about each perspective, concerns remain over how this pursuit could impact CMS researchers looking to action such principles in the field. Scholars who have questioned the academic pursuit of CMS research have called for it to have more practical implications for management practitioners in the field.

The existing debate in the literature about performativity could have harmful implications for researchers looking to action performativity principles in their research or practice. The preference for one type of performativity in the field could hinder the potential of CMS practitioners to fully influence a corporation's stakeholder management processes.

The tendency in CMS to find 'the' one true way to consider management processes and practices could have detrimental impacts for the effectiveness of CMS practice. This chapter argues for a shift in conceptualising 'performativity' in CMS. It suggests that in addition to determining the strengths and weaknesses of non-performativity and critical performativity, there is also a responsibility to ascertain how each approach complements the other. This is because the relational duality between the performativity frames could have direct implications for how

practitioners influence management practices in the field. This argument is explored below.

The principles of non-performativity and critical performativity could dictate how researchers might engage with businesses and organisations in the field. For instance, non-performativity might denote a practice that is unsympathetic to the constraints of management while critical performativity could inform practice that is sympathetic to the constraints of management.

If the tendency to locate one true type of performativity practice was evident in the field, then it could limit the capacity of practitioners/researchers to denaturalise unhelpful management processes in corporations. This discussion looks to the conflictual/collaborative NGO-corporate engagement duality (see Chapter 2 and Chapter 3) to illustrate how a universal representation of one type of performativity in the field could be detrimental to the practice of CMS.

7.3   Similarities between CMS and NGO Co-regulation

The criticisms about non-performativity and critical performativity in CMS seem similar to the criticisms about conflictual and collaborative NGO-corporate engagement in regulatory CSR. While the criticisms are similar, the difference between CMS and CSR is that the performativity principles in CMS have been used as frames for studying management practice, in an academic setting, and conflictual/collaborative NGO-corporate engagement in CSR have been used to actually influence management practice, in the field. Thus, performativity represents a form of analysis while conflictual/collaborative engagement represents a form of practice.

While performativity has largely been used as an analytical tool in CMS and while conflictual/collaborative engagement has been used as categorical depictions of practice in CSR, the criticisms about how they consider the context of management practice is similar. One of the criticisms about conflictual approaches in co-regulatory CSR is that they are good at highlighting what is 'wrong' with management but they are less able to offer useful guidance as to how to alter management practices to accommodate more preferred perspectives perhaps using

economic, social and environmental needs (SustainAbility 2003). This stance is not sympathetic to the constraints of managers. In particular, it provides scope for NGOs to adopt a more radical stance in how they view the processes and practices of management and how they consider the embedded power-relations that inform business operations.

This view of management is similar to the view depicted in the position of non-performativity. CMS scholars propose that researchers adopting a non-performative stance should consider instances where the scientific pursuit of management infringes on the needs of society and the environment (Fournier & Grey 2000). This view provides scope for researchers to adopt a more radical stance in their critique of organisational management. Like the criticisms applied to conflictual engagement between NGOs and corporations, non-performativity can encourage analysis that is able to locate what is structurally 'wrong' with management and organisations but it is less able at suggesting pragmatic recommendations that managers could implement to alter their immediate reality. In this manner, the stance adopted in the conflictual relations between NGOs and corporations and the stance adopted in the non-performative notion of CMS could be thought to be similar.

Conversely, collaborative relationships between NGOs and corporations are better equipped for developing and exploring strategies for socially and environmentally responsible management practices (Utting 2005b). This is because the increased intimacy in the relationship between partners can encourage a dialogue that is constructive for how corporations can improve their performance of addressing economic, social and environmental concerns. While this intimacy can support the development of responsible conduct it too can cause reason for concern. Some researchers believe that the increased level of intimacy can co-opt the NGO's focus for advancing its own mission and agenda for socially responsible practice (Baur & Schmitz 2012). The strengths of this approach are that it can support the development of strategies for responsible management practice but the weakness is such that the NGOs perspective may become co-opted to suit a corporate-based agenda.

These same criticisms have been made about the position adopted in the critically performative approach to CMS. There is a view that researchers adopting a critically

performative approach in their analysis might become too sympathetic to the constraints that management practitioners face (Prasad *et al.* 2015; Fleming & Banerjee 2015). The strength of that approach, however, is that it can encourage analysis that is mindful of the challenges management practitioners face in their organisations (Spicer, Alvesson & Karreman 2009). It is also mindful of finding aspects of management practice that can be constructively changed or altered. Thus, it could be understood that collaborative forms of NGO-corporate engagement and critically performative CMS are similar because they are both mindful of the constraints and challenges of management contexts.

Like collaborative forms of NGO engagement with corporations, the potential for co-option is also depicted as a risk for CMS researchers. There is the belief that CMS researchers may become too accommodating in their analysis of the challenges and constraints faced by managers. This can subsequently promote forms of analysis that can reproduce the discursive and structural *status quo* of management that subverts the realisations of social and environmental needs in organisations (Fleming & Banerjee 2015).

The view adopted in the practice of collaborative forms of NGO-corporate engagement could be thought to be similar to the view adopted in the analytical frame of critical performativity. Both seek to adopt a view that is more mindful of the challenges management practitioners face. Also both have received criticism about the potential for co-option. Due to this, it could be thought that the stance adopted in the practice of collaborative forms of NGO engagement with business is similar to the stance adopted in the critical performative frame of CMS.

7.4 Importance of Non-Performative and Critically Performative CMS Practice

The discussion above indicated that the views of management adopted in conflictual and collaborative forms of NGO and corporate engagement are similar to the views of management adopted in non-performative and critically performative frames of CMS. However, the former denotes a set of practices between NGOs and corporations, while the latter denotes a set of analytical frames for researchers.

Chapter 3 highlighted how the duality of conflict and collaborative relationships between NGOs and corporations had influenced how corporations self-regulate their own management practices. Figure 3.1 demonstrated the need to focus on both practices as the strength of each one complemented the strengths of the other in how they influence corporate behaviour. For instance, the strength of conflictual engagement between NGOs and corporations was such that it could influence how corporations observe and reflect on their own socially responsible processes and practices. Additionally, the strength of collaborative engagement between NGOs and corporations was such that it could influence how corporations plan socially responsible initiatives and how they implement them in practice. Together, both forms of practice influence a systemic macro cycle of social responsibility in corporations.

Advocates for a practitioner form of CMS could look to the duality of conflict and collaborative forms of NGO-corporate engagement to ascertain how the analytical frames of non-performativity and critical performativity could also take the form of a CMS practice. This dissertation argues that there is scope for the understanding of the CMS frames to move from theoretical perspectives of CMS analysis to actual forms of CMS practice.

The similarities in the view of management between conflictual and collaborative forms of NGO-corporate engagement and non-performativity and critical performativity in CMS offers scope to see how a practical application of the CMS frames could influence corporate practice. Forms of CMS research and practice that fall under the non-performative and critically performative categories could influence corporate stakeholder management in the same way that conflictual and collaborative NGO-business engagement approaches influence corporate stakeholder management.

Non-performative informed CMS practice could be thought to influence corporate behaviour in the same way that NGO conflictual engagement approaches influence corporate decisions and practices. This is because non-performative informed CMS practice could be thought to utilise methods that are not sympathetic to the complexities of the management practitioner. The potential strength of non-performative practice, like conflictual engagement methods, could be understood to lie in making public, socially unacceptable forms of corporate behaviour. Such

approaches could be thought to apply social pressure on corporations to reflect on their past behaviour and to alter it according to those advocated views.

Correspondingly, critically performative informed CMS practice could be thought to influence corporate behaviour in the same way that NGO collaborative engagement approaches influence corporate decisions and practices. The potential strength of critically performative practice, like collaborative engagement methods could be such that they can inform strategies for how corporations can address social and environmental needs. Such approaches could be helpful at providing guidance on how corporations could meet a diverse variety of stakeholder needs.

Non-performative and critically performative based practice could have the potential to affect corporate stakeholder management processes in the same way that do conflictual and collaborative based methods in NGO-corporate engagement. The similarities in the view of management between conflictual NGO and corporate engagement and non-performative CMS, and the similarities in the view of management between collaborative NGO-corporate engagement and critically performative CMS, has offered an opportunity to see how the analytical frame of CMS could develop to influence management processes in the field. For instance, conflict forms of NGO-corporate engagement could shed some insight into how non-sympathetic forms of engagement with business could impact corporate stakeholder management processes. Additionally, collaborative forms of NGO-corporate engagement could provide some insight into how more sympathetic forms of engagement with business could influence corporate stakeholder management processes.

This alignment suggests that conflict and collaborative NGO-corporate engagement could be looked at as a way to understand how the non-performative and critical performative frames might be actioned in practice by researchers. The similarities in the views of management between NGO engagement forms and CMS performativity suggest that the potential strengths of non-performative practice could lie in its ability to influence how corporations 'observe' and 'reflect' on their own stakeholder management practices. Additionally, the similarities between the engagement forms and performativity suggest that the potential strengths of critically performative practice could rest on the ability to influence how corporations 'plan' and 'action'

their own stakeholder management processes. If researchers look to the conflict-collaborative duality, it can provide some reason to consider why both performative forms are of critical importance for CMS practice.

The conversation in the literature thus far seems to have competitively positioned non-performativity and critical performativity against each other. This type of dialogue, while it may point to the strengths and weaknesses of each approach also seems to advance one perspective above the other. The implications of such seem to overlook the relationship between the performative concepts.

When considered from a practitioner perspective, it can be seen that favouring one approach above the other could be detrimental to the macro regulation of corporate stakeholder management processes in the field. For instance, should practice-based forms of non-performativity and critical performativity mimic how NGO conflictual and collaborative engagement influences corporate practices then reason suggests that the advancement of one approach above the other could lead to an unbalanced form of CMS practice. For instance, the advancement of non-performativity over critical performativity could produce the development of methods that influence how corporations 'observe' their stakeholder management practices and how they 'reflect' on them. This focus, while important may only impact one part of the corporate stakeholder management process cycle (see Figure 3.2).

Alternatively, the advancement of the critical performativity principle above the non-performativity principle could produce the development of methods that influence how corporations 'plan' and 'implement' their stakeholder management practices and not how they evaluate and learn from them. Correspondingly, this focus may be able to impact the development of responsible corporate management processes but may be less able to influence how corporations reflect on them. Thus, from a practice-orientated perspective it can be seen that the preference of one perspective above the other can negatively impact the capacity of CMS to influence the development of management practices that accommodate economic social and environmental stakeholder needs. The act of advancing one form above the other can deny the seemingly inter-connected duality of how those perspectives can be actioned to influence corporate behaviour. The complementary connection between

non-performativity and critical performativity as principles for practice highlights the need to critically appreciate both forms.

This dissertation argues for the importance of recognising how the performative polarities in CMS could function together in practice to regulate appropriate forms of stakeholder management in the field. This appeal argues that the preference debate in the CMS literature has a broader responsibility to consider the duality of the performativity forms.

7.5   Responsive Methods for Practice-based Critical Management Studies

While non-performativity and critical performativity can provide some insight into how researchers could engage with business contexts in the field, it does not denote the actual 'methods' of 'how' that might be done. The literature on the practice of regulatory CSR can help to provide some insight into this. The regulatory frame of CSR offers numerous examples of stakeholder engagement that mimics the principles of CMS. Taylor, Coronado and Fallon (2011), make the case to look to NGO-corporate engagement as a way to uncover the potential of CMS. They suggested that the practices NGOs use in their engagement with the private sector can uncover critical practice forms that CMS could draw inspiration from.

Fleming and Banerjee (2015 p.14) show support for that view in their recommendation for a 'public critical management studies'. Particularly, they show how CMS could expand to involve participation from other business, society and government actors. Their view suggests how CMS could move from an 'academic exercise' into a practitioner-based practice. They do this by considering how CMS might become engaged in an activist type activity.

For example, Fleming and Banerjee (2015) propose that CMS research has the capacity to engage in advocacy type initiatives as a way to pressure political and regulatory bodies to influence the private sector. Like Utting's (2002) regulatory frame, Fleming and Banerjee (2015) seem to be looking at how CMS can influence corporate decisions and practices via the social pressures applied by stakeholders in the field. One example they discuss considers how research centres and institutions

could 'petition legislative and political power holders' regarding issues of social and environmental concern (Fleming & Banerjee 2015 p. 14). Another example they provide shows how CMS could engage in awareness-based social campaigns and activities. These avenues offer a move away from the analytical understanding of CMS to an activist-orientated one.

Public-based CMS practice described by Fleming and Banerjee (2015) appears similar to the practices adopted by advocacy-based NGOs in their engagement with corporations. For instance, the call for engagement in advocacy and awareness-raising campaigns could be thought to be akin to the conflictual–based processes applied by some NGOs to corporations in the field. Thus, the recommendation proposed by Fleming and Banerjee (2015) could be thought to advance researchers somewhat closer to the co-regulatory space proposed by Utting (2002). This is because the call for activist-type research seems to position researchers in a practitioner space for enforcing responsible stakeholder management processes in corporations.

The recommendation for public CMS could adhere more to the non-performative principle of CMS than the critically performative one. This is because the authors support practices that retain some objective distance from the challenges and constraints of management practice. The use of petition and advocacy-type processes offers scope for researchers to promote more radical perspectives of management, than if they were to pursue methods such as collaboration. Fleming and Banerjee's (2015) proposal could be helpful to encourage the development of more radical activism amongst stakeholders of corporations.

The engagement processes NGOs use to co-regulate corporate behaviour can add to Fleming and Banerjee's (2015) proposal. Specifically, those methods point to a diverse range of practices that have been used by NGOs to influence business agendas in the field. The list of NGO-corporate engagement practices listed in Table 7.1 sheds some insight into how NGOs influence responsible stakeholder management activity in corporations.

In the context of CMS, those practices could offer useful processes that could be drawn on by critical management practitioners to 'de-naturalise' organisational processes which constrain human needs in corporations. The practices listed in the

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conflict engagement row refer to processes that are 'non-performative' in nature. This is because, if CMS practitioners were to apply those processes, they would still be able to retain some objective distance from the business and management contexts. Thus, the methods NGOs use to confront business could provide some specific practice options that CMS practitioners could draw inspiration from for non-performative practice.

	Approach	Method of Practice
Problem-based Practices (Reactive)	Collaborative Engagement	• Partnerships (Utting 2005a) • Collaboration and service provision (Utting 2005a)
	Conflictual Engagement	• Watchdog activism (Utting 2005a) • Litigation (Utting 2005a) • Consumer activism (Utting 2005a) • Critical research and public education/advocacy (Utting 2005a) • Shareholder activism and ethical investment (Utting 2005a)

	Collaborative and Conflictual Engagement	• Eclectic activism (Utting 2005a)
		  o Challenging managerial processes (Taylor, Coronado & Fallon 2011)
		  o Challenging managerial discourse (Taylor, Coronado & Fallon 2011)
		  o Broadening the managerial agenda (Taylor, Coronado & Fallon 2011)

Table 7.1 NGO Problem-based Methods of Corporate Engagement

The preceding discussion illustrated why it was important to have a balance of non-performative and critical performative forms of practice in the field. The absence of one form, or the favouritism of one form, can lead to consequences for the critical intervention in the four phases of a corporation's stakeholder management process cycle (See Figure 3.2). Thus, while Fleming and Banerjee (2015) and the third sector can offer some insight into processes that could ascribe to a non-performative characteristic, it is still important to consider other practices that could ascribe to a critically performative characteristic.

Forms of collaboration between NGOs and corporations can offer insight into practices which take into consideration the contexts and constraints of management. The processes listed in the collaborative engagement row of Table 7.1 could offer potential practice methods that CMS practitioners could draw on for inspiration for critically performative practice.

Taylor's (2010) research into the engagement between NGOs and corporations in the New South Wales mining sector demonstrated how NGOs could use both conflictual and collaborative engagement forms in their relationships with corporations. In that research study, NGOs collaborated with mining companies to develop proposals to manage the environmental impacts of mining activity. Additionally, they also pursued advocacy-based processes to hold mining corporations to account for social and environmental discretions. Thus, that project demonstrated how civil society organisations could use a combination of conflictual and collaborative engagement methods.

Taylor, Coronado, and Fallon's (2011) paper looked to that research study to uncover how NGO-corporate engagement could give meaning to CMS practice. They discovered that those NGOs, in their engagement with mining corporations, challenged managerial discourse and managerial processes and they sought to broaden the managerial agenda. Those processes were thought to offer useful methods that critical management practitioners could use in their engagement with businesses. However, because those practices were conflictual and collaborative in nature, they have been grouped under the notion of eclectic engagement.

Utting (2002) depicted eclectic activism to note instances where NGOs used both conflictual and collaborative engagement processes to co-regulate corporate behaviour. Eclectic activism and the processes of challenging managerial discourse and processes and broadening the managerial agenda could be thought to offer useful practice options for CMS practitioners that are looking for non-performative and critical performative corporate engagement methods.

Table 7.1 highlighted how NGOs engage with business to influence socially responsible stakeholder management practices. This table has been modified according to the discussion above to portray engagement options for non-performative and critical performative practice. This information is depicted in Table 7.2.

	Approach	Method of Practice
Problem-based <u>CMS</u> Practices (Reactive)	Critically Performative CMS	• Partnerships (Utting 2005a) • Collaboration and service provision (Utting 2005a)
	Non-Performative CMS	• Watchdog activism (Utting 2005a) • Litigation (Utting 2005a) • Consumer activism (Utting 2005a) • Critical research and public education/advocacy (Utting 2005a) • Shareholder activism and ethical investment (Utting 2005a)

	Critically Performative and Non-Performative CMS	• Eclectic activism (Utting 2005a)
		   o Challenging managerial processes (Taylor, Coronado & Fallon 2011)
		   o Challenging managerial discourse (Taylor, Coronado & Fallon 2011)
		   o Broadening the managerial agenda (Taylor, Coronado & Fallon 2011)

Table 7.2 Potential Problem-based CMS Practices

7.6 Developmental Methods for Critical Management Practice

The discovery of the 'new' form of stakeholder engagement in CSR has provided insight into a new critical intervention opportunity for CMS practitioners. Particularly, the 'developmental' paradigm of the stakeholder-directive co-development frame has exposed how co-regulation and CMS could both be limiting the capacity of stakeholders/practitioners to influence social and environmental change in organisations. This section uses the interplay of problem-based co-regulation and developmental-focused stakeholder-directive co-development to uncover new opportunities for CMS practice.

The new form of stakeholder engagement in CSR provided an opportunity to compare the problem-based paradigm of co-regulation with the development paradigm of the 'directive co-development' frame. That comparison yielded how different perceptions of corporations can lead to different stakeholder intervention strategies.

Problem-orientated perceptions of corporations in co-regulatory CSR have contributed to 'responsive' forms of critical intervention in corporate practices. Contrastingly, 'developmental' perceptions of corporations in 'directive co-

development' CSR in this research were found to contribute to 'strategic' forms of critical intervention in corporate practice. This premise is explored below. Specifically, the discussion explains how the 'developmental' paradigm of stakeholder-directive co-development had uncovered a missed opportunity for stakeholder participation in corporate management practices. It uses this information to make a case for why CMS should also adopt a developmental agenda.

7.6.l Processes of Stakeholder Intervention in CSR

The comparison of how NGOs engage with corporation in the co-regulatory frame of CSR and how NGOs engage with corporations in directive co-developmental frame of CSR has provided important insights about stakeholder intervention strategies. Utting's (2002) definition posits that co-regulation is used to improve the social and environmental performance of firms. This depiction implies that if NGOs engage with corporations to improve the firm's social and environmental performance, then those same NGOs have specific concerns about the firm's past or existing practices. More specifically, the impetus to 'improve' the corporation's sustainable performance assumes that NGOs are unsatisfied with some action that a corporation has taken. Thus, the process of co-regulation could be viewed as a 'responsive' approach to the past discretions made by corporations.

When considered in this way, co-regulation is actually a type of supervisory social process that is taken up by civil society organisations. Under this frame, stakeholder intervention in corporate practices only occurs when some threat has been perceived to the realisation of stakeholder needs in corporations. This process has been depicted in Figure 7.1.
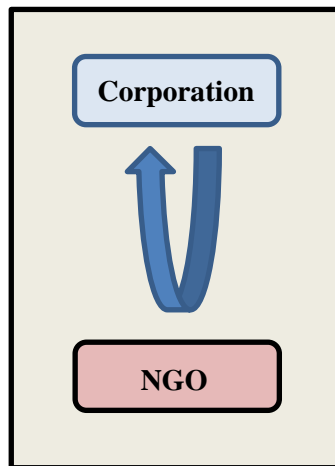
Figure 7.1 The Impact of Stakeholder Co-regulation on Corporate Stakeholder Management

This illustration demonstrates that corporations have significant decision making power over the strategic direction of their management initiatives. Civil society organisations, under the co-regulatory frame, only intervene in the refinement of those initiatives. They do not intervene in the initial strategic development of them. This is because co-regulation is a reactionary stakeholder intervention process. From a participatory perspective, this represents a missed opportunity for stakeholders to participate in the co-construction of CSR. Particularly, it represents a management practice that is devoid of stakeholder intervention. This is explained further below.

The identification of NGO-business collaboration in this thesis as the stakeholder-directive co-development frame provided insight into how stakeholders can participate in the strategic negotiation of management initiatives. Under this developmental frame of CSR, NGOs engage in directing the development of stakeholder initiatives in corporations. In particular, they guide corporations on how they can support the NGOs own vision, goals and objectives. NGOs preside over corporate involvement in community affairs. This approach contributes to the strategic construction of stakeholder-directed processes in corporations. This process has been depicted in Figure 7.2
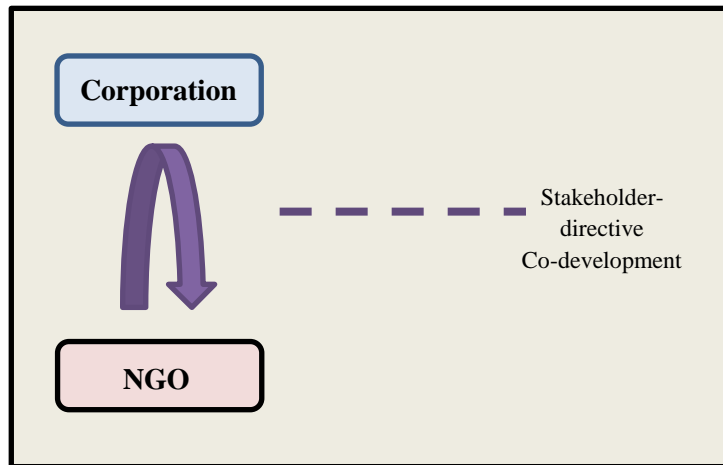
Figure 7.2 The Impact of Stakeholder-directive Co-development on Corporate Stakeholder Management

As Figure 7.2 demonstrates, stakeholder-directive co-development impacts the corporation's strategic decision making processes about its stakeholder management initiatives. The comparison of the two CSR frames uncovered that co-regulation is a 'response-based' stakeholder intervention strategy while directive co-development is a 'strategic-based' stakeholder intervention strategy.

The directive co-development frame offers insights into how stakeholders can remediate the limitations of stakeholder participation in the co-regulatory frame. This is because, when considered together, each frame complements the other: Stakeholder-directive co-development can fill the stakeholder participation limitations of the co-regulatory frame and the co-regulatory frame can fill the stakeholder participation limitations of the directive co-development frame. This complementary relationship is depicted in Figure 7.3.
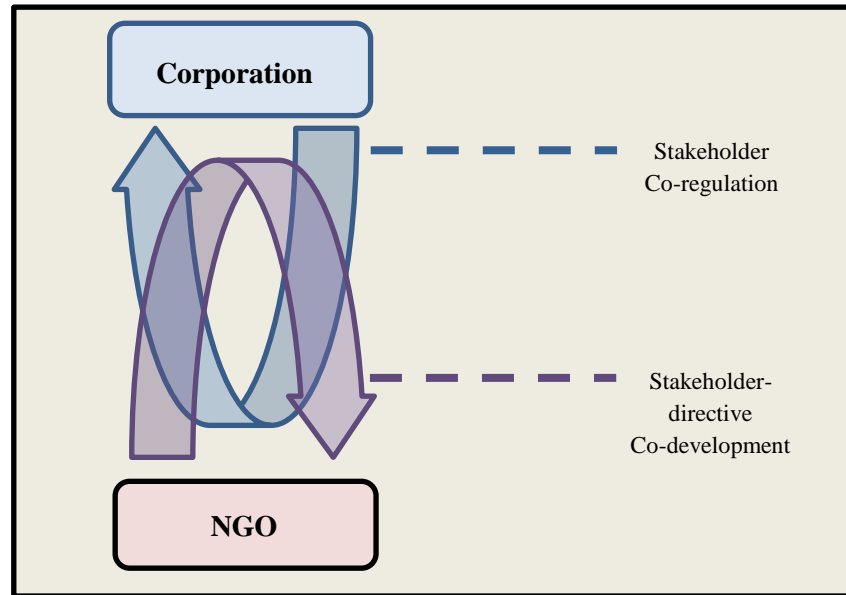
Figure 7.3 The Impact of Stakeholder Co-regulation and Stakeholder directive Co-development on Corporate Stakeholder Management

7.6.2 Imaging CMS Practice through Stakeholder engagement with Corporations

Like the construct of 'co-regulation', CMS also adopts a historic view of the firm. The dominant focus on performativity in CMS aligns the frame to the corporation's past. This is because non-performativity and critical performativity are both focused on finding and locating points of failure for improvement in the corporation's existing stakeholder practices. Non-performativity orientates CMS practitioners to pursue more radical critiques of corporate behaviour while critical performativity orientates CMS practitioners to pursue more pragmatic critiques of corporate behaviour. As there was limited literature about CMS practice, a case was made in this research to look at NGO-corporate engagement as a way to infer what CMS practice could be like in the field.

Specifically, NGO collaborative engagement with corporations was thought to provide insight into what critically performative CMS practice could be like. Table 7.2 highlighted the potential methods practitioners could draw on for critically performative types of CMS practice. These methods included partnerships and collaboration through service provision. Additionally, NGO conflictual engagement

with corporations was understood to provide insight into what non-performative types of CMS practice could be like. For example, strategies such as watchdog activism, litigation, consumer activism shown in Table 7.2 provide an idea of the potential methods practitioners could use for non-performative CMS practice.

Based on this premise, this research suggests that the performativity frames, like co-regulation, would encourage practitioners to 'respond' to corporate processes that subjugate human needs to discourses of efficiency and effectiveness. This is because the view of management in the performativity frames, like the view of management in the co-regulation frame, would orientate practitioners to 'improve' the realisation of human needs in corporations. Thus, CMS could form a *'responsive'* critical interventionist strategy which could be used to improve a corporations stakeholder management practices. This process is depicted in Figure 7.4.
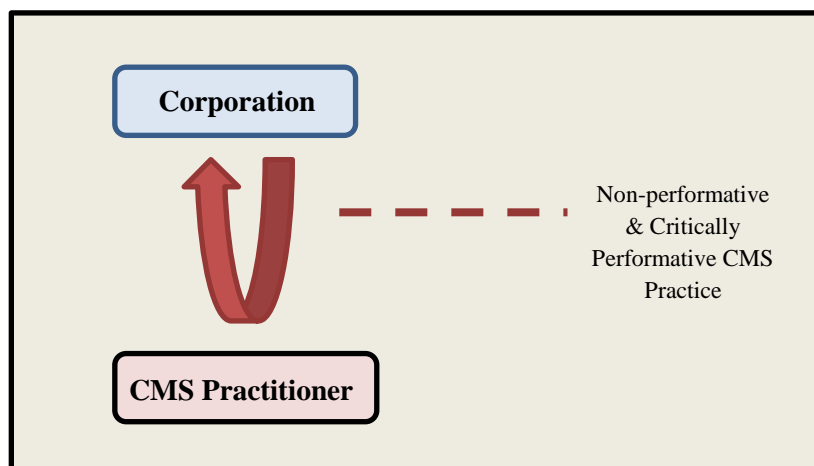

Figure 7.4 Potential Impact of Non-Performative and Critically Performative CMS Practice on Corporate Stakeholder Management

If co-regulatory practice can give an insight into what CMS practice could be like then CMS, like co-regulation, could also be deemed a social supervisory practice that can influence corporate behaviour. Correspondingly, this could mean that performative CMS could be a useful intervention strategy to 'reform' any managerial initiatives that contravene the realisation of human needs in organisations.

In a similar way to co-regulation, non-performative and critically performative CMS practice could also limit practitioner engagement in a corporation's strategic development of its own management initiatives. As it is a potential 'responsive' intervention strategy, non-performative and critically performative CMS practice

could be used to 'refine' existing corporate management initiatives. Thus, non-performative and critically performative CMS, like co-regulation, could only intervene in corporate initiatives after those initiatives have been enacted. This represents a missed opportunity for CMS practitioners to 'de-naturalise' unhelpful corporate perspectives in the strategic development phases of a firm's management. More specifically, it means a missed opportunity for 'early' critical intervention in firm's management.

7.6.3 Stakeholder-directive Co-development Frame for CMS Practitioners

In the context of CSR, the stakeholder-directive co-development frame offered some insights into how stakeholders could participate in the construction of a corporation's strategic management processes. This research looks to that type of CSR to imagine how CMS practitioners could also intervene in the strategic development of a firm's stakeholder management proposals. Specifically, it looks to stakeholder-directive co-development to uncover a 'new' developmental form of CMS.

The stakeholder-directive co-development frame is different to co-regulation because it is focused on community goals instead of on a corporation's stakeholder management practices. The NGOs which participated in the core action research studies 'directed' corporations on how they could support community objectives. Additionally, they facilitated that process by guiding the corporations as to how they could participate in community initiatives and programs. This discursive focus on community aspirations helped to support the realisation of community perspectives in the corporation's own strategic management initiatives. Based on those findings, it is possible to propose that the 'developmental' approach in stakeholder-directive co-development could offer a useful method to challenge the representation of corporate-centric perspectives in the firm's strategic management initiatives.

Those processes used by the NGOs can offer insight into how CMS practitioners could practice a 'developmental' form of CMS. Particularly, it could give some insight into what methods practitioners could use to 'denaturalise' the representation of unhelpful corporate-centric discourses in the firm's strategic management initiatives. A focus on 'co-directing' corporations on how they can support community objectives and a focus on facilitating that engagement could challenge

the dominant representation of corporate-centric views in the firm's strategic management proposals and practices. This is important as it can lead to a pro-active form of 'de-naturalisation' in the corporation's own stakeholder management process cycle. Additionally, it could be useful to address the limitations associated with the performative CMS forms.

The discussion above highlighted that performative-based CMS would be a potential 'responsive-based' critical intervention strategy that would be useful for fixing a corporation's existing processes and practices. This approach, while it may be useful at rendering assistance to reforming a corporations social performance, still leaves exposed a gap for critical social intervention in the corporations own development phase of its strategic management initiatives. The stakeholder-directive co-development frame however, offers insights into how a 'developmental' approach that is focused on community goals and objectives instead of on corporate stakeholder activities might address that gap.

A focus on 'co-directing' corporations on how they can support community objectives seems to offer a useful method that could 'de-naturalise' unhelpful corporate views and perspectives before they are enacted. It offers a pro-active form of social intervention that could challenge the representation and implementation of unhelpful views in corporate practices. The adoption of the 'developmental' view in the CMS frame could equip CMS practitioners with an approach that could complement the limitations of the CMS performativity forms. Particularly, this approach could 'fill' the intervention gap that has been left by the CMS performativity forms. This is demonstrated in Figure 7.5
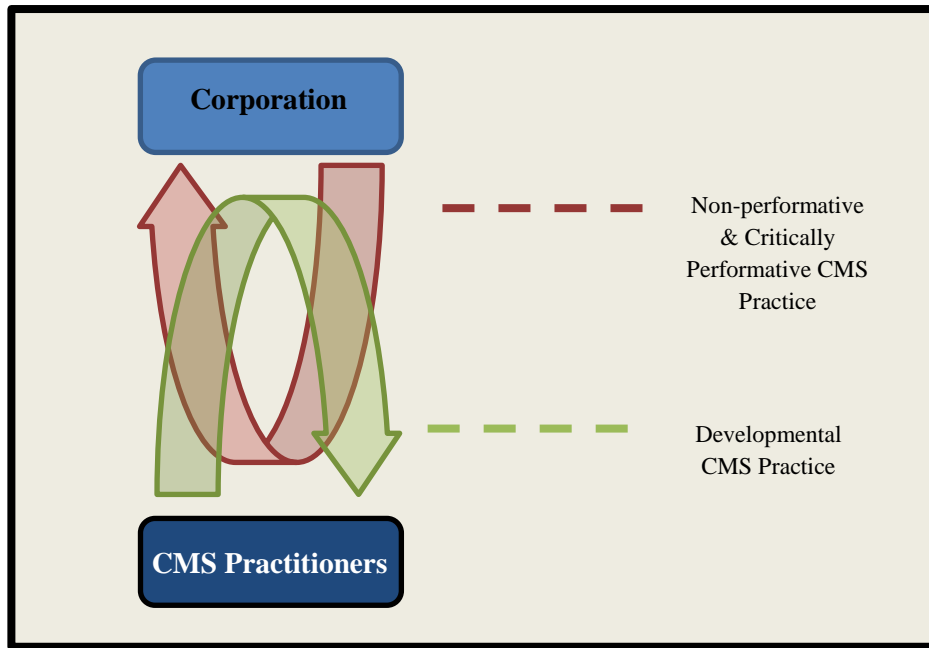
Figure 7.5 Impact of Performative CMS Practices and Developmental CMS Practices on Corporate Stakeholder Management

As Figure 7.5 illustrates, the addition of a 'developmental' form of CMS practice to a 'performativity' form of CMS practice could produce two contrastive intervention processes which address each of the facets of a corporation's stakeholder management processes. The presence of those two intervention forms could offer CMS practitioners the opportunity to intervene not only in the corporation's strategic development of its proposals, but also in the refinement of them once they have been implemented. Correspondingly, this could improve the effectiveness of CMS to alter forms of corporate practice that constrain the realisation of human needs in organisations.

Table 7.3 includes space for a developmental form of CMS. It looks to how NGOs engage with corporations in the stakeholder-directive co-development frame and it includes those processes as potential methods of practice for CMS practitioners. They can be used to pro-actively denaturalise strategic corporate initiatives.

	Approach	Method of Practice
Performativity-Based CMS Practices (Reactive)	Critical Performative CMS	• Partnerships (Utting 2005a) • Collaboration and service provision (Utting 2005a)
	Non-Performative CMS	• Watchdog activism (Utting 2005a) • Litigation (Utting 2005a) • Consumer activism (Utting 2005a) • Critical research and public education/advocacy (Utting 2005a) • Shareholder activism and ethical investment (Utting 2005a)

	Critical Performative and Non-Performative CMS	• Eclectic activism (Utting 2005a)
		   o Challenging managerial processes (Taylor, Coronado & Fallon 2011)
		   o Challenging managerial discourse (Taylor, Coronado & Fallon 2011)
		   o Broadening the managerial agenda (Taylor, Coronado & Fallon 2011)

Developmental CMS Practices (Pro-active)	Collaborative	• Direct how corporations can participate in community initiatives • Facilitate corporate participation in community initiatives

Table 7.3 Performativity-based CMS Practices and Developmental-based CMS Practices

The discussion so far has highlighted how CMS can transition from an analytical exercise to a critical social practice. Specifically, it has looked to the interactions between NGOs and corporations to understand what non-performative practice could be like in the field and to understand what critically performative CMS practice could be like in the field. It has also drawn on the conceptualisation of the stakeholder-directive co-development approach to demonstrate how CMS could become more effective at 'denaturalising' unhelpful corporate practices. The presence of those two forms of practice-based CMS in the field could increase the potential for influencing important social and environmental reform in organisations. This is discussed further in section 8.2.

7.7   Chapter Conclusion

This chapter aimed to offer some insights about how CMS can move from a 'studies-focused' exercise to a critical management practice. By looking to NGO-corporate

engagement this discussion 'de-naturalised' the problem-focused performative views in CMS.

Both non-performativity and critical performativity could be understood to guide the practitioner to explore the historic performance of the firm. Particularly, it orientates them to identify the 'problems' associated with the corporations stakeholder management processes. This view, while it might draw from the historic tradition of the critical social sciences, only seems to encourage negative-based critiques of corporations in society. The emphasis placed by CMS on non/critical performativity, de-naturalisation and reflexivity gears the focus to search for 'wrong-doing' in corporate performance. Correspondingly, this view predicates that the definition of 'critical' in critical management studies is predisposed to follow more negative perceptions of the firm.

While a negative depiction of the corporation might be helpful to identify what needs to be 'fixed', the continued use of that approach could manifest the view that the corporation is a 'defective' social institution in society. The introduction of a developmental frame could alter the definition of what 'critical' means in CMS. Developmental-based CMS might not adhere to the traditional problem-based heart of the critical social sciences but it can be more effective at achieving the social and environmental goals dreamt about by CMS practitioners.

In the CSR frame the developmental perspective, inherent in stakeholder-directive co-development, was effective at challenging the representation of unhelpful profit-centric views in a firm's strategic management initiatives. As it was helpful in this frame, what is not to say that it cannot be just as effective in CMS frame?

The introduction of a developmental frame in CMS can manifest a different perception of the corporation. This is because the developmental frame does not view the corporation as a problem to be fixed. On the contrary, it views the corporation as a social institution that can support the realisation of community-defined goals and objectives. This predisposes a view of the corporation as a potential social institution for opportunity.

The inclusion of a developmental frame in CMS can alter how the term 'critical' is perceived. Instead of having the term denote a negative conception of the

corporation, the introduction of the developmental frame can balance out that view to include a positive connotation also. In this form, perhaps CMS could represent a more balanced practice that not only encourages practitioners to see what needs to be addressed in corporations but also includes scope for practitioners to see what social and environmental opportunities await corporations.

Chapter 8:

A Praxis for CMS

This chapter addresses the importance of this study for the fields of CMS, CSR and action research. It alerts the reader to how the knowledge from this research can be used to transform the role of business in society, to resolve the existing conflicts among and between NGOs about corporate engagement processes. This research can be used by CMS practitioners and action researchers to assist in transforming oppressive discursive regimes that constrain the advancement of social and environmental agendas in organisations.

The chapter concludes with 'visions' about potential new research directions, and it tenders a call for NGOs and CMS practitioners to link arms to strategically coordinate their corporate engagement practices for the attainment of better social and environmental outcomes.

8.1   Addressing the Concern of Co-option

As stated in Chapter 1fears about practitioner co-option by business agendas seemed to have led to a stagnation in the growth of a transformative CMS praxis.

Since the view of the firm in NGO-corporate relationships was similar to the view of the firm in CMS, a case was made to learn from NGOs and their corporate relationships. Knowledge of how co-option could be prevented in NGO-corporate relationships could provide some insights into how co-option could be prevented in CMS. That information could offer the grounds to 'de-naturalise' the existing limitations of CMS and push it towards its transformative potential.

Chapter 6 discussed a new frame of CSR. The discovery of the stakeholder-directive co-development phenomenon resembled an alternative engagement practice that may

potentially confer some protection against NGO co-option. This was because the process shifted the discursive focus of the conversations between the NGOs and the corporations. Instead of focusing on the corporations existing behaviour, the NGOs concentrated on how their corporate partners could support the realisation of their own objectives (see section 6.1 and 6.5). That focus limited the scope for corporate-centric discourse to dominate the discussion between parties. It therefore could be thought to help mitigate the potential of co-option because it left little opportunity for any unhelpful perspectives to be injected into the conversation. The NGO's control over the discourse in the relationship may have helped to provide some protection against views that favour efficiency and effectiveness above stakeholder needs.

The discovery of stakeholder-directive co-development uncovered some useful knowledge about how co-option could be avoided in the context of CMS practice. While the approach seemed inconsistent with the CMS characteristics outlined by Fournier and Grey (2000) and Spicer, Alvesson and Karreman (2009), a deeper analysis suggested otherwise.

The stakeholder-directive co-development approach did not 'problematise' corporate behaviour like the non-performative and critically-performative frames of CMS. It adopted a different focus: instead of locating what was 'wrong' and 'problematic' with the existing behaviour of corporations, the directive co-development approach identified how the firm could participate in fulfilling forms of pro-social ventures. Thus, there was a developmental quality to the NGO's approach.

While that developmental focus was contrary to the 'problematising quality' of CMS and critical theory, it still had the effect of 'de-naturalising' existing corporate processes and practices. It still also invited opportunity for reflexivity about how the corporations could support people-centred needs in their firms. The only aspect that was different was how the corporation was 'received'. The NGOs viewed the corporation as a site for community development instead of a site to be fixed and improved (as is the case with CMS).

It was important to note how an alternative perspective on the role of the corporations in society could yield some protections against the possibility of co-option. As the developmental approach met with the overarching CMS objective for

people-centred organisations, a case was made to include it as an alternative CMS practice for de-naturalisation.

That approach addressed some of the concerns in the literature about co-option. The inclusion of a developmental approach in CMS practice offered the grounds to transition CMS into a reflexive practice. Specifically, the paradigm had shown that it may help to protect against the loss of a social consciousness in the context of corporate power and relationships. Thus, that paradigm could inform the development of a transformative, critical management praxis.

Figure 7.3 in Chapter 7 offered numerous engagement possibilities for critical management practice. These engagement possibilities were inspired from the conflictual and collaborative engagement approaches NGOs used to influence business. Each of those possibilities offered a practice which could assist with the de-naturalisation of unhelpful processes that constrain people in organisations. The adoption of those practices in strategic ways could manifest an effective and helpful CMS praxis. This is discussed further in Section 8.3.

8.2 Response to the Research Question

The first research question which guided this study was:

In the context of stakeholder engagement and co-regulation, how do NGOs
use the notion of reflection and action to influence their engagement with
their corporate partners?

It is difficult to provide a direct response to the research question because it is positioned in the co-regulatory frame of CSR. It was apparent in the field that NGOs were not looking to co-regulate corporate behaviour. Instead, they sought to involve their corporate partners to address community-defined needs and objectives. This represented a different form of social responsibility.

The NGOs did not use reflection and action to co-regulate responsible stakeholder initiatives in corporations. On the contrary, they used reflection and action processes to direct and guide corporations on how they could participate in community programs and activities.

While it was difficult to provide a direct response to the research question, the research questions was helpful to guide the construction of the action research scaffold which was featured in Chapter 4. The themes of 'reflection and action' and 'learning' in the research questions informed the search for processes that could accommodate those themes. The combination of action learning and appreciative inquiry captured those themes in a way that could address the concerns about NGO co-option in collaborative corporate relationships. Accordingly, the research question provided an important mechanism to guide the development of an action research methodology that could address the research problem: how can CMS praxis be deployed to avoid the risk of co-option?

Since the research question pointed to an action research methodology, it was not used to refine the scope of the study to a set of conditions. Action research is an inductive process that is not confined to the original research problem/question for which it may have been used. Action research follows the process of inquiry and moves in the direction of that inquiry. Thus, the research questions acted as an important impetus for the thesis action research study. Its use did not restrict or bind the study to specific parameters for investigation.

Action research became a very important metaphor and methodology in this project. It was drawn on as a metaphor to understand the dynamic, complex set of processes that corporations move through to manage their stakeholder relationships in the context of CSR and CMS. It was also utilised as a methodology to inform the development of reflexive projects with three different NGOs: Creative Minds, Sensory Navigations and Vibrant Community Services (see Chapter 5). In all applications, action research was the 'beating heart' that has helped to realise 'praxis' in the project.

Action research offered a way to understand how stakeholders participate and inform the process of praxis for corporate social responsibility. It also offered a way for the project to learn from the NGOs about how co-option could be mitigated in collaborative relationships. This knowledge was helpful to address the co-option concerns which CMS had about practice.

In addition to acting as a useful mechanism to guide the development of the research methodology, the question was a helpful comparative tool. The theme of CSR as

corporate regulation grounded the research in a CSR frame: co-regulation. That frame describes a social practice where stakeholders influence the development of responsible processes and practices in corporations. Accordingly, that theme provided a useful standpoint from which to compare how the research developed.

Chapter 6 discussed a new form of CSR which emerged from the study. This finding was made by comparing how the engagement between the participant NGOs and their corporate partners was both similar to and different from the frame of stakeholder co-regulation. Thus, the thematic points in the research question were helpful to understand the different interactions that were taking place between the participant NGOs and their corporate partners. Specifically, the themes were important to conceptualise how stakeholder-directive co-development was a separate, distinct frame of CSR.

In summary, the research question was a helpful tool to guide the development of a methodology that could respond to NGO co-option concerns. The themes in the question were useful points which were used to better understand the engagement activity in the core action research studies.

While a direct response was difficult to provide, the research question still acted as a useful tool to guide the research methodology and analysis.

The second research question which guided the study was:

How can the reflection and action engagement processes NGOs use to influence corporations inform a transformative critical management practice?

The NGO's use of reflection and action processes provided insight into a new approach to CSR. Instead of co-regulating corporate behaviour, the NGOs sought to pro-actively guide corporations on how they could participate in addressing community concerns (see section 6.1). This approach offered scope to consider how that pro-active agenda could uncover meaning for a CMS practice.

Chapter 7 highlighted the importance of including a development paradigm for CMS. Specifically, it suggested that the dominant adherence to a 'reactive' disposition for organisational change could confine the transformative potential of CMS. This was because the performative frames could confer too much scope for corporations to

discursively develop and define their strategic CSR initiatives. Its reactive stance allows for the excessive expression of corporate interests in the development of business stakeholder practices. This is a problem as it means that de-naturalisation is a process that is initiated *too late*. More specifically, it means that an unhelpful expression of corporate interests has to occur before potential performativity processes are invoked to rectify the issue.

The development paradigm which informs the stakeholder-directive co-development approach, however, offered an opportunity to reflect on how a developmental approach could also assist the transformative potential of a critical management practice. Particularly, the inclusion of a developmental frame could strengthen the de-naturalising capacity of that practice. This is because a developmental praxis could influence the discursive void, left vacant by performative CMS forms. It could offer an opportunity to influence the initial design and development phases of a corporation's stakeholder management initiatives.

Thus, the reflection and action processes used by the NGOs offered an opportunity to learn how the transformative capacity of a critical management practice could be strengthened through pro-active forms of intervention. The presence of both pro-active, developmental intervention and reactive, performative intervention could limit scope for corporate interests to dominate the design, development and implementation of stakeholder management initiatives. As explained in section 8.1 the developmental approach could be thought to confer some protections against practitioner co-option. It also could be thought to add to the transformative potential of CMS practice through a complementary form of critical intervention. Thus, the reflection and action processes used by NGOs uncovered important processes for building a transformative critical management praxis.

8.3   Contributions to Theory and Practice

This research has made contributions to the theory and practice of CMS, CSR and action research. More specifically, it has developed a practitioner toolkit for each of the three fields. In CMS, it has assembled a list of methods that CMS practitioners can use to 'de-naturalise' unhelpful corporate-centric discourses in corporations. In the field of CSR, it has uncovered a new type of stakeholder engagement that can

influence the strategic development of corporate initiatives. Finally, in action research the study has developed a reflective learning process that can assist with the development of relationships between organisations. Each of these contributions is explained below.

8.3.1 Critical Management Practice

This research has made a contribution to the field of CMS by responding to the concern in the literature that CMS has become too much of an analytical exercise, without an element of critical social practice. The discussion in Chapter 7 explored NGO-corporate interaction as a way to uncover some useful methods that CMS practitioners can use to 'de-naturalise' unhelpful managerial perspectives and practices in organisations. This analysis produced a toolkit of methods that practitioners could draw on to influence corporations. Those methods were categorised according to the non-performative and critically performative views of the corporation.

Chapter 7 also identified a missed opportunity for CMS practitioners to intervene in a corporation's strategic construction of its stakeholder initiatives (See section 7.6). This discovery was made from understanding how the 'developmental paradigm' captured by the stakeholder-directive co-development CSR frame, could give meaning to the practice of CMS. The addition of a 'developmental' CMS frame to the existing 'performative' frames offers practitioners a way to influence the strategic development of management initiatives in corporations and to refine their implementation. This finding is important because it can increase the potential effectiveness of CMS to incite human-centred management practices in corporations.

The developmental frame is also an important inclusion to the field of CMS because it can shift the critical orientation of CMS from a predominately negative one to a more balanced version. For example, the performative focus of CMS encourages the practitioner to adopt a negative perception of the firm. This is because it focuses on what is 'wrong' with corporate behaviour and what needs to be 'fixed'. This promotes a more negative view of the firm in CMS. The developmental frame, however, can alter that view by incorporating space for practitioners to see corporations as a vehicle to achieve social and environmental objectives. This can

balance the critical orientation of CMS to include both negative and positive views of the firm. A balanced view of the firm is important because, as discussed in Chapter 7, it can inform interventionist practice methods that complement the limitations of each other. This can lead to more effective critical management practice in the field.

In summary, this research has constructed a toolkit for critical management practice. Specifically, it has assembled a set of methods research practitioners can use to support the realisation of human needs and desires in corporations. It has also added an additional development frame to CMS which can assist practitioners to influence the kind of social and environmental change that they yearn for and dream about for organisations. Accordingly, this contribution represents a practical turn on CMS.

8.3.2 NGO Engagement with CSR

This research makes a contribution to the theory and practice of NGO engagement with CSR. The discussion in Chapter 3 highlighted the existence of conflict in and between NGOs about how to influence change in corporations. This is due to a preference for more adversarial forms of NGO-corporate interaction. It has been thought that this form was more effective at influencing corporate behaviour. The conflict-collaborative duality identified in Chapter 3 indicates that this preference might be impeding the potential of the third sector to 'co-regulate' corporate stakeholder practices. In particular, the duality denotes the complementary nature of conflictual and collaborative NGO engagement methods and the importance of each approach in association with the other. Accordingly, this discussion could provide the grounds to dissolve the existing conflict that may be unnecessarily hindering the third sector's capacity to change unhelpful corporate perspectives and practices.

In addition to providing the grounds to harmonise the existing conflict among NGOs about corporate engagement, this study also makes a contribution to knowledge via the developmental frame of CSR: stakeholder-directive co-development.

The research set out to uncover how reflective learning could reduce the potential of NGO co-option by corporate perspectives in the context of co-regulation. However, the core action research studies with the participant NGOs alerted the researcher to a 'new' form of CSR practice. This practice was not directly focused on improving the corporation's social performance. Instead, it was focused on the community's goals

and objectives and how corporations could play a part in the realisation of those goals and objectives (see section 6.1). Interestingly, the direction conferred by NGOs about how corporations could participate in community projects was effective at challenging unhelpful corporate-centric perspectives and practices.

The NGOs 'directive' role challenged the domination of corporate-centric perspectives in the firm's strategic management initiatives. This was found to overcome the limitations of Utting's (2002) co-regulatory frame. Utting's (2002) notion of co-regulation represents a responsive stakeholder intervention strategy. It is used to reform existing processes and practices in corporations. In contrast, the notion of stakeholder-directive co-development is a strategic stakeholder intervention mechanism. It impacts the corporation's strategic development of its own stakeholder management initiatives. The developmental frame of CSR offers stakeholders a way to impact the stakeholder management processes that co-regulation does not address (see section 6.5). Accordingly, this frame of CSR can assist stakeholders to become more effective at influencing corporate behaviour. This is because it can offer insight into how stakeholders can participate not just in the reform of CSR but in the strategic development of socially and environmentally responsible processes and practices.

Therefore, this research has made a contribution to the practice of CSR. It has presented a rationale for dissolving the existing conflict NGOs have about corporate engagement methods. Additionally, it has offered insight into another stakeholder practice that can have the effect of influencing socially responsible stakeholder practices in corporations. By overcoming the limitations of Utting's (2002) co-regulatory frame this practice offers stakeholders an intervention strategy that can increase their potential to affect a corporation's socially responsible performance.

8.3.3 Action Research

This research has also contributed to the practice of action research. Specifically, it has constructed a change-orientated tool that can offer some protection against organisational co-option in collaborative arrangements and relationships between researchers and other participants (see section 6.2). Protection against co-option is important because it can guard against the social conformity to dominant discourses

and forms of social organisation. While this tool has been designed for organisations, there is scope for it to be used by individuals also. Those individuals and organisations which have not had their needs met by dominant social organisational forms could use this tool to advance their own power agenda in a pragmatic way.

The scaffold in Chapter 4 combined action learning and appreciative inquiry to mimic 'reflection and action' type processes for relationship development amongst organisations. This design was constructed in response to the concern that NGOs in collaborative relationships were at risk of 'co-option'. Particularly, there were some apprehensions in the literature that NGOs focusing on building relationships with corporations could lose sight of their own mission and objectives (Baur & Schmitz 2012). It was believed that a focus on establishing an increased level of intimacy with a corporate entity would divert the NGO's attention to the corporation's own agenda instead of the NGOs.

To address that concern, I developed a reflective learning program that combined a problem-focused change process and one that was strength-focused. Action learning was used for its problem-focused change agenda and appreciative inquiry for its strength-focused change agenda. The combination of the two action research forms mimicked reflection and action processes that could assist to develop relationships between organisations.

That scaffold was modelled after Freire's (1996) critical pedagogy. His pedagogy depicted a bottom-up process for social change. He believed that those who were constrained by social constructs were important agents who could contribute to their re-creation. Freire (1996) believed that those actors which enforced oppressive constructs had reason to preserve the future existence of them. Because of this, Freire (1996) targeted his change pedagogy to those whose needs were constrained by the constructs enforced upon them. These agents are important catalysts to influence the realisation of new social re-creations that could transform the existing *status quo*. This premise of Freire's (1996) was used to build the reflective learning scaffold for NGOs.

Co-regulation represents a bottom up process that can contribute to the regulation of corporate behaviour in society. This bottom-up approach made it possible to imagine Freire's (1996) praxis in the context of NGO-corporate engagement. The use of

'reflection and action' change processes was helpful to mitigate the potential of NGO co-option in collaborative partnerships with corporations.

Action learning was used in the scaffold to encourage the NGOs to reflect on their corporate relationship. Appreciative inquiry was used in the scaffold to encourage NGOs to action their reflections in a conversation with their corporate partners. The strength-based focus of appreciative inquiry provided a safe discursive environment for NGOs to forward their own reflections formed from their action learning experience. Additionally, the strength-based focus also provided an environment that could preserve the status of a collaborative relationship. This is because it does not promote negative problem-based critique that could damage the essence of a working relationship.

Accordingly, this study has made a contribution to action research. It has constructed a scaffold that can be used by organisations wishing to change the *status quo* of collaboratively based relationships. It made a further contribution to action research by demonstrating how two, seemingly oppositional action research forms can be used together to influence the realisation of human-centred needs in organisations. Informed by Freire's (1996) own praxis and theory of social change, this scaffold can be used by individuals and organisations that choose to adopt a bottom-up collaboratively-orientated change process for social and environmental pursuits.

8.4   Research Scope and Trajectory

This research focused predominantly on NGO views and perspectives. Corporate perspectives were not sought outside the appreciative inquiry forums which involved the participant NGOs and their corporate partners. Seemingly, this could be said to point to a bias of the study.

However, while this highlights what might be considered a bias of the research, the fact that the research focused predominantly on NGO perspectives does not discredit its importance. The CSR frame of co-regulation focuses on how stakeholders improve social and environmental initiatives of corporations (Utting 2002). This concept provided scope to focus the study on NGOs and the methods they use to influence responsible stakeholder management processes in corporations.

Accordingly, the apparent bias inherent in this study can be justified as it corresponds to the focus of the co-regulatory frame, which was the motivation for the research.

The research design included the attainment of corporate perspectives and those would have been helpful to understand the broader impact that stakeholder-directive co-development was having on a corporation's behaviour. However, the inherent transformation of that design during the action research process made it impossible to include the corporate perspectives in this dissertation. The inclusion of those perspectives could have offered insight into the positive and negative effects of the directive co-development approach. Correspondingly, this leaves further scope to explore corporate receptiveness to stakeholder-directive co-development processes and how those processes can impact the different facets of firms. This information can be useful to further assess the strengths and weaknesses of the directive co-development frame and to understand how it complements the existing regulatory practices of policy, corporations and stakeholders.

While the action research scaffold included in Chapter 4 offered a helpful tool to commence a conversation with NGOs about their engagement practices with the private sector, the actual sequential implementation of that scaffold was not applied in practice. The scaffold is thought to offer a tool to help mitigate the risks of organisational co-option in collaborative relationships with other organisational entities. Informed by Freire's (1996) critical pedagogy, the scaffold can be used by those individuals and organisations whose needs have been subjugated to unfair and discriminatory discourses and practices.

As the steps listed in the scaffold were not sequentially implemented in the field, an evaluation and analysis of the scaffold's implementation was not made.

The importance of including action learning and appreciative inquiry in the learning design was taken from the theory and reflections that informed its development. While its importance was gleamed from theory, the actual usefulness of it has not been observed and evaluated in the field. Accordingly, this offers scope for further research into how the action research design might be useful at mitigating the potential of co-option, and preserving the confines of a collaborative working relationship or partnership. As this research was conducted in a different frame to co-

regulation, scope remains to explore the application of the scaffold's action research design in collaborative forms of co-regulation.

The predominant focus on NGOs in this study and the discovery of the new CSR frame informs subsequent trajectories for further research. Particularly, the attainment of corporate perspectives in the context of stakeholder-directive co-development can offer further insight into the strengths and weaknesses of this approach for social responsibility. It can also offer insight into the broader social implications of its practical application.

Furthermore, the application of the action research design in the field can provide some evaluative evidence of how the tool might be used to protect against co-option in inter-organisational and intra-organisational relationships.

8.5   Future Research Directions

Existing literature has focused on the interaction between NGOs and corporations. This research encountered a different type of 'hybrid' NGO – the intermediary – that operated across the third and private sector borders. It was difficult to place or classify this organisation into the NGO or corporate sector. This was because the intermediary organisation was involved in both dimensions.

This research treated the intermediary as a NGO for the purposes of this research. This was because of its strong community focus in aligning corporate participation in the attainment of community goals and objectives. It also treated the Cross-sector Connections as a NGO because this was how the intermediary defined itself.

While this classification was made, further research is needed to understand the role of the intermediary as a separate and unique operator that bridges and brokers both corporate and community worlds.

In this project, the intermediary had a strong role in helping to define how corporations could participate in community defined projects and events. Thus, their approach to cross-sector engagement seems to have influenced this new phase of interaction between business and small to medium sized NGOs.

Accordingly, this provides scope to understand how intermediary organisations may be driving and leading the introduction and development of new CSR forms. The large NGO, 'Vibrant Community Services' had a dedicated team of individuals to develop and manage relationships between the NGO and the private sector. The intermediary fulfilled this role for the small to medium sized NGOs.

It would be useful to understand how the rise of the intermediary had contributed to the development of stakeholder-directive co-development CSR. It would also be useful to understand whether the intermediary had influenced the practice of corporate relationship management in large NGOs which had a dedicated team of individuals devoted to that task. This information and knowledge could provide some historic insight into how and why the practice of stakeholder-directive co-development had arisen in the case studies.

In addition to investigating the degree to which the intermediary had driven the stakeholder-directive co-development agenda, it would also be important to investigate how other intermediaries practice NGO-corporate relationship management.

This research focused on one intermediary only. Thus, it would be important to see if other intermediaries also use a similar approach to Cross-sector Connections. Just as NGOs have classifications, it would be helpful to construct classifications for intermediary organisations to determine their similarities and differences.

8.6   A Call for NGOs and CMS Practitioners to Link Arms

This research drew together a stakeholder engagement practice called co-regulation and a critically-orientated frame called CMS. Because of the similarities in both the practice and the frame, a case was made to consider how knowledge about co-option in co-regulation could provide insights into how it could be prevented in CMS practice. In doing so, Chapter 7 bought together the co-regulatory practice and the CMS frame. It aligned them.

The methods the NGOs used to intervene in corporate stakeholder practices were re-imagined in the context of non-performative, critically performative and developmental CMS. While NGO-corporate engagement was identified as a helpful

context to uncover new understandings about CMS, there is no reason to think that CMS could not also provide a helpful context to uncover new understandings about NGO-corporate engagement. The two contexts, because of the similarities they contain, have the potential to learn from each other in a reciprocal, dialectal relationship.

The linking arms of NGOs and CMS practitioners could go some way towards improving the effectiveness of social intervention in business decisions and practices. It could produce a more strategically targeted approach. Insights into how the different engagement practices influence corporations can assist with that intervention.

For instance, the prejudice in the third sector and the academic literature for conflict-based NGO-corporate engagement is unhelpful because it creates tension in and amongst NGOs that utilise more collaborative forms. That tension could distract those organisations from strategically coordinating with each other to affect the co-construction of responsible stakeholder management in corporations.

Disagreement limits the capacity of NGOs to 'co-regulate' corporate behaviour. Additionally, in the stakeholder-directive co-development frame disagreement could limit NGOs from the accomplishment of their own community goals and objectives. The tension derived from that prejudice could have the impact of blinding NGOs from seeing how conflictual and collaborative methods can function together to improve a corporation's management practices. Additionally, it could limit NGOs from forming strong relationships with each other to strategically coordinate how they can affect CSR and how they can strategically participate in CSR.

In a similar manner, CMS is also affected by unhelpful prejudices. This was depicted in the debate about which performative frame was the most effective one to apply. If that same attitude was represented in a practice form of CMS then it is more than likely that similar disagreements would manifest. Preferences for a universal practice method can create an internal 'war' which can distract practitioners from the purpose of considering the role of corporations in society. Such prejudice might even denote a different type of co-option – one where organisations or practitioners become so fixed on a universal approach that they lose sight of the purpose for which that approach was applied. As the social world consists of many cultures, and sub-

cultures it is unlikely that one universal approach would be effective for each and every context.

While there are concerns that NGOs and CMS practitioners could lose sight of their own objectives the closer they are to corporations, it could also be argued that a different form of co-option also exists. This concerns a pre-occupation with universal approaches. The presence of such attitudes can build tension amongst practitioners and can distract them from the goals of influencing socially responsible corporations and developing strong communities in society.

The point of this discussion is not to suggest that disagreement is an unfavourable or an unhelpful mechanism in CMS and the third sector. To the contrary, disagreement could lead to the development of more critical types of critical practice. In the context of co-regulation, disagreement about engagement approaches could improve the way that collaboration and conflict is used to co-regulate corporate behaviour. Additionally, in the context of stakeholder directive co-development, disagreement could be used to improve the way that collaboration is used to 'co-develop 'corporate behaviour. This dissertation does not suggest avoiding constructive disagreement over how to engage with corporations. Instead, it suggests that there is a need to think about how disagreement could inhibit a strategic alliance of NGOs and practitioners working together to build socially conscious corporations and communities. There is a need to raise awareness of how existing prejudices may be inhibiting NGOs from attaining the very goal or objective they seek to attain.

Knowledge of how different intervention strategies complement each other can assist with the construction of strategic alliances amongst NGOs and practitioners. The conflict-collaboration engagement duality identified in Chapter 3 offers one way for NGOs and practitioners to understand the importance of each approach. Knowledge of how each method impacts a corporation's stakeholder management cycle offers the ground for why intra-organisational and inter-organisational disagreements about corporate engagement should be minimised.

It also can equip NGOs with the power to co-ordinate their interactions so that they can ensure that maximum social intervention is achieved in each phase of the corporation's stakeholder management cycle. A coordinated effort of this sort can

ensure that all energy is targeted towards challenging corporate behaviour instead of being wasted on unhelpful and unconstructive conflicts about 'the one best method'.

The discussion in Chapter 7 can also assist that process. Chapter 7 demonstrated how the different regulatory and developmental intervention strategies affected corporations: the regulatory process which problematised corporate behaviour depicted a reactionary change-based process. Conversely, the developmental process which considered the social possibilities of corporate behaviour depicted a pro-active change-based process.

Together the application of both the regulatory change process and the developmental change process could produce a form of 'double intervention' for corporations. This is because the application of the two processes together impacts corporations in 'clockwise' and 'counter-clockwise' way. That relationship was symbolically demonstrated in Figures 7.3 and 7.5.

An understanding of how the regulatory and developmental change processes influence management processes in corporations can equip NGOs and CMS practitioners with the knowledge to create more targeted, effective engagement practices for transforming corporations and stakeholder communities into ones which account for people's needs.

8.7   Thesis Conclusion

This research explored the limits of CMS. It discovered an impediment that while there is an inherent objective in CMS for transformative change, there are also deep fears about the practice of it. The concern in the CMS literature about co-option was characteristic of this and the debates about performativity were also indicative of a fear about the inclusion of a CMS developmental agenda for business.

This concern about co-option was found to represent a challenge to the practice of CMS and had confined CMS to an analytical exercise for the study of corporations and management. This runs contrary to the overarching change-based objective of the critical paradigm, which is a pillar of CMS. The apparent prevarication about or reluctance to change conflicted with the CMS characteristic of 'de-naturalisation'. Instead of identifying the limits imposed on the transformative potential of CMS, the

concern about co-option had actually countered that change objective through the imposition of its own limitations. This indicates that, even in a transformative change-based approach, there can still be deep-rooted fears associated with change.

Another aspect which points to the fear about practice-based transformative change was the presence of a universal reasoning about performativity. Chapters 3 and 7 uncovered a type of undercurrent agenda for finding the 'one best approach' for analysing corporations and management. The debate about the notion of performativity and how researchers and practitioners should view constraints in business contexts indicated that there was a prevailing search in CMS for a universal approach, 'the right one'.

This search for a universal approach had seemingly blinded researchers and practitioners from understanding how different critical approaches could complement each other for more effective practice. There is a comfort that can be gained from universal thinking. For instance, the strict adherence to one approach can offer individuals a sense of familiarity, security and comfort. However, those feelings are reminiscent of self-imposed limits. Comfort is contrary to the characteristic of de-naturalisation. It signifies a form of crystallisation and structuring which conflicts with the CMS objective for de-naturalisation. Thus, the paradox of engaging in a transformative-based paradigm but at the same time desiring a universal approach signifies that perhaps there is also a prevalent fear in CMS for being part of social change.

A fear of transformation and change can divert the hearts and minds of researchers and practitioners from manifesting the kind of social and organisational change that they dream about and yearn for. This type of fear and concern might have distracted researchers from the pursuit of a transformative praxis.

This research has revealed a mirror about co-option in CMS. The research started with a goal to find ways to mitigate the fear of co-option in CMS practice. However, it found that the very concern about and fear of co-option was a form of co-option in itself. It had averted the potential to evaluate CMS against its own objectives for 'de-naturalisation' and transformative change. Thus, the very concern about co-option was actually a type of co-option in itself.

This finding indicates that there is a need for another form of self-reflexive practice in CMS. There is a need to reflect as researchers on our own fears for engaging with transformative change and to consider how the concerns we project onto CMS might translate into self-fulfilling prophecies that negate the very objectives of the approach. There is also a need to reflect on those perspectives and practices which provide us with a type of comfort and security. This is because those perspectives and practices might be reminiscent of internal unconscious fears that we ourselves might hold about transformative praxis.

An insight that I have taken from Freire, the action research community, and this research may assist to overcome the paradox about the fear in CMS. I have learnt that there is not just a need for an openness to '*work with*' others but there is also a need to '*work with*' diverse critical perspectives and practices that have an inherent aim for creating (and re-creating) a more people-centric society. This guiding principle of *working with* other views and practices provides scope to see how they might complement each other to produce more effective social intervention. A desire to *work with* different views and practices would also remove any comfort that could be taken from adhering to one particular performativity principle. This is because it encourages researchers and practitioners to consider how other views and practices might complement their own performativity preferences. The approach of working with different critical views and practices can require a continual commitment to reflection and change, and can indirectly lead to a need, essentially, to remain passionately uncomfortable about reforming the business environment.

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Appendices

Appendix 1

University of
Western Sydney
Bringing knowledge to life

Dear [NAME OF NON-GOVERNMENT ORGANISATION]

My name is Robyn Taylor and I am a doctoral student in the School of Management at the University of Western Sydney. I am conducting a research project as part of the requirements of my degree and would like to invite [NAME OF NON-GOVERNMENT ORGANISATION] to participate. The title of the study is:

Non-Government Organisations Learning from Corporate Relationships: A Participatory Approach

The purpose of the project is to understand how a Non-Government Organisation (NGO) can learn from its corporate relationships, and how it can use that knowledge in creative dialogue with its corporate benefactors. If [NAME OF NON-GOVERNMENT ORGANISATION] would like to participate, it will be asked to nominate 3-5 representatives that might like to be involved in the project.

Each of the nominated representatives will be invited to participate in a face-to-face interview focused on understanding the history and the characteristics of the engagement between the NGO and its corporate benefactors. Following this, those representatives can choose to engage in a reflective learning program which includes a series of action learning and appreciative inquiry focus group discussions. The action learning focus group discussions will provide a forum for representatives to reflect on the NGO's corporate engagement experiences and the appreciative inquiry focus groups will provide a forum where that knowledge can be creatively acted on in dialogue with those corporations.

The significance of this study can be derived from its aim to make a social contribution to the development of NGO and corporate collaboration via a series of reflective and creative action-based focus group exercises. The study also aims to develop, together with the NGOs nominated participants and representatives from the NGO's corporate benefactors, a series of reflective learning tools which can have the capacity to benefit the future engagement processes between organisations. For more information about the study please refer to the information sheet attached with this invitation.

Participation in the study is confidential. The results of the study will form part of a formal research thesis and may be presented in other scholarly publications including conference papers, academic journal articles, books and book chapters. Pseudonyms will be used to hide organisational and participant identities in the research thesis and any other publications made.

Participation in this project is voluntary. The organisation and its participants are free to withdraw their participation from the study at any time without giving any reason and without any consequences.

Thank you for your consideration. I will contact you soon to discuss your organisation's potential participation in the research project. However, in the meantime, if you have any questions please feel free to contact me via email 15950866@student.uws.edu.au or via phone: 0416 330 490.

Kind Regards,

Robyn Taylor

PhD Candidate,
School of Management,
College of Business
University of Western Sydney

Dear [NAME OF NON-GOVERNMENT ORGANISATIONAL REPRESENTATIVE]

My name is Robyn Taylor and I am a doctoral student in the School of Management at the University of Western Sydney. I am conducting a research project as part of the requirements of my degree and would like to invite you to participate. The title of the study is:

Non-Government Organisations Learning from Corporate Relationships: A Participatory Approach

The purpose of the project is to understand how a Non-Government Organisation (NGO) can learn from its corporate relationships, and how it can use that knowledge in creative dialogue with its corporate benefactors. Your organisation has agreed to participate in this project and has nominated you as a potential participant who might like to be involved in the research.

If you decide to participate you will be invited to take part in a face-to-face interview focused on understanding the history and the characteristics of engagement between the NGO and its corporate benefactors. Following this, you can choose to engage in a reflective learning program which includes a series of action learning and appreciative inquiry focus group discussions. The action learning focus group discussions will provide a forum for you and other representatives of your organisation to reflect on the NGO's corporate engagement experiences and the appreciative inquiry focus group discussions will provide a forum where that knowledge can be creatively acted on in dialogue with the NGO's corporate benefactors.

The significance of this study can be derived from its aim to make a social contribution to the development of NGO and corporate collaboration via a series of reflective and creative action-based focus group exercises. The study also aims to develop, together with the NGO's nominated participants and representatives from its corporate benefactors, a series of reflective learning tools which can have the capacity to benefit the future engagement processes between organisations. For more information about the study please refer to the information sheet attached with this invitation.

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Kind Regards,

Robyn Taylor

PhD Candidate,
School of Management,
College of Business
University of Western Sydney

University of
Western Sydney
Bringing knowledge to life

Dear [NAME OF CORPORATION]

My name is Robyn Taylor and I am a doctoral student in the School of Management at the University of Western Sydney. I am conducting a research project as part of the requirements of my degree and would like to invite [NAME OF CORPORATION] to participate. The title of the study is:

Non-Government Organisations Learning from Corporate Relationships: A Participatory Approach

The purpose of the project is to understand how a Non-Government Organisation (NGO) learns from its corporate relationships, and how it uses that knowledge in creative dialogue with its corporate benefactors. A Non-Government organisation that is participating in the research has nominated your corporation as a potential participant which might like to take part in two focus group discussions of this research. The focus group discussions are based on a method of research known as appreciative inquiry. It is a method used by small to large groups of individuals to reflexively develop strategic management initiatives that are based on the strengths of an organisation or system.

If [NAME OF CORPORATION] chooses to participate, it will be asked to nominate 3-5 representatives that might like to be involved in the project. Each of the nominated representatives will be invited to participate in a focus group with 3-5 representatives of the non-government organisation to identify the strengths of the engagement between [NAME OF CORPORATION] and the NGO and to develop strategic initiatives for the future engagement between organisations The following focus group will invite those same corporate representatives to participate in another forum with the NGO and its other corporate benefactors, to collectively reflect about the process of appreciative inquiry, the learning tools offered via the process and how those tools can be adapted to the processes of engagement between organisations.

The significance of this study can be derived from its aim to make a social contribution to the development of NGO and corporate collaboration via a series of reflective and creative, action-based focus group exercises. The study also aims to develop, together with the NGO and its corporate benefactors, a series of reflective learning tools which can have the capacity to benefit the future engagement processes between organisations. For more information about the study please refer to the information sheet attached with this invitation.

Participation in the study is confidential. The results of the study will form part of a formal research thesis and may be presented in other scholarly publications including conference papers, academic journal articles, books and book chapters. Pseudonyms will be used to hide organisational and participant identities in the research thesis and any other publications made.

Participation in this project is voluntary. The organisation and its participants are free to withdraw their participation from the study at any time without giving any reason and without any consequences.

Thank you for your consideration. I will contact you soon to discuss your organisation's potential participation in the research project. However, in the meantime, if you have any questions please feel free to contact me via email 15950866@student.uws.edu.au or via phone: 0416 330 490.

Kind Regards,

Robyn Taylor

PhD Candidate,
School of Management,
College of Business
University of Western Sydney

Dear [CORPORATE REPRESENTATIVE]

My name is Robyn Taylor and I am a doctoral student in the School of Management at the University of Western Sydney. I am conducting a research project as part of the requirements of my degree and would like to invite you to participate. The title of the study is:

Non-Government Organisations Learning from Corporate Relationships: A Participatory Approach

The purpose of the project is to understand how a Non-Government Organisation (NGO) learns from its corporate relationships, and how it uses that knowledge in creative dialogue with its corporate benefactors. Your organisation has agreed to participate in this project and has nominated you as a potential participant who might like to be involved in the research.

If you decide to participate you will be invited to take part in two focus group discussions which are based on a method of research known as appreciative inquiry. It is a method used by small to large groups of individuals to reflexively develop strategic management initiatives that are based on the strengths of an organisation or system.

In the context of this research the first focus group will ask you and other participants of your corporation to engage with representatives of a non-government organisation (which is a stakeholder to [NAME OF CORPORATION]). As a participant in the focus group, you will be able to identify the strengths of the engagement between [NAME OF CORPORATION] and the non-government organisation and to develop strategic initiatives for the future engagement between organisations. The following focus group will allow you and those other representatives from your corporation to participate in another forum with the NGO and its other corporate benefactors, to collectively reflect about the process of appreciative inquiry, the learning tools offered via the process and how those tools can be adapted to the processes of engagement between organisations.

The significance of this study can be derived from its aim to make a social contribution to the development of NGO and corporate collaboration via a series of reflective and creative, action-based focus group exercises. The study also aims to develop, together with the NGO and its corporate benefactors, a series of reflective learning tools which can have the capacity to benefit the future engagement processes between organisations. For more information about the project please refer to the information sheet attached with this invitation.

Participation in the study is confidential. The results of the study will form part of a formal research thesis and may be presented in other scholarly publications including conference papers, academic journal articles, books and book chapters. Pseudonyms will be used to hide organisational and participant identities in the research thesis and any other publications made.

Participation in this project is voluntary. Participants are free to withdraw their participation from the study at any time without giving any reason and without any consequences.

Thank you for your consideration. I will contact you soon to discuss your potential participation in the research project. However, in the meantime, if you have any questions please feel free to contact me via email 15950866@student.uws.edu.au or via phone: 0416 330 490.

Kind Regards,

Robyn Taylor

PhD Candidate,
School of Management,
College of Business
University of Western Sydney

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Research Information Sheet

Non-Government Organisation

Project Title:

Non-Government Organisations Learning from Corporate Relationships: A
Participatory Approach

Who is carrying out the study?

You are invited to participate in a study carried out by Robyn Taylor, a doctoral
student (PhD) in the School of Business at the University of Western Sydney. The
project forms part of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at the
University of Western Sydney. This study is supervised by Dr. Gabriela Coronado
and Dr. Wayne Fallon

What is the study about?

The purpose of the project is to understand how a Non-Government Organisation
(NGO) can learn from its corporate partners, and how it can use that knowledge in
creative dialogue with its corporate partners.

What does the study involve?

Your non-government organisation is invited to nominate 3-5 representatives that
might like to participate in this research.

The study will involve a face-to-face interview with each of the 3-5 nominated
representatives. The interview questions will seek to understand the NGOs
perspective on the elements of inclusion, openness, tolerance, empowerment and
transparency in the organisation's relationship with its corporate partners, and it will
also seek to understand the history of the engagement between those organisations.
Following the interviews, those nominated representatives will also be invited to
participate in a reflective learning program characterised by three action learning
focus group discussions and four appreciative inquiry focus group discussions.

Action learning is a team-based, dialogic approach to inquiry which uses the
reflexive capacity of individuals to solve organisational problems. It will allow NGO

representatives to reflect on the themes of the engagement between the NGO and its corporate partners that are important to them. They will also have the opportunity to reflect on their engagement experiences and to learn from the experiences of others in their organisation. Following this, participants will be encouraged to discuss how that knowledge can be used in creative dialogue with the NGO's corporate partners. The subsequent appreciative inquiry focus group discussions will provide a forum where that knowledge can be acted on in dialogue with the NGO's corporate partners.

Appreciative inquiry is a method of research used by small to large groups of individuals to reflexively develop new forms of management that are based on the strengths of an organisation or system. Specifically the process invites a group of people to collectively discover the strengths of an organisation or system, dream about new initiatives which are embedded in those strengths, and produce a design that incorporates those initiatives into an alternate organisational destiny. Three of the four appreciative inquiry focus groups will allow representatives from the NGO and members from one or more of the NGO's corporate partners to engage in dialogue to discover the strengths of engagement between organisations, dream about new initiatives embedded in those strengths, and creatively produce a design that incorporates those initiatives into a strategic plan for the future engagement between organisations.

The last appreciative inquiry focus group discussion invites all nominated NGO and corporate representatives who participated in the action learning and appreciative inquiry focus group discussions to collectively reflect about the concept of appreciative inquiry, the learning tools offered via the process and how those tools can be adapted to the processes of engagement between organisations.

How much time will the study take?

Each interview with a nominated participant will last approximately 30 minutes. The action learning and appreciative inquiry focus groups are expected to last 60-90 minutes each. Both the interviews and the focus groups will be electronically recorded to ensure that the participant's information can be accurately retrieved for later transcription, reflection and data analysis purposes.

Will the study benefit me?

The significance of the study can be derived from its aim to make a social contribution to the development of NGO and corporate collaboration via a series of reflective and creative action-based focus group exercises. The study also aims to develop, together with the NGO and its corporate partners, a series of reflective learning tools that can have the capacity to benefit the future engagement processes between organisations.

Will the study involve any discomfort for me?

The interviews and focus groups are not expected to cause discomfort to participants. Nominated representatives are free not to answer any questions or be involved in any activities, without giving any reason and without any consequences. They are also free to withdraw from the study at any time.

How is this study being paid for?

The study is a compulsory assessment component of the Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degree at the University of Western Sydney. No third-party or external sponsorship has been sought.

Will anyone else know the results? How will the results be disseminated?

Due to the nature of focus groups, it is possible that others who are participating in the discussions will know who is involved in the study and what is discussed at those meetings. Due to this, the study cannot guarantee that the dialogue in each of the meetings will remain private. However participants will be asked to agree to respect the privacy and confidentiality of others in the focus groups.

Participation in the study is confidential. The results of the study will be disseminated in a formal research thesis and may be presented in other scholarly publications including conference papers, academic journal articles, books and book chapters. Pseudonyms will be used to hide organisational and participant identities in any publication made.

Can I withdraw from the study?

Participation is entirely voluntary: you are not obliged to be involved and - if you do participate - you can withdraw at any time without giving any reason and without any consequences.

Can I tell other people about the study?

Yes, you can tell other people about the study by providing them with the chief investigator's contact details. They can contact the chief investigator to discuss their participation in the research project and obtain an information sheet.

What if I require further information?
When you have read this information, Robyn Taylor will discuss it with you further and answer any questions you may have. If you would like to know more at any stage, please feel free to contact Robyn or her supervisors using the following information:

Contact Person	Position	Contact Number	Email
Robyn Taylor	PhD Student	Mob : 0416 330 490	15950866@student.uws.edu.au
Dr Gabriela Coronado	Primary Supervisor	Tel: (02) 9685 9842	g.coronado@uws.edu.au
Dr Wayne Fallon	Co-Supervisor	Tel: (02) 9685 9844	w.fallon@uws.edu.au

What if I have a complaint?

This study has been approved by the University of Western Sydney Human Research Ethics Committee. The Approval number is [H9325]

If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this research, you may contact the Ethics Committee through the Office of Research Services on Tel +61 2 4736 0229 Fax +61 2 4736 0013 or email humanethics@uws.edu.au.

Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.

If you agree to participate in this study, you may be asked to sign the Participant Consent Form.

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Research Information Sheet

Non-Government Organisational Representative

Project Title:

Non-Government Organisations Learning from Corporate Relationships: A Participatory Approach

Who is carrying out the study?

You are invited to participate in a study carried out by Robyn Taylor, a doctoral student (PhD) in the School of Business at the University of Western Sydney. The project forms part of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at the University of Western Sydney. This study is supervised by Dr. Gabriela Coronado and Dr. Wayne Fallon

What is the study about?

The purpose of the project is to understand how a Non-Government Organisation (NGO) can learn from its corporate relationships, and how it can use that knowledge in creative dialogue with its corporate partners.

What does the study involve?

Your organisation has given their consent to participate in this study and has nominated you as a potential participant who might like to take part in this research project. As a potential participant, you are invited to take part in an initial interview focused on understanding the elements of inclusion, openness, tolerance, empowerment and transparency in your organisation's relationship with its corporate partners, and the history of the engagement between those organisations. Following that interview, you will also be invited to participate in a reflective learning program characterised by three action learning focus group discussions and four appreciative inquiry focus group discussions.

Action learning is a team-based, dialogic approach to inquiry which uses the reflexive capacity of individuals to solve organisational problems. In this project it will allow you and other NGO representatives to identify themes about the engagement between your organisation and its corporate partner/s that are important to you. As a result, you will have opportunity to reflect on your engagement

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experiences and also learn from the experiences of others in your organisation. Following this, you will be encouraged to discuss how that knowledge can be used in creative dialogue with the NGO's corporate partners in the subsequent appreciative inquiry focus groups.

Appreciative inquiry is a method of research used by small to large groups of individuals to reflexively develop new forms of management that are based on the strengths of an organisation or system. Specifically the process invites a group of people to collectively discover the strengths of an organisation or system, dream about new initiatives which are embedded in those strengths, and produce a design that incorporates those initiatives into an alternate organisational destiny. Three of the four appreciative inquiry focus group discussions will allow you, other representatives from the NGO and members from one or more of its corporate partners to engage in dialogue to discover the strengths of engagement between organisations, dream about new initiatives embedded in those strengths, and creatively produce a design that incorporates those initiatives into a strategic plan for the future engagement between organisations.

The last appreciative inquiry focus group discussion invites all nominated NGO and corporate representatives who participated in the action learning and appreciative inquiry focus groups to collectively reflect about the concept of appreciative inquiry, the learning tools offered via the process and how those tools can be adapted to the processes of engagement between organisations.

How much time will the study take?

Each interview will last approximately 30 minutes. The action learning and appreciative inquiry focus groups are expected to last 60-90 minutes each. Both the interviews and the focus groups will be electronically recorded to ensure that the participant's information can be accurately retrieved for later transcription, reflection and data analysis purposes.

Will the study benefit me?

The significance of the study can be derived from its aim to make a social contribution to the development of NGO and corporate collaboration via a series of reflective and creative action-based focus group exercises. The study also aims to develop, together with the NGO and its corporate partners, a series of reflective learning tools that can the capacity to benefit the future engagement processes between organisations.

Will the study involve any discomfort for me?

The interviews and focus groups are not expected to cause discomfort to participants. Nominated representatives are free not to answer any questions or be involved in any activities, without giving any reason and without any consequences. They are also free to withdraw from the study at any time.

How is this study being paid for?

The study is a compulsory assessment component of the Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degree at the University of Western Sydney. No third-party or external sponsorship has been sought.

Will anyone else know the results? How will the results be disseminated?

Due to the nature of focus groups, it is possible that others who are participating in the discussions will know who is involved in the study and what is discussed at those meetings. Due to this, the study cannot guarantee that the dialogue in each of the meetings will remain private. However participants will be asked to agree to respect the privacy and confidentiality of others in the focus groups.

Participation in the study is confidential. The results of the study will be disseminated in a formal research thesis and may be presented in other scholarly publications including conference papers, academic journal articles, books and book chapters. Pseudonyms will be used to hide organisational and participant identities in any publication made.

Can I withdraw from the study?

Participation is entirely voluntary: you are not obliged to be involved and - if you do participate - you can withdraw at any time without giving any reason and without any consequences.

Can I tell other people about the study?

Yes, you can tell other people about the study by providing them with the chief investigator's contact details. They can contact the chief investigator to discuss their participation in the research project and obtain an information sheet.

What if I require further information?
When you have read this information, Robyn Taylor will discuss it with you further and answer any questions you may have. If you would like to know more at any stage, please feel free to contact Robyn or her supervisors using the following information:

Contact Person	Position	Contact Number	Email
Robyn Taylor	PhD Student	Mob : 0416 330 490	15950866@student.uws.edu.au
Dr Gabriela Coronado	Primary Supervisor	Tel: (02) 9685 9842	g.coronado@uws.edu.au
Dr Wayne Fallon	Co-Supervisor	Tel: (02) 9685 9844	w.fallon@uws.edu.au

What if I have a complaint?

This study has been approved by the University of Western Sydney Human Research Ethics Committee. The Approval number is [H9325]

If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this research, you may contact the Ethics Committee through the Office of Research Services on Tel +61 2 4736 0229 Fax +61 2 4736 0013 or email humanethics@uws.edu.au.

Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.

If you agree to participate in this study, you may be asked to sign the Participant Consent Form.

Research Information Sheet

Corporation

Project Title:

Non-Government Organisations Learning from Corporate Relationships: A Participatory Approach

Who is carrying out the study?

You are invited to participate in a study carried out by Robyn Taylor, a doctoral student (PhD) in the School of Management at the University of Western Sydney. The project forms part of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at the University of Western Sydney. This study is supervised by Dr. Gabriela Coronado and Dr. Wayne Fallon

What is the study about?

The purpose of the project is to understand how a Non-Government Organisation (NGO) can learn from its corporate relationships, and how it can use that knowledge in creative dialogue with its corporate partners.

What does the study involve?

Your corporation is invited to nominate 3-5 representatives who might like to participate in two appreciative inquiry focus group discussions with representatives of a Non-government Organisation (NGO) and where appropriate, members from the NGOs other corporate partners.

Appreciative inquiry is a method of research used by small to large groups of individuals to reflexively develop strategic management initiatives that are based on the strengths of an organisation or system. Specifically the process invites a group of people to collectively identify the strengths of an organisation or system, develop new initiatives which are embedded in those strengths, and produce a design that incorporates those initiatives into a strategic plan for the future of that organisation or system. The first appreciative inquiry focus group discussion will allow participants from the NGO and the nominated representatives from your corporation to engage in dialogue to identify the strengths of engagement between organisations, develop new initiatives embedded in those strengths, and creatively produce a design that

incorporates those initiatives into a strategic plan for the future engagement between organisations.

The second appreciative inquiry focus group discussion will invite the nominated representatives from your corporation, the participants from the NGO, and representatives from that NGO's other corporate partners to collectively reflect about the concept of appreciative inquiry, the learning tools offered via the process and how those tools can be adapted to the processes of engagement between organisations.

How much time will the study take?

The appreciative inquiry focus groups are expected to last 60-90 minutes each. The focus groups will be electronically recorded to ensure that the participant's information can be accurately retrieved for later transcription, reflection and data analysis purposes.

Will the study benefit me?

The significance of the study can be derived from its aim to make a social contribution to the development of NGO and corporate collaboration via a series of reflective and creative action-based focus group exercises. The study also aims to develop, together with the NGO and its corporate partners, a series of reflective learning tools that can have the capacity to benefit the future engagement processes between organisations.

Will the study involve any discomfort for me?

The focus groups are not expected to cause discomfort to participants. Nominated representatives are free not to answer any questions or be involved in any activities, without giving any reason and without any consequences. They are also free to withdraw from the study at any time.

How is this study being paid for?

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Can I withdraw from the study?

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If you agree to participate in this study, you may be asked to sign the Participant Consent Form.

Research Information Sheet

Corporate Representative

Project Title:

Non-Government Organisations Learning from Corporate Relationships: A Participatory Approach

Who is carrying out the study?

You are invited to participate in a study carried out by Robyn Taylor, a doctoral student (PhD) in the School of Management at the University of Western Sydney. The project forms part of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at the University of Western Sydney. This study is supervised by Dr. Gabriela Coronado and Dr. Wayne Fallon

What is the study about?

The purpose of the project is to understand how a Non-Government Organisation (NGO) can learn from its corporate relationships, and how it can use that knowledge in creative dialogue with its corporate benefactors.

What does the study involve?

Your organisation has given their consent to participate in this study and has nominated you as a potential participant who might like to take part in this research project. As a potential participant, you are invited to take part in two appreciative inquiry focus group discussions which may include other representatives from your corporation, representatives from a NGO and where appropriate, members from that NGO's other corporate benefactors.

Appreciative inquiry is a method of research used by small to large groups of individuals to reflexively develop strategic management initiatives that are based on the strengths of an organisation or system. Specifically the process invites a group of people to collectively identify the strengths of an organisation or system, develop new initiatives which are embedded in those strengths, and produce a design that incorporates those initiatives into a strategic plan for the future of that organisation or system. The first appreciative inquiry focus group discussion allows you, other nominated representatives from your corporation and the nominated representatives

from the NGO to engage in dialogue to identify the strengths of engagement between organisations, develop new initiatives embedded in those strengths, and creatively produce a design that incorporates those initiatives into a strategic plan for the future engagement between organisations.

The second appreciative inquiry focus group discussion will invite you, the other nominated representatives from your corporation, the participants from the NGO, and representatives from that NGO's other corporate benefactors to collectively reflect about the concept of appreciative inquiry, the learning tools offered via the process and how those tools can be adapted to the processes of engagement between organisations.

How much time will the study take?

The appreciative inquiry focus groups are expected to last 60-90 minutes each. The focus groups will be electronically recorded to ensure that the participant's information can be accurately retrieved for later transcription, reflection and data analysis purposes.

Will the study benefit me?

The significance of the study can be derived from its aim to make a social contribution to the development of NGO and corporate collaboration via a series of reflective and creative action-based focus group exercises. The study also aims to develop, together with the NGO and its corporate benefactors, a series of reflective learning tools that can have the capacity to benefit the future engagement processes between organisations.

Will the study involve any discomfort for me?

The focus groups are not expected to cause discomfort to participants. Nominated representatives are free not to answer any questions or be involved in any activities, without giving any reason and without any consequences. They are also free to withdraw from the study at any time.

How is this study being paid for?

The study is a compulsory assessment component of the Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degree at the University of Western Sydney. No third-party or external sponsorship has been sought.

Will anyone else know the results? How will the results be disseminated?

Due to the nature of focus groups, it is possible that others who are participating in the discussions will know who is involved in the study and what is discussed at those meetings. Due to this, the study cannot guarantee that the dialogue in each of the meetings will remain private. However participants will be asked to agree to respect the privacy and confidentiality of others in the focus groups.

Participation in the study is confidential. The results of the study will be disseminated in a formal research thesis and may be presented in other scholarly publications including conference papers, academic journal articles, books and book

chapters. Pseudonyms will be used to hide organisational and participant identities in any publication made.

Can I withdraw from the study?

Participation is entirely voluntary: you are not obliged to be involved and - if you do participate - you can withdraw at any time without giving any reason and without any consequences.

Can I tell other people about the study?

Yes, you can tell other people about the study by providing them with the chief investigator's contact details. They can contact the chief investigator to discuss their participation in the research project and obtain an information sheet.

What if I require further information?

When you have read this information, Robyn Taylor will discuss it with you further and answer any questions you may have. If you would like to know more at any stage, please feel free to contact Robyn or her supervisors using the following information:

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Dr Gabriela Coronado	Primary Supervisor	Tel: (02) 9685 9842	g.coronado@uws.edu.au
Dr Wayne Fallon	Co-Supervisor	Tel: (02) 9685 9844	w.fallon@uws.edu.au

What if I have a complaint?

This study has been approved by the University of Western Sydney Human Research Ethics Committee. The Approval number is [enter approval number]

If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this research, you may contact the Ethics Committee through the Office of Research Services on Tel +61 2 4736 0229 Fax +61 2 4736 0013 or email humanethics@uws.edu.au.

Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.

If you agree to participate in this study, you may be asked to sign the Participant Consent Form.

Appendix 3

Participant Consent Form

Non-Government Organisation

Project Title:

Non-Government Organisations Learning from Corporate Relationships: A Participatory Approach

I,…………………………, give consent for this organisation,………………………, to participate in the research project titled "*Non-Government Organisations Learning from Corporate Relationships: A Participatory Approach*". I acknowledge that: I have read the participant information sheet [or where appropriate, 'have had read to me'] and have been given the opportunity to discuss the information and the organisation's involvement in the project with the researcher/s.

The procedures required for the project and the time involved have been explained to me, and any questions I have about the project have been answered to my satisfaction.

I give consent for this organisation to participate in the initial interviews, the action learning focus groups and the appreciative inquiry focus groups of this research project. I understand that the interviews and focus groups will be electronically recorded to ensure that the information can be accurately retrieved for later transcription, reflection and data analysis purposes.

I understand that the organisation's involvement is confidential and that the information gained during the study may be published but no information about the organisation or its nominated representatives will be used in any way that reveals participant identities.

I understand that I can withdraw from the study at any time, without affecting my relationship with the researcher/s now or in the future.

Signed:

Name:

Date:

Return Address:

This study has been approved by the University of Western Sydney Human Research Ethics Committee.

The Approval number is: [H9325]

If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this research, you may contact the Ethics Committee through the Office of Research Services on Tel +61 2 4736 0229 Fax +61 2 4736 0013 or email humanethics@uws.edu.au. Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.

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Participant Consent Form

Non-Government Organisational Representative

Project Title:

Non-Government Organisations Learning from Corporate Relationships: A Participatory Approach

I,…………………………, consent to participate in the research project titled "*Non-Government Organisations Learning from Corporate Relationships: A Participatory Approach*". I acknowledge that: I have read the participant information sheet [or where appropriate, 'have had read to me'] and have been given the opportunity to discuss the information and my involvement in the project with the researcher/s.

The procedures required for the project and the time involved have been explained to me, and any questions I have about the project have been answered to my satisfaction.

I give my consent to participate in the initial interview, the action learning focus groups and the appreciative inquiry focus groups of this research project. I understand that the interviews and focus groups will be electronically recorded to ensure that the information can be accurately retrieved for later transcription, reflection and data analysis purposes.

I understand that my involvement is confidential and that the information gained during the study may be published but no information about me will be used in any way that reveals my identity.

I understand that I can withdraw from the study at any time, without affecting my relationship with the researcher/s now or in the future.

Signed:

Name:

Date:

Return Address:

This study has been approved by the University of Western Sydney Human Research Ethics Committee.

The Approval number is: [H9325]

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Participant Consent Form

Corporation

Project Title:

Non-Government Organisations Learning from Corporate Relationships: A Participatory Approach

I,…………………………, give consent for this organisation,…………………………, to participate in the research project titled "*Non-Government Organisations Learning from Corporate Relationships: A Participatory Approach*". I acknowledge that I have read the participant information sheet [or where appropriate, 'have had read to me'] and have been given the opportunity to discuss the information and the organisation's involvement in the project with the researcher/s.

The procedures required for the project and the time involved have been explained to me, and any questions I have about the project have been answered to my satisfaction.

I give consent for this organisation to participate in the appreciative inquiry focus groups of this research project. I understand that the focus groups will be electronically recorded to ensure that the information can be accurately retrieved for later transcription, reflection and data analysis purposes.

I understand that the organisation's involvement is confidential and that the information gained during the study may be published but no information about the organisation or its nominated representatives will be used in any way that reveals participant identities.

I understand that I can withdraw from the study at any time, without affecting my relationship with the researcher/s now or in the future.

Signed:

Name:

Date:

Return Address:

This study has been approved by the University of Western Sydney Human Research Ethics Committee.

The Approval number is: [H9325]

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Participant Consent Form

Corporate Representative

Project Title:

Non-Government Organisations Learning from Corporate Relationships: A Participatory Approach

I,…………………………, consent to participate in the research project titled "*Non-Government Organisations Learning from Corporate Relationships: A Participatory Approach*". I acknowledge that: I have read the participant information sheet [or where appropriate, 'have had read to me'] and have been given the opportunity to discuss the information and my involvement in the project with the researcher/s.

The procedures required for the project and the time involved have been explained to me, and any questions I have about the project have been answered to my satisfaction.

I give my consent to participate in the appreciative inquiry focus groups of this research project. I understand that the focus groups will be electronically recorded to ensure that the information can be accurately retrieved for later transcription, reflection and data analysis purposes.

I understand that my involvement is confidential and that the information gained during the study may be published but no information about me will be used in any way that reveals my identity.

I understand that I can withdraw from the study at any time, without affecting my relationship with the researcher/s now or in the future.

Signed:

Name:

Date:

Return Address:

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