

# **What factors influence coopetitive relationships within an inter-organisational network?**

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## **Abstract**

### **What factors influence coopetitive relationships within an inter-organisational network?**

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Coopetition is a concept that describes the simultaneous cooperation and competition between organisations. The purpose of this research is to examine how certain factors that are perceived to be significant influence coopetitive relationships between 19 competing arts organisations and asks how much of an effect these factors have on those relationships. This research uses a thematic network as the framework for understanding and analysing multiple dyadic relationships and as such, employs the use of qualitative data collection methods: including semi-structured interviews and observational data to investigate the relationships between competing non-profit arts-based organisations in an inter-organisational network.

The research findings demonstrate that the factors identified within this research can pose both challenges and successes to the coopetitive relationships found within the network. Four factors in particular (i.e. proximity, building relationships, expectations and management) have been found to influence coopetitive relationships. Although these factors are found to be crucial for the success of the coopetitive network, these factors also create tensions between member organisations.

Specifically, this study makes two key contributions to coopetition literature. First, it extends our understanding of coopetitive relationships through a conceptualisation of coopetition using empirical data. It builds on previous work by Bengtsson and Kock (2000) who conceptualise coopetition as being one of three parts: cooperation between partners; competition between partners and the interaction between cooperation and competition. By conceptualising coopetition, this study discusses whether the factors for coopetition between single dyads can also apply in the context of a network of multiple dyads, and to what extent organisations can benefit or face challenges in coopetition. The aim is to enable a deeper understanding of coopetition and will also show how coopetitive networks operate.

Secondly, the role of tension in coopetitive relationships is explored. Traditionally in literature, tensions in inter-organisational relations have been linked to paradoxical influences such as value creation versus value appropriation. As it will be discussed in later chapters, coopetition itself is considered paradoxical and unpredictable suggesting that managing it can be quite challenging; particularly if organisations aim to balance the mutual benefits afforded through cooperation with separate strategic goals from being competitors. Thus, the role tension plays in inter-organisational relationships is critical for understanding the relationship between cooperation and competition; which remains to date relatively under-researched in coopetition literature (Chen, 2008; Das and Teng, 2000; Luo, 2007). Through the case study and the qualitative study, this thesis demonstrates that an organisation's ability to manage its coopetitive ties is linked to how the concept of coopetition is viewed.

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*This thesis is dedicated to my wonderful children.  
You have brought with you countless blessings into my life and taught me the meaning of  
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## **Glossary of terms**

### **Acronym      Description**

ABO	Arts-based Organizations
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CT	Cinema/Theatre
DCMS	Department for Culture, Media and Sport
ED	Educational Establishment
EV	Events-based Organisation
GT	Game Theory
H	High Relationship Strength
I	Interviewer
IO	Inter-organisation
ION	Inter-organisational Network
IOR	Inter-organisational Relationships
L	Low Relationship Strength
M	Medium Relationship Strength
MNC	Multi-national Corporations
MU	Museum
NN	Network N
No.	Number
ORG	Organisation
R	Representative
RE	Religious Establishment

# **Chapter One**

## **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter presents the purpose of this research and its significance and describes the research objectives that guide the study. The research process is briefly described and the chapter concludes with an overview of the thesis structure.

### **1.1 Purpose of the research and its significance**

More organisations now enter into simultaneous cooperative and competitive relationships (Brandenburger and Nalebuff, 1996; Yami, Castaldo, Dagnino and Roy, 2010). Coined *coopetition*, it is described as a paradoxical culmination of simultaneous cooperation and competition in inter-organisational relationships (Bengtsson and Kock, 2000; Bengtsson, Eriksson and Wincent, 2010; Bengtsson and Johansson, 2012). This paradox is evident when organisations attempt to interact by cooperating to achieve a mutual target, but also compete out of self-interest to satisfy individually set goals (Bengtsson and Kock, 2000). Bengtsson and Powell (2004) equate this rise in collaborative relationships with a competitive pressure to satisfy suppliers and customers alike. Studies have focused on why organisations that traditionally compete would choose to enter into cooperative arrangements (e.g. Todeva, 2006; Zineldin and Dodourova, 2005). Likewise, considerable research has been conducted on the nature and importance of interactions between pairs of organisations (Bengtsson and Kock, 2014; Wilhelm, 2011; Hakansson *et al.*, 2009); but only a small number of studies have been dedicated to research on coopetitive relationships at network level. Instead, the focus has predominantly been on traditional manufacturing, large multi-national enterprises and high-tech organisations, with little or no attention placed on other types of organisations and industries (Luo, 2005; Walley, 2007). Specifically, Gnyawali and Park (2009) call for more research that focuses on factors that drive coopetition at both industry and firm levels. This study responds to calls for empirical evidence to examine how factors may influence cooperative-competitive interactions between organisations based on the typology of coopetitive relations proposed by Bengtsson and Kock (2000).

A number of different industries make up the arts in the UK. In a bid to provide some clarity, research by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS, 2011) broadly categorises the arts under three headings, namely: the creative industries, heritage, and sport. Organisations usually include theatres, cinemas, galleries, arts festivals and museums (Centre for Economics and Business Research, 2013). In this study, the focus is solely on the creative

industries (e.g., theatres, cinemas); heritage (e.g., museums) and those organisations whose remit contribute to the development of the arts in the region. Like the aforementioned, the arts industry at a regional level has its own sets of structures, activities and degrees of customer involvement that make it distinctive within the broader arts sector.

The arts sector faces an increased pressure of funding, and so must now find new ways of working, alternate sources of income (see Fillis, 2010; Foster, 2009), and more entrepreneurial means of surviving (Rentschler, Radbourne, Carr, and Rickard, 2002). This pressure is due to a combination of rising costs, a decline in financial resources, and the need for stable funding sources. The result is increased competition between arts organisations to deliver services. As competition for limited financial resources intensifies, many organizations implement strategies to sustain and maintain their current situation or increase their organisational capacity. Certain external pressures such as competing for audiences, retaining and hiring skilled employees and attracting funding influence their need to adopt strategies (Salamon, 1999). Arts organisations in particular make it an obligation to serve the community, but these organisations are inevitably forced to think strategically about how to achieve this aim when they seem to function in an environment that is not always secure. Thus, it is not unusual for them to form formal partnerships or join informal networks.

The focus of this study is on an inter-organisational network of arts sector organisations, called Network N (NN). NN was originally founded ten years before this research commenced. The 19 member organisations come predominantly from the creative-arts and heritage sector (e.g., theatres, cinemas and museums), although the network also includes some organisations (e.g., higher education and churches/cathedrals) that do not strictly adhere to the definition of an arts organisation, but whose remit contributes to the development of the arts through education. Its core focus as a network is on combining the expertise and resources of its members (i.e., creative arts providers) in order to develop and promote learning opportunities to primary and secondary education providers (in the East of England) as well as to learners of all ages and abilities. Its other primary function is to offer support by providing advice and access to resources to its member organisations. So, it can be seen that although these member organisations are in competition with one another, they aim to collaborate so that they can share resources and collectively increase audience numbers. This network has created a set of common goals and aims to leverage resources to achieve better outcomes for the communities that they serve.

Studies in inter-organisational networks present research opportunities that can be classed as gaps. This particularly occurs when only a few aim to understand an organisation, its

network governance and its management (e.g., Oliver and Ebers, 1998; Brass *et al.*, 2004). In this study, the focus is on horizontal coopetitive relationships at network level. This is where legally independent organisations that are similarly structured or come from the same sector of activity collectively act to strengthen their competitive position. All of the organisations are classed as being either current or potential competitors. Cooperation is necessary for these organisations to be able to achieve the network's objectives. By focusing on multiple horizontal dyads at network level, my intention is to examine how certain factors shape the coopetitive relationships between organisations. In particular, this study focuses on the factors that define coopetitive relationships, as well the influence these factors have on the dynamics of the coopetitive relationships between organisations. The research objectives are, therefore, as follows:

1. Examine what types of relationships exist between competing organisations in the inter-organisational network.
2. Identify potential factors that directly influence coopetitive relationships and how these factors influence such relationships and the functioning of the network.

The review of coopetition in chapter two will show that there have been significant changes in the last decade and within the arts in particular, due to the influence of societal changes on the need for organisations to engage in coopetitive relationships. This, combined with the increased role of an integrated approach to cooperation, competition and coopetition in ION literature, and to a lesser extent the arts industry as outlined in chapter two, means that the task of identifying such factors is a complex one. It is also a task that, to my knowledge has not been undertaken by any other researchers to date, either in the wider arts sector or as applied to a single network with multiple dyadic relationships, such as the ones studied in this thesis.

Specifically, this study makes two key contributions to coopetition literature. First, it extends our understanding of coopetitive relationships through a conceptualisation of coopetition using empirical data. It builds on previous work by Bengtsson and Kock (2000) who conceptualise coopetition as being one of three parts: cooperation between partners; competition between partners and the interaction between cooperation and competition. By conceptualising coopetition, this study discusses whether the factors for coopetition between single dyads can also be applied in the context of a network of multiple dyads, and to what extent organisations can benefit or face challenges in coopetition. The aim is to enable a

deeper understanding of coopetition as well as to demonstrate how coopetitive networks operate.

Secondly, the role of tension in coopetitive relationships is explored. Traditionally in literature, tensions in inter-organisational relations have been linked to paradoxical influences such as value creation versus value appropriation. As will be discussed in later chapters, coopetition itself is considered paradoxical and unpredictable suggesting that managing it can be quite challenging, particularly if organisations aim to balance the mutual benefits afforded through cooperation with separate strategic goals to promote competition. Thus, the role tension plays in inter-organisational relationships is critical for understanding the relationship between cooperation and competition. This relationship remains to date relatively under-researched in coopetition literature (Chen, 2008; Das and Teng, 2000; Luo, 2007). Through the case study and the qualitative study, this thesis demonstrates that an organisation's ability to manage its coopetitive ties is linked to how the concept of coopetition is viewed.

This study also examines coopetitive relationships from a network context using a different methodological stance. Most empirical studies examine coopetition using quantitative measures that have been until recently acknowledged by academics to be unable to capture the complexities posed by coopetition (Yami *et al.*, 2010). This thesis however demonstrates that through using an interpretivist approach to empirically examine coopetitive relationships, there is an opportunity to fully explore the different interpretations accorded to coopetition and the factors that may arise as a result.

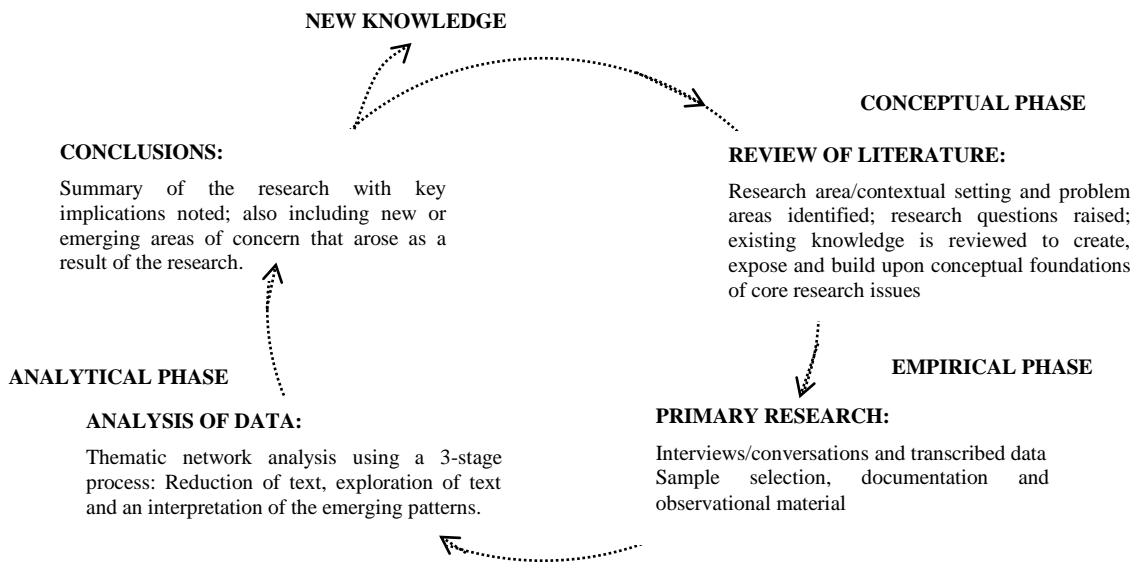
## **1.2 Research process**

Using a qualitative framework and an interpretivist position, this thesis identifies the factors that influence horizontal coopetitive relationships and the extent to which these factors influence such relationships in a single network. Therefore, the nature of the research presented in this thesis is both exploratory and descriptive in order to build on existing knowledge and theories first by being receptive to new phenomena and then by extending existing conceptual research.

Qualitative data were collected using semi-structured interviews with members of all 19 organisations in the network. Network meetings and key events were also attended and observed. The researcher was also given access to meeting minutes and other documents relating to the network. Thematic analysis of the data was conducted. Thematic analysis is considered “a process for encoding qualitative information, which may be a list of themes; a complex model, indicators and qualifications that are causally related” (Boyatzis, 1998: vi).

Key themes were highlighted during the coding and analytical process to find repetitive patterns, and then presented as a web-like framework that makes it easier to organise and present a synopsis of the main ideas from the study (Attride-Sterling, 2001). In summary, research findings and analysis are based on multiple data sources, including data from network meetings, meeting minutes, joint exhibitions and projects, other network documents, websites, observational data and 36.5 hours of interviews. This research process is presented in Figure 1a.

**Figure 1a: Research process**



Source: developed for this research by author

### 1.3 Key Findings

The data analysis showed that there were different types of relationships within the network. Of the 342 relationships identified, 90 were predominantly cooperative, 184 were predominantly competitive and 46 were balanced coopetitive when placed on a coopetitive continuum. Relationships within the network were mainly multiple dyads, although single dyads also appeared to be present in cases where short term projects were undertaken. Despite the majority of relationships being described as competitive, this finding supports the view that because of the pressure to collaborate as one of the conditions of funding, and in order to remain relevant through access to key resources (e.g., audience databases, expertise), arts organisations have now started to establish an increasing amount of cooperative relations with their competitors. It is suggested that certain factors influence the cooperative-competitive balance in coopetitive relationships. These empirical findings may provide

valuable extensions for conceptual thinking about coopetition because fundamentally, these findings highlight the significance of interactions in coopetitive relationships. The manner and depth of interactions are determined by the readiness of organisations to engage in coopetition, and in this study four factors namely; proximity, building relationships, expectations and management are significant. Although these factors were found to have a mainly positive influence on the relationships, they were also found to be the root cause of tensions between the network's members.

#### **1.4 Thesis structure**

There are six chapters in this thesis.

Chapter one introduces the background to the study and the high level aims at the outset of this research. The research process is then briefly presented. This chapter concludes with the structure of the thesis.

Chapter two examines the central concepts that underpin this study. It examines previous literature on coopetition to provide a theoretical framework to inform this study. Key debates within the literature are highlighted along with key gaps in the literature, some of which can be addressed by this research.

Chapter three presents a methodological frame of reference as suggested by Crotty (1998) that answers questions on the epistemological stance and theoretical perspective of this study; the rationale for the methodology and research design chosen; and the data collection and analysis methods used.

Chapter four describes the inter-organisational network and the context within which it operates. The chapter then presents the empirical findings from the data collection and analysis, as they relate to the research objectives and sub-questions of this study. It addresses each research objective separately. First, the responses from organisations based on their perspectives of their current associations with other member organisations are described. Second, the factors that influence coopetitive relationships are identified, and the final section presents the perspectives of the organisations on how these factors shape their coopetitive relationships.

Chapter five discusses the research findings and whether or not they support previous research findings and theories, as presented in the literature review chapter.

Chapter six is the final chapter of this thesis. The conclusions of the study are presented to show how the research objectives were met. The theoretical and practical contributions of

this study are also highlighted. Finally, the limitations of this research and areas for future research are expounded.

## **Chapter Two**

# **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

The purpose of this chapter is to examine the central concepts that underpin this study. The literature on inter-organisational relationships, networks, and coopetition are reviewed to identify gaps in the literature and to provide a theoretical and conceptual framework that informs this study.

### **2.1 Inter-organisational relationships and networks**

#### **2.1.1 Defining inter-organisational relationships**

According to Bengtsson and Kock (2000), organisations typically work together to achieve a common objective that often ends in creating a competitive advantage. These types of relationships are called inter-organisational relationships within the literature (Bergenholz and Waldstrom, 2011; Tonge, 2012). The Oxford English dictionary regards a relationship as being “the state of being connected”, which when applied to organisational relationships suggests the development of a connection between two organisations over an agreed period (Copulsky and Wolf, 1990). In management research, relationships at an inter-organisational level focus on organisations that choose to collectively cooperate in order to survive and grow (Osborn and Hagedoorn, 1997; Murphy, Maguiness, Pescott, Wislang, Ma and Wang, 2005; Copulsky and Wolf, 1990).

One definition of an inter-organisational relationship (IOR) is “the set of social, economic and technical ties between two autonomous business organisations” (Anderson and Narus, 1991:96). This definition suggests that IORs based within business environments are characterised by the creation and governance of links that organisations use to adjust their routines and products in order to pool resources and match their respective needs and capabilities to partnering organisations. Thus, organisations may perceive a reduction in risk and this notion somehow helps to shape the perceptions behind their competitive behaviour in the relationship (Eikebrokk and Olsen, 2005). According to Kanter (1994:98), a relational exchange presupposes that “a business relationship is more than just the deal. It is a connection between otherwise independent organisations that can take many forms and contains the potential for additional collaboration. It is a mutual agreement to continue to get together; thus its value includes the potential for a stream of opportunities.” The focus should therefore not only be on considering the level of dependence on the external relationships

between organisations, but also on understanding the interactions that take place within them (Hakansson, 1982).

### **2.1.2 Exchange and interactions within relationships**

IORs are increasingly characterised by a mutuality upon which there is an exchange of cooperative and competitive activities on an organisational level (Peng *et al.*, 2012). The notion of exchange in an IOR setting is defined by Levine and White (1961:588) as being “a voluntary activity between two organisations which has consequences, actual or anticipated, for the realisation of their respective goals and objectives.” By mutuality, there must be an understood requirement by organisations to voluntarily participate or interact with each other (either as a transactional or relational exchange). Relational exchanges occur when an accountability of power between organisations in a network is counter-balanced with the theory of how organisations seek to manage their own environments (Davis and Cobb, 2009). Transaction exchange is more focused on the management and costs internal to the organisation (Barringer and Harrison, 2000). Williamson (1991) points out four key features that typify transactions (i.e., uncertainty, information asymmetry, asset specificity and the frequency of the transaction), which he bases on an analysis of the combinations of attributes gained from the advantages of different governance structures. Table 2.1 provides a comparison between transactional and relational exchange using five factors: theoretical foundations, unit of analysis, situational contexts, process characteristics, and outcomes.

Exchange is crucial in relationships between organisations and occurs through singular interactions between organisations over a period of time, such that a continuous stream of exchanges between organisations may then lead to a relationship (Johanson and Mattson, 1987). Thus, relationships connect organisations to each other, and the length and duration of the interactions become dependent on the outcome of prior interactions. Factors that may impact future interactions may include what was learned in previous encounters, what happens in current interactions, the expectations of both organisations with respect to any future interactions, and the impact on the wider network of relationships that they may be indirectly or directly involved in. These factors therefore create a point of reference within the relationship between organisations (Hakansson and Ford, 2002).

**Table 2.1: Transactional and relational exchange**

Factors	Exchange Characteristics	Transactional Exchange (TC)	Relational Exchange (RE)
Theoretical foundation	-	<p>TC has theoretical links to economics, organisational theory and contract law.</p> <p>It aims to explain the motivations behind how organisations weigh the costs of exchanging resources with the environment, against the bureaucratic costs of performing activities internally (Coase, 1937).</p>	<p>RE explicitly views exchange relations as a dynamic process and focuses on the social aspects of business relationships, built on the principles of the social psychology of groups e.g., interdependence theory (Thibaut and Kelley 1959).</p> <p>It aims to explain the social context in which IO-relationships develop, are maintained and terminated based on a mutuality of interests that may exist between the organisations.</p>
Unit of analysis	-	The firm	<p>The dyadic relationship (between two organisations).</p> <p>In addition, RE theory explicitly recognises that the behaviours and reputations of the organisations involved in the relationship create a set of implicit expectations and obligations far beyond any contract.</p>
Situational context	Exchange timing	Transaction has a distinct beginning and end. Exchange duration is short.	On-going, continuous exchange in which each exchange episode is linked to previous experience. Exchange duration is longer.
	Responsibilities	Obligations are well-defined for purposes of completing the transaction and are standardised.	Obligations transcend any particular exchange episode and are customised
	Expectations	Expectations are limited to the transaction completion.	Expectations are on future exchange rather than a specific exchange episode
Process characteristics	Personal relations	Interaction is limited, standardised and formal.	Interaction is frequent, adapted over time and predominantly informal
	Cooperation	Little or no joint effort is demonstrated. Focus is on completing the immediate transaction.	Exchange partners are highly interdependent.
	Transferability	Total transferability is probable as there is little reliance on the other party to complete the transaction	Very limited transferability because the exchange episodes are tailored to the exchange partners.
Outcomes	Costs	Costs are determined on a transaction basis with little consideration of opportunity costs.	Costs are shared by exchange partners over time. There is tacit agreement that the burdens will be distributed equitably during the relationship.
	Benefits	There is a clear and predetermined allocation of benefits from the transaction.	Allocation of exchange utility is judicious and based on contentment of all exchange partners.

(Source: adapted from Von der Heidt, 2008)

Networks are characterised by a dual boundary setting dynamic as they require a higher level of social integration (Poulymenakou and Klein, 2006). Areas such as trust, commitment, and identification with the network and management help to facilitate and align different capabilities and roles of organisations to a mutual target. Internally, organisations define shared values, which aim to align their common interests. This delineates the boundaries between themselves (i.e. the organisations) and the opportunities presented by being part of a network. From an external perspective, boundaries are defined by membership. Recent studies of business relationships point out that the interactions that exist within those relationships can be complex but are a necessary element of the relationship dynamics – as interactions ultimately govern the manner in which the relationships develop at inter-organisational and network level. From a traditionally economic perspective, an interaction is considered a mechanism that facilitates market exchange. In contrast, Hakansson *et al.* (2009:27) suggest that the interactions in business are more encompassing as they are much more than exchange mechanisms.

Relationships involve costs for the interacting actors and also provide important potential benefits that cannot be obtained without interaction, and this inevitably affects the resources, people and activities performed. In other words, as organisations engage in dyadic interactions, there is a higher possibility of one interaction affecting another interaction, effectively creating a network of connections that filters change across many organisational boundaries (eventually affecting the combination of organisational activities and the manner in which the organisation shares resources). Clark (1998) categorises three notable types of interactions that exist between competitors based on the level of awareness competing organisations reciprocally have of each other. These are implicit, explicit and asymmetric interactions. Implicit interactions take place when an organisation is either unaware or chooses to be ignorant of the effects another organisation has on its business. Conversely, explicit interactions suggest that both organisations are aware of each other and the exchange between both can either be hostile, responsive or benign. Where asymmetric interactions occur, it is assumed that one organisation is more aware of the benefits from the relationship than the other, and can use this to its advantage.

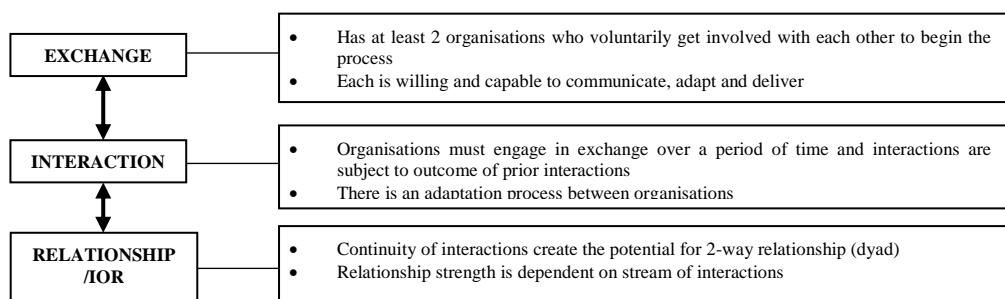
According to Clark (1998), a typical pattern of behaviour is determined by first defining what the goals are for the interaction between one organisation and another. An organisation, for instance, would have to determine what benefits the relationship would offer and whether or not the exchange would be beneficial prior to starting the relationship. Two important elements of interaction that help to define the goals are *time* and *space*. Time is relevant as

interactions from previous periods in time are often linked to the present situation and often create the basis of expectations for future interactions between the organisations. Space refers to the context within which an organisation simultaneously interacts with other organisations using the availability of resources and the type of activities it engages in as major deciders of the outcome of their interactions (Johanson and Mattson, 1992).

At an initial stage of analysis, different interpretations of both historical and future expectations can be misaligned on the part of the organisation – meaning that some challenges may exist in the analysis of interactions, particularly where the perception of the level of intensity is concerned. Intensity here is crucial because there may be periods where for instance, interactions may be more frequent and intense whilst during other periods, little or no interactional involvement may exist. In both cases, an organisation in the dyad may perceive an apparently insignificant episode of interaction as important and this may have an effect on the depth of future interactions.

Intensity in the interactions, relational exchanges and relationships between organisations is an area covered in this thesis and will be directly applied to competitive relationships (in line with the research question). Where used within this thesis, interaction refers to the continuous adaptation process between organisations as they adjust their routines to exchange benefits with each other over a period of time to reach relationship status. Care must be taken to note that relationships are dynamic and are therefore not prescribed to follow a specific pattern as relationships change over time. Thus, exchanges in a social context that lead to a relationship are often a good indicator of the extent to which organisations evolve and adapt to build a dyadic relationship with another organisation. Figure 2a shows the links between exchanges, interactions and relationships.

**Figure 2a: Link between exchange, interactions and relationships**



(Source: adapted from Von der Heidt, 2008)

## **2.2 Networks**

### **2.2.1 Definition and characteristics of networks**

A network is a structure that develops from business relationships (Padula and Dagnino, 2008). Organisations are thought to form mutually dependent links that govern the manner in which the network is managed, which in turn determines the potential outcomes and behaviour within the network (Bengtsson and Kock, 2000; Peng and Bourne, 2009). In most cases, these links are a combination of both competitive and cooperative motives in which organisations have private and common interests (Abdallah and Wadhwa, 2009). Networks can appear in different forms and shapes and as such, there is a wide range of concepts used to describe them. A key connection between these varying concepts is the use of ‘nodes’ and the ‘links or ties between those nodes’ to depict what a network is and how it operates (Brass *et al.*, 2004). Nodes represent the actors or key players in the network, and can include individual people, groups and organisations or can be determined through specific collective characteristics. Relationships, on the other hand, are represented by the links between the nodes. Such links may be *undirected* (i.e., two organisations communicating with each other) or *directed* (i.e., one organisation sees another as a source of leadership).

In the case of directional links, the relationships between organisations may be reciprocated, highlighting the agreement between the pair or, in other cases, the relationship becomes unbalanced (i.e. asymmetric) and one organisation becomes more dependent on the other. In many cases, network ties may simply signify the existence of a relationship, although it is the strength of those ties between organisations that influences how organisations will relate to one another and create the basis upon which an identity is formed within the network. Stronger ties between organisations imply close, stable relationships typified by regular communication and a stronger emotional intensity that lead to a continuity of cooperative interactions between the organisations. By contrast, weaker ties between organisations occur when relationships are casual and feature one-off exchanges that are temporary or indirect. What this highlights is that the interactions between parties are integral to network arrangements and can be considered to drive the formation of business relationships to create, in some cases, the malleable structure of the network (Gulati, Nohria and Zaheer, 2000).

Further, it (i.e., network ties/links) highlights a connectedness that suggests that relationships cannot exist in isolation or independently. It is therefore suggested that within this thesis, the network is characterised by an agreement to mutual expectations based on social action and the type of relationships present within the network (Williams, 2005; Moller

and Halinen, 1999). Accordingly, the type and intensity of the interactions and agreed routines between organisations determine the degree to which the competitive-cooperative process is executed, and therefore how much influence is exerted during this process (Johnston, Peters and Gassenheimer, 2006).

In the organisation theory literature, research on relationships in networks is informed by a range of theoretical perspectives such as the resource-based view, related exchange perspectives, game theory and transaction cost economics. All of these perspectives offer both complementary and contrasting views about network formation. Essentially, each perspective focuses on the antecedents and outcomes of organisations – with little attention paid to the network except for its governance and structure (Provan and Kenis, 2008). Organisations make up a network. Although this view is understandable, it is equally necessary to understand that organisations can also benefit or lose by being involved in a network.

Ritter and Gemunden (2003) explain why defining networks is still conceptually difficult. Firstly, understanding the interactions in business relations using qualitative means is different to analysing management issues using quantitative methods, as is categorising networks either vertically or horizontally. Often, academics versed in one method of inquiry may fail to recognise and acknowledge the merit or contributions of the other method (Ghesi and Martinelli, 2006). Such discrepancies in network research call for there to be an increased interest in determining a real focus for network research, specifically where inter-organisational relationships are concerned. Alternatively, Borgatti and Foster (2003) question whether networks should be considered as a unique organisational form, as organisations are already embedded in the broader “network” of economic and social relationships (Granovetter, 1985; Podolny and Page, 1998). Networks are viewed in a multitude of ways because many argue that networks are indeed a unique organisational form, but there is the danger that a multitude of definitions creates different meanings (Williamson, 1991).

Secondly, they suggest that different aims and objectives underpin different studies, and consequently research results have become difficult to generalise across the different methods. For instance, a difference in the backgrounds of academics who study IORs and networks may add to the confusion of defining networks appropriately. IORs focus on the importance of using the social elements highlighted through network relationships to access and exploit the resources on offer (Cropper, Ebers, Huxham and Ring, 2008), whilst network theory defines the structure of the relationships and the meaning behind those relationships (Provan and Lemaire, 2011). In other words, the focus of research may be to understand how

business relationships are managed, whilst another body of research may seek to address different business realities. According to Provan *et al.*, (2007:480):

“...although inter-organizational networks are by now a commonly understood phenomenon of organizational life, it is not always clear exactly what organizational scholars [or people in practice] are talking about when they use the term. Even the term *network* is not always used. Many who study business, community, and other organizational networks prefer to talk about partnerships, strategic alliances, inter-organizational relationships, coalitions, cooperative arrangements, or collaborative agreements.”

This thesis does not try to offer an all-encompassing definition of an inter-organisational network. Rather, its focus is on addressing, in part, one particular type of network that is frequently discussed but rarely researched, namely, a coopetitive network. Similar to other networks, a coopetitive network includes organisations (nodes), their relationships (ties) and the absence of relationships. Within the confines of this study, a coopetitive network is viewed here as a group of competitive organisations connected and linked through multilateral ties in ways that enable the realisation of a shared objective. Relationships among network members are largely non-hierarchical and they often have substantial operating autonomy. Further, connections between network members can be made through information links, financial resources, expertise, materials and social support. Connections may be informal and totally trust-based or more formalised, as through a contract. Unlike traditional network research, however, the focus here is on the significance of the relationships of the organisations that comprise the network rather than solely on the structures and processes of the entire network.

The literature used in this review is far less extensive than the general literature on inter-organisational networks, but it covers specific areas believed to be under-addressed. Building on this perspective, this thesis focuses on the attributes of organisations to explain their relationship with other organisations, concentrating on issues such as organisational trust (amongst other key factors) to explain the nature and extent of an organisation’s involvement with others through dyadic relationships (Gulati, 1995).

Where the term *network* is used within this thesis, it makes reference to the “web of relationships” in which a group of organisations, individuals or groups are connected by exchange relations (Brass, Galaskiewicz, Greve and Tsai, 2004; Hakansson and Snehota, 1989; Weber and Khademian, 2008). Organisational relationships are dependent on the ability of an organisation to choose appropriate partners, so the depth of exchange between

organisations and the individual contributions of each organisation to the network must be considered (Ghesi and Martenelli, 2006). William's (2005:223) definition of inter-organisational networks is therefore apt:

“...a group of legally separate organisations connected with each other through *web-like* exchange relationships, common or complementary goals, and/or common bonds or social relationships that are sustained over time towards a mutual gain.”

This working definition is in response to the contributions of many academics that have added to the growing number of ways to describe networks using different contexts, and therefore will be applied to this study. This definition is in line with proposals from academics such as Williamson (1991), who regard networks as being distinct from the hierarchical governance arrangements set specifically for and within individual organisations. However, I see it as a mix of those arrangements that link governance with market coordination through its actors (e.g., organisations), the links between those actors (e.g., social relations, mutual targets), and their contextual environment.

### **2.2.2 Social networks**

Networks are often interpreted in a *social* context because they are comprised of many horizontal exchanges. Here, a mutual dependence between organisations motivates a social exchange that is either a mutually beneficial cooperative relationship or a competitive relationship that would reflect the opportunistic interests of an organisation (Molm, Collett and Schaefer, 2006). Also, the *dual* relations formed involve a direct connection between organisations and this depicts the social character of a network (Breiger, 2004).

Extensive theory discusses and examines the advantages of networks (see Granovetter, 1985; Provan, 1995). Different network perspectives build on the same notion that the act of exchange in relationships does not take place in a barren social context, but is instead embedded in a social network of relationships (Gulati, 1998:281). Granovetter (1973) distinguishes between weak and strong ties, and notes that there must be a balance between organisations being embedded and having arm's-length relations at an inter-organisational level in order to develop trust and remain open to new ideas external to the network. Where organisations share a wide range of inter-links that they consider beneficial, this can be termed a social network. Accordingly, Laumann, Galaskiewicz and Marsden (1978:458) define a social network as “a set of nodes among persons or organisations which is linked by a set of social relationships of a specific type.” Bengtsson and Kock (2000:422) extend this

definition to include coopetition at network level, where they insist “the decision to operate or cooperate in a specific product or market area needs to be made with regard to all the competitors’ positions and the connectedness between them, as a change in one relationship within the network may affect the competitors’ relationships and positions.”

The definition makes an indirect reference to an embedded type of relationship that fits into a larger context of relationships. It highlights how related structural elements affect the process within which a change in coopetitive behaviour could influence the positions of organisations in the network (Gnyawali and Madhavan, 2001). Here, the structure and formation of relationships which constitute the network are an aspect of the network context. Networks are not controlled by one player, and so the structure of the network gradually evolves through interactions and therefore changes according to how organisations form their identities within the network and relate to one another. Therefore, the type and intensity of the interactions and agreed routines between organisations determine the degree to which the competitive-cooperative process is executed, and therefore how much influence is exerted during this process (Johnston, Peters and Gassenheimer, 2006). Candido and Abreu (2000) carried out a study on networks and found that the formation of networks was dependent on the interests and the different requirements of the organisations involved, and was influenced by several variations (e.g., technology, culture, regional and geographical characteristics, etc.) of their collective business environment. In their opinion, many organisations have "limited financial, structural and dimensional resources", and their decision to be part of a network is centred on being able to maintain, develop and expand their business. Thus, interactions with other organisations are necessary, and this is thought to also contribute to the structure of inter-organisational networks (Ghesi and Martinelli, 2006).

### **2.2.3 The resource-based view of networks**

The resource-based view promotes the idea that organisations are heterogeneous in their resource assets. The basic assumption of this theory is that organisations seek valuable, rare and inimitable resources in order to create and sustain a competitive advantage (Das and Teng, 2000; see the VRIN criteria by Barney, 1991). The criteria by Barney (1991) define the characteristics of the value in the resources and are presented in Table 2.2 under four different categories (Bowman and Ambrosini, 2003). The *valuable* and *rare* criteria focus on identifying the characteristics of resources to gain a sustainable competitive advantage. Alternatively, the *inimitable* and *non-substitutable* criteria address the sustainability of the rent streams flowing from these resources.

**Table 2.2: Characteristics of the value in resources**

Valuable	Rare
-Generates rents that can be captured by the firm	-A firm that possesses a rare resource can generate either superior margins or superior sales volumes from an equivalent cost base to competitors.
-Resources can enable a firm to be lower cost than rival firms, or they may enable the firm to differentiate its products or services.	-Resource is not commonly found across other competing firms.
Inimitable	Non-substitutable
-The more difficult it is for competing firms to replicate the resource, the longer-lived will be the rent stream accruing to the resource. -Inimitability results from the presence of isolating mechanisms such as causal ambiguity, information asymmetries or social complexity.	-A resource cannot be easily replaced by another resource that delivers the same effect.

Source: Rusko, Merenheimo and Haanpää (2013)

The relevance of this perspective to the present context is that the nature and degree of interactions at an inter-organisational level could influence and be influenced by the value in the resources offered. For instance, Wernerfelt (1995) discusses the importance of resources for achieving a competitive advantage and suggests that a competitive advantage can be gained by focusing on the organisation's resource portfolio. He proposes that organisations can perform well by paying attention to differences between their own and another organisation's resources. Hence, the resource-based view is increasingly recognised as a key theoretical paradigm in coopeition and network literature, particularly as both research streams adopt the notion that resources can help in differentiating overall business competencies (Ritala, 2010; Freeman, Styles and Lawley, 2012).

#### 2.2.4 Governance of inter-organisational networks

Governance is defined as “the set of rules, restrictions, incentives and mechanisms applied to coordinate the participants in an organisation” (Wegner and Padula, 2010:75). When applied to relationships in an inter-organisational network, the term *governance* is based on the internal organisational and coordination elements of the networks as well as on the network structure's design, which may be as a result of a bargaining process between organisations participating in the arrangement (Provan and Kenis, 2007; Albers, 2005). In other words, organisations make agreements to forfeit their freedom temporarily to enable cooperative arrangements that seek to manage certain aspects of their businesses under the system of rules created by the group (Albers 2005).

One of the simplest structures in networks is of shared governance, which aims to involve all member organisations in the overall strategic direction of the network. According

to Jones, Hesterly and Borgatti (1997), a link may exist between network size, the adopted governance structure and the performance of member-firms. Thus, groups of organisations in the network work as a collective (i.e., through formal or informal meetings of organisational representatives) without the formalities of an overall managerial entity (Wegner and Padula, 2010; Provan and Kenis, 2007).

Albers (2005) examined the internal governance mechanisms used to achieve better performance in inter-organisational relationships. He defines these as guidelines that organisations use as a basis to become involved, such as opportunities for decision making and other mechanisms used to influence the behaviour of the member-firms to achieve specific goals. By analysing the governance of inter-organisational relationships, Albers (2005) focuses on two key areas: the structural and the instrumental. From an instrumental perspective, network governance concerns the instruments by which management and control of the network are put into effect so that member organisations conform to the rules set by the majority (Oxley, 1997). Management includes mechanisms such as the supervision of organisations within the network and the standardisation of processes. Incentives (either offered as tangible and intangible rewards) form part of a governance structure and are used to change the behaviour of organisations in order to achieve the objectives of the overall goal (Albers 2005). Alternatively, the structural dimension of governance can be characterised by the way in which the cooperative agreement is organised and regulated. This may include formal rules on how the network or alliance will be managed by centralising the decision-making process (Oxley 1997). Studies show that the increase in the number of members in the network is positively associated with the centralisation of decision making. However, there is a limit to centralising decision making, as Albers (2005) points out. As the number of members in the network grows, a higher degree of centralisation in decision making may be required. There may also be a need for a formalisation of activities in order for the collective goals to be achieved, and this may eventually affect the positive influences pointed out by Albers (2005).

### **2.2.5 Levels of analysis in network research**

Inter-organisational studies clearly highlight the importance of the relationship ties that organisations create, and as such; are reflected in the diverse number of studies that range in theoretical depth (Cropper *et al.*, 2008). Consequently, the interest that surrounds the associations between organisations in inter-organisational network research has advanced in many disciplines (Franke and Koch, 2013; Provan, Fish, and Sydow, 2007), but most notably

in organisational literature (Ahuja, 2000; Uzzi, 1997), methodological approaches and theoretical mechanisms (Bergenholtz and Waldstrom, 2011). Many of the theories on networks take on an individual or organisational perspective; a majority often use a dyadic approach of analysis (Cropper *et al.*, 2008). A dyad by its very definition is a two-party relationship, and this hints at an inter-connected social environment that can provide opportunities for organisations to shape their individual interests but can also constrain their actions once in that union (Granovetter, 1985; Gulati, Nohria, and Zaheer, 2000).

For the many typologies in existence, (e.g., organisational networks, inter-organisational networks, inter-personal networks, intra-organisational networks, partnerships, strategic alliances, etc.), the make-up of the network and how the relationships are analysed are fundamentally the same. For instance, relationships are studied over three levels (micro-, meso- and macro-levels) which, according to Dagnino and Padula (2002), include analysing the nature and number of interactions that take place between units and persons within organisations (the micro-level); assessing whether the relationship is dyadic and based on individual relationships or on a portfolio of similar relationships between organisations (the meso-level); assessing all of the relationships the organisation is involved with either on a horizontal level or vertically (again, the meso-level); and the relationships between groups of organisations at industry level (the macro-level).

However, following extensive research of relationships at both individual and network level, Albers and Schweiger (2011) present a contrasting view of how cooperative and competitive relationships should be studied. They present four groups of cooperative-competitive relationships that combine the primary focus of organisations (the individual ideals of organisation vs. network) with their relational focus (the cooperative and competitive ties to external relationships). Table 2.3 presents the four levels of analysis applied to the relationships, with a specific focus on horizontal relationships within networks.

*Group 1* focuses on the internal relationships of a single organisation. It offers an insight into an internal competitive situation that is prevalent in all organisations due to financial restraints and resource scarcity (Tsai, 2002). Of particular importance is the issue of inter-unit rivalry and how the coordination of the separate business units can be efficiently rendered. Here, Tsai (2002) suggests that social interaction can be a strong influence that helps identify and administer new capabilities as well as facilitate vital resource flows between unit rivals using both control and competitive incentives based on performance.

*Group 2* focuses on network relationships, in contrast to both groups 1 and 3, where the primary focus of analysis is on the single organisation. Specifically, this group analyses the

relationships within organisational networks. It applies a network perspective that suggests that network structure may offer valuable insight into the relational ties of organisations and the relevance of an organisation's position in the network (Gnyawali *et al.*, 2006).

**Table 2.3: Levels of analysis used for relationships and networks**

Primary organizational focus	Group 2 Cooperation and competition within networks (network perspective) <i>The focus of analysis is on network relationships</i>	Group 4 Cooperation and competition between networks <i>The focus of analysis is on network relationships</i>
	Group 1 Cooperation and competition within firms <i>The focus of analysis is on the single firm</i>	Group 3 Cooperation and competition between firms (organisational perspective) <i>The focus of analysis is on the single firm</i>
	Internal relations	External relations
	<b>Primary relational focus</b>	

Source: Albers and Schweiger (2011)

*Group 3* focuses on a single organisation and the relational links and interactions external to it. Here, researchers essentially seek to analyse the relevant network of competitive and cooperative ties around the main organisation, with a particular reference to the influence of cooperative interactions on the behaviour and performance of the participating competing organisations (Osarenkhoe, 2010a). Luo, Rindfleisch and Tse (2007), for instance, question how influential competitors are on issues such as firm profitability where intensive alliances with competitors exist – and whether an organisation's competitive strategy increases or decreases this influence. They found that overall there was a negative effect on the performance of the organisation.

Finally, *group 4* focuses on the external competitive relations of at least two or more networks in order to create benefits to its members either by competing against other networks to gain more members, and to retain and gain a wider customer base. More recently, research has started to shift from the traditional organisational versus organisational view towards the idea of coopetition at an inter-network level. For instance, Peng and Bourne (2009), in their study of Taiwanese hospital networks, point to how coopetitive relationships can be managed when networks are well-matched despite having different structures. For

this thesis, the focus is on cooperative and competitive relationships between organisations within a single network, so the research falls within **group 2** of this typology.

## 2.3 Coopetition

### 2.3.1 Defining coopetition

As relationships between organisations become more complex, the currently accepted definitions and descriptions accorded to coopetition increasingly indicate a lack of empirical depth and uniformity within the academic community (see Table 2.4). In fact, many attempts have been made in recent years to shed new light on the coopetition phenomenon, and this has led to a difficulty in synthesising the development of coopetition as a concept over the last decade (Dagnino, 2007; Yami *et al.*, 2010; Bengtsson and Kock, 2014; Czakon *et al.*, 2014). Research on coopetition is focused more on developing its definition than determining what and how effective coopetitive relationships should be (Mariani, 2007; Bengtsson *et al.*, 2010; Dagnino and Padula, 2009).

**Table 2.4: Development of coopetition as a concept in the last decade**

Year	Author	Definition
2014	Bengtsson and Kock	Coopetition is a paradoxical relationship between two or more actors simultaneously involved in cooperative and competitive interactions, regardless of whether their relationship is horizontal or vertical (p.182).
2014	Dahl	Coopetition refers to the notion that two organisations simultaneously cooperate in some activities, such as research and development or purchasing, as they compete with each other in, for example, sale activities (p.272).
2012	Song and Lee	Coopetition is an occurrence between different supply chains (p.18).
2011	Gnyawali and Park	Coopetition is a simultaneous pursuit of collaboration and competition between a pair of firms (p.651).
2010	Bengtsson, Eriksson and Wincent	Coopetition is a consequence of changes to structural conditions in the market (p.29).
2010	Ritala	Coopetition is a collaborative relationship between two or more independent economic actors simultaneously engaged in product-market competition. (p.21)
2007	Luo	Coopetition is the simultaneous competition and cooperation between two or more rivals (p.130).
2004	Zineldin	Coopetition is a business situation in which independent parties cooperate with one another and coordinate their activities, thereby collaborating to achieve mutual goals, but at the same time compete with each other as well as with other firms” (p.780).
2002	Dagnino and Padula	Coopetition is a matter of incomplete interest and goal congruence concerning firms’ interdependence (p.2). It (coopetition) is a multidimensional and multifaceted concept which assumes a number of different forms... it is all but easy to grasp its structure, processes and evolving patterns (p.13).
2000	Bengtsson and Kock	Coopetition is “the dyadic and paradoxical relationship that emerges when two firms cooperate in some activities, such as in a strategic alliance, and at the same time compete with each other in other activities. (p.412)

Source: Adapted from Alves (2013)

The term *coopetition* was originally coined by Raymond Noorda (founder and CEO of the software company, Novell) in 1993 (Dagnino and Padula, 2002; Brandenburger and Nalebuff, 1996; Walley, 2007). It is derived from the words *cooperation* and *competition* and is used to describe the multi-dimensional business relationships in which today's organisations engage (Zakrzewska-Bielawska, 2015). Nowadays, a generally accepted alternate perspective defines coopetition as a “mind-set, process or phenomenon of combining cooperation and competition” (see Luo, 2005:72; Bengtsson and Kock, 2000). Here, coopetition in itself is predominantly perceived as a paradoxical phenomenon mainly because of the simultaneous mix of competition and cooperation within dyadic relationships between the parties involved (Chen, 2008; Peng and Bourne, 2009; Bengtsson and Johansson, 2012).

On one hand, organisations attempt to interact directly when cooperating towards a mutual goal. Alternatively, some see the coopetitive process as being strictly cooperative or competitive, which in its nature encompasses the voluntary and reciprocal action of participating organisations to enable it to succeed. It can be argued to symbolise a more inclusive yet inter-dependent continuum where cooperation and competition work simultaneously but are yet still very distinct in nature. Mainly, this simultaneous interlink occurs between the extreme forms of pure inter-organisational cooperation to pure inter-organisational competition, where theory asserts a key advantage of coopetition is the mutual benefits that can be gained by those pursuing it (Barretta, 2008; Zakrzewska-Bielawska, 2015). Dagnino and Padula (2002:13) add to this argument with their definition of coopetition as:

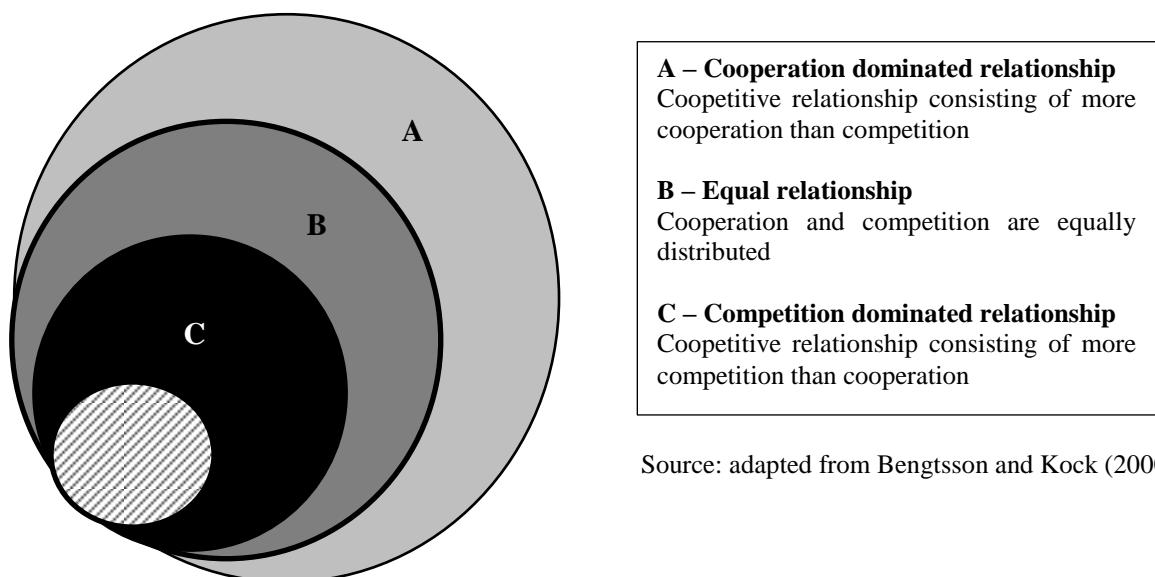
“... a multidimensional and multifaceted concept which assumes a number of different forms... it is all but easy to grasp its structure, processes and evolving patterns.”

Within the context of inter-organisational relationships, the introduction of coopetition to the forefront of many academic studies is an interesting one. Literature in management emphasises the relationships between organisations and network relationships alike in order to denote how inherently dynamic inter-organisational interactions can be. Here, the cooperative function is seen by some to be an advantageous asset in respect to organisations being able to combine assets and resources for mutual benefit (Laine, 2002; Eikebrokke and Olsen, 2005). However, as more organisations choose to work together, there is a need to be aware of the tensions caused as a result of similar organisations sharing resources to access

the same markets (Gnyawali and Madhavan, 2001; Chen, 1996; Miles *et al.*, 2000). A seemingly coopetitive relationship may result in collusive behaviour, particularly where separate goals subsist from those mutually agreed between the competitors (Bengtsson and Kock, 1999; Mariani, 2007). Research indicates coopetition theory is focused more on defining it as a concept rather than on the principles surrounding coopetitive relations (Mariani, 2007). Therefore, in establishing the balance between the cooperative and competitive mind-set, one common theme becomes apparent: the inherent tension that exists between them. This tension, according to research, depicts the current state of inter-organisational relationships (Bengtsson and Kock, 2000; Yami *et al.*, 2010; Wilhelm, 2011).

Bengtsson and Kock's (2000) study explains how organisations can balance a coopetitive relationship using a set of propositions that highlight the effects of direct interaction between organisations, the level of heterogeneity in resources, the closeness of an activity to the customer, the competitors' position and the connectedness between them. Bengtsson and Kock then applied these propositions to the three industries in their empirical study. They assert that changes within the marketplace can influence coopetitive relationships between organisations. They also maintain that coopetition as a relationship is dependent on the strength of links between organisations, and these links can vary during the lifecycle of the relationship. This assertion is more pertinent when three elements of a coopetitive-based relationship are placed on a continuum according to how competitively dominated, cooperatively dominated or equally dominated the relationships are (see figure 2b).

**Figure 2b: Classifications of coopetitive relationships between competitors**

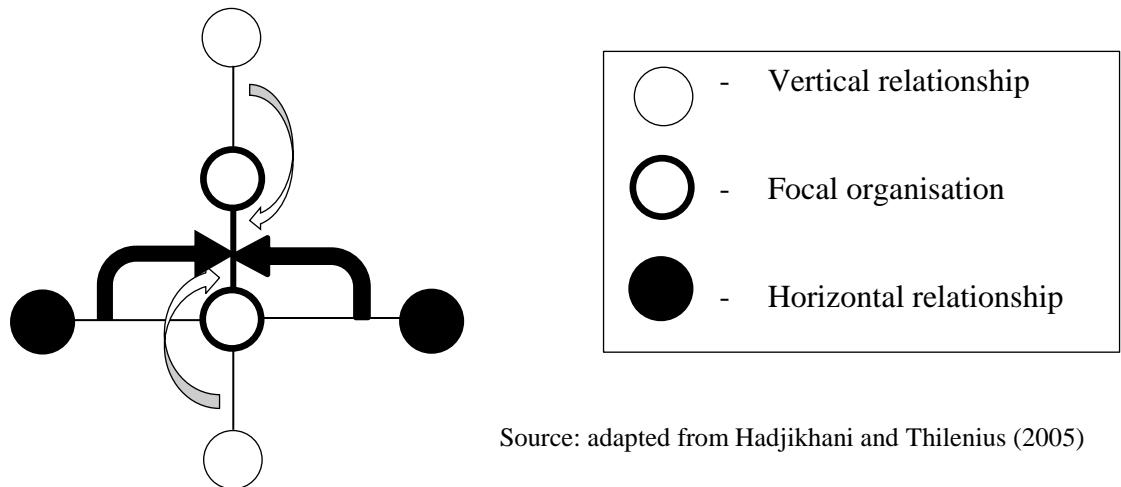


Peng *et al.*, (2012) contribute to the current debates on the dynamics and consequences of cooperation with competitors. They demonstrate through their empirical study that when competing organisations cooperate, this coopetition has a significant temporary performance advantage for the organisations involved. Others examine the effect of coopetition on organisational performance (Peng *et al.*, 2012); whilst Geraudel and Salvetat (2010) present coopetition from the perspective of the individual using personality traits of the *actors* involved in the relationship. However, what is highlighted is a gap in the literature regarding the need to develop a deeper understanding of how the development of coopetitive relationships can be influenced when specific factors, that bring a mutual benefit to organisations, change over the course of the relationship.

As previously highlighted, coopetition is more commonly referred to as a paradoxical culmination of simultaneous cooperation and competition in inter-organisational relationships (Bengtsson *et al.*, 2010; Bengtsson and Johansson, 2012). To this simple definition, Bengtsson and Kock (2000:412) offer the explanation of how the cooperative and competitive activities of organisations can be combined by suggesting organisations cooperate in some activities whilst simultaneously competing in other activities. Coopetitive relationships can be either horizontal or vertical. A vertical dyadic relationship is a cooperative relationship between an organisation and its customer (Bengtsson and Kock, 1999) or one that has some level of economic exchange present within the supply chain where there is some mutual interest to interact (Easton and Araujo, 1992; Bengtsson and Kock, 2000). In other words, vertical relationships are visible and are built on a distribution of activities between competing organisations and the supply chain, with the core focus on suppliers and the end users or consumers (Makonnen, 2008).

While horizontal relationships also suggest a strong customer focus based around a multifaceted relational process, the similarities end there. According to Bengtsson and Kock (2000:414), horizontal relationships are normally categorised as being cooperative, competitive or coopetitive and are likely to be “more informal and invisible, in that information and social exchanges are more common than economic exchange. Competitors are almost always informed about each other’s movement, often through buyers, but also directly through trade fairs, brochures, meetings, buying competitors’ products, etc.” Furthermore, organisations are willing to interact only with one another on more or less an equal playing field to compete for a common product, resource or customer (see figure 2c).

**Figure 2c: Vertical and horizontal relationships**



For horizontal coopetitive relationships, there are different advantages based on the type of interactions competing organisations engage in and the contextual conditions upon which cooperation and competition are able to interact concurrently (Bengtsson and Kock, 1999). Within this thesis, the network members engage with each other horizontally, and thus this study focuses on horizontal, rather than vertical relationships.

### 2.3.2 Defining cooperation and competition

Cooperation is one of the terms commonly used to describe inter-organisational relationships. Cooperation is defined by Easton and Araujo (1992:76) as “when two or more parties have complementary objectives, and are mutually dependent”. Cooperation is a collective strategy for rent generation, where organisations pool resources and work together to achieve a win-win scenario (Eikebrokk and Olsen, 2005; Thomason *et al.*, 2013). Miles *et al.* (2000) view cooperative acts as voluntary and reciprocal and where the concepts of time, trust and space are important attributes of cooperation. Space is viewed in this context as both the physical environment and a socially positive atmosphere created as a result of the mutual agreement to share.

The term collaboration is often used interchangeably with cooperation (Gray, 2004). Miles and Snow (2006:1) define collaboration as “a process whereby two or more parties work closely with each other to achieve mutually beneficial outcomes.” Despite the parallel in definitions and usage of the terms *collaboration* and *cooperation*, the similarities are minimal. Academics view collaboration as a process which is more demanding and complex than cooperative engagements (Miles *et al.*, 2006). Further, collaboration embodies other

well-noted forms of inter-organisational relationships that according to Lewis, Isbell and Koschmann (2010:462) include “cooperation, coordination and other forms of exchange of resources (including people, funding, information, ideas and a mutual respect for individual goals and/or joint goals).” The act of cooperation itself is distinctly characterised by the level of frequent exchanges between organisations, which are most likely to include both tangible resources (such as money, space, labour, and technological aids) as well as intangible resources (personal relationships, expertise, etc.). In essence, cooperative acts create a relational platform upon which two or more organisations, individuals or groups of individuals reciprocally unite in strategic, managerial, innovative or financial elements until either or both decide the usefulness of the relationship has ended (Bengtsson and Kock, 2000; Osarenkhoe, 2010b).

The motives for entering into a cooperative union are often put down to sharing or gaining access to resources. Resources can include human or relational resources (Hunt and Morgan, 1995); value creation through research and development (Gnyawali and Madhavan, 2001); sharing knowledge and expertise in areas of product capabilities and processes (Bengtsson and Kock, 2000); and gaining knowledge through learning to adapt to external threats and to implement the resulting opportunities (Teece, Pisano and Shuen, 1997).

According to Bengtsson and Kock (1999:181), there are certain characteristics that define a cooperative relationship:

“Exchanges are frequent, comprising business, information and social exchange. Informal agreements are built on social norms and trust. These norms, and sometimes formal agreements, adjust the distribution of power and dependence among the competitors, which means that conflicts are rare. Competitors have common goals, and proximity between them is based on functional and psychological factors.”

One crucial point raised from the definition alludes to the fear of failure. The fear of failure comes under different guises, although organisations are particularly at risk of failure when adequate knowledge, commitment, communication and resources are lacking. Where competing organisations are in some cooperative agreement, the likelihood of this perception by the participants is heightened (Hagberg-Andersson, Virtanen and Kock, 2007). In assessing the importance of cooperative relationships, the definition offered by Bengtsson and Kock (1999) addresses the issue of exchanges and of adjusting the distribution of power and dependence between organisations. Both elements (the frequency/intensity of the interactions and the organisations’ willingness to adapt) highlight the benefits that a

cooperative relationship offers when organisations adapt their behaviour to create trust and long-term interactions in order to positively develop and sustain these relationships.

In contrast to cooperation, competition is determined as a rent appropriation strategy, where organisations strive to achieve what competing organisations cannot offer. In general, competition between organisations is well documented (e.g., Echols and Tsai, 2005). Osarenkhoe (2010a:345) defines competition as “a dynamic situation that occurs when several actors in a specific area (i.e., market) struggle for scarce resources, and/or produce and market very similar products or services that satisfy the same customer need.” Aside from the definition given, the most common viewpoint is based on the industrial organisation perspective, which suggests that competition is most likely between organisations in the same industry, clusters or regions (Porter, 1999).

Porter (1980) postulates competition as a psychological pressure that organisations use to create operational improvements in order to become more efficient than their counterparts. In management research, similar views are held. Where two or more organisations, irrespective of type, vie for the same or similar customer needs by producing and marketing similar products, there is competition (Bengtsson and Kock, 2000; Yami *et al.*, 2010). However, there are certain characteristics that may be definitive of a competitive relationship. These are explained by Bengtsson and Kock (1999:181):

“Interaction is simple and direct. Power and dependence are distributed among the competitors based on their positions in the business network. Proximity or distance is based on functional and psychological factors, and competitors set their goals independently.”

The motive for being competitive is to create a long-term advantage in which an organisation maintains or improves its position amongst other organisations. The key point is in creating and capturing value, particularly when considered from the perspective of an organisation recognising the value of opportunities by defining the means by which it intends to transform the relationship into a successful venture at the expense of another organisation (Dagnino and Padula, 2002). Simply put, “creating value is an inherently cooperative process, and capturing value is inherently competitive” (Brandenburger and Nalebuff, 1996:13). Equally widely agreed are the benefits competition has for the end-user or consumer. Competition is linked to creating a competitive advantage and so can be viewed as impacting an organisation’s performance positively (Bengtsson and Kock, 2000; Hunt, 2007).

However, this may not always strictly be true as competition can lead to “pursuing one’s own interest at the expense of others,” which may create negativity in the relationship (Das

and Teng, 2000:85; Birkinshaw and Lingblad, 2005). In essence, organisations are more likely to behave according to their individual aims rather than according to the mutual interests that should govern the relationship. One theoretical framework that views competition from an internal tensions perspective is proposed by Das and Teng (2000), who suggest that a high level of competition in a relationship inevitably leads to opportunistic behaviour that may be costly (in resources and time) and difficult to control, eventually undermining the relationship as it develops.

Bennett's (2005) classification of competition in the arts sector is similar. One finding in the literature is that there is little perceived direct competition in the arts industry and amongst arts organisations in particular. There are a few exceptions, but these are usually confined to the urban areas and tend to enjoy a monopolistic environment in their geographic areas (Voss and Voss 2000). He proposes that competition may be explicit and direct or it may be implied, and may involve organisations he refers to as "unconventional competitors" who operate in the broader forum of the leisure and entertainment industries and who may unwittingly pose competition. Consumers tend to have high expectations of creativity, innovativeness, and accessibility in leisure activities, entertainment and with limited funds and available leisure time, competition is increasingly aimed at winning the consumer over (Jones 2000).

### **2.3.3 Dynamics and intensity of coopetitive relationships**

Coopetition is studied within and applied to different relationships contexts, for instance: as a continuation of competition (Hamel, Doz and Prahalad, 1989); within dyads (Bengtsson and Kock, 2014); at an inter-network level (Peng and Bourne, 2009); at an inter-organisational level (Bengtsson and Kock, 2000); and even at an intra-organisational level (Tsai, 2002; Osarenkhoe, 2010b). From this, two key streams of research have developed when academics discuss coopetition, implying a difference in the context in which they are assessed. The first considers coopetition as the sum of many different relationships, with the cooperative and competitive elements divided between the different organisations involved (Bengtsson *et al.*, 2010). According to Wilhelm (2011:665), the basic premise is the "fight over private versus common benefits." The suggestion here is that within the natural intertwining of cooperation and competition, organisations do not necessarily have to be in direct competition with each other to gain a competitive advantage as no pure forms of competition and cooperation exist (Brandenburger and Nalebuff, 1996; Yami *et al.*, 2010).

Such studies on coopetition seem to be a response to volatile market conditions in which scholars try to examine coopetition and how it is shaped by organisational behaviour.

The second stream of research proposes that competing organisations cooperate in activities that directly benefit both parties (e.g., resource acquisition and product innovation), and compete in activities that directly affect the decision of the end user (Wilhelm, 2011; Dagnino and Mariani, 2010; Bengtsson and Kock, 1999). This reveals a complex side to the coopetitive concept since it is implied that organisations that compete and cooperate choose to engage in an aggressive combination of “(competitively) sleeping with the enemy” (Peng *et al.*, 2012:532) on one hand, whilst “cooperating to create a bigger business pie” on the other (Luo, 2005:72; Brandenburger and Nalebuff, 1996; Bengtsson and Kock, 2000; Gnyawali and Madhavan, 2001; Zineldin, 2004; Bengtsson *et al.*, 2010). Coopetitive relationships have been argued to provide the right conditions in which both competitive and cooperative elements of an inter-organisational relationship are able to coexist concurrently, and thus tensions are inherent and evolve but may vary in intensity (depending on the nature of the relationship) within these collaborative unions (Bengtsson and Kock, 1999, 2000; Barretta, 2008). In considering the simultaneous mix of cooperative and competitive elements in the relationships between organisations, the intensity with which these roles affect inter-organisational relationships is also brought to the forefront. Appendix One presents conceptual and empirical research on coopetition over the last decade.

According to Bengtsson and Kock (2000:421), coopetition occurs when “...firms compete in activities close to the customer and cooperate in activities far from the customer.” One popular approach to examining the coopetitive concept is in business, organisational and management research that assesses coopetition based on a more socio-cultural context – where organisations try to measure each partner’s position based on a collective acceptance of cooperative and competitive behaviour (see Bengtsson *et al.*, 2010; Dagnino, 2009; Gnyawali *et al.*, 2006; Yami, Dagnino, Le Roy, and Czakon, 2010; Kock, Nisius, and Söderqvist, 2010; Peng *et al.*, 2012). As such, coopetitive relationships are characterised by the intensity and degree of competition or cooperation that exist between competitors. Hence, it is necessary to examine how competitors make the choice to move between positions of cooperation or competition to a coopetitive state (Mariani, 2007). Academics (e.g., Luo, 2007 and Lado *et al.*, 1997) classify coopetitive behaviour by the extent to which competitive and cooperative behaviour can occur depending on the number of markets the organisation is presently active in and the number of competitors in those markets (see figure 2d). The

categories from low to high depict degrees of interdependence rather than the presence or absence of competition or cooperation (Lado *et al.*, 1997).

**Figure 2d: A syncretic model of rent-seeking strategic behaviour**

<b>Cooperative Orientation</b>	<b>High</b>	<b>Collaborative rent-seeking behaviour</b>	<b>Syncretic rent-seeking behaviour</b>
	<b>Low</b>	<b>Monopolistic rent-seeking behaviour</b>	<b>Competitive rent-seeking behaviour</b>
		<b>Low</b>	<b>High</b>
		<b>Competitive Orientation</b>	

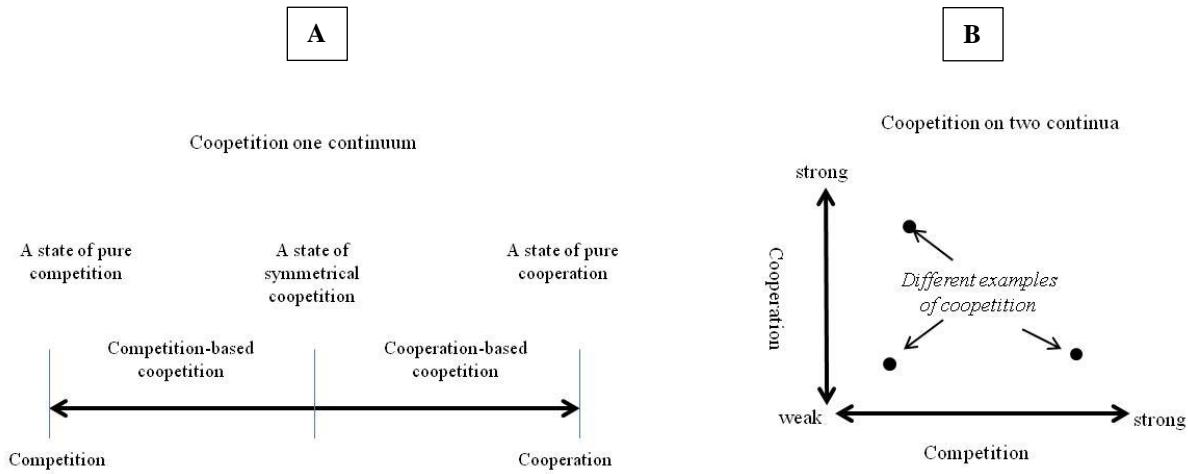
Source: adapted from Lado *et al.*, (1997)

When low competitive and low cooperative behaviours are present, an organisation is said to hold a mono-player position. Here, both parties choose to interact on a far lesser scale with each other. Low cooperative and high competition (i.e., contender position) suggests high levels of competitive rivalry is present, whereas the opposite, high cooperation and low competition (i.e., partner position), suggests a mostly cooperative relationship is present between organisations. The adapter position (i.e., high competition and high cooperation) suggests that a high degree of both competitive and cooperative behaviour is present. Here, Bengtsson and Kock (2000) refer to this relationship as a balanced relationship operating at an optimal level to achieve the highest economic returns and long-term performance. It is therefore assumed that organisations understand that they mutually need to depend on each other to achieve the collective aim of both parties as well their individual goals.

Likewise, two other separate approaches to the intensity of competitive relations are mentioned in the literature: the one continuum approach and the two continua approach (see figure 2e). These types of working associations encompass the benefits of an exchange relationship that an organisation would gain on a mutual basis rather than in isolation. As such, relationships become, as Bengtsson and Kock (2000:413) suggest, "...an interactive process where individual, and thereby organisational perceptions and experience affect

organisational actions, and thus affects the *relative* interactions between competitors" along an intensity continuum.

**Figure 2e: Comparison of coopetitive dimensional approaches**

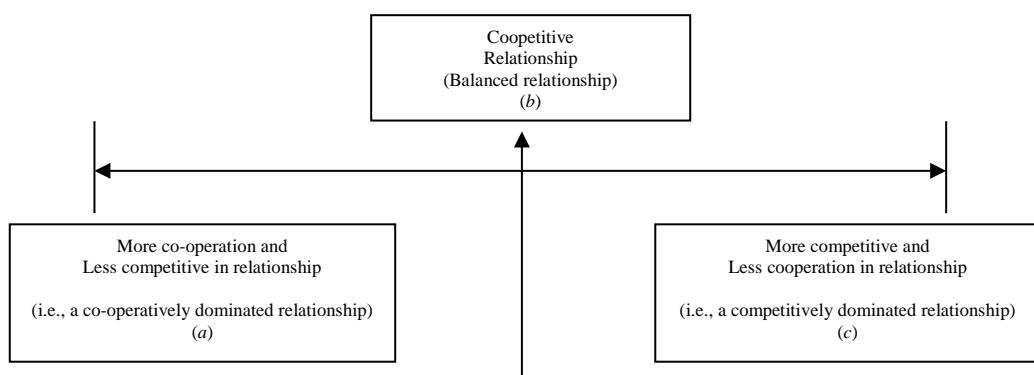


Whilst the one continuum perspective argues that relationships exist mainly between two extremes as depicted on the first diagram (A) in figure 2e (i.e., highly cooperative/highly competitive); coopetition from a two continua perspective (B) suggests cooperative and competitive activities can co-exist from one continuous dimension – suggesting that both low competition and cooperation can occur, as can high competition and cooperation (Bengtsson *et al.*, 2010). Bengtsson and Kock (2000 highlight the effects of direct interaction between organisations, the level of heterogeneity in resources, the closeness of an activity to the customer, competitors' positions and the connectedness between them using a set of propositions that they argue that organisations can use in balancing a coopetitive relationship. They assert that changes within the market place can influence coopetitive relationships between organisations, which they then applied to eight organisations across the lining and brewery industries in Sweden, and four organisations across the dairy industry in Finland. They argue that coopetition as a relationship is dependent on the strength of interactional links between organisations, which varies during the lifecycle of the relationship (Bengtsson and Kock, 2000).

This assertion is more pertinent when three elements of a coopetitive-based relationship are placed on a continuum according to how competitively dominated; cooperatively dominated and equally dominated the relationships are. When applied to network-based

relationships, Dennis (2000) highlights differences in how networks can become either (wholly competitively or cooperatively) dominated or equal-partner led based on the weight of behaviour on the continuum. Thus, where activities were not within reach of the end-users (i.e., customers or suppliers), there was a higher chance that organisations would choose to cooperate more. However, where activities were closer to the customers or mutual buyers, there was the tendency for organisations to become intensively competitive. Figure 2f has been modified to depict the three different types of coopetitive relationships that can exist between organisations.

**Figure 2f: The coopetitive continuum (modified one continuum approach)**



Source: adapted from Bengtsson and Kock (2000)

In position (a), the relationship has high levels of cooperation and less competitive elements. In position (c) the relationship has high levels of competition and the partners cooperate less. In the middle, at position (b) there is a balance between cooperation and competition, with high levels of both. This is the ideal coopetitive relationship on a horizontal level (Bengtsson and Kock, 2000). Luo (2004) refers to these interactions as identifiers, which help to define the degree to which the competitive or cooperative stances may weaken or become stronger in terms of intensity and diversity within a coopetitive relationship, and are used as a basis within this thesis to assess how coopetitive relationships are between organisations.

### 2.3.4 Factors affecting coopetitive relationships

Dyadic relationships between organisations naturally are a varied interactive process because organisational perceptions and experiences affect individual actions, and this in turn has an effect on the *relative exchange* between organisations (Xingxiu, Hanmin and Chunxia, 2013). An organisation may choose to cooperate with its competitor in order to develop a mutually

beneficial business idea or project, and then compete when the time comes, but what criteria do competing organisations use to establish their cooperative relationships, and how does this affect the relationships? Four factors in particular are directly relevant, as all reflect this relative exchange and thus influence coopetitive relations. They are: management (how important the management of the network can be to developing its success); proximity (both geographical and structural); building relationships (the organisation's need for a social identity and taking account of the issue of control within coopetitive relationships and IONs); and expectations (the expectations of organisations and how these expectations change is considered crucial to the development of coopetitive relationships).

#### **2.3.4.1 Management**

Within networks, management is often used to define “a range of decision making activities such as resource acquisition, resource allocation, production, distribution and exchange, co-ordination, positioning, planning and so on.” (Goodwin *et al.*, 2004: 96). Indeed, the goal of management is to coordinate all network related activity within constraints that may be caused by either a limited quantity of resources, contractual obligations or organisational practices within the network (Goodwin *et al.*, 2004; Poulymenakou and Klein, 2006).

The resources of an organisation also define how attractive an organisation is from a business perspective, and as such increases the motives for an organisation to want to enter into a cooperative arrangement with its competitor. As organisations aim to gain access to the resources of other organisations, they create new opportunities whilst increasing the benefits associated with innovation in the process (Bengtsson and Kock, 2000; Peng and Bourne, 2009). For instance, organisations may choose to target growth in specific business areas where they consider themselves weak, such as R&D or production (Dagnino and Padula, 2002); innovation (Zineldin, 2004); or sales and marketing (Bengtsson and Kock, 2000). As such, there would be the tendency for organisations to weigh up different factors depending on their industry, organisational culture, goal orientation, commitment to the partner relationship and their cultural mind-set. Resources may include access to new knowledge and expertise, technology, greater bargaining power with suppliers, distribution channels, wider market reach and customers (Lado *et al.*, 1997; Bengtsson and Kock, 2000; Zineldin, 2004; Ritala, 2012). Garcia and Valasco (2002), for example, found in their research that in cooperating with competing organisations there was a significant effect on the business activities that had a positive impact on their product lines and technological diversity. Bengtsson and Kock (1999) further argue that coopetition is instrumental in directly

developing organisational learning where competing organisations are involved. They claim that an organisation can play different roles once a link has been created between them depending on the available resources and activities performed. In other words, organisations are constantly faced with the pressure to continually redevelop their operations in order to keep abreast of other competing organisations. Thus, a shared understanding of socially acceptable norms is vital in how these organisations are perceived by each other (Birkinshaw and Lingblad, 2005).

#### **2.3.4.2 Proximity**

Proximity highlights the nature of certain boundaries created as a result of an organisation's perception of competition, cooperation and coopetition with other organisations. Thus, exploring the broader organisational environment to include both the structural and geographical context of the network may be useful in gauging how much of an influence proximity has on coopetition patterns. Upon entry into a network, an organisation may have specific intentions to either preserve or change the structure of the network to a position from which they can exercise some influence. In considering the structure of the network, then, a key consideration is the level at which mutual goals are planned.

Within the specific confines of cluster theory, geographical proximity is often cited as a determinant of competition, and in defining competitive groups – especially where acquiring resources, the right staffing, maintaining and gaining more clients are all deemed important when operating within the same market (Ganesan, Malter and Rindfleisch, 2005). Spatial economics literature also questions the usefulness of proximity, but primarily regarding the effect of proximity on the cooperative ties based on the distance between the organisations (Torre, 2013). Within management research, there is a rather limited body of research on proximity, although the few that do exist also focus on analysing proximity from a relational or organisational dimension. The primary suggestion from the few studies is that geographical proximity facilitates strong relational ties, and as such is a vital link in the development of social interactions. Harrison (1992), for instance, links frequent interactions of organisations in close proximity to a growth in reciprocity and mutual trust. Although this view is echoed by many in the field of sociology and studies in inter-personal communication (e.g., Etzioni and Etzioni, 1999; Rosenfeld, 1997; Porter, 1998), it remains an assumption due to a lack of concrete empirical evidence that can be generalised in other research areas, such as coopetition.

### 2.3.4.3 Building relationships and expectations

An organisation cannot enter into a coopetitive relationship either on its own or with an organisation that can potentially damage its likelihood of strategic gain (Zineldin, 2004), which is why understanding its decision to become part of a dyad is necessary. Thus, this makes partner selection a crucial factor in developing mutually beneficial business and social relationships between organisations (Solesvik and Westhead, 2010; Cummings and Holmberg, 2012) and a relevant area to examine in this study. However, it is an area that has received very little empirical or theoretical attention in coopetition research. Rather, greater focus is directed to understanding the formation of partnerships and motivations behind partner selection (Cummings and Holmberg, 2012).

Research suggests different forms of cooperator-competitor literature can be traced back to the 1980s, with strategic alliances acting as a blanket term for a number of inter-organisational agreements ranging from small agreements to complex joint ventures, including coopetition (Bengtsson and Kock, 2000; Yami *et al.*, 2010). In fact, there has been a significant rise in the use of the term *alliances* in research (Contractor and Lorange, 2002; Das and Teng, 2000). Alliances are a type of inter-organisational relationships and are defined by Gulati (1998:293) as “voluntary agreements involving exchange, sharing or co-development of products, technologies or services...” that arise when “...a wide range of motives and goals take on a variety of forms, and occur across vertical and horizontal boundaries.” Some of its more popular forms are identified in Table 2.5 (Tonge, 2012; Peng and Bourne, 2009; Song, Nerur and Teng, 2007).

**Table 2.5: Classification of strategic alliances**

Relationship (horizontal)	Description
Types of inter-organisational relationships	<p><b>Strategic alliance.</b> Organisations that form a strategic alliance usually do so voluntarily. To create a strategic alliance means to extend an organisation's present structural boundary to accommodate new management philosophies, structures and patterns set by all parties involved in order to trade and acquire access to the others' skills and resources. Strategic alliances are usually collaboratively set up on the premise of spreading the risk involved in technical and market development, and from larger scale projects between the participating organisations, by sharing resource contributions to strategic areas of development and managerial control over the performance of assigned tasks/end-goal; Allied organisations tend to distribute end-benefits despite their agreement to remain legally independent. Commonly recognised forms of an alliance are joint ventures and consortiums.</p> <p><b>Joint ventures.</b> The organisations that form a joint venture tend to do so under a formalised agreement because there is an opportunity to share control over a specific entity. Joint ventures are generally heavily invested</p>

	<p>in by the partnering organisations to ensure a good outcome for the business opportunity, and so stronger ties are created between participants to equally share risks and responsibilities as well as the revenues and benefits. There is a higher degree of equality, particularly where control, influence and involvement are concerned.</p> <p><b>Consortia.</b> A consortium is typically regarded as a particular form of strategic alliance because it involves two or more partners. It is usually focused on very specific purposes, like the military and aerospace industries and large civil engineering projects. Alternatively, these alliances have to be managed by political forces to ensure fairness of competition and limit the negative implications for free competition.</p>
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Source: adapted from Todeva and Knoke, 2005; Pesamma, 2007 and Song, Nerur and Teng, 2007

An alliance is formed when two or more competing organisations collaborate with the aim to benefit independently of each other. In fact, Das and Teng (2000, 2002) make reference to most alliances as being dyadic in nature and describe the simultaneous existence of cooperation and competition as a key characteristic of strategic alliances. Alliances are believed to encompass a more open-ended contractual relationship, where organisations seek to obtain valuable resources through pivotal partnerships that involve an exchange in vital areas of strategic development, such as co-development of products, services production, market-entry, and intellectual and technological capabilities (Mason, 1993; Gulati, 1998). Alliances take on different legal forms enabling them to adequately control resource allocation and the manner by which benefits are distributed among the partners (see Knoke, 2001: 121-8). They can include joint ventures, equity investments, and research and development agreements. As with coopetition; a distinction is made between dyadic and multi-partner alliances (Todeva and Knoke, 2005; Das and Teng, 2000).

Academic literature is already rich in empirical research on the importance of partner selection in business alliances (Todeva and Knoke, 2005). Some widely-accepted reasons that push competing organisations into cooperative relationships are continuity, the potential to benefit and the ability to interact. These reasons have been recognised in both alliance (Tong and Reuer, 2010) and coopetition literature (Luo, 2007). When applied to a coopetitive context, choosing the right organisation to partner with is crucial to abating the negative aspects of being alone, especially where the costs and risks associated with intensive competition and other external pressures in business ventures are not uncommon. Motives differ according to each organisation, and may not necessarily be reciprocated as partners may feel attracted to one another for different reasons.

Studies on the field of partner selection mainly focus on task-related and partner-related criteria critical to the choices made by organisations prior to entering into coopetitive unions.

As such, a suitable partner can be assessed using either task-related or partner-related criteria. Task-related criteria highlight operational skills and complementary resources as the key motives required by organisations to successfully enter into a partnership (Geringer, 1991). Geringer (1991) proposes that complementarity may only be recognised in those cases where partner selection is based on task-related criteria (e.g., complementarity of skills and resources). As an alternate argument, Todeva and Knoke (2005) suggest that better performance is attained if partners gather on the basis of complementary strategic advantages instead of basing an alliance on their organisations' similarities. Alternatively, partner-related criteria highlight a more strategic approach that leans towards choosing a partner based on how socially compatible the organisations are. According to Das and He (2006:126):

“Task-related criteria – addresses complementary products or skills; financial resources; technology capabilities or uniqueness; location; marketing or distribution systems, or established customer base; reputation and image; managerial capabilities; government relationship, including regulatory requirements and government sales; help in faster entry into the target market; and industry attractiveness.

Partner-related criteria – addresses strategic fit or interdependence, or compatible goals; compatible or cooperative culture and ethics; prior ties and successful prior association; trust between top managers; strong commitment; similar status, including size and structure; reciprocal relationship; commensurate risk; and ease of communication.”

According to Cummings and Holmberg (2012), both types of criteria help to emphasise some of the more general motivations for coopetition in management research, like trust, commitment, relationship development and communication for organisations forming dyadic unions (Shah and Swarninathan, 2008; Johansson, 2012; Peng *et al.*, 2012). Nevertheless, an additional criterion that seems to have been neglected may be the inter-personal relationships between entrepreneurs or decision makers, and this is likely to be a relevant factor for partner selection in many cases, particularly in coopetitive relationships where sharing information between partnering organisations means sharing information between competitors.

The pre-existing relationships between organisations make up a critical part of the formation of coopetitive relationships. The personal relationships formed are argued to be as coopetitive as the relationships formed between organisations because of the constant balance between being personally independent and embedded within the demands of acting in the interest of the organisation being represented. Further, the question of the level of influence one has in the personal relationships, as well as the ability of one to influence other

organisations in the network, is also highlighted; particularly where the cooperative and competitive stakes of the organisations may be concerned. A representative could (for personal or competitive gain) be deceptive in his intentions towards his counterpart, for example in order to maintain influence in the relationship (Freeman, 1984). Differences in how ones' (i.e., an organisation's) counterpart may perceive the relationships can produce complexities in the personal and professional relationships formed and structurally, for the network, thereby influencing the social relationship in either a negative or positive manner (Uzzi, 1997). Ultimately, this suggests perceptions play a crucial role in representatives' understanding of the balance between business and personal relationships, and failure to do so may affect the level of relational content and its intensity (Gedeon, Fearne and Poole, 2009).

Trust is defined as "confidence in an exchange partner's reliability and integrity", suggesting that the very basis of any exchange relationship is reliant on trust in order for that relationship to develop (Morgan and Hunt, 1994:23). Morgan and Hunt (1994:20) insist that the "somewhat paradoxical nature of relationships" demand that in order to be "an effective competitor, one would be required to be a trusted co-operator". Hence, trust is cited by many academics as being one of the most important factors in the coopetitive relationships between organisations (Johansson, 2012; Peng *et al.*, 2012). Networks tend to create an environment where trust is embedded into both the personal relationships and the social context, as organisations do not necessarily want to engage in adverse competitive actions that may eventually seriously undermine their market position or that of their competitors (Morris *et al.*, 2007).

Viewed from a coopetitive context, trust is often discussed from a vertically-based perspective, where the focus is primarily on the organisation and its supply chain. A service or product is consumed usually as it is purchased, meaning its state prior to the sale determines the initial purchase and future purchases, making the development and depth of trust between organisations a necessity (Bennett, McColl-Kennedy and Coote, 2000). In essence, where trust exists, intensive cooperation is present. Likewise, trust promotes a deeper level of cooperation that drives communication to actively consolidate the relationship, and may form a critical part in the success of the collaborative relationship between organisations. Thus, organisations are more aware of each other and there is an increased possibility of receiving, disseminating and utilising complex information and resources. However, where information or access to knowledge and expertise is concerned, the coopetitive relationship needs to be carefully managed. Organisations have different

needs for information and expertise, and so the requirements to satisfy these needs also differ (Khanna *et al.*, 1998). Developing trust is dependent on how much content competing organisations are willing to share whilst the cooperative agreement is on-going, and to some degree it dictates how intense the relationship will be. Horizontally, trust within organisational relationships is not as well documented owing to the complexities it presents. In other words, the cooperative and competitive elements of coopetition present separate challenges for an organisation of being in both harmony and conflict concurrently with its competitor-partner.

Dependence is best described as “the need to maintain a relationship to achieve *personal* goals” (Palmatier, Dant and Grewal, 2007:175). Although dependence between competing organisations is more likely to create an incentive for organisations to understand each other’s strengths and weaknesses, it can also lead to an imbalance of power (Tsai, 2002; Peng and Bourne, 2009; Yami *et al.*, 2010). The significance of power within inter-organisational relationships is an interesting point to note, particularly where tensions and the issue of conflict are discussed (Bonomo, 1976; Pondy, 1967). Power imbalance is defined by the differences observed in the influence exercised by one party over another in a relationship, and is likened to asymmetric behaviour (Bucklin and Sengupta, 1993). Imbalances may be caused if (1) the services obtained by one party are considered highly valued, and the magnitude of the exchange is high; (2) when the services obtained exceed services available from the best alternative provider; and (3) when fewer sources or potential sources of exchange are available (Heide and John, 1988).

An asymmetric interdependence takes place when there is an unbalanced relationship between organisations in a group setting, particularly where different levels of dependence are evident. In other words, one organisation is totally dependent on another, whilst the other is totally independent in return (Kumar, Schleer and Steenkamp, 1995). So, where the opportunity for benefit is high, the potential for a dependent organisation to cooperate is higher. Conversely, where the opportunity for benefits is limited, the more independent organisation dictates to what degree it is willing to cooperate. This means that the exchanges between them deteriorate to the point where one organisation has more power to dictate the tone of the relationship, whilst the other faces uncertainty (Casciaro and Piskorski, 2005). The size of the organisation is an example of a factor that could affect the balance in relationships between organisations. Where a larger organisation starts to dictate decisions to their smaller counterparts, there are arguments to suggest some level or type of dependency that may be a trigger for tensions and eventual conflict (Tidstrom, 2009; Bonoma, 1976).

Applying dependence in a relational context reveals contradictory results, which according to Palmatier, Dant, Grewal and Evans (2006) suggest that the influence of dependence on inter-organisational relationships may be context-dependent. However, despite the drawback of dependence on relationship satisfaction, in the long term, dependence can be positively linked to stability, continuity and performance improvements in relationships (Ganesan, 1994).

### 2.3.5 Tensions

The Oxford dictionary defines tension as “a relationship between ideas or qualities with conflicting demands or implications” and suggests it could also be “a strained social state or relationship.” Similarly, conflict is defined as “a serious incompatibility between two or more opinions, principles, or interests.” Pondy (1967), however, describes conflict in terms of being an effect of (and a response to) situations of tension, where issues of feedback and differences between parties are key drivers in characterising behaviours of the individuals involved and, indeed, organisational behaviour. However, IOR literature still refers to conflict as only a side effect of a business relationship (Tidstrom, 2009). This is because organisations are said to have complex, multi-level relationships that exhibit both competitive and cooperative aspects, indirectly suggesting that conflict cannot be avoided but must be managed in order to successfully maintain a coopetitive relationship (Bengtsson and Kock, 2000; Brandenburger and Nalebuff, 1996; Luo, Slotegraaf and Pan, 2006; Chen, 1996; Lado *et al.*, 1997; Luo *et al.*, 2006).

Coopetition by definition highlights the constant pull between cooperative and competitive behaviour, and so potentially any benefits are likely to be dictated on the basis of compromises and trade-offs, leading to rivalries, misunderstandings, mistrust and an eventual breakdown of the coopetitive relationship through tensions or conflict (Lado *et al.*, 1997; Dagnino and Padula, 2002; Anslinger and Jenk, 2004). Misunderstandings and mistrust can arise, for example, when joint objectives or mutual goals are not set clearly because of a lack of planning, which then leads to strategic and tactical restrictions; or when resources are mismatched or lacking; or where the behaviour of the cooperating organisation(s) are perceived as either over-confident or aggressive; or when access to knowledge and learning is restricted and unequal or when the end-benefits are unequally shared. These can result in a breakdown and potential dissolution of the coopetitive relationship (Lado *et al.*, 1997; Dagnino and Padula, 2002; Luo, Slotegraaf and Pan, 2006). Rivalry hinders the innovative process as each organisation begins to neglect the unions formed to focus on their individual

needs, consequently reducing the amount of commitment to the relationship (Morris, Kocak and Ozer, 2007) and increasing the risk of vulnerability and dependency (Zineldin, 2004).

### 2.3.5.1 Conflict in coopetitive relationships

The term conflict has been widely documented in empirical literature as a relatively new paradigm in organisational relationships (Schmidt and Kochan, 1972; Pruden, 1969; Molnar and Rogers, 1979; Lewicki, Weiss and Lewin, 1992; Trought and Willey, 1986; Valaand and Hakaansson, 2003). However, a standard definition of conflict varies, as table 2.6 indicates.

**Table 2.6: Definitions of conflict**

Author	Definition
March and Simon (1958)	A breakdown in standard mechanisms of decision making so that an individual or group experiences difficulty in selecting an action alternative
Walton (1966)	...opposition processes in any of several forms – competition, status rivalry, bargaining, sabotage, verbal abuse
Pondy (1967)	A dynamic process underlying organisational behaviour
Schmidt and Kochan (1972)	The overt behaviour arising out of a process in which one seeks the advancement of its own interests in its relationship with others...
Deutsch (1973)	A conflict exists whenever incompatible activities occur
Hunger and Stern (1976)	An opponent centred episode or series of episodes based upon incompatibility of goals aims or values
Likert and Likert (1976)	Conflict is viewed as the active striving for one's preferred outcome which, if attained, precludes the attainment by others of their own preferred outcome, thereby producing hostility
Brown (1983)	Incompatible behaviour among parties whose interests differ
Bisno (1988)	Perception of opposition to a person, a group of persons or systems of belief
Easton and Araujo (1992)	A conflict implies incompatibility between two or several organizations concerning something that at least one of the parties cares about. The incompatibility can be expressed by opponent centred strategies.
Laine (2002)	Cooperation among competitors is more prone to conflict if they include areas of core competence

(Source: adapted from Tidstrom, 2006)

Many of the definitions in the table are particularly relevant when referring to an intra-organisational setting, and each author categorises conflict according to specific contexts in order to define and identify its cause (Pondy, 1967; Fink, 1968; Walton and Dutton, 1969; Deutsch, 1973; Likert and Likert, 1976; Trought and Willey, 1986; Lewicki, *et al.*, 1992; Tidstrom, 2006). Within an intra-organisational setting, conflicts may manifest through a perceived situation and be caused between individuals or organisational representatives and groups.

Early studies saw many academics refer to conflict as an incompatibility of goals or interests, which would include behaviours deemed to obstruct others' pursuits of their goals

(Schmidt and Kochan 1972; Deutsch 1973). Sandole (1993:6) defines conflict as present in “a situation in which at least two actors, or their representatives, try to pursue their perceptions of mutually incompatible goals by undermining, directly or indirectly, the goal-seeking capability of one another”. What may seem obvious from this definition is the question of incompatibilities, but whether this is based on both sides not being compatible or just based on a disproportionate balance of perceptive ideals (played out in some cases through a representative’s behaviour) is not clear from the definitions offered.

Conflicts are generally denoted as being negative in literature because of the *incompatibilities* which may be perceived by either one or both parties, but research also suggests that conflicts can also have consequences that are for the most part positive (Anderson and Narus, 1990) or neither positive or negative, depending on the processes used to judge the results (Tidstrom, 2006). Kabanoff (1985) suggests conflicts are likely where goals are compatible, but where in the approach to dealing with the situation different backgrounds and value systems are key influences. It is all the more metaphoric when the subjective nature of the human element is included. Pondy (1967) views conflict as being a dynamic process underlying organisational behaviour. He distinguishes between the different phases in the conflict process using a model. Table 2.7 presents Pondy’s (1967) model where conflict has been reviewed on the basis of it being a process that operates on a sequential basis of five key episodes.

**Table 2.7: Conflict episodes according to Pondy’s (1967) 5 stage conflict model**

Conflict episode	Definition
Latent (stage 1)	Is predominantly believed to be an invisible factor that is not noticeable by the parties involved or is perceived but not made known to others in the relationship. It is thought to consist of three main sections, namely: competition for scarce resources, drivers for autonomy and divergence of subunit goals.
Perceived (stage 2)	At least one party is made aware of the potential for conflict through a felt situation (i.e. tensions).
Felt (stage 3)	Is based more on an individual perspective, where conflict is deemed to be more personalised as opposed to dealing with conflict from a horizontal inter-relational perspective.
Manifest (stage 4)	Involves a deliberately disruptive behaviour, which if not defined and managed by other parties as disruptive as soon as it is felt could lead to outright aggression.
Aftermath (stage 5)	Refers to the resolution and management of conflict afterwards. Care must be taken in the aftermath stage so as not to suppress the feeling of conflict to the latent stage as this may develop into another episode.

(Source: cited from Pondy, 1967)

Schmidt and Kochan (1972) and Rahim (1986) both argue that this definition provides too broad a spectrum and thus has no real significance to any situation. They insist that a concrete definition of conflict is missing and question whether the definitions given are based on the theorised effects of conflict on relationships or founded upon the effects of competitive strengths in relation to cooperation within inter-organisational relationships. As in the intra-organisational context, the general perception is often that conflict is negative, particularly as conflict is thought to occur within relationships where unbalanced competitive and cooperative interests are present (Tjosvold, 1998). However, what is highlighted here is that conflict is not necessarily bad for a relationship, but for the subjective context that surrounds it. What one organisation considers a conflict situation may not be perceived in the same manner by others. Rather, the perception of a mutually incompatible goal may create an obstacle that is considered a trigger for negativity and apprehension.

In recent times, research on conflict has begun to emerge as a key topic for researchers concerned with inter-organisational relationship studies and has been used to understand relational interactions and conflicts between organisations (Laine, 2002). As network relationships are assumed to be inherently dynamic in nature (Ritter *et al.*, 2004; Welch and Wilkinson, 2002; Provan, *et al.*, 2007), there is the potential for certain factors such as a power imbalance to influence the relationships in a negative manner. In this case, a perceived form of conflict (stages 2 and 3 – i.e., tensions) deteriorates into to a more visible form (stage 4) between the parties involved (see table 2.7).

## 2.4 Conceptual development

Organisational responses are dependent on the characteristics of their relationships (Hibbard *et al.*, 2001). As such, Padula and Dagnino (2007) acknowledge that organisations simultaneously pursue cooperative and competitive strategies in relationships. The competition paradigm is crucial to the resource-based view of the organisation, whilst the cooperation paradigm dominates the strategic alliance literature and network theory. Coopetition literature brings together both competition and cooperation paradigms and is closely linked to the literature on horizontal strategic alliances, whilst coopetition research offers a narrower analysis of the organisation's quest for simultaneous cooperation and competition in their relationships and the analysis of its interdependences on multiple levels (Lou, 2005; Dagnino and Rocco, 2009).

Coopetitive relationships are formed on agreement between two or more independent organisations with the aim of mutually sharing tangible and intangible inputs, outputs and the

consequent end-benefits. Historically, organisations create and encourage the mentality of added value in economic terms by adapting certain organisational functions whilst remaining responsive to their environment (Kirchner, 2007). Thus, when the benefits of coopetition are discussed in terms of an inter-organisational relationship, the appeal of increased performance, profitability, new market creation, and innovative efficiency gained from the cooperative relationships in which the organisations engage are usually some of the key points highlighted (Luo *et al.*, 2007; Ritala, 2012; Gnyawali and Park, 2009). For horizontal relationships, trust is considered to be less important to information and knowledge sharing at the initial stages as frequent cooperation between organisations is suggested to increase the possibility of a rise in mutual understanding, thereby reducing any potential misunderstandings (Luo *et al.*, 2006). The opportunity for healthy competition is also highlighted in a coopetitive context, particularly where information and knowledge sharing bring the notion of trust into play (Bengtsson and Kock, 2000; Zineldin, 2004).

However, competition has its drawbacks within coopetitive situations. It can create informal social or informational exchanges that have been described as harder to grasp due to the softer or more invisible nature of the links between organisations (Laine, 2002; Easton and Araujo, 1992; Bengtsson and Kock, 1999). Also highlighted in the literature are the risks of competitive behaviour to partner selection, which is crucial in coopetitive dyads as inconsistencies in expectations can make the cooperation in the dyad difficult, potentially leading to instabilities in the relationship or to an eventual failure of the relationship (Das and Teng, 2000). Thus, the success rate of a coopetitive relationship is most likely influenced by the level of competition and cooperation. To date, however, there has been limited empirical research on the factors that affect horizontal coopetitive relationships (Bengtsson and Kock, 2000; Thomason *et al.*, 2013; Bengtsson and Johansson, 2012).

This research therefore addresses the dynamics of cooperative-competitive relationships based on previous research by Bengtsson and Kock (2000). To begin, the research question and objectives are:

***What factors influence coopetitive relationships within an inter-organisational network?***

- Objective 1: Examine the relationships that exist between competing organisations in the network (NN)
- Objective 2: Identify and examine potential factors that directly influence coopetitive relationships and how these factors influence such relationships and the functioning of the network.

By conducting an empirical examination of both extremes in inter-organisational relationships, this study is relevant to both coopetition theory and managerial practise. By addressing inter-organisational dynamics, this thesis also makes the assumption that there are underlying factors that need to be empirically investigated in order to understand what these factors are and how they influence the mix of competition and cooperation within dyadic relationships. In particular, horizontal coopetitive relationships should be empirically observed, as they are not only influenced by the cooperative interaction between the organisations or individuals in question, but also by the competitive context in which they are embedded. In other words, an organisation understands that in committing to a cooperative relationship with its competitor, the agreement does not weaken its capability to also compete.

The theoretical streams of the resource-based view, the relational based view and network theory provide the conceptual basis for the understanding of how organisations identify the most relevant factors that affect inter-organisational relationships at a horizontal level and outline potential implications. Thus, the research presented in this thesis explores the factors that define horizontal coopetitive relationships between organisations within a network before examining how these factors influence the dynamics of the coopetitive relationships formed based on the intensity of the competitive and cooperative interactions between organisations.

## **Chapter Three**

# **METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 Overview**

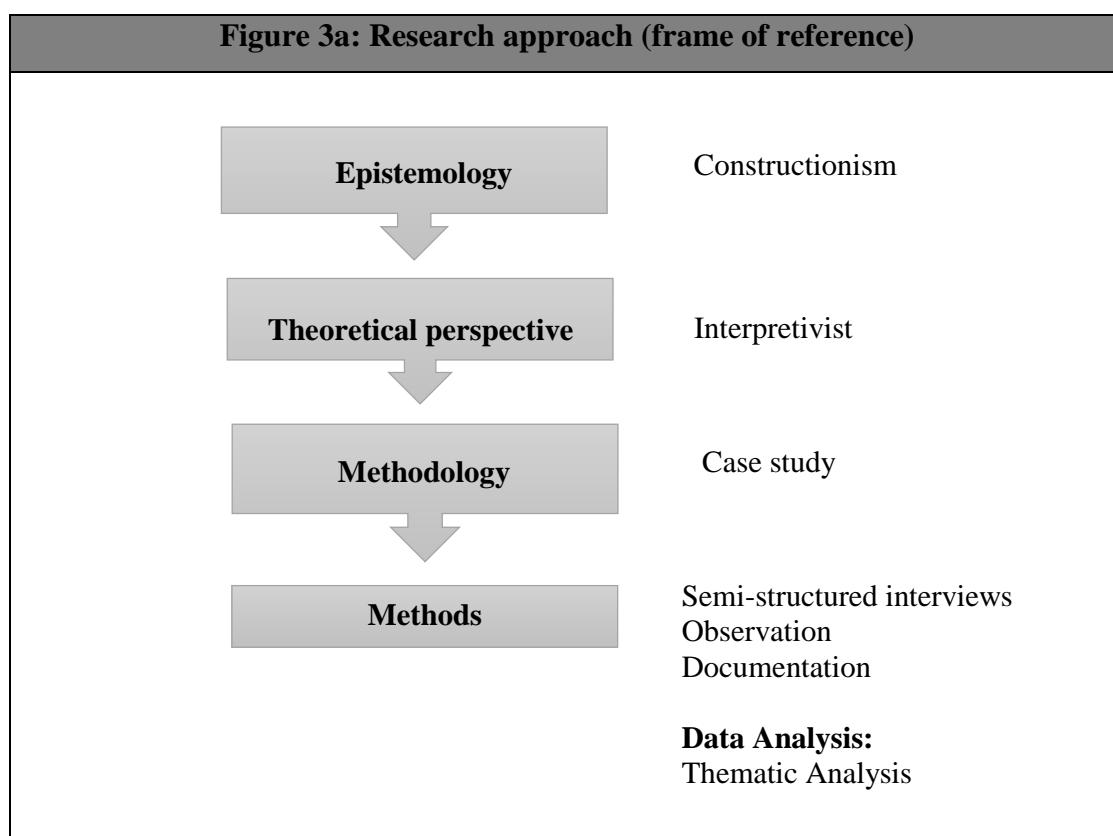
The purpose of this research is to examine how certain factors that are perceived to be significant influence competitive relationships between competing organisations and to investigate how much of an effect these factors have on those relationships. This research uses a thematic network as the framework for understanding and analysing multiple dyadic relationships, and as such employs the use of qualitative data collection methods including semi-structured interviews and observational data to investigate the relationships between competing, non-profit, arts-based organisations in an inter-organisational network. This chapter provides a rationale for the methodology chosen; discusses the research design (as well as its implementation) and outlines the modes of data analysis applied.

This chapter begins with a reminder of the research objectives and questions as a necessary basis for establishing the validity of the research design. It then presents a frame of reference that illustrates on a basic level, the key decisions made from both a theoretical and practical perspective by answering four basic questions. These are:

- What is my epistemological stand and how does this inform my theoretical perspective?
- What theoretical perspective is behind the methodology in this study?
- What methodology governs my choice and use of methods?
- What methods do I intend to use?

On approaching business or social research, researchers often face numerous questions that require choices to be made. Consequently, the different terminology in research literature (i.e., epistemology, theoretical perspectives, methodologies, and methods) is as Crotty (1998:3) describes, “often thrown together in a grab-bag style as if they were all comparable terms.” Each of these terms are distinct in that they all influence the researcher to make choices that are reliant on philosophical platforms and empirical techniques that then determine appropriate routes in order to best serve the study objectives. The epistemology or stance dictates the entire research route and governs what theoretical perspective is likely to be chosen. The theoretical perspective will be implicit in the research question and influence the plan of action (i.e., methodology), which in turn guides the choice of methods that will be employed during the research study. I utilise Crotty’s (1998) approach as a methodological

framework because he proposes four different parts that act as crucial steps of the research process that need to be addressed so that the reader understands how the research questions will be answered throughout the study. These are: epistemology, theoretical perspective, methodology and methods (see figure 3a). Next, these four aspects are discussed in the context of this research study.



This chapter closes with a presentation of how the research addresses concerns surrounding the quality of the research. In particular, I address issues on ethics, sample selection, validity and the reliability of the study.

### 3.2 Epistemology

This section presents the philosophical assumptions underpinning this research by being explicit about the epistemological foundations of my work, and identifies how my orientation has helped me frame my research design. Epistemological assumptions underpin what is considered an acceptable basis for knowledge developed from the research process in a discipline. Crotty (1998:8) describes epistemology as “a way of understanding and explaining

how we know what we know.”.” Bryman (2004:11) notes that epistemology can be defined as “a theory of knowledge and concern of what is considered as acceptable knowledge in a particular discipline.” So; in asserting an epistemological stance, one is creating a set of rules about knowledge and its validity by emphasising the criteria that allow the researcher to define and differentiate between assumptions and what constitutes genuine knowledge (Easterby-Smith *et al.*, 2002). This thesis is driven by a constructionist epistemology, but in order to build an understanding of this epistemology and its relevance to this thesis, two other epistemologies (objectivism and subjectivism), as outlined by Crotty (1998), are first explored.

### **3.2.1 Subjectivism and Objectivism**

Subjectivism makes reference to the belief that social phenomena are created from the continual processing of meanings from social interactions of those social actors directly concerned with their existence (Saunders *et al.*, 2007:108). In other words, a person makes *meaning* out of a situation, suggesting that *meaning* is socially constructed based on the experience of the person or people involved. When applied to a social context, however, *meaning* is considered to be subjective and intrinsic to the social world as greater emphasis is placed on the interactions as a means to gaining information about it. For a subjectivist, the focus is on being able to interpret the different meanings from perceptions and experiences in the social world. Table 3.1 provides an illustration of basic assumptions that characterize the divide between the objectivist and subjectivist approaches within the social sciences. It notes different perspectives that indicate different grounds for knowledge about the social world.

In contrast, Crotty (1998:8) defines objectivism as a meaningful reality that exists separately from the operation of any consciousness. For an objectivist, this belief is centred around the view that the social world is objective, and the classifications we associate with everyday events have an existence that is separate from social actors (Bryman, 2004). So it lies with the researcher to map out from those meanings already considered to be inherent in the object being examined. Objectivism supports a positivist theoretical perspective, and as such is widely featured in quantitative methodologies and methods. It is, according to Candy (1989:3), determined by:

“...the belief that theory is universal and law-like generalisations are not bound to specific contexts or circumstances; the commitment to an objective or dispassionate pursuit of scientific truth; a belief in determinism, or the assumption that events have causes which are distinct and analytically separate from them; the view that variables can

be identified and defined, and that knowledge can be formalised; and a conviction that relationships between and among variables can be expressed in mathematically precise ways in the development and testing of theoretical propositions.”

**Table 3.1: Basic assumptions of the subjectivist-objectivist divide in social sciences**

	<b>Subjectivist Approaches to Social Science</b>			<b>Objectivist Approaches to Social Science</b>		
<b>Core ontological assumptions</b>	Reality as a projection of human imagination	Reality as a social construction	Reality as a realm of symbolic discourse	Reality as a contextual field of information	Reality as a concrete process	Reality as a concrete structure
<b>Assumptions About Human Nature</b>	Man as pure spirit, consciousness, being	Man as a social constructor the symbol creator	Man as an actor the symbol user	Man as an information processor	Man as an adaptor	Man as a responder
<b>Basic Epistemological Stance</b>	To obtain phenomenological insight, revelation	To understand how social reality is created	To understand patterns of symbolic discourse	To map context	To study systems, process, change	To construct a positivist science
<b>Some Favored Metaphors</b>	transcendental	Language game, accomplishment, text	Theater, culture	Cybernetic organism	organism	machine
<b>Research Methods</b>	Exploration of pure subjectivity	hermeneutics	Symbolic analysis	Contextual analysis of Gestalten	Historical analysis	Lab experiments, survey

Source: Bahari (2010)

However, as with all perspectives, objectivism is no exception to challenges to its claim of an objective reality, particularly where one can only fully grasp reality based on a degree of probability and not in its totality. One explanation, according to Crotty (1998), may lie in the constraints of human limitations, which may confine the researcher to a reality within certain boundaries.

### 3.2.2 Constructionism

One's percept of the world is formed by constructing personal meanings, and so the resultant outcomes become inter-subjective because of the notion of experiencing the world with and through others. The constructionist epistemology builds on Piaget and Inhelder's (1967)

theory of constructivism, and is founded on the understanding that reality is socially constructed by and between the people who go through the experience (Saunders *et al.*, 2003; Papert and Harel, 1991). According to Papert (1991:1), a subtle difference exists between the two epistemologies where:

“Constructionism — the N word as opposed to the V word shares constructivism’s view of learning as “building knowledge structures” through progressive internalization of actions... It then adds the idea that this happens especially felicitously in a context where the learner is consciously engaged in constructing a public entity, whether it’s a sand castle on the beach or a theory of the universe.”

Based on this definition, researchers should aim to understand, reconstruct, critique and present different perspectives in a way that leads to building meaningful outcomes through a common agreement. According to Crotty (1998:42), constructionism takes “the view that all knowledge, and therefore all meaningful reality as such, is contingent upon human practices, being constructed in and out of interaction between human beings and their world, and developed and transmitted within an essentially social context.”

Reality is considered to be a subjective experience even though it is independent of the person experiencing it. There is the suggestion that the differences in the perspectives of individuals often bring an awareness of the similarities that unite us as human beings. According to Schwandt (2000:197); “...we are all constructionists if we believe that the mind is active in the construction of knowledge. Most of us would agree that knowing is not passive (i.e., a simple imprinting on the mind), but active (i.e., the mind does something with those impressions), and at the very least forms abstractions or concepts. In this sense, constructionism means that human beings do not find or discover knowledge so much as construct or make it.” In other words, although one may not necessarily share similar beliefs with others, one cannot change or alter one’s reality simply because one wishes to do so. The notion of objectivity is replaced by confirmability, as data and any subsequent interpretations are rooted in the contexts and persons aside from the researcher. Further, this statement acts as a prompt to researchers to employ other approaches that not “only accept but value the role of the subjective rather than the objective in our attempts to understand phenomena from the idiographic perspective to embrace the development of different parameters of investigation” (Darlastone-Jones, 2007:21).

As previously mentioned, this research examines how factors might influence the competitive relations between competing organisations, and how much of an effect these

factors have on those relationships. From a constructionist perspective, each organisation has a separate and unique reality and each is independent of their interpretation of that reality. I therefore find it is necessary to understand and construct the realities of these organisations from their appointed representatives, who either currently are part of the experience or have lived the experience. This is because the realities of organisations are shaped by the experiences of the representatives who act or have acted on its behalf, the pressures of different organisational cultures and, indeed, any socialisation processes to which they may be subject prior to and upon entering into a cooptive relationship.

### **3.3 Theoretical Perspective**

#### **3.3.1 Inductive and deductive approaches to research**

Researchers take different routes that influence their eventual choices when they embark on research studies. The two most commonly applied routes to research according to Saunders *et al.* (2007) are a qualitative route (i.e., an inductive approach) and a quantitative route (i.e., a deductive approach). Both routes in social research methodology are based on opposing philosophical positions with very distinct research paradigms. An inductive approach is characterised by the development of theory which comes as a result of observations of empirical data. By contrast, a deductive approach is characterised by testing or verifying theory by examining research questions or hypotheses derived from theory. In other words, whilst an inductive approach requires the researcher to gather relevant data from participants and develop generalizable data from themes that can then be compared to existing literature, the deductive approach requires the researcher to use theory in a more deductive manner, whereby a study framework, research model, research questions, hypotheses and data collection procedures are developed at the start of the study. Table 3.2 shows the differences between an inductive and deductive approach.

**Table 3.2: Comparison of the inductive and deductive approaches to research**

	Qualitative route (Inductive approach)	Quantitative route (Deductive approach)
Basic beliefs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Uses an insider perspective to understand participant viewpoints</li> <li>▪ The world is considered to be socially constructed and subjective</li> <li>▪ Researcher is more subjectively immersed in the subject matter</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Uses an outsider perspective to verify facts</li> <li>▪ The world is considered to be external and objective</li> <li>▪ Researcher is objectively separated from the subject matter</li> <li>▪ Scientific principles govern analytical</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Close understanding of the research context because observer is part of what is observed</li> <li>▪ More flexible structure to permit changes to research</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ discussion of the causal relationships between variables</li> <li>▪ Observer is independent</li> </ul>
The researcher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Is the data gathering instrument</li> <li>▪ Places more emphasis on the quality of criteria such as trustworthiness of data, transferability, credibility and contextual value of data</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Uses tools such as questionnaires, or equipment to collect numerical data</li> <li>▪ Uses a highly structured approach methodologically</li> <li>▪ Formulates hypotheses to test them</li> <li>▪ Places more emphasis on rigour, internal and external validity to ensure the objectivity of the research</li> </ul>
Preferred methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Generation and use of qualitative data</li> <li>▪ Multiple methods and viewpoints</li> <li>▪ Useful for small samples in depth</li> <li>▪ Data is in the form of words, pictures or objects</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Data is in the form of numbers and statistics</li> <li>▪ Useful for larger samples</li> <li>▪ Data is in the form of numbers and statistics</li> </ul>

Source: adapted from Miles and Huberman (1994) and Saunders *et al.* (2007)

Qualitative and quantitative approaches represent two legitimate routes of empirically investigating inter-organisational relationships, although researchers often prefer to use one or the other to tackle research pragmatically (Ospina, 2004). To determine whether a qualitative or quantitative perspective is the more relevant route, one has to first consider how appropriate each would be to the context of the research. Using a qualitative outlook, for example, Lincoln and Guba (1985:120) insist that “if you want people to better understand than they otherwise might, provide them information in the form in which they usually experience it”. In other words, they would argue that the choice to conduct an in-depth investigation into the complexities of a problem from what is perceived as the inarticulate confines of research could lead the researcher to a more grounded descriptive outcome (Kayrooz and Trevitt, 2005).

As already noted, the qualitative route to research is considered inductive in nature. Mostly, the observations as a result of pilot studies and literature reviews tend to start the process of developing a theory (Miles and Huberman, 1994; Perry, 1998). This means that theory emerges from data, mostly because there are little or no theories available. The qualitative route is relevant when there is insufficient existent knowledge on a complex topic of interest to develop and preserve a holistic description of a phenomenon, particularly where there is a focus on identifying and exploring the range and complexity of factors pertinent to the function of the phenomenon (Attride-Stirling, 2001). Consequently the researcher must gain an understanding of the meanings people attach to events.

Qualitative research is grounded in human activity, and simply encapsulates “any kind of research that produces findings not arrived at by means of statistical procedures or other

means of quantification” (Strauss and Corbin, 1990:17). Qualitative research applies an inquiry-based approach for understanding complex issues, according to Miles and Huberman (1994). Adopting this approach to research utilises a certain flexibility, which researchers can then adapt methodologically. Consequently, adjustments during the process of gaining rich data creates a means to investigate emergent ideas in a structured manner as situations present themselves (Eisenhardt, 1989).

In contrast, a quantitative route is considered to be deductive simply because it isolates phenomena, reducing any complexities that may arise during analysis, and tests the inter-relationships of samples through scientifically-based measurements from the outside (Shank, 2002). The types of relationships adopted are then decided on either with or without a cause-and-effect. For a cause-and-effect type relationship, the quantitative researcher needs to consider experimental or longitudinal observation using a time-series design for their research. Without a cause-and-effect relationship, using basic descriptive research that addresses the relationships between the variables may be relevant. Quantitative approaches mostly utilise questionnaires, evaluative and correlation research, surveys, tables, graphs, and other analytical statistical/data collection methods and equipment as tools for precisely testing and measuring wider ranging samples.

Quantitative research lacks the softer, speculative, and contextually rich elements that are associated with investigating meanings and reporting detailed viewpoints from the actors involved in the *who*, *what*, *where*, *when*, *why* and *how* of a given phenomenon. There is a tendency to clearly define and measure variables in a controlled environment, in the process losing the contextual meanings and interpretations that people attach to events or incidents (Merriam, 1998). A deeper understanding from multiple perspectives is therefore imperative. By adding *why* and *how* into the equation through a qualitative approach, one is able to benefit existing theory by being both descriptive and critical. Leedy and Ormrod (2005:94) observe the differences more succinctly:

“In general, quantitative research is used to answer questions about relationships among measured variables with the purpose of explaining, predicting, and controlling phenomena. This approach is sometimes called the traditional, experimental, or positivist approach. In contrast, qualitative research is typically used to answer questions about the complex nature of phenomena, often with the purpose of describing and understanding the phenomena from the participants’ point of view.”

The difference between qualitative and quantitative research is not just limited to a researcher’s choice of data collection that may be distinguished between statistical analysis

and interviews or surveys and case studies. The difference is often reflected in the choice of methodology and selection of an appropriate research strategy that “involves the views or beliefs that underlie the situation of what is being studied” (Bahari, 2010:19).

This study addresses the under-examined issue of factors that influence the dynamics of coopetitive relationships between organisations. Based on the discussion above, a quantitative perspective is not suitable for this study. A qualitative approach is more suited to this research approach, whereas a quantitative route is more suited to theory testing. So, Therefore, I apply a qualitative route (i.e. inductive approach) to this research, as well as for the following two reasons:

The first reason is that a qualitative route to research is better suited to exploring the range, depth and complexity of the issues that develop from the dynamics of inter-organisational relationships and coopetition.

Second, existing research addresses different factors relevant to coopetition. However, there is limited empirical evidence of how these factors influence the coopetitive relationship at an inter-organisational level and within the context of an inter-organisational network. There is therefore room for theory extension or theory development within my research.

### **3.3.2 Interpretivism or positivism?**

Three main aspects act as a connection between theory and research, epistemology and ontology and these, according to Bryman (2004), highlight the fundamental differences between qualitative and quantitative research strategies. Table 3.3 summarises the three main aspects.

**Table 3.3: Summary of the differences between qualitative and quantitative research strategies**

	Qualitative research strategy	Quantitative research strategy
Role of theory in relation to research	▪ Inductive (generation of theory)	▪ Deductive (testing of theory)
Epistemological direction	▪ Constructionism/Subjectivism	▪ Objectivism
Theoretical direction	▪ Interpretivism	▪ Positivism

Source: Adapted from Bryman (2004) and, Bahari (2010)

According to Crotty (1998), theoretical perspectives support the philosophical stance that informs the methodology and thus provides a context for the process that grounds its logic and criteria. Although Crotty (1998) omits ontology from his presentation of the research process, he acknowledges it plays a vital role in the initial stages of the research process. He equates ontology to epistemology because, according to him, both are mutually dependent

and difficult to distinguish conceptually: “to talk about the construction of meaning (epistemology) is to talk of the construction of a meaningful reality (ontology)” (Crotty, 1998:10). Ontologically, I stand with the assumption that the nature of reality is subjective (Bryman, 2004). Taking a qualitative stance means multiple realities define the manner in which the world is viewed, so that the development of knowledge is based on the different assumptions of the people that live within it, as opposed to the nature of reality being defined under a single reality (Cresswell, 2007). The philosophy itself is dependent on two equally relevant but distinct stances: positivism and interpretivism (Bryman and Bell, 2007).

Positivism views reality as being universal, quantifiable and objective and standing separate from the views of the individual. It also acknowledges that a systematic investigation is needed in order to meet with the rules of rigour in scientific research. One could infer that the relationship between social reality and humans is independent of each other. Thus, the researcher assumes a position external to the data collection process, isolating phenomena to reduce any complexities that may arise during analysis and testing the inter-relationships of samples through scientifically-based measurements from the outside (Shank, 2002). It also requires some thought as to *what* drives one to start that piece of research and, more importantly, *why* one is interested in investigating that particular issue or phenomenon. Mainly, it is inferred that the researcher is limited in their ability to see introspectively how or to what extent their personal views may affect the interpretation of the data. Consequently, some argue that the researcher remains passive in his/her world rather than seeking to actively make sense of his/her world through experience (Darlastone-Jones, 2007). Thus, to apply a positivist philosophy to this study would be inappropriate.

An interpretivist philosophy, in contrast to positivism, focuses more on the understanding of behaviour rather than seeking an explanation from pre-defining dependent and independent variables. This suggests that the totality of a social existence is constructed from a specific source and, with the involvement of multiple constructed realities, helps to elucidate a deep enough understanding to become a general reality (Miles and Huberman, 1994; Merriam, 1998). According to Bryman and Bell (2007:17), an interpretivist takes the view that “the subject matter of the social sciences (i.e., people and their institutions) is fundamentally different from that of the natural sciences and as such, the study of the social world requires a different logic of research procedure”. Epistemologically, knowledge of reality (from an interpretive stance) depends on social constructions such as shared meanings and language. Researchers who adopt an interpretive stance therefore claim that phenomena must be understood in the social contexts in which they are constructed, thereby emphasising

the complexity of human sense-making as a situation develops (Kaplan and Maxwell, 1994). In essence, the researcher's own background and experience may impact upon the research because it is ultimately a subjective one. Maykut and Morehouse (1994:123) agree:

“The qualitative researcher’s perspective is perhaps a paradoxical one: it is to be acutely tuned in to the experiences and meaning systems of others...and at the same time to be aware of how one’s own biases and preconceptions may be influencing what one is trying to understand.”

This study focuses on multi-faceted relationships between competitors who also cooperate. Therefore I have chosen to apply an interpretivist philosophy to this research mainly because this school of thought is rooted in developing a social reality that aims to give a full account or deeper insight into the research area and its context. Specifically, it is an ideal means of exploring the different interpretations attached to coopetition and how certain factors arise based on those interpretations to affect the social entity of a group of organisations.

The creation of meaning is often based on multiple (and often conflicting) constructions that lead to a better understanding of life conditions (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998). I acknowledge that reality is a construction of the mind and that both the subject and the object actively participate in the construction of knowledge about reality. Thus, this thesis is driven by a constructionist epistemology and applies an interpretivist philosophy as they most closely parallel the philosophical underpinnings of this study.

As a researcher, I use the suggestion by Guba and Lincoln (1988:94) to minimise the *objective separateness* between myself and the subject matter by being immersed in the context during data collection, but detach myself from the subject matter and apply an objective outlook during data analysis.

### 3.4 Research Methodology

“The connection from content to method is through data.” – Punch (1998:57)

In response to the quote from Punch (1998), the next few sections ask what design choices will suit this study. They also give rise to questions regarding the types of data that will be the most appropriate means needed to answer the research questions set in section 3.2. The data required to suit this study mainly involves general views of existing relationships between industry-based organisations. Due to the nature of this study, precise descriptive data that is both appropriate and in-depth is demanded to highlight the differing perspectives on competitive relationships at network level, as well as to make appropriate recommendations using mainly qualitative methods.

The research methodology guides how the researcher decides to accomplish the study, and is dependent on how suitable the chosen methodology and methods are to the demands of the research (Silverman, 2010). As there are different approaches to research, the researcher makes choices regarding methodology and methods used to collect and analyse data. So, the recommendation by Young (2003:11) is one which should not be taken lightly. She suggests that researchers ensure that, as an integral part of the inquiry approach, a clearly structured plan should be “based on the development of logical relationships and meaningful results rather than on an ad hoc presentation of results and assumptions.” Therefore, crucial choices have to be made by the researcher during the formulation process for future planning, evaluating outcomes, monitoring performance and, indeed, mitigating any possible impacts, to ultimately meet the criteria for initial questions and objectives set.

Questions pertaining to the research are not normally defined as clearly at the outset of a study, and as such the aims and objectives are never really expected to develop until the study progresses. Ragin (1994) points out that social research involves the interaction between ideas and the evidence gained. Using a strategy increases the focus on significant issues within the study and clearly defines aims and objectives backed up by a combination of data sources, existing knowledge in the field of research, the timeframe available to the researcher and their theoretical underpinning. Clearly, equal importance in the selection process of an appropriate strategy should be given to the amount of control and focus a researcher has over present or past events (Robson, 1993). Consequently, a research question can help to decide what type of strategy is selected and may give some indication of how the topic is to be analysed.

### **3.4.1 Research Design**

Saunders *et al.*, (2007) propose three research design choices namely, mono-, mixed- or multiple methods. The mono method requires a singular method of data collection (either quantitative or qualitative) to be combined with a data analysis procedure of the same nature. If data collection is qualitative, the data can only be analysed using a qualitative procedure. Likewise, if the data collection technique is quantitative, then data can only be analysed using a corresponding quantitative procedure.

The multiple-method is when a researcher uses more than one method to collect data of one type. For example, a quantitative multiple-method could use a quantitative survey and a structured observational technique, and would analyse the results using appropriate statistical analysis procedures. Likewise, multiple qualitative data collection techniques (i.e.,

interviews, observations and documentation) can be used and the data analysed with corresponding analytical qualitative procedures.

The mixed-method design is a combination of both qualitative and quantitative data collection techniques and data analysis procedures. A researcher could, for example, start with a qualitative data collection and analysis process using interviews, and then use a quantitative survey analysed with statistical techniques. Alternatively, the researcher could combine a qualitative data collection technique with a data analysis procedure of a quantitative nature, for example using a qualitative narrative analysis and a quantitative frequency count of concepts for qualitative interview data. The reverse is also applicable.

The time horizon for conducting research can also vary. A longitudinal study tracks changes to a studied phenomenon over a period of time. Alternatively, a *snapshot* or cross-sectional perspective focuses on a particular phenomenon at a specific point in time.

I adopt a multiple- method design for this research, using a range of qualitative data collection techniques (i.e., interviews, observations and documentation from the organisations) and apply a corresponding qualitative data analysis to suited to the requirements of this study. Data will be collected at a single point in time using a cross-sectional research design.

### 3.4.2 Case studies

Social science research is an activity of understanding and analysing social phenomena, social behaviours and social processes. Where the context is especially necessary to understand the phenomenon, or boundaries are blurred between the phenomenon and the context, the use of a case study as a methodological approach is appropriate. Miles and Huberman (1994) state that a case can include anything from a role to group clusters, individuals, organisations or countries, and is used as part of a bigger picture (i.e., a unit of analysis and context) to shed light on a phenomenon. In other words, it is considered from the perspective of the researcher to include anything (i.e., either as a unit or a theoretical construct) that is of a special scientific or practical interest to them (Scholz and Tietje, 2002). Stake (1998:236) proposes that a “case study is defined by individual cases, not by the methods of inquiry used.” So equally, a case could reflect an ever-changing unit of analysis, in which instance it is used within a very specific context to affirm or challenge the status quo either empirically, theoretically, or both (Ragin and Becker, 1992; Johansson, 2003).

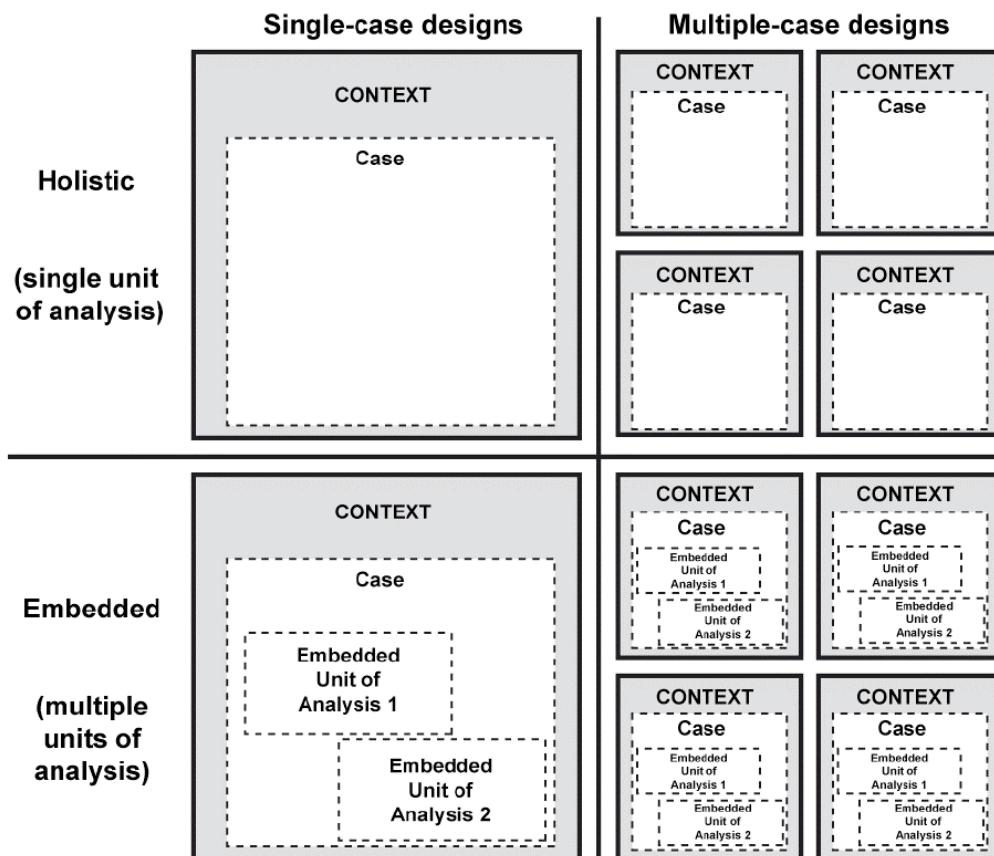
It is more difficult to readily pin down a standard definition of a case study though the various meanings that have been offered (Yin, 1981; Eisenhardt, 1989; Lindgreen, 2001). The primary confusion is regarding what they encompass as opposed to what they are. By

design, a case study is a systematically planned piece of research, which includes (1) preparing a strategy to resolve a particular question; (2) collection and recording of evidence; (3) processing and analysis of this data; and finally, (4) their interpretation (Buchanan and Huczynski, 2004). More commonly accepted, however, is their use as a form of qualitative strategy alongside more quantitative stances such as experimental or survey-based strategies. From a social scientific background, Yin (1989:23) describes case study research as an empirical inquiry which:

“...investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context; when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident; and in which multiple sources of evidence are used.”

Based on this definition, Yin (2003) presents a matrix where case studies can be designed using either single or multiple design types as is shown in figure 3b.

**Figure 3b: Case study designs**



Source: Yin (2003)

A single site design is defined as being either intrinsic or instrumental in nature because it can examine a unique part of a case or highlight a particular area to investigate (Jackson and Taylor, 2007). Multiple site designs use several cases to examine one issue or phenomenon. Jackson and Taylor (2007:85) also explain an embedded case study based on work by Patton (2002) and Yin (2002):

“...embedded case study research is where the case is an organisation, but data gathering and analysis from several members of the organisation are needed. To conduct the case study for the organisation, you obtain case data from each specified research participant in the organisation. Data and their analysis from each member are similar to a case study in and of itself.”

Here, they make a distinction between the single and multiple case designs and another between being holistic and embedded analytically. The first distinction is determined by the number of cases studied, and the second is determined by whether the case is considered to be holistic or whether multiple units are embedded within it. However, case studies have a disadvantage in that the question of generalizability is raised, as researchers often consider the generalizability of a study to be the ultimate goal of that research inquiry. Depending on the degree of similarity of contexts in single cases, transferability of these working assumptions may be possible from case to case. In essence, the depth of information about a specific case creates the basis to make informed judgements about whether the working assumptions drawn from that particular study are useful in understanding other cases or contexts (Schofield, 2002). The application of a case study using a multiple site design increases the possibility of transferability to other cases with a similar contextual focus (Lincoln and Guba, 2002; Huberman and Miles, 2002). Schofield (2002) proposes two key ways of increasing transferability within qualitative research. The first addresses the use of similar data collection and analytical procedures. The second way of increasing transferability is through heterogeneity of the cases. Case studies can be used for three types of research: descriptive, explanatory and evaluative/exploratory. Table 3.4 presents a classification of case study research by these three key groups as well as identifying other appropriate research strategies.

Case studies are particularly advocated for theory extension and theory building research (Eisenhardt and Graebner, 2007). In fact, Yin (1993, 1994) define theory building as a “phenomenon-case design fit”, where case studies are not limited to a minimum number of cases, but where the researcher adjusts the number of cases to fit the phenomenon in order to achieve the robustness of the theory.

**Table 3.4: Classification of research applying the case study strategy**

Classification of research	Type of research question	Definition(s)	Other appropriate strategies
Description	<p>[quantitative] Who, what, where, how many, how much</p> <p>[qualitative] Who, what, where</p>	Descriptive cases must cover the depth and scope of the case under study. The selection of cases and the unit of analysis are developed in the same manner as the other types of case studies.	<p>[quantitative] Survey Longitudinal studies Secondary data analysis</p> <p>[qualitative] Case study Grounded theory Participant observation Ethnography Case surveys</p>
Explanation [causal studies]	[qualitative] How, why	Explanatory cases are suitable for doing causal studies. In very complex and multivariate cases, the analysis can make use of pattern-matching techniques.	<p>[qualitative] Case study Experiments Grounded theory Participant observation Ethnography Case surveys</p>
Evaluation [Exploratory]	<p>[quantitative] How often, how much, how many, who, what, where</p> <p>[qualitative] How, why</p>	In exploratory case studies; pilot studies, and data collection may be undertaken prior to definition of the research questions. The cases that are selected should be easy and willing subjects as time is limited.	<p>[quantitative] Survey Secondary data analysis</p> <p>[qualitative] Case study Experiments Participant observation Case surveys</p>

(Source: adapted from Leedy, 1997:157; Tellis, 1997; Yin, 1994)

Eisenhardt and Graebner (2007) suggest that theory is generated by identifying relationships amongst constructs within and across cases as theory is emergent. Eisenhardt and Graebner (2007) also highlight the importance of cross referencing the emergent themes and working definitions to existing literature. This challenges researchers to develop their creative insights by adjusting their thinking to encourage the rise of emergent theory (building) from cases. According to Eisenhardt (1989:546), “the attempt to reconcile evidence across cases, types of data, different investigators and between cases and literature increases the likelihood of creative reframing into a new theoretical vision”.

A case study is selected as an appropriate methodological strategy for this study. This study presents coopetition as a single phenomenon, and so the multifaceted dynamics between the case organisations gives rise to an embedded enquiry of what factors infringe or enhance the *coopetitive* relationship from different perspectives. A descriptive and exploratory approach are adopted primarily because it extends and links existing conceptual research on coopetitive relationships within the confines of this case study research.

### 3.4.2.1 Sampling

“...even if it’s possible, it is not necessary to collect data from everyone in a community in order to get valid findings. In qualitative research, only a sample (that is, a subject) of a population is selected for any given study” (Mack *et al.*, 2005:5)

Mack *et al.* (*ibid*) infers sampling to be a set of procedures that are guided either through a quantitative or qualitative route to find a representative subset of a selected population to study. In essence, data is collected from a smaller group rather than from a large population (Saunders *et al.*, 2009). Certain limitations (i.e., time and budget) exist that make it difficult to collect data from a total population, and so where necessary the researcher selects a sample size that share similar characteristics of the population as a whole and, more importantly, that he/she will have more control over. Crucially, choosing the right representative sample allows the researcher to generalise the research findings. Two of the most commonly used sampling techniques in research are theoretical and purposive sampling. Mason’s (1996:93-4) definition of theoretical sampling describes the link between theory and sampling in simple terms:

“...theoretical sampling means selecting groups or categories to study on the basis of their relevance to your research questions, your theoretical position... and most importantly, the explanation or account which you are developing. Theoretical sampling is concerned with constructing a sample... which is meaningful theoretically because it builds in certain characteristics or criteria which may help to develop and test your theory and explanation.”

With deep-seated roots in grounded theory, a theoretical route to sampling suggests a more theory-based purpose for choosing the case. Alternatively, purposive sampling techniques are guided by a process, purpose, specific features, or interest within the case, and as such are not theoretically defined. Instead, it can be described as being much more unstructured and data-led. Due to the nature of qualitative inquiries to select information-rich cases, a purposive route can qualify when the sample is seen to be representative of the whole population and when it is adopted to satisfy the core needs of research inquiries (Khalifa, 2010). Purposive sampling takes place, according to Schutt (2006:155), when:

“...each sample element is selected for a purpose, usually because of the unique position of the sample elements. Purposive sampling may involve studying the entire population of some limited group (directors of shelters for homeless adults); or a subset of a population (mid-level managers with a reputation for efficiency); or a purposive sample may be a ‘key informant survey’, which targets individuals who are particularly knowledgeable about the issues under investigation.”

Specifically, to qualify for a purposive sampling technique, the onus was on me to ensure that participants in this study were knowledgeable about the issues I was investigating and were willing to talk about these issues in some depth with an adequate range or representation of points of view. More on the selection of cases can be found in the next section, whilst the history of the organisations and the network is presented in chapter four.

A purposive sampling technique is adopted as the most appropriate sampling technique to meet the requirements of this research study.

### **3.4.2.2 Selection of the cases**

There is a need to extend coopetition theory and research to better understand the cooperative relationships between competing organisations. As has been previously noted, this research follows a multiple and embedded case study design and will be qualitative, descriptive and evaluative in nature.

To identify an interesting case to study, I had a consultation with the heads of local theatres in the region, who suggested a network of arts-based organisations that compete for audiences and funding, but also cooperate to provide educational resources and venues for local schools. The network was then assessed to see if it met the criteria for the study and whether it would form a suitable basis for answering the research questions. The aim was to gain a range of perspectives on how specific factors affected coopetitive relationships.

This network of 19 competing organisations was actively engaged in horizontal cooperative dyads. The network is heterogeneous, as it represents a diverse number of organisations within the arts and culture sector including religious organisations such as cathedrals, churches and temples; cinemas and theatres; event organisers that coordinate, promote and provide cultural based events in the region; education providers with an interest in providing arts education in the region; and museums, archive services and galleries.

The organisations share a common purpose, which is to collectively promote the importance of linking the arts and education through the national curriculum to education providers in the region. The services which the individual organisations provide differ depending on whether the education provider is at primary or secondary school level, as children at either stage would require totally different types of information and activities. Primary schools, for instance, would require only a basic introduction to arts education and would be encouraged to explore the range of resources available in order to begin to

understand their usefulness in wider society. At secondary level, the attention would turn from a purely informational stance to creating study programmes that are streamlined to improve student achievement.

The network members are all located within close proximity to one another. This is advantageous for the sharing of resources and increases the potential competitiveness between network members.

Finally, the region itself has limited empirical research readily available where arts education is concerned, and has recently carried out a transitional phase where re-generation projects have been aimed at developing regional arts and culture. One such project is an annual celebration of arts festival that reportedly draws in huge numbers from across the region.

### **3.5 Research methods within the case study approach**

#### **3.5.1 Data collection methods**

In selecting the most appropriate data collection methods, two considerations were important. First, it was necessary to consider the constraints of the Ph.D. process in terms of time and resources required to conduct, transcribe and analyse the data to achieve a valid and reliable result. Given these constraints, I started by using a questions and methods matrix (Maxwell, 2005) as an initial step towards identifying relevant data collection methods. The sole purpose of a questions and methods matrix table was to determine what data needed to be collected, why it was needed, the type of data that would answer questions and where such data could be found (see table 3.5).

**Table 3.5: Questions and methods matrix**

#### **Relevance of competitive relationships between competing organisations**

To understand to what extent what being part of a collective means to individual organisation and develop an understanding of the competitive relationships between competing organisations (using their network as context)

<b>What data is needed?</b>	<b>Why is it needed?</b>	<b>Type of data to answer questions?</b>	<b>Location of data?</b>
What is this group of organisations about, why did organisations join initially and why do they stay now?	To assess the structural characteristics of NN, and any other relevant information	Data on types of organisations that join this group; length of time organisations have been part of the current group of organisations (i.e., have known of each other; any friendships prior); types of activities/events between organisations, network age,	Interview transcripts, observational notes, organisations' websites

		representative backgrounds, length of service in particular industry. Conversations (i.e., semi-structured interviews) for background information/published documents (secondary data)	
Who (i.e., what organisations and how many) make up this group of organisations?	To determine if organisations know about other member organisations and discover their opinion on newer and older members of present group of organisations	Observations of the group members during meetings, joint events, information to be gained through interviews/conversations from perceptions of representatives	Representatives, personal notes, observational notes, transcripts
What relationships presently exist between organisations?	To assess the types of relationships currently present in the network	Using interview data	Interview transcripts; from org. websites; personal notes; observational notes; minutes; emails
How are each of these relationships perceived?	To assess how relationships are perceived	Using interview data	Interview transcripts, personal notes, observational notes, emails, memos
What are the key factors behind these perceptions?	To determine the key motivators for the representative and organisation getting involved in chosen relationships	Interviews and observations of joint events and meetings	Interview transcripts, org. websites, personal notes, observational notes, minutes, emails
What makes up a coopetitive relationship?	To identify the key elements of a coopetitive (i.e., joint cooperation and competition) relationship and the drivers, organisational positioning, their levels of interaction, and the goals behind them	Using interview data	Interview transcripts, org. websites, personal notes, observational notes, minutes, emails
How relevant are coopetitive relationships between organisations?	Identifying whether chosen relationships have met expectations, as well as strengths and weaknesses of being part of NN; any friendships prior to engaging in coopetitive relationships?; what are the benefits and drawbacks from all elements of coopetitive relationships between these organisations?	Interviews and observations of joint events and meetings	Interview transcripts, org. websites, personal notes, observational notes, minutes, emails
Why and how do organisations cooperate and compete with each other?	To determine levels of inter-relational involvement between member organisations and their representatives in different coopetitive settings towards different organisations in NN	Interviews and observations of joint events and meetings	Interview transcripts, org. websites, personal notes, observational notes, minutes, emails
To what degree do individual organisations compete and cooperate?	To determine the level of intensity organisations and their representatives offer within different coopetitive settings to different organisations in NN	Using interview data	Interview transcripts, org. websites, personal notes, observational notes, minutes, emails
What are the benefits and drawbacks of being involved in different horizontal relationships?	To assess to what degree representatives understand where they stand on the coopetitive continuum (follow on task from previous questions)	Using interview data	Interview transcripts, org. websites, personal notes, observational notes, minutes, emails
Which organisations make up the most and least influential organisations in Network N?	To discover which member organisations are perceived to be key players amongst the organisations	Using interview data/observations	Interview transcripts; org. websites; personal notes; observational notes, minutes, emails

(Source: adapted from Maxwell, 2005)

Second, I had to determine if my research met the criteria of an interpretivist perspective, which takes the position that in order to study a particular phenomenon, the social context that shapes that phenomenon (through the interpretations of people) must also be considered.

Based on this view, exploring how an organisation relates to another is only possible through an individual's interpretation of that experience within the group. In this case, the individual is the representative of the organisation, and the social context is the group or network setting in which each organisation in this study is an active member. Data were collected using three main data collection methods: interviews (taped and transcribed), observation (at meetings or network events) and documentation (meeting minutes, emails and websites). Table 3.6 briefly describes the types, options available within the different types of data collection methods and some advantages of each method used within this study.

**Table 3.6: Data collection methods, descriptions and advantages**

Data collection method	Description of method	Advantages of using each method
Interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Personal contact through a face to face interview</li> <li>• Interviews via telephone</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unclear subjects can be dealt with immediately, particularly where specific areas need clarification</li> <li>• Good platform to gain an in-depth insight into viewpoints of participants, their priorities, ideas, and opinions in a controlled environment</li> <li>• Structure to the content of questioning</li> <li>• High level of flexibility to include more or less during interview</li> <li>• Direct contact with interviewee ensures data can be checked for accuracy and relevance</li> </ul>
Observation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participant observation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Either as a complete participant where role is hidden or as a participant where role is known</li> <li>- Either as an observer where being a participant comes in second to observation or as a complete observer where no participation takes place</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides access to a direct source of substantial data by recording events as they unfold (in a relatively short time span).</li> <li>• Helps produce objective observations based on an observation schedule, which eliminates the bias associated with being emotionally connected with participants – issues are noticed more quickly</li> <li>• Produces ready data, which can then be used for analysis</li> </ul>
Documentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Documentary data: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Either as documents available in the public domain: books, journals, organisational data; or</li> <li>- Documents that are restricted to public viewing: internal emails, memos, letters, researcher's personal diary, email discussion between organisations</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nature of documents determine the level of accessibility, but in saying that, a vast amount of information is available</li> <li>• Relatively easy to access and inexpensive to obtain</li> <li>• Permanent source of information in a format that can be checked upon, edited or added to by others at a later date.</li> </ul>

(Source: adapted from Creswell, 2003)

### 3.5.1.1 Interviews

An interview is defined as having “a conversation with a purpose” (Berg, 2007:89). Conversation is important if you want to gain an insight into what is on someone else’s mind about issues you (i.e., the researcher) may not have the ability or opportunity to observe.

Interviews are considered one of the most common methods of collecting first-hand data. Interviews, in part, afford the researcher the opportunity to be part of the data collection process, and exercise a certain level of control over responses (Harris, 2008). Three types of interviews exist, depending on the research objectives and questions: unstructured, semi-structured and structured interviews. Table 3.7 presents a brief summary of the main attributes of the three interview types. The interview type chosen for this study is in bold.

**Table 3.7: Interview types**

Type	Format	Main attributes	When to use	Relevant in this study?
Unstructured	Checklist, interview guide	Uncontrolled and flexible; explorative in nature and mostly interviewee-led; Quality of data depends on interviewers’ skills	When one wants to generate a large amount of rich detailed data and new information	No (range and quantity of data too wide – researcher might miss the point of study)
Semi-structured	<b>Written interview script (or interview guide) which includes interviewer instructions</b>	<b>Controlled with more structure for comparable responses – very little room for exploration beyond scripted material</b>	Same as above but easier to compare answers between interviewees	Yes (narrower range and quantity of data than type above)
Structured	Open ended survey questions which are based on a very strict interview guide that is then applied to each interviewee in the same way	Mainly quantitatively driven. Highly controlled and specific with limited detail	Surveys – effective with larger populations to study	No (data limited; and more useful when topic is already well known - e.g., if study is based on previous open-ended interviews data)

(Source: adapted from Saunders *et al.*, 2007)

The semi-structured interview was chosen as the format for this study, as using this method would maximize the chance of personal expression for the interviewees while remaining within the specified boundaries set by the researcher beforehand. Questions were pre-determined, but during the interviews respondents were given the opportunity to elaborate on specific areas of concern in more detail.

As an initial step in conducting each interview, I introduced myself to the interviewee by stating my name, position, and institution. Each interviewee was then briefed on the purpose

of the study to familiarise the interviewee with the research topic. Initial interview questions were designed to collect information about the interviewee, such as the length of time they had worked at their respective organisations, their background, job title and role within the organisation, time within the education network (NN), and their motivations for joining the network. As part of the interview process, interviewees were asked a series of similar questions based on the research objectives to facilitate a comparison of responses. Questions were open-ended and rank-ordered. Open questions gave the interviewee an opportunity to answer freely, whilst those questions that required rank ordering gave the interviewees an opportunity to rank specific relationships in order of importance. Questions were also kept short and simple, and were related specifically to the areas that needed to be covered in some depth. Specifically, the interviews focused on two key areas. The first explored different perspectives of the coopetitive relationship (i.e., cooperation, competition and coopetition) and factors that were considered pertinent to the success of those relationships. The second assessed the influence and impact of the more common factors to coopetitive relationships between the organisations in this study.

With the rank ordering questions, interviewees were asked to rank their organisation's cooperative and competitive relationships with their counterparts from 0 (least) to 4 (most). The aim was to start a discussion on why those particular choices had been made, in part acknowledging the factors that may have had some influence in their choices. A sample of the checklist and interview guide is provided under Appendix Two and Three. Semi-structured interviews were carried out over a five-month period with the key representatives of member organisations at their respective offices or at a venue of their choice. Only those respondents that were directly linked to or involved (e.g., as an education officer or manager) with an educational outreach type programme or equivalent within the network were chosen to be interviewed for this study. All interviewees, with the exception of one organisation, were interviewed twice or more. Despite the heterogeneity of my sample, I found it was necessary to complete interviews with all of the organisations because there may have been a few points raised that may not have been mentioned before. However, there came a point during the interviews where I realised that the responses from interviewees were not presenting new information and the themes that emerged had started becoming repetitive – inferring that the saturation level was achieved (Brocki and Wearden, 2006).

Table 3.8 summarises details of all the interviews. A tape recorder was used (with prior permission) during each of these interviews to ensure the collection of information that may have been lost otherwise during note-taking (Patton 1990:348). There were also hand-written

notes taken during the course of all the interviews. The initial interviews lasted approximately 45 minutes to an hour. Subsequent interviews lasted approximately 15 to 30 minutes.

**Table 3.8: Details of data collection - interviews**

<b>Summary of data collection (interview)</b>	
Number of interviews conducted	43
Hours of interviews	36.5
Pages of transcripts (total)	914

<b>Competing organisation</b>	<b>Total interview duration (hrs.)</b>
<b>ED1</b>	1½
<b>ED2</b>	1½
<b>ED3</b>	1½
<b>ED4</b>	3½
<b>MU1</b>	1½
<b>MU2</b>	2
<b>MU3</b>	3
<b>MU4</b>	2
<b>MU5</b>	1½
<b>CT1</b>	1½
<b>CT2</b>	1½
<b>CT3</b>	2
<b>CT4</b>	2
<b>RE1</b>	1½
<b>RE2</b>	1½
<b>RE3</b>	1½
<b>EV1</b>	1½
<b>EV2</b>	4
<b>EV3</b>	1½

All in all, 36.5 hours of interviews were conducted, tape recorded and transcribed, which resulted in transcripts totalling 914 typewritten A4 pages. The transcripts were sent to interviewees to review so that they could provide feedback, recommendations or corrections to their transcripts; a process that helped me improve the reliability and validity of the data collected. All but five interviewees reviewed their interview transcripts. The interviewees that did not return any feedback on the transcripts responded via email that they had pressing work constraints and were happy that the researcher was approaching the data collection appropriately.

The richness of data is usually determined by the level to which the participants are willing to disclose their experiences on a certain issue of interest to the researcher. The responsibility then lays with the researcher's ability to balance his/her principles with those of the rights of the participants (Ramos, 1989; Orb, Eisenhauer and Wynaden, 2000). Consent is another important condition of ethics. It plays a major part in gaining trust, particularly as one has to disclose the full purpose of the study from the initial stages (Kvale, 1996; Patton, 1990). As such, a protocol was made which outlined in detail the process for the study, accessibility to willing participants, their consent and the storage of data. This included a brief discussion on their rights to voluntarily accept or refuse to take part in the study at any time without a penalty (Orb *et al.*, 2000).

All respondents were assured both verbally and in writing that their identities and the data collected would be kept secure and confidential. Any identifiable links to the organisations or their representatives would be disguised to preserve participant anonymity. In order not to breach confidentiality or the rights of the participants or their respective organisations, interview transcripts are not included within the appendices. This is in accordance with the guidelines postulated by the University of East Anglia's (UEA) ethics and normal research practice. The researcher adhered to UEA's ethics policies and procedures at all times during this research.

### **3.5.1.2 Documentation**

A document is a primarily textual reference point that provides added information about a phenomenon that is to be (or has been) investigated, and exists independently of the researcher's actions (Corbetta, 2003). Thus, collecting relevant documents can be used in any case study in conjunction with other forms of primary data documentation (i.e., interviews, observation). These forms of documentation help to corroborate evidence, and this has been shown to be vital in gaining a wider perspective on an issue as well as increasing the validity of the results (Yin, 2003). Specifically, Yin (2003:87) argues for the usefulness of documents in case studies by insisting that "the most important use of documents is to corroborate and augment evidence from other sources." In this research, documentation included information from the websites of participating organisations, annual reports, marketing materials, emails and meeting minutes.

Organisation websites were used to understand the relationships between organisations, the projects they were working on together through the network, and to ascertain how consistently the network's activities were presented across the different

websites. This analysis revealed that some websites had more members listed whilst others had fewer. Some had included a detailed account of the activities the network offered whilst others only presented those activities in which they were involved with a few organisations from the network. This enabled the researcher to check for inconsistencies between the websites and earlier interview transcripts, and these points were then discussed during subsequent interviews.

Documents such as annual reports are particularly useful in gaining an understanding of an organisation and its history. The annual reports provided me with supplementary information on the organisations' on-going projects, funding status and partnerships. All of this basic information was then compiled and a comparison was made with other data collected through interviews and the websites. The annual reports studied were for the financial years from 2009 to 2010 and 2010 to 2011. Copies of the annual report were readily available online but in some cases, a copy had to be requested directly from the organisation. Another source of secondary documentation was the organisations' general marketing materials, particularly those that were specifically made to publicise the activities of the network. Again, these were used to develop a richer picture of the organisations and the network, and also to identify any inconsistencies or points for discussion within subsequent interviews.

### **3.5.1.3 Observation**

Observation is a data collection method that requires rigorous preparation and can lead to a deeper understanding of a subject matter or the actions and behaviour of a group of individuals in a social setting that is as natural as possible. According to Proctor (2000:206), observation involves "the personal or mechanical monitoring of selected activities. It records actions as they occur and thus there is no lack of accuracy caused by a respondent's faulty recollection of their past actions or inadequate estimate of future ones." However, although an important aspect in social inquiry, an observational strategy on its own is also considered to be highly subjective because it involves describing the actions of others using one's own perceptions and biases.

It is important to note that in choosing to carry out observation as part of a data collection method for a study, the researcher is often expected to have gained certain insights from the field by trying to establish the meaning of raw data and how to analyse the data gathered. This study is guided by research questions that act as a driving force for obtaining observational data. Thus, there is a more structured approach regarding what is to be

observed and the method of collecting that data through observation is planned in advance. Some suggestions by Robson (1993) were applied to this study. These are described below:

- The researcher made on the spot observations of interactions that took place at meetings between the organisations. These observations were condensed using abbreviations. The main purpose was to remind the researcher of what happened.
- The observational record was comprehensively revised on the day of observation using both a tape recorder and an observational log sheet.
- Key materials that were included in the recording were running descriptions of the events that took place on the day, personal impressions and feelings, and reminders to check for additional information.

There are two key forms of observational methods, according to Robson (1993): participant and structured observation. A participant observer utilises a narrative form of recording behaviour, which can therefore be considered to be qualitative in its approach. A structured observer, on the other hand, takes a detached route by using a more systematic observational method. Here, the development of coding schemes is used to quantify behaviour to observation. Table 3.9 outlines the differences between the two forms as well as the use and purpose of observation to this inquiry.

**Table 3.9: Differences in observational types and the use and purpose of observation to this inquiry**

<b>Participant observation:</b> described as a qualitative style with roots in anthropology studies. <b>Structured observation:</b> described as a quantitative style that is used in varied disciplines. Coding schemes are developed in order to quantify behaviour.	
Observation use	Purpose of observation
During exploratory phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To find out what is going on in a situation</li> <li>• Observation is in an unstructured form at this stage</li> <li>• Acts as a precursor to subsequent testing of insights</li> </ul>
As a supplementary data collection technique	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To complement or set in perspective data obtained by other means</li> <li>• Validates insights obtained through other means, i.e., interviews</li> <li>• Can be used as a primary method, particularly in a research study of a descriptive nature</li> </ul>
During experimental research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Used within the context of a controlled experiment as direct observation of laboratory experiment or in field research</li> </ul>

This study takes on a participant observational data collection method as a supplementary data collection technique because it has given the researcher the opportunity to become directly involved with the case under investigation, and it helped the researcher to validate the data collected through interviews and documentation. In the case where tailored responses are given during interviews to please the researcher or mask the true nature of a situation, observations in meetings and events may tell a different story. I used observations to identify areas to discuss in more detail within certain interviews and to better understand the points of view of the interviewees regarding how the network operated and which members are salient, which dominate, and which are reticent within the network meetings and mutual projects.

The data collection methods for this study are interviews, observation, and documentation. These are suitable methods for this study because they enable data to be collected to answer the research questions, and; they fit the epistemological and theoretical perspectives and overall research approach and design.

### **3.5.2 Data Analysis**

#### **3.5.2.1 Thematic Analysis**

According to Boyatzis (1998:vi), thematic analysis is “a process for encoding qualitative information, which may be a list of themes, a complex model, indicators and qualifications that are causally related.” Hence, its flexibility as a method allows one to recognise and describe the key themes emerging from simultaneously searching multiple data sets to find repetitive patterns in rich detail (Braun and Clarke, 2006). In contrast, a thematic network analysis represents a theoretical extension of the thematic analysis, and is therefore presented as a web-like framework that makes it easier to organise and present a synopsis of the main ideas from the study (Attride-Sterling, 2001:386-387). Both the thematic analysis and network analysis are therefore applied to this study on the basis of clarity for the reader to see what has been achieved and how it has been achieved.

Although widely used, thematic analysis is not as widely acknowledged as other more popular forms of data analysis procedures in both quantitative and qualitative research (Boyatzis, 1998; Braun and Clarke, 2006; Silverman, 1993). As such, it has been subject to criticisms centred around rigour that are mostly down to the lack of guidance to researchers on how to both conduct and report this type of analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Ultimately, it is necessary for the researcher to have clarity about what they want out to get out of the

research. In this way, one acknowledges what they are doing, why they are doing it and how the analysis is conducted to suit the aims of that study.

There are two approaches to consider prior to conducting a thematic analysis. The first approach is theoretically driven, where the data are coded with a specific research question in mind and, therefore, it is the analytic interests of the researcher from published literature that drive the analysis rather than the data. In contrast, the other approach is inductively driven, meaning that it is the data that drives the analysis, during which the research question(s) may evolve throughout the coding process. Applying this approach develops not only a familiarisation with the data from the initial stages, but also provides an in-depth description of the data. Thus, I chose to apply a data-driven thematic analysis to this study.

For the benefit of this study, I largely adhere to the three steps proposed in Attridge-Stirling's (2001) model of necessary steps in conducting a thorough thematic analysis. The first stage includes reducing data through coding, identifying themes and constructing the thematic network; the second stage explores the text by describing, exploring thematic networks and summarizing the thematic network; whilst the last stage integrates stages one and two to interpret the patterns which emerge consequently. My data consisted of audio recordings of interviews, interview transcripts, personal memos, documentation and observational notes.

The first stage of the analysis for this research study determines how the text should be reduced into manageable text segments through coding (Attridge-Stirling, 2001). First, I familiarized myself with the data through repeated listening and re-reading to highlight whether there were recurrent issues surrounding the nature of cooptition and inter-organisational interactions. I felt it was important at this juncture to check that all of my audio recordings matched the typed versions to ensure nothing was omitted. This included checking the notes after each interview and during observations. At the initial stages of analysis, I had an idea of what I was hoping to investigate (namely, dyadic relationships), but systematically working through the dataset helped me identify areas of interest that formed the basis of recurrent patterns to refine my ideas. Thus, the recurrent patterns I found formed my list of initial codes.

According to Coffrey and Atkinson (1996:27), coding is “a way of relating our data to our ideas about the data.” Mainly, I highlighted lines and sections of text and made notes to identify where each of the initial codes had come from within the data. Being a largely interpretative step, care had to be taken during this initial process to select codes that created a meaningful link to the eventual global theme, and which would enable the researcher to

separate and categorise data according to the codes selected. For example, the code *expectations* was based on text such as "...I have the opportunity to develop projects with various people. I learn from them... things that I can link in with my education programme". Similarly, the code *resource* was based on "...another reason why you want to work with another organisation is because they would have access and knowledge about certain funding streams."

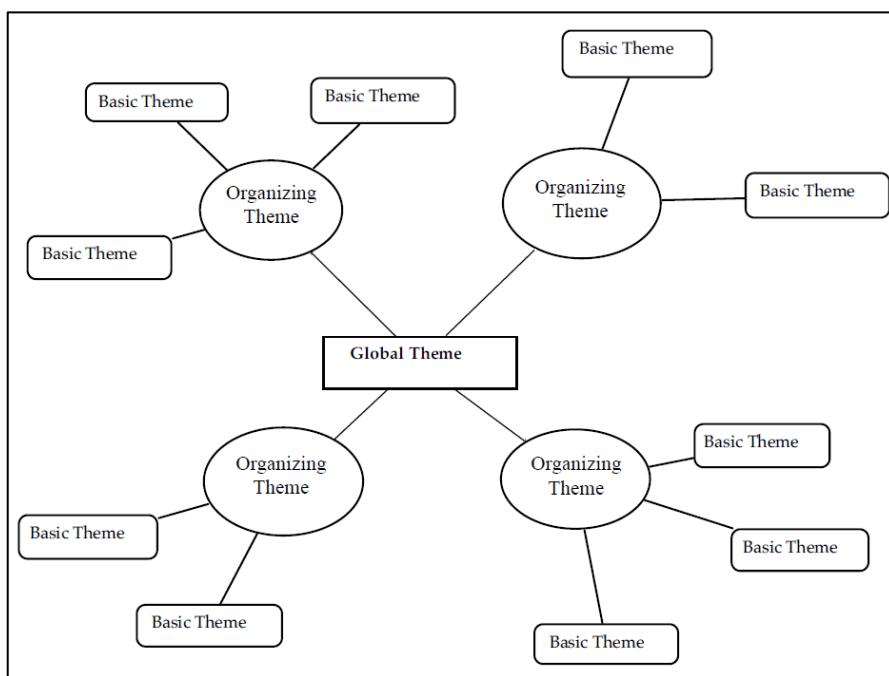
So, I took on a more iterative approach to checking and questioning transcribed data to highlight emerging issues. An identifiers listing was used to highlight basic identifiers (i.e., location, date, time and interview length) and basic participant meanings on key issues (Braun and Clarke, 2006). The purpose here was to identify as many themes as possible and then reduce the dataset into meaningful sections using four different colours. I then reassigned these colours on the basis of importance to highlight how each code was prioritised. Blue was designated the colour for the most significant finding (global theme), purple for a very significant finding (organising theme), yellow for a significant finding (basic theme) and light grey for the basic codes.

I coded the dataset in its entirety on a line-by-line basis (Grbich, 2007). This step was important because I was able to recognise the most relevant common patterns in the coded data and also establish something significant in relation to the research question (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Appendix Four provides an example of how text has been reduced from transcript data using codes to develop themes. I started by sorting the codes into groups in order to develop themes, and these groups were based on whether the relationships between the codes highlighted a similarity or whether they were opposites. The text was then re-read, and the themes that emerged from the second wave of reading were then recorded to indicate the frequency at which they were used within the text and to refine the specifics of each theme. This in turn made the search for relationships between the codes a key feature in developing themes. I had to consider the story each individual theme was trying to convey and how each fitted within the context of the research question. Consequently, I ended up with twelve groups, where some codes were easier to place in groups, whilst others did not quite fit into any group and so either remained as a single code or ended up in pairs. Each group was classified as a theme, and was given a name to capture its overall essence.

To reduce and code data into more manageable chunks, I chose to use a thematic network analysis to help interpret the data. Specifically, I adhered to the thematic network analysis model as proposed by Attride-Stirling (2001). I also chose to adhere to the terminology as it is applied in her research. A thematic network analysis acts as a tool for

analysis rather than being the analysis itself (Attride-Stirling, 2001). As its name suggests, a thematic network analysis uses web-like illustrations to summarize and present the inter-connectivity of the main themes. Thus, it is considered a systematic and replicable technique for qualitative analysis (Attride-Stirling, 2001). A thematic network analysis presents themes at three levels: basic themes, organising themes and global themes. Figure 3c is an example of a thematic network, and figure 3d presents the complete thematic network that is central to this thesis.

**Figure 3c: Structure of a thematic network**



(Source: adapted from Attride-Stirling, 2001)

*Basic themes* are the lowest order themes taken from textual data, and are mostly used to highlight the attributes of the data. Thus, they act predominantly in a contributory role, in which their meanings are manifested only when read within the setting of other basic themes. Table 3.10 presents some of the basic themes used for this analysis.

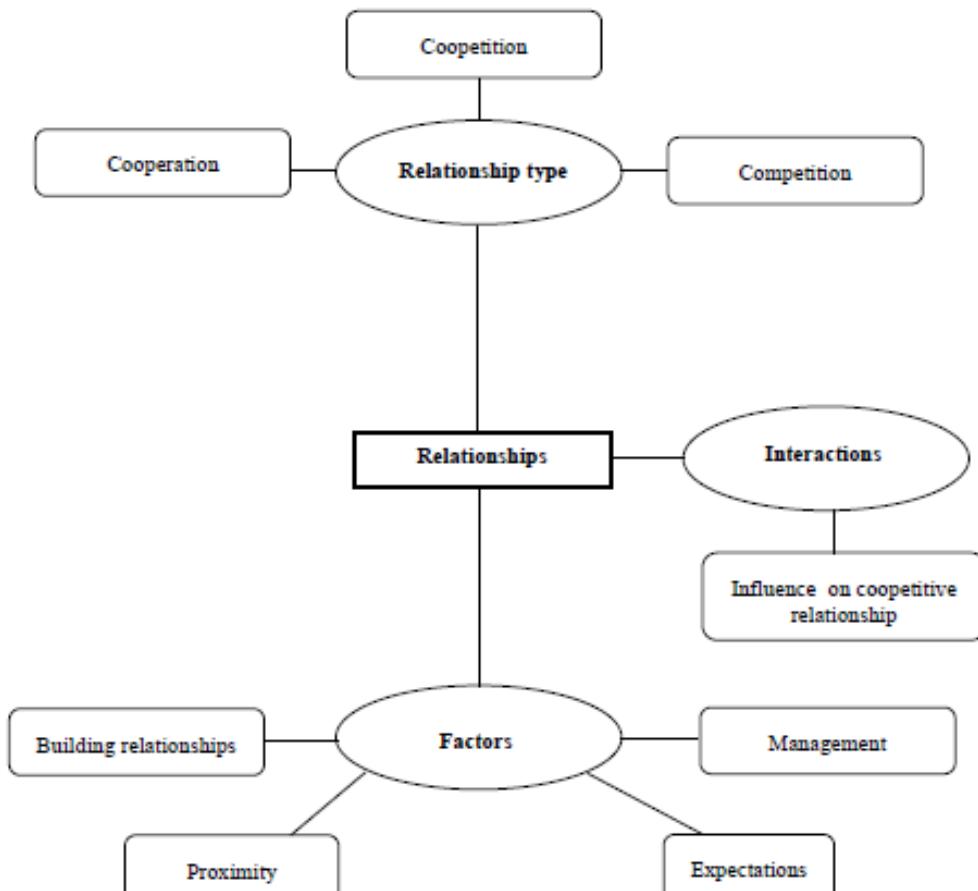
**Table 3.10: Examples of some basic themes used and their descriptions**

Theme (basic)	Description
Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implies the suitability of the network to fulfil some or all of an organisation's defined strategy</li> </ul>
Mutual targets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Indicates all organisations have the same vision, thinking or attitude in network towards the end user</li> </ul>

Trust	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Means the trust between decision makers/representatives of the organisations and thus the level of trust between organisations</li> </ul>
Commitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Indicates the existence of a strong commitment of organisations towards relationship</li> </ul>
Funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Means solid financial resources offered by an organisation</li> </ul>
Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Denotes the ease by which organisations communicate to achieve a sustainable relationship</li> </ul>
Previous associations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Represents the experience of previously successful (personal and professional) relationships/associations between existing organisations</li> </ul>
Interactional intensity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Indicates the existence of a bi-directional relationship between organisations. Relationships are considered to be of equal value to both parties (i.e., no organisation is superior or inferior to the other). What differs however is the nature of the relationship depending on how cooperative or competitive each organisation may be towards its counterpart.</li> </ul>

*Organising themes* are the next stage up from basic themes, and are therefore considered to be of greater importance in presenting analysis. When basic themes form a cluster, an organising theme is formed, and as such each assembles the core ideas offered through the basic themes and examines the relevance of underlying assumptions governing a broader theme within the transcribed texts. The organising themes used in this thesis fall into three categories: *relationship type, interactions and factors*.

**Figure 3d: Thematic network for global theme *relationships***



*Global themes*, on the other hand, are formed from the organised themes that act as a preceding sequence in the thematic analysis process. Here, global themes act as a summary of the key themes because of their conclusive nature. Global themes also interpret texts in a more informative manner because they represent the main ideas in the whole dataset. Interestingly, it is possible to have more than one global theme as is the development of many thematic networks (Attride-Stirling, 2001). Within this thesis, one global theme has emerged in spite of the complexity of the data set, and that is *relationships*. In this way, the expected outcome of the thematic network presents the perfect opportunity for a closer examination of the key issues affecting coopetition and their relevance in practice.

The second stage of analysis focused on the exploration of text. There is a strong focus on refining the key themes, particularly to explicate what each theme represents and, more importantly, how they connect with each other. Here, I attempted to ensure the meaning of each theme was clearly conveyed to the reader through examples from the text.

The final stage dealt with the write-up of the key issues that resulted from stages one and two in line with the research question. The outcome of the thematic analysis is written up in chapter four of this thesis.

I chose to use a thematic analysis and a thematic network analysis because, even as a neophyte researcher, I was able to learn how to conduct, develop and present my analysis within a short time with minimal difficulty.

### **3.6 Quality of the Research**

Dependability or trustworthiness is an expression generally used to affirm accepted methodological dimensions in order to evaluate the quality of the research (Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Morse, Barrett, Mayan, Olson and Spiers, 2002). The process of study is checked for consistency over a period of time and to ascertain if this consistency is applicable across researchers and methods (Silverman, 2000). There is a degree of comparability between reliability and dependability in that both aim to identify and acknowledge that the process of inquiry is logical, appropriately documented and traceable. Reliability is often understood in qualitative research as a means to generate an understanding of a particular issue, whilst from a quantitative perspective it is often associated with the explanation of the phenomena (Stenbacka, 2001; Golafshani, 2003). In creating this understanding, clear rules as to what encompasses the criteria for reliability in qualitative research are often either underrated or lacking. Stenbacka (2001: 552) states that “the concept of reliability is

misleading in qualitative research, particularly if a qualitative study is discussed with reliability as a criterion; the consequence is the study is no good.” Patton (2002) suggests otherwise. His viewpoint advocates that as a result of these notions of unreliability, the consistency of quality should be seriously considered when undertaking qualitative research. For this reason, the issue of dependability is taken very seriously. Thus, within this study, triangulation has been applied to this study to enhance its dependability.

Qualitative research affords the use of different methods, which on their own would provide only a partial view of the whole picture. Thus, triangulation is generally accepted in social sciences where research methods are concerned because it encourages the gathering of two or more differing forms and types of data from various sources. It also affords one to be able to collect this data in as many varied ways as possible despite the difficulty associated with combining very distinct parallel data sets from different data sources. Further, triangulation also addresses potential validity issues that may consequently arise during the course of data collection and analysis when collecting the same data repeatedly. To achieve triangulation in this study, data had to be collected using a series of steps. Firstly, texts from the three main sources of data collection (interviews, observation and documentation) were subject to an initial interviewee validation in which transcripts needed to be assessed repeatedly. Initial codes were then gathered, tabulated, analysed and discussed using a thematic analysis and a thematic network analysis approach.

In aiming to use triangulation techniques, one has to be aware that quality is not necessarily assumed to have been achieved. For instance, a third party having access to the material does not guarantee they have a comprehensive understanding of the data from its inset, which the author is privy to from the analysis to the post-hoc evaluation stages. Instead, it is assumed that although the research may be classified as being reliable, it is also suggested to have an underlying superficiality (Morse *et al.*, 2002). So, validity is necessary to test the quality of the research by providing an assurance of the fit between the viewpoints of the participants and the researchers’ reconstructions and representation of the data. It is considered to be a true version of events, whereby any description, conclusion, explanation and indeed interpretations are provided in as true a detail as possible (Maxwell 1996). In this study, validity was achieved through low inference descriptors and verbatim comments that were given at the time of interviews.

Also relevant in contributing to and building reliability and validity are verification techniques made up of a set of necessary activities or actions designed to investigate, check, question and theorise, but which also closely align with the interpretivist view to inform the

authenticity of this qualitative inquiry. Morse, Barrett, Mayan, Olson and Spiers (2002:9) define verification as being “the process of checking, confirming, making sure and being certain.” In actuality, the verification technique should add to other generally accepted procedures used during the research process to incrementally contribute to ensuring the research is valid and reliable through a consistent checking, identification and correction of errors that may otherwise undermine the analytical process. For this reason, I have applied a four-step verification strategy from Morse *et al.* (2002) to minimize the risks that would ordinarily be associated with errors in this thesis. The steps include methodological coherence, sampling sufficiency, data collection and analysis, and thinking theoretically.

The first step was methodological coherence, which advocates a balance between the research question, the method used, the data collected and the analytic procedures. In order to match the demands of the research to those of the methods and analytic procedures, all of my data has been systematically and consistently examined to reduce any hidden threats to the trustworthiness of the research. Furthermore, I find that my actions as a researcher during the course of the investigation play a significant role as to whether the outcomes produced are of optimal reliability and validity. Thus, my actions are determined and governed by my ability to be sensitive, creative, and insightful in dealing with any information that is deemed poorly supported during the analytical process.

The second was collating an appropriate sample comprised of a sufficient number of chosen participants who were deemed to have the best knowledge of the research area (Morse *et al.*, 2002). In this instance, there were at least two representatives per organisation who had the expertise and were willing to divulge relevant pieces of information for this study. Data was evidenced from all of the relevant categories in achieving the best possible responses for the research topic. Mostly, I encouraged data saturation. Replication between initial interviewees and newer ones is a result of saturation, because often one person may agree with a certain ideal or have a similar feeling about an experience at the same point in time. Feedback was used to increase the scope of study and address possible gaps, but also was required to balance the negative and positive elements associated with the topic that may not necessarily have been obvious at the initial stages of inquiry.

The third element was collecting and analysing data simultaneously. This step helped to highlight the interactions between existing knowledge from the data to what was yet to be discovered from the data. It was from this process that the last stage of verification of thinking theoretically and theory development took place. To think theoretically, where empirical data was concerned, meant one had to reaffirm and ground any emerging ideas into

already existing knowledge on the topic area. In particular, there was a conscious move from using theory as “an initial framework to move the study along” rather than just laying more emphasis on its use as a basis for further comparisons based on the outcomes of the research (Morse *et al.*, 2002:13).

Triangulation is applied within this study to enhance its dependability, validity and reliability. Verification techniques alongside triangulation have been useful as in-built mechanisms of the project to help check and rectify errors from the onset.

### 3.7 Summary

This chapter outlines the rationale behind the author’s research approach and design. The choice to take on a qualitative approach to the research was driven by the research problem, with the key aim of empirically studying how certain factors influence coopetitive relationships. A qualitative approach using a case study format was chosen on the basis of being better suited to explore the range, depth and complexity of the issues affecting participating organisations and their representatives in both a descriptive and exploratory format. Research findings in this thesis are based on multiple data sources, including data from organisational websites, exhibitions and projects, documentation from organisations, observational data and 43 semi-structured interviews totalling over 36 hours. Data analysis relies heavily on both a thematic analysis and thematic network analysis (Attride-Stirling, 2001). The main purpose of the thematic process is to categorise complex or large data sets into smaller analytical units using reoccurring themes and the repetitive patterns that emerge from the dataset to create a simple coding system. Table 3.11 summarises the methodological decisions central to the development of this research.

**Table 3.11: Methodological decisions central to the development of this research**

Area	Position of this thesis
Epistemology/Theoretical perspective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interpretivist/Constructionism</li> </ul>
Context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The relevance of factors in influencing coopetitive relationships between 19 organisations</li> </ul>
Phenomenon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How much of an effect these factors have on the relationships when applied to a coopetitive continuum</li> </ul>
Unit of analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Multiple dyadic relationships</li> </ul>
Methodology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Case study</li> </ul>
Methods (data collection)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Varied: Semi-structured interviews, observation and documentation</li> </ul>
Data analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thematic analysis</li> </ul>

## **Chapter Four**

## **FINDINGS**

This chapter presents the empirical findings from the data collection phase as they relate to the research questions for this study. It starts with a description of the inter-organisational network and the context within which it operates. Next, it presents the empirical findings from the data collection and analysis as they relate to the research objectives and sub-questions of this study. It addresses each research objective separately. First, the responses from organisations based on their perspectives of their current associations with other member organisations are described. Second, the factors that influence coopetitive relationships are identified. The final section presents the perspectives of the organisations on how these factors shape their coopetitive relationships.

### **4.1 Overview of the network**

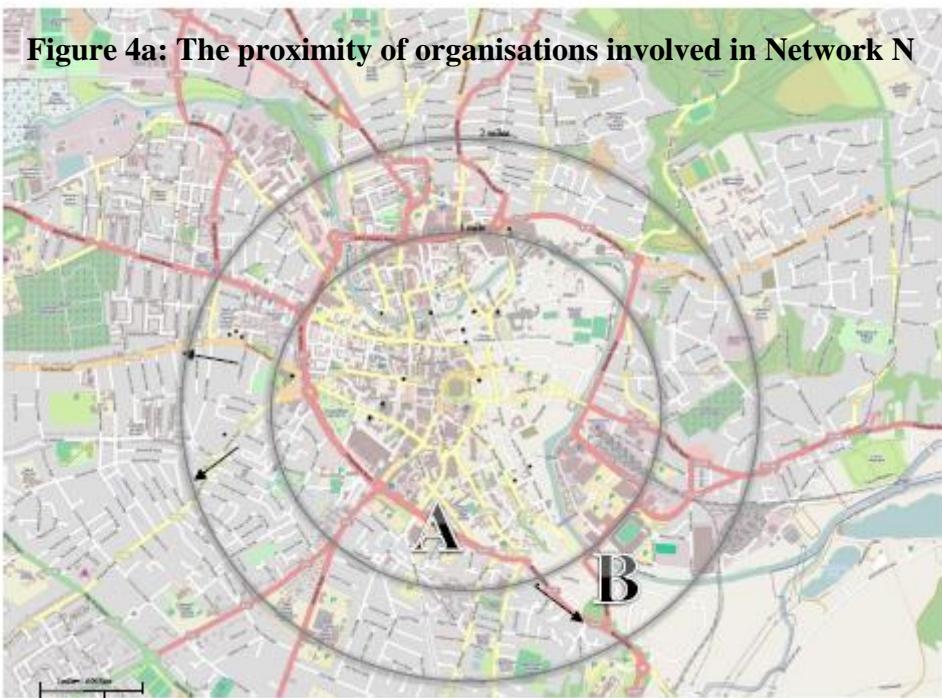
This section aims to accomplish two things. First, it provides an overview of the network (Network N) and the 19 member organisations. The history and governance structure of each member organisation is defined with a view to provide a longitudinal perspective that may be useful for further case study analysis (Yin, 2003). It also provides the necessary detail that will help to establish a background for the findings and discussion chapters.

The previous chapter outlined that this research takes an interpretivist position. This is primarily based on the belief that a qualitative approach provides the range and depth of data required to understand the type of network and to address the research aims. Another key strength is that qualitative data locate the phenomena within its context (Miles and Huberman, 1994).

The second aim of this section is to present the Network N (NN) case study from a relational perspective. Using the statements shown on the organisations' websites, from meeting minutes, their annual reports, interview transcripts and researcher visits to each organisation, it is possible to make an assessment of the importance of membership of the network and the strategic relevance of particular relationships formed with other member organisations (Appendix Five). As the analysis of the case study will be based on a relational perspective, the data presented in this chapter help to create a valuable context for the overall research aims.

#### **4.1.1 Network N (NN)**

Network N (NN) is a regional education network based in and around a city in the East of England, where the members are all based. All of the organisations are located within a two mile radius of each other (see figure 4a). The network is comprised of 19 organisations, of which four are cinemas/theatres, three are events organisations, three are religious sites, five are museums and four are educational outreach organisations.



#### **4.1.2 Organisational types and categories**

Table 4.1 is a breakdown of the five categories (i.e., Religion (RE); Cinemas/Theatres (CT); Events (EV); Education (ED); and Museums (MU)), showing the codes used for each organisation within the network based on its organisation category. A more detailed overview of the individual organisations is presented in Appendix Five.

**Table 4.1: Organisational category**

**Organisational categories, their codes and the member organisations that fall under each category in NN**

ED – Arts Education	(Organisations ED1, ED2, ED3, and ED4)
MU – Museum	(Organisations MU1, MU2, MU3, MU4, and MU5)
CT – Cinema/Theatre	(Organisations CT1, CT2, CT3, and CT4)
RE – Religion	(Organisations RE1, RE2, and RE3)
EV – Events	(Organisations EV1, EV2, and EV3)

#### **4.1.3 Vision and aims of the network**

The network was established as an informal gathering of four friends within the cinema and theatre sector (i.e., CT3, CT1, CT2 and CT4). They came together to share information about their experiences within the local arts industry, and used it as a forum to develop creative ideas for their individual organisations. It grew from these beginnings to bring in other member organisations. However, NN's purpose and where it positions itself as a network appears to have changed a lot since its inception a decade ago. Consequently, its vision and aims have had to be refined over the intervening period. However, what is noticeable is that NN remains a network with a narrow organisational reach.

NN is a network without a hierarchy, but with a clear focus. NN's primary focus is on the interests of local organisations that wish to share good industry practise and collaborate in combining their expertise and resources. They cater to the rising demand from schools in their region for improved educational resources to support the curriculum across a range of subjects including history, media and film, English, science, drama, leisure and tourism, art and modern foreign languages. The members have developed a collaborative network of relationships, and they aim to position the network to meet the expectations of its member organisations and their customers and to conform to industry standards.

#### **4.1.4 Governance and key working relationships**

The network is considered to have an informal structure and governance, but the day-to-day operation of NN is the responsibility of an appointed representative (from CT1) who chairs meetings and is accountable to the other organisations. Within the network, organisations are represented by their education officers or equivalent role holders, who have responsibility for developing relationships with schools and other educational establishments in the region. The network has been running for about 10 years since its inception and meets approximately six times per year.

The majority of projects that take place in the network are carried out on a large scale and usually involve most of the organisations. Interactions between organisations are primarily horizontal because the organisations do not have buyer-supplier relationships with one another. The main relationships that take place between organisations happen on an inter-organisational level between similar organisations. The network relationships are considered to be predominantly coopetitive because the members compete for audience numbers across the same geographical region and for arts-based funding, but they collaborate on key activities to provide resources and to support the arts-based curriculum for local

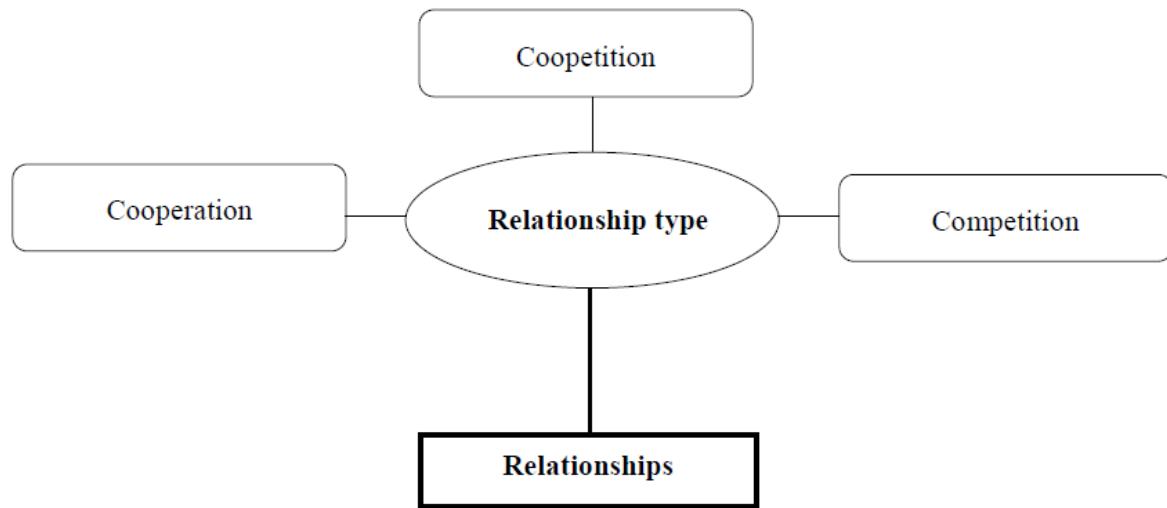
schools. Interactions are also considered to be dyadic, fairly frequent and bi-directional (see figure 4d, section 4.2), because by working together and engaging in joint network activities, the organisations aim to create extensive relationships within the education community and with funding bodies and to ultimately increase visitor numbers to their venues. There is a focus on helping teachers to develop the curricula, providing venues for school events and encouraging schools and their pupils to visit the network member organisations more regularly. Consequently, shared efforts by all organisations in the network aim to lead industry-shaping innovations and facilitate the creation of more collective initiatives that link the arts to the education sector.

For instance, NN organisations cooperate to organise a themed teachers' fair that is held in the region every few months. The success of the fair is determined by positive feedback from teachers about the products and services on offer and then by the increase of educational tours to each of the venues. Other network activities have included collaboratively developing learning maps, posters, and education packs with the aim of helping teachers to identify and use suitable alternative venues for enhancing the traditional classroom curriculum. Further, the network demonstrates its dynamic status by encouraging sub-groups to be formed within it. Sub-groups are typically responsible for organising presentations, moderating discussions and organising events around a particular theme. Some of these sub-group events are now held annually in the region and have brought recognition to the organisations and to the overall network itself. All network initiatives are aimed at engaging students and teachers in different activities within their school environment or at the attractions during visits. Over the past decade, the network has significantly expanded its activities to cope with changes within schools and to continue to develop activities and spaces for schools. The next few sections present the empirical findings from the data collection and analysis as they relate to the research objectives and sub-questions of this study.

## **4.2 Relationships between competing organisations in the network**

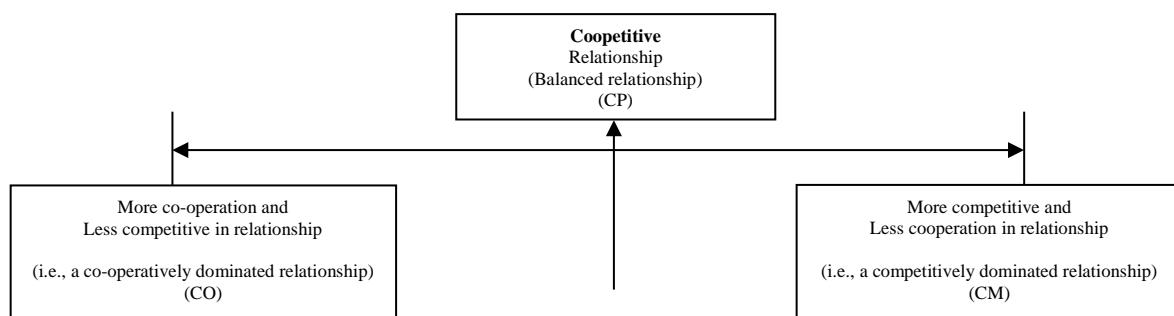
This section focuses on objective one for this research, which is to examine the relationships that exist between competing organisations in the network (NN). Bengtsson and Kock (1999) identify three key relationships, namely: competition, cooperation, and coopetition. These classifications will be used to define the key relationships between member organisations of NN. Figure 4b shows the thematic network for the organising theme; *relationship type*.

**Figure 4b: Thematic network representing the organising theme *relationship type* in NN**



An analysis of the data collected in this research shows that there are eighteen dyadic inter-relationships between network members that can be classified under the three key relationship types: cooperation, competition and coopetition. The coopetitive relationships were analysed based on Bengtsson and Kock's (2000) typology of coopetitive inter-organisational relationships. The relationships between the organisations in this study are categorised based on the degree to which organisations compete or cooperate, as depicted in Figure 4c.

**Figure 4c: The coopetitive continuum**



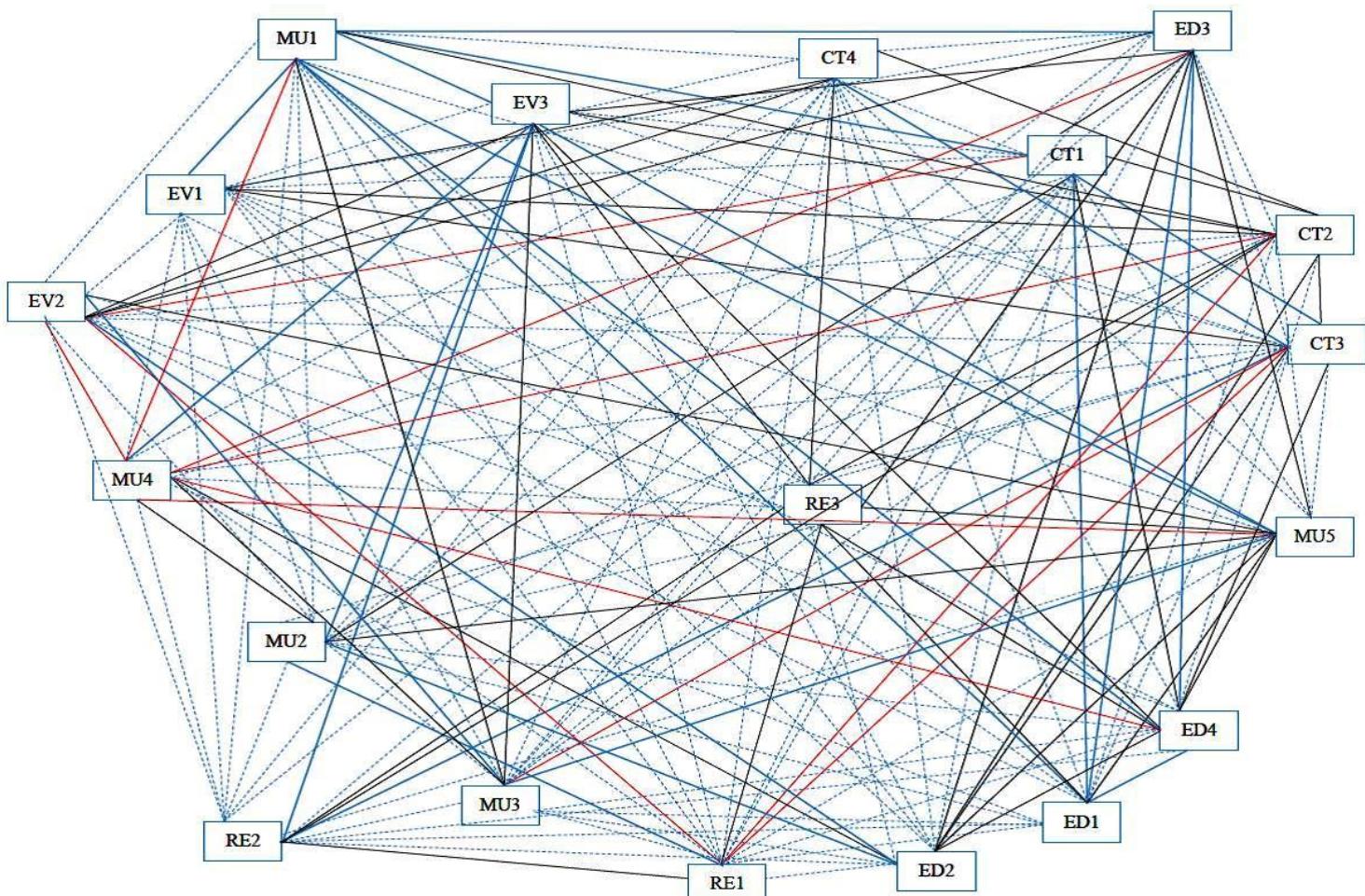
Source: adapted from Luo (2004) and Bengtsson and Kock (2000)

The first type is a predominantly cooperative relationship with low levels of competition [CO], the second is a predominantly competitive relationship with low levels of cooperation

[CM] and the third is a balanced coopetitive relationship with high levels of both cooperation and competition [CP].

Each dyadic relationship was categorised based on the perceptions of both organisations in the pair. This analysis was repeated for all 19 organisations in the network. During the interviews, participants were asked to select the category that best described their relationship with other member organisations. For illustrative purposes, all 342 relationships between all 19 organisations within the network are shown in Figure 4d.

**Figure 4d: Multiple dyadic inter-organisational network relationships, categorised as predominantly competitive, predominantly cooperative or balanced coopetition**



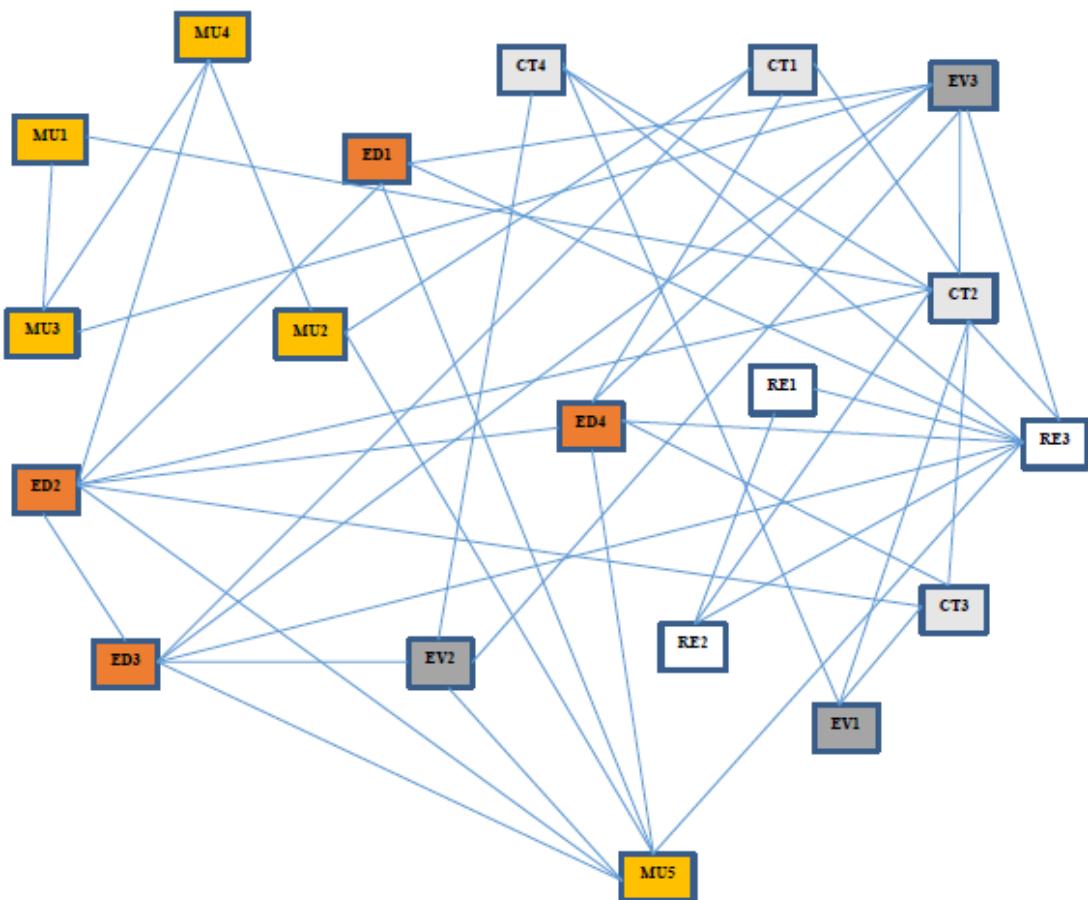
**Relationship intensity grades (*indicated by coloured lines*)**

- |                  |   |
|------------------|---|
| CO (black):      | + cooperation / - competitive                     |
| CP (thick blue): | perceptions of balanced relationship by both orgs |
| CM (blue dash):  | + competition / - cooperation                     |
| NR (red):        | No relationship from both sides                   |

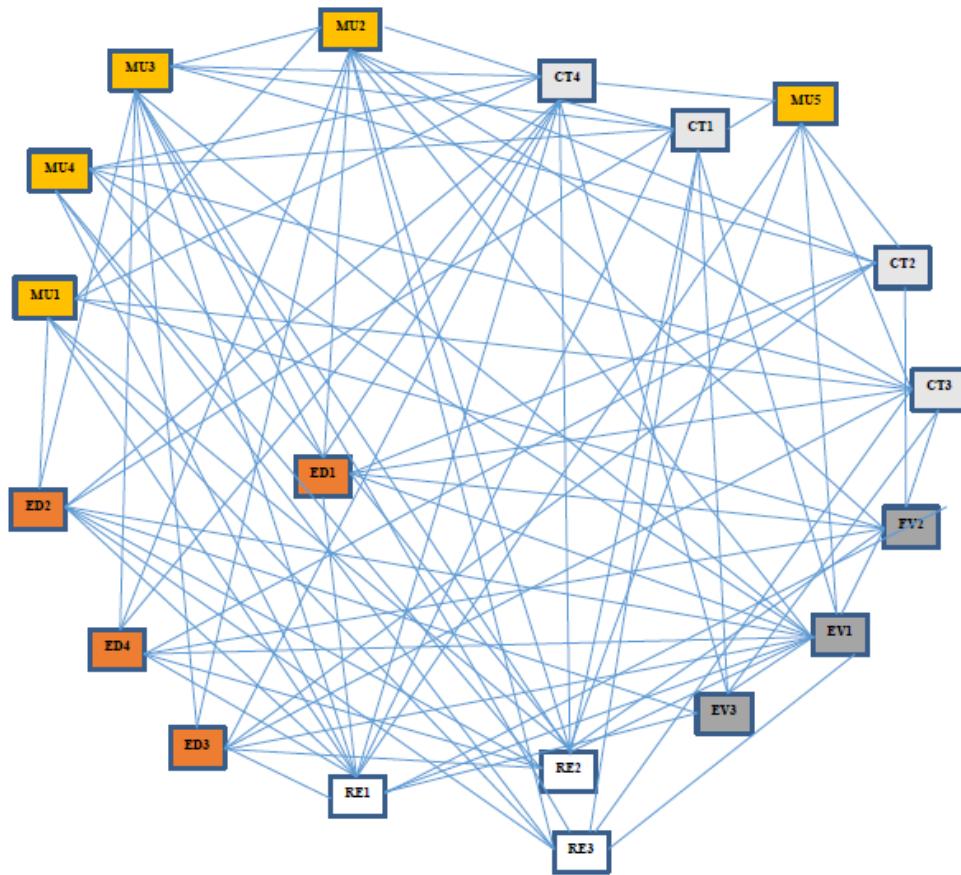
A cross-sectional perspective of the dyadic relationships between all of the organisations in the network is shown, and illustrates to some degree how an organisation's perception of its relationship not only influences the coopetitive behaviour between itself and other organisations, but the extent to which this perception determines the level of involvement it, as an organisation, is willing to give to develop and maintain inter-relational contact with other member organisations. On average, the number of ties (i.e. relationships) per organisation is six when all three relationship types are taken into account. Appendix Six provides a full breakdown of the relationship intensity grade charts used for this study.

Figures 4e, 4f and 4g break down the three main relationship types in the network. All three figures show the network contains reciprocated dyadic connections between the organisations. Of the 342 relationships between the 19 member organisations, 46 of the relationships are balanced coopetitive, 184 are predominantly competitive, 90 are predominantly cooperative and 22 indicate either a one-sided acknowledgement of a relationship or both organisations did not acknowledge a relationship existed. Of these organisations, EV3 and MU1 have the highest number of balanced coopetitive relationships with the other organisations, whilst CT2, ED2, ED3, ED4, MU5 and RE3 have the highest number of predominantly cooperative relationships.

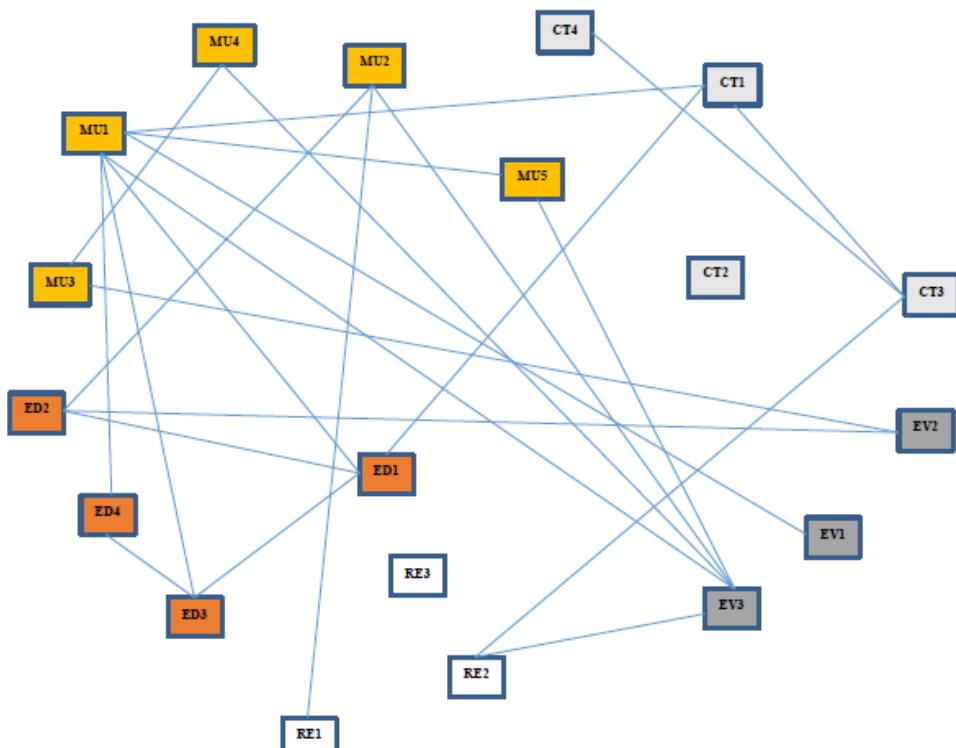
**Figure 4e: Predominantly cooperative with low levels of competition present in relationship**



**Figure 4f: Predominantly competitive with low levels of cooperation present in relationship**



**Figure 4g: Balanced relationship with high levels of both cooperation and competition present in relationship**



Of the 18 relationships MU4 has with other organisations, 14 are either non-relationships or are predominantly competitive. MU4 currently has the highest number of non-relationships in the network with six of its 18 relationships falling into that category. MU5 and RE3 have equal numbers of predominantly cooperative and predominantly competitive relationships with other organisations. Likewise, MU2 and MU3 have equal numbers of predominantly cooperative, predominantly competitive and balanced coopetitive relationships with others. In contrast, ED1 and ED3 made a conscious decision to have a pre-dominantly cooperative relationship that was based on a perceived value gained (i.e., managing information and resources) from both sides. The suggestion is that these types of relationships, although important, needed to be considered as part of a larger relationship as the smaller relational dyads tended to be inextricably linked. Although all of the organisations in the network indicate their competitive relationships are high, CT1, CT3, CT4, ED1, EV1, EV2, MU2, MU3, RE1 and RE2 have the highest predominantly competitive relationships with others. Of these ten organisations, EV1 has the highest number of predominantly competitive relationships for 14 of its 18 relationships. Table 4.2 outlines the predominant relationships for each organisation in the network and identifies the organisations with which it has those relationships.

**Table 4.2: Predominant relationships in the network**

	Predominant relationship(s)	With organisation(s)?
CT1	CM (10)	CT4, EV1, EV3, MU3, MU4, MU5, RE1, RE2, RE3
CT2	CO (9)	CT1, CT3, CT4, ED2, EV1, EV3, MU1, RE2, RE3
CT3	CM (9)	ED1, ED3, EV2, EV3, MU1, MU2, MU4, MU5, RE3
CT4	CM (13)	CT1, ED1, ED2, ED3, ED4, EV2, EV3, MU1, MU2, MU4, MU5, RE1, RE2
ED1	CM (10)	CT2, CT3, CT4, EV1, EV2, MU2, MU3, MU4, RE1, RE2
ED2	CO (7)	CT2, CT3, ED1, ED3, ED4, MU4, MU5
ED3	CO (6)	CT1, ED2, EV2, EV3, MU5, RE3
ED4	CO (6)	CT1, CT3, ED2, EV3, MU5, RE3
EV1	CM (14)	CT1, ED1, ED2, ED3, ED4, EV2, EV3, MU2, MU3, MU4, MU5, RE1, RE2, RE3
EV2	CM (9)	CT2, CT3, ED1, ED4, EV1, MU1, MU2, RE2, RE3
EV3	CO (7), CP (5)	CT2, ED1, ED3, ED4, EV2, MU3, RE3, MU1, MU2, MU4, MU5, RE2
MU1	CP (7)	CT1, ED1, ED3, ED4, EV1, MU5
MU2	CM (12)	CT2, CT3, CT4, ED1, ED3, ED4, EV1, EV2, MU1, MU3, RE2, RE3
MU3	CM (12)	CT1, CT2, CT4, ED1, ED2, ED3, ED4, EV1, MU2, RE1, RE2, RE3
MU4	NR (6)	CT2, ED3, ED4, EV2, MU1, MU5
MU5	CO (7), CM (7)	ED1, ED2, ED3, ED4, EV2, MU2, RE3, CT1, CT2, CT3, CT4, EV1, RE1, RE2
RE1	CM (12)	CT1, CT4, ED1, ED2, ED3, ED4, EV1, EV3, MU1, MU3, MU4, MU5
RE2	CM (13)	CT1, CT4, ED1, ED2, ED3, ED4, EV1, EV2, MU1, MU2, MU3, MU4, MU5
RE3	CO (9), CM (9)	CT1, CT2, CT3, CT4, ED1, ED2, ED3, ED4, EV1, EV2, EV3, MU1, MU2, MU3, MU4, MU5, RE1, RE2

The extent to which organisations cooperated with other organisations in the network was originally investigated by asking the following question: “To what extent do you relate with

other organisations?" Competition in the arts is considered to be extremely tough, and this was noted by a majority of the organisations.

"I suppose with all honesty probably with {RE3} there is a bit {of competition}, as it is the nearest organisation to us by type." (RE2)

"I suppose there might be with that as well, just because of the nature of who we are. And the same with {EV3} – just because of the nature of {SG2}, I suppose in that sense of healthy competition I guess help us to up our game in that sense." (MU5)

"...as far as education is concerned, schools are shutting down rather than expanding, so the competition is coming because they're doing less and less and it is more and more stressful and so your...you want to...you also need to adapt to their stresses and help them with their stresses. You cannot fight it; it is too horrific being a teacher these days." (CT3)

"We are in competition with {MU3}. {MU3} is in-house. It is our archive and is us. I suppose we have a good relationship with them, although in some ways we are competing for the same audience as our local history section is the same." (EV2)

"Obviously, the cathedrals, the two cathedrals to an extent are [laughs]." (ED3)

The most proactive way to operate was to cooperate, as some of the organisations below note. All organisations were in agreement that they all engaged in some form of cooperative activity with most of the other organisations in the network.

R        "Well, just because quite a lot of the things that they offer to schools are similar to what we offer. So, sometimes schools will say – it is a direct competition – no, we are going to go to the {RE3} for that this year and we're not coming to you. So, it is a straight competition between they've taken their trade somewhere else and not giving it to us. For instance, that happens at {RE3} that they might go and do a medieval day there rather than coming and doing a medieval day with us. Similarly they might do things that {EV2} offers and {MU3}; although we do work closely with them as well, but they might choose to go for a whole day there. So, it is quite a simple thing really: they're not coming to us, they're going to you; and we are therefore not getting those numbers on our target list. It is such a different place, {MU1}: actually I would say they're more competitive, we've more in competition with them than we do cooperate with them.

I        Why is that?

R        They offer something different. I know that sounds odd but if they offer something different it competes against us rather than for us, because people have to make a choice, whereas I don't compete against {RE1} because we can be inclusive. And

also {MU1} is way out there so they couldn't come to {MU2} because we would compete... it is geography as well." (MU2)

"{EV3} is competitive as they do a heritage open day. It is very figure driven and we also open up for them. It depends on how many people you get round and it feels as though you have to get more people through the door, and you back the whole programme to try and boost it. With the {MU5} it is the case that many people who come here will have been to the {MU5}, or will be going, so we seem to have quite a lot of overlap between visitors. We try to get people who have been to {MU5} in here, and then compare our visitors with theirs to see how we are doing." (ED2)

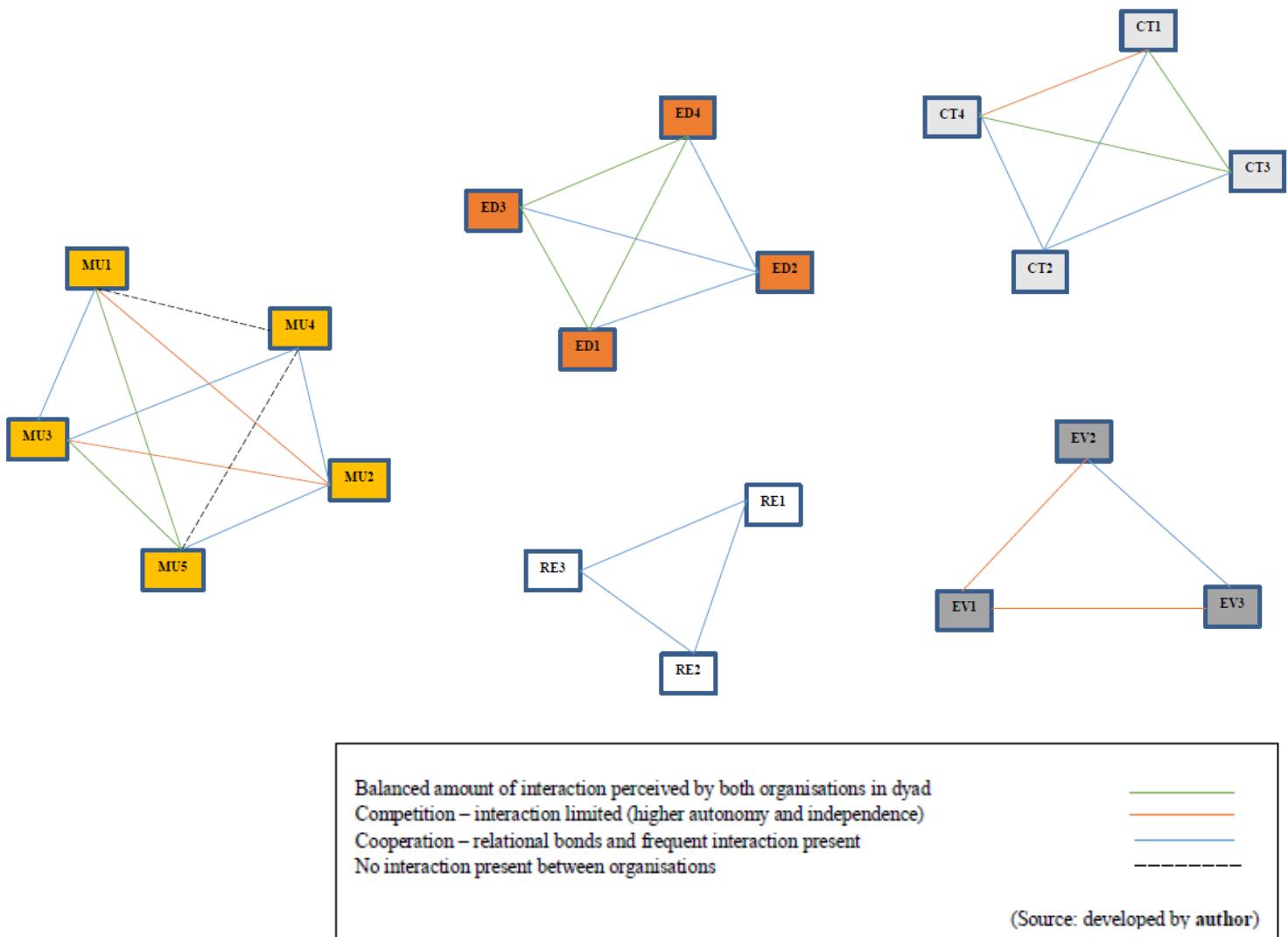
A majority also agreed that the relationships were dyadic in nature and due to different constraints within their respective organisations; interactions with organisations were mostly informal. The most popular form of cooperative activities were the *teacher fairs* and *learning maps*, which allows organisations to come together to create a schedule that highlights all their individual products and services. Doing this helps them strike a balance between the demand and supply of arts services to the education market, and escape direct intensive competition among rival organisations. The informal forms of cooperative interaction are established through meetings, and this contributes to the development of a closer, longer-term relationship between the competing organisations. According to RE2:

"...really we as an organisation realised that we weren't well connected, we weren't well networked, that we needed to do more to get the word out there that we're not some scary, strange [laughingly] organisation in a big gothic building in an inaccessible part of town, but that actually irrespective of faith we felt we had a lot to offer from a heritage point of view, architectural point of view, as well as a spiritual, to be able to take kids around or adults and show them what we have here and what it means to be a Christian and so on. So, really it's only been with the development of our new development and the realisation that we, in order to make the most of living here and now in {this region} and in this county right here and now, that we had to be more proactive in reaching out and marketing ourselves. And so that's why we've joined a whole load of different networking groups and organisations that we might not have done say a decade ago. And I think there are more now than ever before in {this region}, the last decade has seen an explosion of networking groups. I think it partly comes out of a recession, it partly comes out of one or two visionary people who force everyone together and who are really hardworking and keep it all going, and also just this desire to communicate better and I think the internet has helped that as well, because people just bounce emails around, whereas before you'd have to walk across town and [laughingly] drop a letter off or something or pick up the phone. But I think it's, yeah, we wanted to kind of get the word out there that we are open and accessible and therefore that's why we work with {NN}" (RE2)

In order to assess how strong the interactions were in the network, all of the participants were asked about how close they thought their cooperative relationships were. Within the five

separate categories of organisation in the network, it was found that the cinemas/theatres (CT), educational outreach organisations (ED) and religious sites (RE) generally kept close relationships with each other to exchange information and to converse about their operations. Of the three, RE has the highest intensity ratings for cooperation, as they cooperate with all of the organisations in this network to some degree. The organisations in both ED and CT also showed a high intensity rating for cooperation and in many instances, there was an indication that the relationship has shifted to become a more balanced relationship. With museums (MU) and events organisations (EV), however, it was found that although all of the organisations knew each other, some of their interactions were far more limited and, in four cases, there were either no relationships said to exist or relationships were of a more competitive nature. A reason for this might have been that they did not find it necessary to keep in contact with each other, particularly as their operations were on a small scale. Figure 4h shows the breakdown of relationships in each of the five categories.

**Figure 4h: Nature of relationships in the five categories of arts organisations  
(ED, MU, CT, EV and RE)**



EV3 represents one of the smaller organisations involved in the network, but is the most consistent when compared to its counterparts in both the number of cooperative relationships and the intensity of those relationships. According to EV3:

"It is sort of part of our function is to be a bit of an umbrella body for Heritage. {EV3} at that time didn't provide much education stuff directly ourselves so it was mostly about putting people in touch with one another, but since then we've provided more education stuff directly and it's become more relevant, actually."

One benefit from the dyadic relationships formed is the overall strength of the relationship through association. For example, CT2 and EV3 both exhibit a higher level of cooperation than competition to other specific member organisations, suggesting that strong relational interactions are present in their dyadic relationships. Prior interactions between the organisations could account for why there is increased trust and communication between these two organisations and other organisations in the network. Also, in fostering these cooperative efforts, a more positive perception has been created over the longer term.

"Nobody actually says, "I'm looking for a new partner". I think people rely on their existing partnerships. {NN} has met exchanging of views, reinforcing professional friendships." (CT2)

However, this was not the same for other relationships in the network. On the whole, many of the organisations believed cooperation within the network was more prevalent, but findings suggested otherwise. The more typical response when asked about competitive relationships is highlighted from the statements below. This response has been described by academics as being a form of competitive myopia. Competitive myopia addresses those organisations that do not see competition from anyone other than those in direct competition to them, which in itself is a significant risk to their business (Bennett, 2005). Within this network, there is a risk that competition is limited to the conceptions of each organisational representative, as each organisation involved with the network has an agenda.

"There's no competition. You know we are all educationalists, but nobody does what we do, so I have no competition." (CT4)

"{EV3} is competitive as they do a heritage open day. It is very figure driven. It depends on how many people you get round and it feels as though you have to get more people through the door, and you back the whole programme to try and boost it. With {MU5}, it is the case that many people who come here will have been to {MU5}, or will be going, so we seem to have quite a lot of overlap between visitors. We try to get people who have been to {MU5} in here, and then compare our visitors with theirs to see how we are

doing. So, when theirs dip, will ours dip? If ours have gone up, have theirs gone up also?" (RE2)

"...with {RE3} there is a bit of competition; I think it is probably still there. For {EV2, MU1} I think that is a bit more there [in reference to competition]. I'm not allowed to say there is any competition between us and {EV3}; that would be terrible... we're all meant to be on the same side and everything." (MU5)

Much of the feedback from interviews suggested there was a failure by organisations to clearly define what parameters were acceptable in creating relationships with other members. In fact, statements by ED1 and ED3 are representative of some of the hidden competitive notions held by a large number of organisations within NN:

"I think sometimes we get quite excited about getting involved with something that's going on or with another organisation, but then we have to remind ourselves what our remit is, and our remit is to promote the {organisation}." (ED1)

"...it did get a bit tense at times because people had very strong opinions about the way to do things because they've got different goals and different kinds of motivations for being there, I suppose." (ED3)

MU3 had this to say about a relationship with RE1, despite both organisations being regular attendees at network meetings:

"{RE1} I know very little about. I did look into working with them probably, yeah, getting on for about a year and a half ago now, so there was some contact between us but nothing actually came from it. So, I think for now I will say a nought. I don't know that they come to meetings very often either. I certainly couldn't tell you who kind of came from {RE1}." (MU3)

Similarly, ED1 had this to say of CT3:

"...it doesn't necessarily mean we have a bad relationship, it just means we don't really have one". (ED1)

MU1 failed to relate successfully with CT3 and ED1. For all three, this was believed to be caused by MU1's independent organisational agenda. MU1 noted a generally lower perception in both its strength and intensity towards these relationships in comparison to CT1 and ED1, where the relationships were believed to be a bit more cooperative than competitive. In this scenario, their level of cooperation was perceived as such because of the

level of organisational contact. One organisation offers an explanation below, despite reservations from ED1:

“...like for me, its knowing that those people are on my fingertips for when I want to work with them and I want to go and use them. Knowing that they are there and just keeping my foot in the door with them, and keeping an idea of what they are doing, you then possibly can find links with them and draw partnerships there.” (MU1)

“That really depends on who it is because there are some people I have an excellent, really brilliant, supportive, productive working relationship with and others that there is nothing. There are people that give me nothing and do not respond. It is a real mix. Generally it is pretty good, not as good as it should be...” (ED1)

The interviews suggest that CT1 and CT3 perceive their relationship as being balanced. They agree that the level of involvement between them is high as they are both members of the same external networks, but their actual level of involvement with each other was found to be limited to meetings and the infrequent events put on by this particular network. However, the strength of CT3’s interaction with other member organisations was generally deemed to be low. On speaking with CT3, it became apparent that they had recently begun to feel quite disillusioned with the network. For example, they suggested that the network as a whole had lost what it had initially stood for as it increasingly tried to satisfy a few members. As one of the founding members, CT3 felt that the network was supposed to be another forum to develop the profiles of a small clique of organisations whose representatives had a social bond, but instead it had begun to cater to the needs of those who brought in more funding. Therefore, CT3 was left feeling discouraged with the current state of affairs.

“I didn’t look to the network to realise anything particularly. I looked at it as a means of putting the organisation’s name and profile somewhere else, but it wasn’t...” (CT3)

### **Section summary**

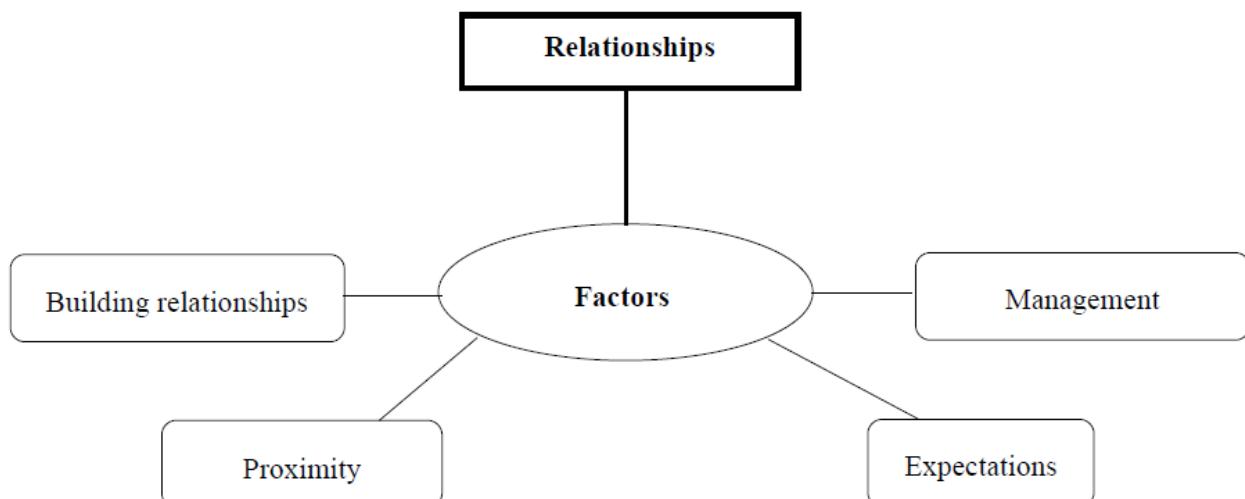
At the initial stage of presenting the findings, it is established that organisations in NN operate in the same industry. Despite the different categories to which they are assigned (i.e., MU, CT, ED, EV and RE), they compete for funding and audience numbers in the same region. In recent years, there has been an increased focus on the education market, and as such the business areas of these organisations have overlapped in areas such as strengthening their strategic position with respect to competitors, resource acquisition, and its management. It was therefore necessary to establish what types of relationships were in existence in the

network, and this served as the starting point in trying to establish relational strength and the intensity of interactions between organisations. It also played a pivotal role in establishing what factors had a direct influence on the relationships. In NN, findings suggested a total of 342 relationships were in existence between organisations. 184 were found to be predominantly competitive, 90 predominantly cooperative, and 46 were shown to have a balanced coopetitive relationship. Despite the majority of relationships being described as competitive, this finding supports the view that because of the pressure to collaborate as one of the conditions of funding, and to remain relevant through access to key resources (e.g., audience databases, expertise), arts organisations have now started to establish an increasing amount of cooperative relations with their competitors. 22 of the relationships were found to either one-sided (i.e., where an organisation acknowledges it has a relationship with another organisation but it is not reciprocated) or non-existent, where both organisations acknowledged that no relationship existed at all. However, for all of the organisations that were affected, there was a desire to engage in some type of coopetitive relationship in the future through joint projects.

#### **4.3 Factors affecting coopetitive relationships**

This section presents the results from the data collection process covering objective two of this research: to identify potential factors that directly affect coopetitive relationships, and investigate how these factors influence the different types of coopetitive relationships and the functioning of the network. Factors that have been found to affect the relationships within this network are: proximity, building relationships, expectations, and management. The thematic network is illustrated in figure 4i.

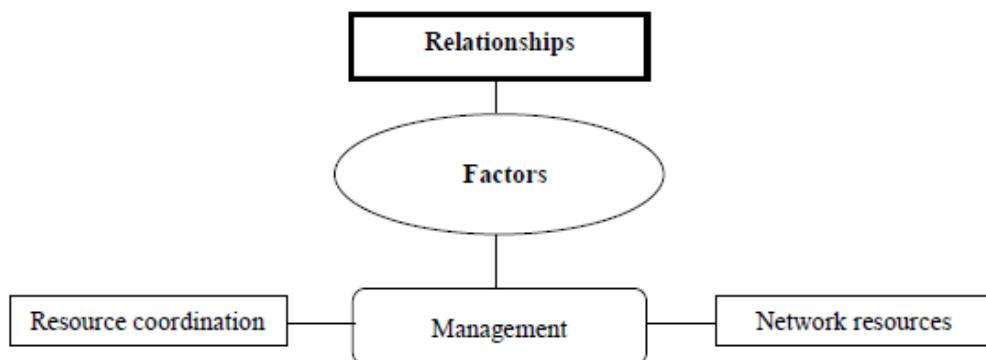
**Figure 4i: Thematic network representing the organising theme *factors* in NN**



### 4.3.1 Factor 1: Management

Management highlights how important certain elements are in effectively running the network. This theme had two sub-factors including *network resource* and *resource coordination* (see figure 4j). Each of these factors is described with supporting quotes from the interviews.

**Figure 4j: Basic theme of *management* with sub-factors**



#### 4.3.1.1 Network resources

##### Access to resources

The organisations faced similar issues around access to funding, access to general resources and developing an identity within the education and schools field. Most organisations therefore felt that by pooling resources around education, they would be able to achieve more.

“It seems useful that if there is advertising going on and all the main institutions are involved then I wanted to be a part of that and it was part of my role to advertise the presence of RE1 – that is what I was doing.” (RE1)

“...what it {the network} has met is providing a time and a place to meet and exchange views. It has not for us particularly created any new partnerships for projects.”(CT2)

“I like the fact that it’s a city-based organisation {in reference to the network}. I think that is in its favour and there is strength in that. I think it is very beneficial for some of the other members, those smaller organisations that don’t have any links with anyone else... I can really see their benefit to being part of it, because they can join forces and make something happen.” (CT4)

“It’s been really positive getting to know all the people who do education work in the city and getting to know who’s got expertise in what and who you can ask for specific things. That’s really useful. And we’ve been able to pull off some joint events that are really good. I think the learning map is really good and what we’ve done with websites is really helpful. The teachers’ fair events are getting there; they’ve been a bit more difficult to organise but they are getting there. It has created some really good sort of one-off

partnerships as well because people meet in those meetings [and] they often then... you know, two or three people go off and do a project together and stuff like that..." (EV3)

For example, the organisations in the network were able to access school contacts through a shared database, and some could access more experienced colleagues for advice on fundraising, curricula activities, and event organisation. Here, a couple of the members reflect on what being a member of the network means for them and others in the network:

"The strength of being part of the {NN} is that I'm always looped in to what's going on. Events-wise, I have the opportunity to develop projects with various people. As and when I... you know, sort of... maybe want to start that up, I have that sort of scope to do that. I learn from them. You know? I hear about other ideas....ways of working....things that I can link in with my education programme. I can promote and make people more aware of what we're doing. So people who are caught in that sort of {the city} bubble, you know, sort of focussed on what's going on in the city centre, I can make them... keep them aware of us and what we're doing and keep our profile, sort of representation in the city." (MU1)

"I think it's quite helpful and we have found from NN things like {MU1} do their lunchtime lectures on a Thursday and so now we know to avoid doing our lunchtime lectures on a Thursday and things like that. So, it's quite helpful to know what other people are actually doing, but also just to get some kind of support and find out what they would recommend as well. Because I think we're all learning all the time and things are changing and things like the national curriculum, they've just changed the secondary curriculum about a couple of years ago now and so it's quite good to share ideas and see how that's going. And we do talk about different school groups that have come in and what's worked and what doesn't work and things like that. So, from that point of view we thought it would be really worth at least being able to speak to other people." (MU3)

"...we do not have an education officer and we have not put the time and effort into selling ourselves as a learning institution. We have not got into the game at all because we have to do so many other things too. We need to deliver issues and other things." (EV2)

Some of the members of the network who had initially felt quite isolated were looking to develop relationships with others with shared interests. Aiming for a similar goal acted as an initial pull to developing a collective professional image around the network identity.

"When we haven't got an event on, it's very much a networking meeting where we sort of basically catch each other up on what we've been doing, any opportunities that we've heard about that might suit the other organisations or any ideas for cooperation. Yes, so when there's no event on it's basically a bit of a mutual support thing. Some of the other people who come to {NN} work in organisations where they're the only person who's got a brief for education and it's sort of not core to the business, and that means they

don't really get a chance to bounce ideas off about things. So it functions like that as well." (EV3)

"...the purpose of them really I have found is very much supportive, it is a very much sort of supportive network that you can... I know, I've met all these people and I know that they're there and they're doing the same sort of job as me and if I need advice or a contact name I can contact certain people. And really only by meeting them and talking to them and going to the meetings can you get to know the people and what they do and what they're into." (MU2)

Many organisations expressed a similar view. Thus, this is an indication that the relationships within this network generally are perceived to have a positive influence.

### **Applying for Funding**

Applying for funding was considered an important function of this network, particularly where the individual budgets of organisations were concerned. Specifically, organisations used the network as a means of finding new funding streams and retaining their existing ones.

"...hopefully next year we are going to be delivering an exciting festival or something and we've got to apply for funding. It is interesting as well because that's in turn driven by the climate of funding at the moment... that's another reason why you want to work with an organisation outside of your location because they would have access and knowledge about certain funding streams that we wouldn't necessarily have..." (CT1)

"You get a really good idea of things like the budgets people are working with and that is always really interesting because here, we are quite blessed with very generous budgets and so we work very differently to an organisation that is really allocating very carefully the money. I mean, we do not waste money but we do not have to worry in the same way. I really like to see how people work under different circumstances." (ED1)

For some of the smaller organisations, being able to retain existing funding meant organisations had to pull together to help one another develop, particularly in the cases where renewing funding applications meant these organisations were able to break even.

"They {MU2} supported us in the Lottery Heritage Fund submission for here and {RE1} supported them. The National Lottery Fund wanted the two of us to work together and we've been good allies because this is religious and that's historical." (RE1)

In many cases, joining the network was as a result of the conditions set by funders for organisations to promote educational goals, demonstrate their competitive edge and maintain links with the key networking forums. As one organisation puts it:

“...It’s got a lot to do with our funding sort of remit if you like, from... Our main funding comes from {reference to funders/financiers} and within their stipulations for the funding they do say that we need to have... an educational programme.” (EV1)

Once part of the network, organisations were expected to share the cost of joint projects with other member organisations.

“...rather than us all mailing out or trying to email out or trying to email out to schools basically the same information but to actually sort of say, well, we’ll have one hit and share the cost of it, great idea, and it also shows that we’re working collaboratively. Great idea, it sends out the right message, I think, to people. And I think it is useful if you’re a smaller organisation because it halves your workload.” (MU5)

However, those that did not or could not afford to contribute were often side-lined during discussions on important decisions in meetings.

“I mean, this one, you know, it’s bring your £15 and then there was the {NN} map they wanted us to do, I got involved in quite a lot of the map meetings. They just, they don’t speak to me even [laughingly] half of them and I’m thinking well, I can’t be bothered either [laughs]. And perhaps it’s one of those things you need to be involved in for a long time.”

#### **4.3.1.2 Resource coordination**

Findings suggested that in a large number of cases organisations felt let down by the management of the network. The coordination of resources, over-emphasising the importance of basic administrative routines and a nonchalant approach to leading and managing the professional relationships within the network were specific areas of concern.

“We’ve got 19 organisations of which some people send two [representatives] and let’s say half will turn up. Sometimes more so, you know, you’re really crowded in and you’re clearly in that transition as to what we’re doing and why we’re doing it and older members are saying, ‘Oh no, this is getting too big’, but it’s too big to do what? You know, you have to identify what it is you’re going to be doing and as we haven’t done that yet I don’t know.” (CT3)

“I expected it to be a little bit more business-like I suppose, I don’t know, and kind of going round and talking about what each of us had done, a bit more formal perhaps. It was nice to do it as informal but I don’t know how... I don’t think it was very productive necessarily or it could have been more productive.” (ED1)

“Maybe the leadership of those meetings needs to be more focused on a professional level.” (MU1)

For many organisations, these areas of concern affected their desire to be part of the projects or meetings and often resulted in an outward display of frustration. Subsequently, many members reduced their involvement because the management of the network was felt to be lacking in drive and direction.

“People [were] getting frustrated with meetings having no objectives, and how difficult it was to come to a consensus about anything. And having not been before I was trying not to be too vocal and opinionated, but I just felt that there was quite a lot of things that had been missed from the last one.” (ED3)

“...with this {NN} teachers’ event that we’re having, there doesn’t seem to be a lead really. I think {CT1} probably does more of the admin side.” (ED4)

“It {NN} relies on somebody being willing to chair it and to organise it, and it’s not an organisation out to make profit so there’s no sort of money in there for anyone to take on those roles. So it needs someone who’s got the time and is prepared to kind of take it on to run it as an organisation as well.” (ED1)

Even though CT1 had taken on board the management of NN, they had not considered how to integrate smaller organisations more fully into the network. According to these representatives:

“{CT1} understanding the basic requirements to run the network is not enough to truly understand the setup of relationships between the larger and smaller ones or resources required.” (CT3)

“{The CT1 representative} is lovely. They are very organised but sometimes there is not necessarily a clear direction that the meeting is going in. I guess actually that is something that someone who is maybe a lot more executive level or professional than me would wonder about is the general direction of the entire group.” (ED1)

“...just to reiterate the fact, that there’s not particularly a leading organisation to kind of drive things forward. So I think a lot of time is spent discussing perhaps trivial things that could be... it could be made more decisive and therefore we could be more productive.” (CT4)

“I felt like perhaps, he’s brilliant {in reference to representative from CT1} and he is a really nice chair, but I felt it almost needs someone who’s a bit more, ‘...right, okay let’s stop there, we’ll go with this!’ It needed to have a bit more drive behind it and a bit more action. And then the next point to discuss was this list that was going to be sent out to schools inviting them to it. And so the one from last year was handed round and again there was just so much discussion, which I felt was a waste of time, about a couple of bits of wording and things. Whereas where actually I don’t think we needed to spend half an hour discussing that, it would have been better for someone to just make a decision about it.” (ED3)

Notably, no member organisation seemed to broach the subject to any other members or the group either during or outside of the meetings. According to one organisation:

“I am aware of how people perceive me. Because equally I want to see it as a way into working with other people and I wouldn’t want them to think, ‘Oh, God, so-and-so from {MU1} is just constantly squashing everyone’s ideas and is coming in heavy-handedly and is not approachable’.” (MU1)

NN has only been formally referred to as a network in the last few years. As such, many meetings address how this network should become more formalised in its approach to what it could offer existing members and new entrants to the network. CT1 takes the responsibility of trying to manage existing members but also tries to engage the interest of potential new members to join the network. This it does mainly through referrals and extending invitations to potential members to join meetings after discussions with other member organisations.

“We have had a few new members through referrals... and obviously the decision was made as a group, the whole of {the network}.” (CT1)

“CT1 introduced her {to the network and in reference to the representative’s immediate boss} and then I took over that role.” (EV1)

“{CT1} takes main responsibility for organising the meetings. {CT1 representative one} chairs them unofficially and {CT1 representative two} does the minutes and I think they are both quite strong characters.” (ED4)

When questioned on the aims of the network, a majority of the member organisations agreed that the network worked on a mostly voluntary basis, and as such had no clear strategic direction as it was still in its infancy in its current form.

“There is not a big arc plan – it has not been talked about over the last six months – that {NN} is going to achieve. In five years’ time, where do we want {NN} to be? There is none of that strategic stuff.” (CT3)

“I don’t know, in some ways no because I think at the last meeting there was about 16 of us I think – 12 to 16 of us – and as I say because we only had two hours [and] everyone had something to say, it loses focus. So for this teachers’ event instead of having 16 of us go to the meetings and all arguing about or all disagreeing or... I think it would be better to say, ‘Who would be willing to be on a working party for the event?’ and perhaps just having four people to lead it and still communicate with all the others, but actually to lead it.” (ED3)

Some seemed happy with the way the network was run. ED4's comment is typically echoed by some of the interviewees:

"I think they lead it quite well even though it is not led. It is not like an executive board meeting. It is very democratic, everyone gets to speak." (ED4)

However, others were not convinced. Where the topic of who was responsible for managing the network was broached, CT3 believed that in leading, CT1 was to be held accountable as it fell a little short of the mark. Some, like EV3, did not even seem to recognise CT1 as the head of the network:

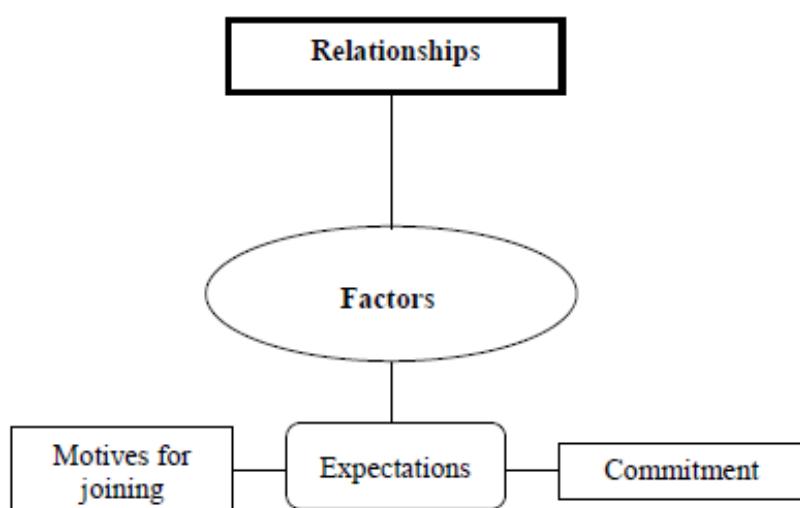
"...it's mostly because it's nobody's core job to make it work. Because it's a totally cooperative networking organisation, there's no administrator or... So sometimes that causes minor problems, but... and they are minor problems, you just have to accept that there's a limit to the power of an organisation like that." (EV3)

"I suspect it is hard, you know, just because of ...the focus and also the leadership from those meetings." (ED4)

#### 4.3.2 Factor 2: Expectations

Expectations highlight the perceptions of organisations regarding their expectations prior to and after joining the network. This factor looks at how these expectations change and may conflict with what they are expected to contribute to the growth of the network with what they feel they want or may wish to contribute to relationships within the network. This basic theme had two sub-factors, including *motives for joining* and *commitment* (see figure 4k). Each of these factors is described with supporting quotes from the interviews.

**Figure 4k: Basic theme of *expectations* with sub-factors**



#### **4.3.2.1 Motives for joining**

Being part of the network is considered important by all of the member organisations. According to a majority of respondents, NN had only formally been referred to as a network in the last few years. As such, it was becoming more formalised in its approach to what it could offer existing and new entrants. Despite the lack of direction, it was generally agreed that the network was useful in overcoming isolation, which would have been inevitable if member organisations had not joined the network:

“The network, I think it’s...it seems to me the network got together because people just wanted to talk to each other because they felt quite isolated. It seemed to me a sort of a friendly thing, a need to feel that you weren’t the only one out there...” (CT3)

“{CT3}, it’s our little sister. {CT3} is there because we do work together and {the CT3 representative} is somebody who I could talk to... she is the biggest ally I have because she’s the one whose work most closely resembles what we do and the fact that we part manage it as well. So that’s our biggest relationship.” (CT4)

“It’s been really useful for me but I seem to be only accessing a small section of it; there are whole groups of people there that I’ve not only not spoken to but can’t see how the actual groups fit together either. I’m not quite sure how you get the religious organisations mixing with {CT2} and it seems so broad to me I can’t see how they actually fit.” (RE1)

Participating organisations range in their length of involvement in the network, which in turn is reflected in their financial means and access/contribution to varied resources. As their projects are geared towards a specific market type, and based in the same locality; any connections made to the network increase opportunities to access advice and information that encourage product development:

“...everyone can get involved and come up with their ideas. Instead of making the event having lots of different organisations doing things because everyone’s planning it together it’ll look much more... it will link... all the stands will maybe link up better, there will not be repeats of activities.” (ED4)

The network is perceived as being an enabler and as such, access into the network is considered an enabler for some organisations to develop a stronger presence towards prospective schools. For example, joining the network afforded a means to gain entry into schools through a shared data-basing/resource system, which ordinarily would have been difficult for some. The network also created easier access to more experienced colleagues regarding, for example, fundraising, curricula activities, and education networks:

“...in terms of being aware of what other people are doing, what other things are happening, how other things work in {the city}, it has met my expectations in allowing me to be part of that and to understand that a bit more. But in terms of the sort of level of educational things, and expertise in education, in their own right all the organisations do a fantastic job in relation to their organisation.” (MU1)

“...the aim is to reach out to as many people within the education sector to inform them of the work that each of the partner organisations undertake and can offer. And beyond that, to reach out and educate the community of the activities and the organisations involved. So, in a way it is kind of a middleman, or middle woman, or it is a conduit through which information is disseminated and a way that pools resources...” (RE2)

Most organisations that join the network are limited in their data-basing resources, and so this network provided an opportunity to tap into an expensive and detailed resource base provided by the bigger or more established members that own these costly resources. For example, some organisations formed sub-groups in order to take advantage of using the network resources to deliver specific activities:

“It is just that whole thing of working together with other cultural groups is just part of our whole ethos. We would have done that anyway. And very much, certainly within the whole museum sector, certainly the publicly-funded museum sector, one of our aims is to work with other people and to support other people as well, not just what we can get out of it for ourselves, but to be supporting and sharing of our expertise and just the way we work, really.” (MU5)

“It is because we are going to have a separate subgroup of {NN} that is specifically going to be for putting together our formal learning pack for the festival. That will be about really exploring where all of us in our activities that we put on... can hit curriculum points at various key stages, for various subjects, English, speaking, writing, listening. There will probably be some drama stuff in there, definitely some fun citizenship business. I am going to do a den for business studies and I think that will probably be quite productive. The people that have worked in education for a long time and really understand the curriculum will probably be brilliantly useful whereas I am winging it a bit. I read the curriculum and think this is where I can probably tick off some points for some teachers.” (ED3)

“I think most of all it is a perception thing, because if schools and colleges and other organisations can see that people are working together then that is sending out a really good message, a really strong message and the right message about partnership and about potential because you can achieve so much more. It is that thing of the more heads that you can get together the bigger the ideas and probably the better the outcome, together with kind of many hands make light work, it is that sort of sense, yeah, you can really get some good ideas going and you can also get people to help turn them into a reality.” (RE2)

Tapping into a joint resource bank is an incentive, and one respondent describes how this network differs from others as it provides a platform for organisations to meet in the education sector:

“The joint resources are a good thing. We get access to {RE3} for example... we would never get access otherwise... pooling resources for mail outs and contact with the teachers. We find it hard to get hold of schools or teachers with our mail outs but {NN} seems to be able to get more of them.” (ED2)

#### **4.3.2.2 Commitment**

A number of organisations confirmed that there was lack of commitment to the network. The ability to give a reasonable amount of time to the network was given as a reason for this lack of commitment.

“It’s really hard because everyone is on different schedules, we work part time, full time, very little time, some people work on their own, some people work in teams.” (MU2)

“Some of them I meet only in meetings. Some of those organisations on that list are very, very occasional attenders, you know, some of them you won’t see for a very long time. But they’re all people I would have contact details for through {the network} at the very least, and some idea of what work they do.” (EV3)

I haven’t gone as much as I wanted to... and I’ve been so busy. We have lost a member of staff so we have been working under-capacity – so it’s been trying to get time out. {The network} just had one {in reference to an event} a couple of weeks ago, but we weren’t able to because... we’ve just hit our busiest time in regards to our school programmes because we’ve got the budget coming and we have to assess all of their stuff... it came at completely the wrong time [laughing]. We were just like, ‘No, we haven’t got any staff, for a start, so...’” (EV1)

There was also a lot of reference made to how disengaged organisations were from the network activities and in co-producing joint events. MU1 and RE1 offer two differing but representative insights on some of the views offered during interviews:

“...it’s a great deal of time. I mean I know that’s... I’m constantly whining that I haven’t got enough time. But it’s... it’s a huge amount of time over sort of the course of a season or a year to take out and then sometimes [to] not have your voice heard or maybe, you know, [it’s] not seen as a very productive meeting.” (MU1)

“I’ve got lots of contacts and I like some of the people that I work with on there; I obviously get on really well with them and that’s useful, but I tend to find that when I go to meetings most of them know each other and know each other quite well and it’s not uncommon to actually go and leave and nobody’s speaking to you at all. So odd. It’s

odd. They're an odd bunch. I find them an odd bunch. It's probably me that's odd but there you go [laughs]" (RE1)

Where commitment was perceived to be in abundance, the perception of success was higher in both the production of events and in the general perception of how the network would appeal to newer organisations joining.

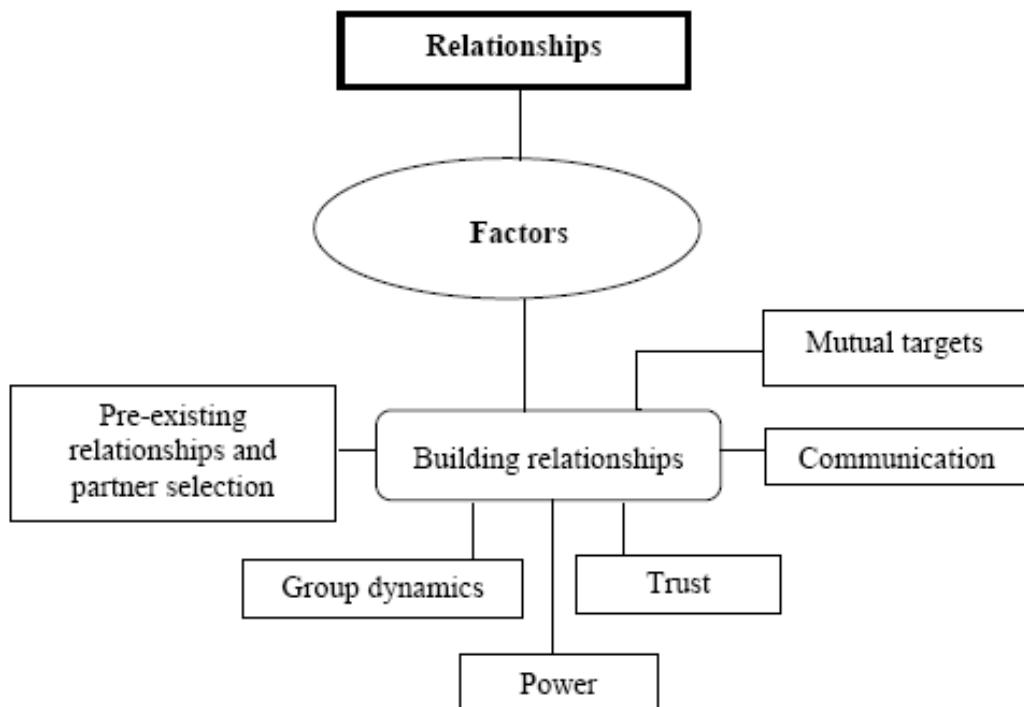
"...it's because I've got to know the two education officers there {in reference to CT1} quite well... I kind of see them quite a lot through various different networks." (ED1)

"The way that we arrange meetings at {NN} is amazing because people will send out all sorts of ways of finding the best time for us all to meet. And they go to extreme lengths to do it and it can be quite good fun just doing that. That's what I felt anyway when I went." (MU2)

#### 4.3.3 Factor 3: Building relationships

The basic theme of *building relationships* had five sub-factors including *partner selection*, *group dynamics*, *trust*, *power*, *mutual targets* and *communication* (see figure 4l). Each of these sub-factors is described with supporting quotes from the interviews.

**Figure 4l: Basic theme of *building relationships* with sub-factors**



#### **4.3.3.1 Pre-existing relationships and partner selection**

Data analysis revealed that there were a number of pre-existing relationships between a majority of the organisations prior to entering the network, and this was consistently mentioned. Specifically, many interviewees cited that previous relationships were built from prior successful experiences of working together, whilst others mentioned that organisations had links to the common business networks and industrial associations outside of this network. Some examples are given below:

“I have done work with {RE3} in the past before and I know {RE3 representative} quite well, and we often will talk on the phone and that sort of thing. As for {ED1, ED3, ED4 and for EV3} – those are the people that I work most with.” (MU5)

“I would have to say out of those I have a very close relationship with {MU4} because I’m actually a Trustee of that.” (EV3)

“We quite often contact them and ask whether we could offer an activity at the {MU1} so they obviously have their education programme. So they might get in one of their artists and run an hour’s workshop as part of our summer school. So we meet with them occasionally, their education team, for no particular event purpose but we meet with them just to have a chat and keep that relationship going.” (ED3)

Previous relationships seemed to account for a significant degree of reciprocity amongst the organisations regarding the mutual criteria to select the right partner to work with prior to and upon entry into the network. According to {RE1}:

We have worked with {MU2} so much and they are open to any ideas. We will work together on anything and get on very well with them. The {EV2} is similar. We go there often and do events. They have given us the room for free to run our events and we do joint promotion of the {EV2} also. We go to {ED1, ED3 and ED4} a lot and they help us. We have done some events {RE3} there. One of our members of staff used to work there so he has got contacts there. It is the same with {MU5} – he works there too. We hire {MU4} but the manager has changed recently so we do not know the new management. We got on very well with {the previous representative} but we do not know who it is any more. (RE1)

From the analysis, there was a clear indication that, for the majority of interviewees, the organisation’s perception of reciprocity was a criterion for their decision to be part of the network. Having the right perception of a partner’s motivations contributed to their individual self-awareness, allowing each organisation to then properly manage its expectations for the partnership, with trust playing a vital role in the relationship.

#### **4.3.3.2 Group dynamics**

A recurrent theme from interviews was the necessity of organisations to be part of an established network, and so being part of the group was something that a majority willingly embraced. Specifically, the data analysis indicated that most respondents linked being visible within the group to being able to contribute. Being visible also determined the amount of influence or power the organisation felt they were able to wield within the group during decision making. Hence, the more visible the organisation, the more included it felt within the group and consequently the more it was able to contribute.

“I sort of sometimes feel that there are other things going on. That people have been talking to each other a lot more. I’ve just come to the meetings to contribute to that meeting, whereas they’ve been organising a... you know, there’s sort of that... not to say that they’re excluding... you know, exclusive of me. You know? They don’t sort of say ‘you can’t contribute’. But it’s... you know, I feel a bit of an outsider, still.” (MU1)

In reality, the opposite (i.e., a disengagement) was more apparent during group meetings, where only a few seemed to be outspoken enough to express their points of view. It was observed that the few from the quiet group who decided to speak were often spoken over, which consequently created an uncomfortable environment for the entire group. Others commented on the difficulty of gaining support from the more influential players from within the network, often leaving them quiet during vital contributions and isolated from the conversations and decision-making process.

“...my voice wasn’t heard because I can come across as flippant and come across as not taking it seriously.” (CT4)

“I’d like the group to be seen as a bit more supportive, but I think because it’s so large, and also so diverse, it’s very hard to do that.” (MU1)

“they’re not very welcoming of us either, they reckon we’re too far out so we’re not involved in that although we would like to be, but not got any support from that and they’re members of {NN} as well, of course. I mean, I did ask, when I joined {NN} I’d hoped that I’d get some more support from {EV3} but they were less than forthcoming but it may just have been me, the personality. I mean, she said, ‘The best thing that we can do is to try and get some advertising for you’, which seemed a good idea, ‘but you’ll have to wait four or five years for that, you’re not a priority.’” (RE1)

“...when I went to the first meeting, I sort of went in and everyone was sitting there. Some people had arrived, and someone just went, ‘Oh hi, do you want a cup of tea?’ I kind of said, ‘Oh yeah, I’m {ED3 representative}’, and they kind of said, ‘Oh right, great, take a seat’ – but then nobody introduced everyone. And the meeting started straight... because normally I’m the sort of person I’d just say, ‘Oh hi, who are you?’ I’d

always just ask people who they are but the meeting then started. So for the whole meeting I didn't know who anyone was.” (ED3)

“...in an hour and a half’s meeting I felt that by the end of it all we’d done is decide the date should be changed but we didn’t have a new date, and that the letter what kind of... when the letter was going to go out. I’d made some comment about, ‘Oh surely when we’re planning for the next one we should look at what teachers said about the last one’, to consider what they want from it. I said, ‘So could we look at the feedback from the last time?’ because I wasn’t involved in it last time... and someone said something like, ‘Oh, feedback forms, that’s a good idea, we didn’t do that last year.’ Whereas to me that would be the most obvious thing to do at an event is have some kind of option for feedback. I left the meeting feeling... and my colleague did as well, agreed with me, really frustrated because I thought there’s so much we could do to make this a really good event, and I just felt people didn’t quite get it. I don’t know if that’s because there’s so many people. The negative part of having so many people involved and everyone’s on an equal keel is that, as I say, everyone had a different opinion about certain parts of it and no one seemed to have the power to make the decision and say, ‘...this is what we’re going to do.’” (ED3)

Involvement with other organisations in the network seemed to be dependent on those with better personal relationships or in similar social/business networks external to the network. It was more apparent if both parties stood to gain more as a cooperative partnership outside of the network. MU1, for instance, discusses how her organisation is able to maintain its profile through cooperative acts:

“...there are selfish reasons that we do it, but also sort of benefits as part of a programme of enhancement as well. Well, like I said, it’s sort of part and parcel, really, I think. It’s selfish reasons for the organisation, because like I said, being part of that network benefits us and allows those organisations to remember that we’re here. You know? That... to include us in things. To... and I mean there’s things like the {event} coming up next year. Things like the teachers’ inset thing that they’re organising. It’s all part of... you know, for example, this teachers’ inset might be capturing teachers that we haven’t captured yet.” (MU1)

This was the case with EV1, when organisations were supposed to have reached a collective consensus to allow it to join because of its business connections and the potential amount of funding it would bring into the network. However, it was revealed that during later meetings the more influential or louder members of the group argued against EV1’s viability to fit with the profile of the network. EV1 had already brought some funding into the network and had already been inducted as a member by the lead organisation, but it had not been able to fully attend any meetings, be involved in any collective projects of the network, nor entered into substantive partnerships with other organisations because it had not been fully accepted by the majority of organisations in the network.

“Though there does seem to be some issue with some members feeling that just anybody shouldn’t be allowed to join. I’m a real, ‘Let’s get everyone involved who’s thinking the same way’, but there was some little bit of a ruffled feather about... last time around... because the {EV2} has joined now...” (CT3)

Even with the reservations of some member organisations, analysis of the interviews suggested that EV1 was under the impression that it was part of the network.

“EV1 joined the {network}...probably about nine months ago I think. We have sort of connected with {the representative} at {CT1} because they had a teachers’ event at {RE3}.” (EV1)

To date, though, it is not listed as a member of NN and has not partaken in any of the recent network joint projects or been invited to more recent meetings.

“EV1 – don’t see them at {network meetings} very often.” (CT2)

“One of the ones that I’ve been in contact with who was in the {EV1}, who are not part of the group, and I don’t know whether that’s a conscious choice or not, but I spoke to the education officer there yesterday actually. And I said, ‘Oh, you know, you’re not part of the {network}. You should be, because of all the things you have been doing.’ She said, ‘Oh yeah, you know, put my name down.’” (MU1)

#### **4.3.3.3 Trust**

Data analysis of the transcripts suggested the development of trusting relationships was a key issue in the relationships between organisations in the network. For many, meetings were considered an important medium for increasing trust because it encouraged interaction, which in turn enabled an exchange of information that tended to benefit organisations.

“I will find people and I’ll go, ‘Oh, you’re from so-and-so, we’d really like to do a project with you’. You know? ...equally I’m out to get what I want to get... I think it is the whole, sort of, like, super-friendly type attitude that you get at those. Yeah, you know? ‘Yeah, I want to be your friend’... and you’re like, ‘Well, clearly we have nothing in common in terms of personality-wise, but we have to work together to do something’. So it is interesting.” (MU1)

“We have expectations that, you know, kind of, that’s what it’s like. It’s quite interesting when people are trying to muscle in, for want of a better word, so the idea that they just wanted to be there to get access to teachers, you know, you build up the relationships with teachers over a long time and the time you’ve been here it’s going to really grow in the database and you get people coming back and they trust you, and therefore I’m a bit nervous to send them out just introducing people with their stall and who just have

basically got a, you know, are motivated more by, you know, their organisation to get out there, you know." (CT1)

The choice of partners was mostly facilitated through the personal relationships of its representatives. As such, building trust in relationships with new members to the network seemed to be undermined, even with simple decisions relating to the network meetings, as RE1 suggests:

"There was discussion at one of the last {NN} meetings I went to which was about two of them back, as to why the actual fairs are always being held at {RE3}. If this is a group {in reference to NN} throughout the city, why are they not held somewhere else? I mean I know they were trying to promote {a new attraction within RE3} first time round and can understand that but it makes me wonder why they're not held in {CT2} or they're not held in {CT1}. Why are they always being held in the {RE3}? I would prefer to have seen them held elsewhere... but it is just me." (RE1)

A majority of the organisations confirmed a fairly flexible diary for their events, and had the freedom to choose the organisations they could partner with, but some complained that their schedules did not give them the time to build a trusting relationship with the others. Instead, as in the following statement from CT4, this lack of trust was often inconspicuous, but was targeted mostly at newer members to the network:

"It goes round and round and round and nothing really quite gets decided because everyone has to have their say and it's a long-winded way of doing it. If you get too many people in, you don't get far. So you can spend the whole meeting deciding on whether we have, I don't know, Pimm's and lemonade or tea and coffee for the teachers' fair. It's that sort of level. Well, I just haven't got any energy to do that and if I want to speak to someone about something we might tie in with, then I would do it separately." (CT4)

#### **4.3.3.4 Power**

Another key theme was with the effect of power relations on the group and how that was translated through influence formed through their interactions. CT4, for example, saw itself becoming less influential in the decision-making process. This was because he had begun to notice that some of the other organisations had created stronger personal ties, which made him feel like an outsider. For example, he felt that he was not invited to help develop a project, and this had made him feel increasingly isolated. His response is echoed by another organisation and is an indication of a higher chance of underlying tension developing:

“We started off inter-connected but have had to develop on our own.” (CT3)

“The joy that I had of being part of it has been replaced with nonchalance because actually most of the things that they discuss, we can’t be involved in. I don’t want that out of what it was originally.” (CT4)

Whilst discussing causes of potential tension in relationships, EV3 believed the demeanour of CT4 was always negative, and this may have had an impact on the level of involvement he would have been willing to contribute to the group, as well as the perceptions other organisations had of him:

“{The representative} from {CT4} is really funny and a nice guy, but you can exactly predict what he’s going to say in the meetings; he’s going to say, ‘Well that doesn’t really fit with what we do at {CT4} and anyway we’re completely booked up.’ And I think for him the main reason to come to the {network} meeting is to be able to have a bit of a whinge about how hard his life is and meet up with people socially.” (EV3)

The data indicated that most respondents linked being visible to being able to contribute. It also determined the amount of influence the organisation felt they were able to wield within the group during decision making. Where there was a higher perception of an organisation being visible, the more included that organisation felt within the group and the more they felt they were able to contribute. However, the opposite was more apparent during network meetings, where only a few seemed to be outspoken enough to express their points of view. It was observed when one of the quiet members of the network decided to speak, they were often spoken over, which consequently created an uncomfortable environment for the entire group. One organisation comments on the difficulty of gaining support from the more influential players, particularly as this means his organisation is left isolated from key conversations and the decision-making process within the network:

“If you’ve met these people then you know what I’m talking about, but it is not that they’re not nice, but what are you giving in? ...I think that’s why I’ve struggled with it, because when it was smaller it was more intimate and we could just get away with a bit more and feel... be able to express a bit more. Now I might feel awkward if I said something that actually I know that might, not offend, but it might not sit well with others.” (CT4)

“It is hard because... you’re aware that everyone else is listening and you, you know you want to obviously, yeah, tell them that you disagree.” (ED3)

#### 4.3.3.5 Communication

Communication was acknowledged as an important function within the relationships and was generally carried out via emails, meetings or joint events between organisations in the network. One organisation elaborates on its contributions to an event put on by NN:

“There was not necessarily an objective for the meeting. It was just everyone talking about [how] they have got this teachers’ inset day coming up or they were planning this week of events at half term. It was more an information sharing hour, but even that kind of thing I think can be really useful. These meetings happen once a month. It is not a huge amount of time. They are always held at one of the organisations and so far not here, so obviously it is half an hour to travel but I think it is very worthwhile to keep links with these places.” (ED4)

Attending meetings was a voluntary act by a majority of the organisations, and so if an organisation did not attend due to other commitments, it meant there was a greater reliance on emails or through existing personal relationships with other organisations. However, communication was believed to be a potential cause of tensions during meetings as it was considered frustrating by those organisations that were considered to be weaker in influence.

“I think some more of... communication, I think, [in] certain areas I don’t think we communicate... I mean most of them wouldn’t know my name anyway as I don’t know theirs.” (RE1)

“...being allowed to sort of get everybody and make sure everyone’s opinion is heard. I think I’m aware of it when I am even, you know, saying, ‘I disagree’ or ‘I think we should do something else’.” (ED3)

Emails were considered important in keeping all organisations in the loop, but it was also said to be a time-consuming task and has been described as *frustrating*, mainly because too much unnecessary information was passed around on issues considered irrelevant to many members and which may have only needed a few appointed representatives to make a decision. Some complained:

“..Certainly one of my frustrations with {NN}; and I guess in some ways a weakness that, yeah, things don’t always happen just because there are too many people trying to have their say in how things happen and it gets to the point where it’s like, yeah, it’s just not going to happen.” (ED1)

“The email correspondence is irritating, it is frustrating!” (ED1)

“...there had been 20, 30 emails going round about it and eventually someone set up a questionnaire, a little survey online so everyone could pick what day and we go with the

majority. This is actually a bit silly isn't it, when you have thirty emails? You are out the office for half a day and there are thirty emails about the learning for teachers' event." (ED4)

#### 4.3.3.6 Mutual targets

Achieving a mutual target was a recurrent theme from the interviews and the common remit, joint events and educational focus were felt to be very beneficial for the network and its members.

"I think {the network} sits in a really interesting and ideal place and could use its title, could be stronger in getting that message out there, because as far as I know there are other networks that exist within the education sector where teachers meet and talk, but there are very few that involve external organisations whose remit is education. So, I think it has, yeah it does have a very interesting and special place." (RE2)

"I think most of us are in the same position which is that we want to participate quite a lot and we're all education-type people so we're all quite engaged and quite vocal and in meetings [and] everybody sort of dives in there." (EV3)

"{NN} was really an attempt to sort of bring those people together sort of partly just for mutual support and sharing best practice and stuff, but also so that we could pool resources and do things like publicity in common and events in common just to sort of raise the profile of all those small education providers, and to help stop them accidentally competing with one another." (EV3)

However, mutual targets were also considered by many to cause tension. Even though organisations act independently and have specific agendas, many felt an obligation to adhere to the expectations of the group. Specific comments from the interviewees highlighted that the non-fulfilment of agreed targets was a major source of tension. One speaks of his disappointment:

"The joy that I had of being part of {the network} has been replaced with nonchalance because actually most of the things that they discuss we can't be involved in..." (CT4)

It was suggested by a few organisations that non-fulfilment of targets often fuelled disagreements regarding what targets had to be met and long meetings with unresolved issues carried over at the end. Some examples of the frustration over direction and targets are given in the quotes below:

"Because it is so consensus-driven it can take a very long time to get action taken..." (EV3)

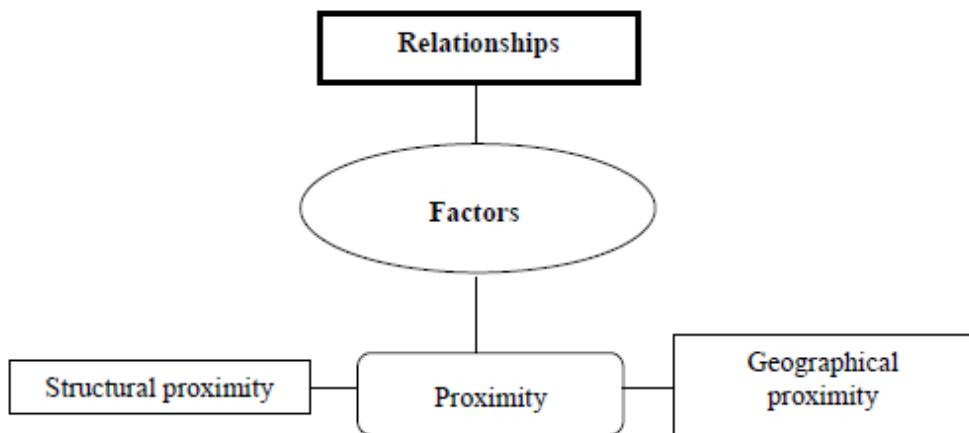
“Like any organisation that comes together with people with different agendas then there’s always going to be disagreement about what it should be about, what you are aiming for, and I think that is a benefit and it’s not at the same time, because it will always spark off ideas and ways of thinking that perhaps you weren’t aware of, but at the same time it feels as if we don’t get anywhere...” (CT4)

“What {the network} has met is providing a time and a place to meet and exchange views. It has not for us particularly created any new partnerships for projects.”(CT2)

#### 4.3.4 Factor 4: Proximity

In using the term *proximity*, the nature of certain boundaries created as a result of an organisation’s perception of competition, cooperation and coopetition is addressed. This section focuses on the responses regarding proximity of organisations to both external end-users and competing organisations within the network. This basic theme has two sub-factors including *geographical proximity* and *structural boundaries*. These are depicted in figure 4m.

**Figure 4m: Basic theme of *proximity* with sub-factors**



##### 4.3.4.1 Geographical proximity

As well as being closely connected within this network, a majority of member organisations were also geographically close to each other. For many, offering similar products and services and being in close proximity of each other were often areas of discussion during interviews. In particular, being close to one another and competing within the same region meant that tensions arose when these organisations tried to cooperate. The statements below show support for geography being a determinant of competition for the organisations in this network:

“Quite a lot of the things that they {in reference to other organisations in network} offer to schools are similar to what we offer. So, sometimes schools will say – it is a direct competition – ‘No, we are going to go to the cathedral for that this year and we’re not coming to you’. So, it is a straight competition between they’ve taken their trade somewhere else and not giving it to us. For instance, that happens at the {RE3} that they might go and do a medieval day there rather than coming and doing a medieval day with us. Similarly they might do things that {EV2} offers and {MU3}, although we do work closely with them as well, but they might choose to go for a whole day there. So, it’s quite a simple thing really: they’re not coming to us, they’re going to you, and we are therefore not getting those numbers on our target list. And probably there is a combination of that, that might happen, but other times we will cooperate and do something together; whereas on these it’s more of a really direct competition and there is never any sharing of working together.” (MU5)

Despite promoting similar products, it was clear that some organisations used different means to attract their core audience. Thus, some organisations felt a weak competitiveness in comparison to others in the network that fuelled a need to communicate in order to fulfil specific organisational aims. Further, not knowing how others fared in the market was thought to fuel some of the tensions that hindered interaction despite being located within a mile or two geographically.

“{CT1} does similar events to us, such as holiday all day workshops. It is a case of, ‘Do they get more of them? How do they do it? How should we do it? Do we compare methods and see who is doing better out of it?’ We aim to discover whether we get the same children to ours as theirs or if we get a different group. {MU1} is the same reason as {CT1}. {CT4} and {MU1} have events like us, such as evening events, or all day events that children sign up for. It is a case of, ‘How well is everybody doing? Are we doing worse than everybody else or are we getting a good number compared to what they get?’ (ED2)

One organisation talks about the benefits of being centrally placed and close to other organisations geographically. This is because being close geographically means organisations fulfil one of the fundamental aims of being in the network, which is to support local knowledge and develop strong interactions between the competing organisations.

“{MU2} are also quite a small organisation and there is a similar ethos in both our offices. We are both small and struggling and desperate to get people through the doors. We are both happy to promote each other any way possible; posters, leaflets, joint mailing lists. Any idea is a good idea and we will take it somewhere. Everybody has said, “Let’s get people through both our doors. They will come here and we will send them straight across to you.” (ED2)

Some organisations, located a little outside of the city centre, felt at a disadvantage against the more centrally-based organisations. For instance, MU3 refers to the difficulty of being less close to most of the other venues and to transport and parking being more of an issue:

“I think for us it’s almost a little bit difficult being a bit out of the city, so when they do talk about sort of having the half day activities and some of the events they can park the bus and then the children can walk between the two, they can’t down here, so I think rather than us kind of changing something about the workshop it would be more changing how easy it is to get here, where they could park the coach and things like that which at the moment is quite difficult, we have had children coming in coaches and then coaches have had to drop them off and then they’ve had to go somewhere else to park and things. So, that logistical side of things can be a bit difficult.” (MU3)

#### **4.3.4.2 Structural boundaries of the network**

Although not specifically referred to in the course of the interviews/conversations, the theme of *boundaries* was presented repeatedly under different guises throughout the interviews. The use of boundaries specifically highlights the relational activities between member organisations that can usually be perceived to be fairly flexible, formal or a mixture of the two. Boundary lines can often differ depending on the types of relationships member organisations get involved in from either an organisational or a personal perspective. For some, boundary lines can become blurred, and this indirectly undermines the image that the network projects. The boundaries these organisations suggest at first seem rather rigid and formalized. However, on closer examination, this turned out not to be the case. There are no set criteria for membership, and so the network is generally acknowledged by all members as being informal. The ease with which an organisation can join NN is widely accepted as a positive attribute, but despite this, some of the members still felt uneasy about the route the network was taking to becoming larger and more formalised.

“The {SG1} involves a lot of the same people... I mean, they’ve got sort of sub-education committees, sub-outreach committees, sub-marketing committees. Which is in some ways... it’s probably because {NN} needs to develop a bit more.” (MU1)

Some of the responses suggested organisations perceived that NN either did not fulfil its role as the social entity it used to be, or was not a network in the traditional sense even though it offered them flexibility in the level of involvement they could now engage in. There was a mixture of feelings regarding whether the network catered to the needs of certain individuals because of the image (i.e., level of influence and market awareness) their organisation

seemed to portray, rather than to the needs of the network as a whole. CT4 describes its inability to fit in despite being invited to join:

“The original purpose isn’t there anymore, doesn’t feel like it and unfortunately people have moved and now it’s other people that have come in who have brought their own way of having these sorts of meetings with like-minded people, whereas before it was more... not that it isn’t friendly, but it was much more ‘we’re all friends having a bit of a coffee and a chat and a chinwag’, and it’s not that anymore.” (CT4)

Another member reflects on the change the network has undergone over time, which has seen his organisation become more alienated as a result:

“I don’t know how it happened. I don’t know how they get invited... Who’s inviting these people? It’s not me. So I don’t know how these organisations are growing. We didn’t want to invite anybody, it was just us. It was so much not what it is now. It was just, ‘...right, we’re getting together, we’ll get together every three months so we can say what we’ve been up to, show each other bits of paper that we’ve got that we can advertise, I might be able to advertise that here or might be able to link in’, but it was generally more of a coffee and sit down and go, you know... rather than what it’s turned into, so I don’t know.” (CT4)

The more influential organisations got too involved in the running of the network and in the relationships of other member organisations, the more likely the boundary lines of independence and autonomy were sometimes crossed. From the researcher’s observations, one organisation in particular dominated the rest in the meetings on joint projects or on who was to join the network. Organisations felt overwhelmed by her presence at meetings:

“when I joined {NN} I’d hoped that I’d get some more support from {EV3}, but they were less than forthcoming. But it may just have been me, the personality... and we weren’t even acknowledged on the door... I wasn’t impressed.” (RE1)

“She’s the loudest. Not a bad thing but it can be when you don’t let others have their say around the table.” (CT4)

The comments from CT4 and RE1 indicate a sense of confusion regarding certain relationships and the perceived boundary lines many of the member organisations (including founder ones) try not to cross. This makes relationships appear somewhat strained, which in itself is indicative of the different expectations and experiences organisations have and are willing to contribute to remain within the network. Some were drawn to its non-rigid and informal structure, where attendance and level of involvement is voluntary. These rules also

applied to joint events, where member organisations were free to choose to get involved or not. There are no set rules, contracts or procedures.

“...the last teacher’s event we did have a stand there and everything. I wasn’t personally involved but my colleague organised it. And I think we felt it was the sort of event we definitely want to be involved with again and have a presence at. I think we found it was really nice to be a part of a network and be there.” (ED3)

“Everybody has to be a little bit careful how many hours they give to it because everybody’s incredibly busy and under budgetary constraints, so some people do step back from actual sort of administrative tasks and things I think I’m sort of in the middle really. I’m quite happy to do things but I’m not sort of trying to get to be chairman or anything.” (EV3)

Mostly, member organisations were free to choose their relational connections, and as such some developed smaller sub-groups for external projects to improve their influence and increase value to their business. Hence, the formalities that member organisations agreed to became blurred, and this affected the perception of relationships both positively and negatively. When asked her perception of relational connections between her organisation and other members, the representative from RE1 had no negative feedback, whilst other members felt differently:

“It feels like {NN and SG1 are} sort of not one and the same, they’re just like this offshoot, but obviously we’re working with different partners. For instance, this time for {SG1} you can partner with anybody, I mean anyone who wants to get involved. Because it’s {SG1} we could partner up with the bloke who mends shoes down the road, or we could partner up with anyone. So who we’ve partnered with this time – who we wanted to partner with – was at {attraction}, and they are our partner. So actually we apply for the funding and then pay for anything that they might need in conjunction with our whole event.” (MU2)

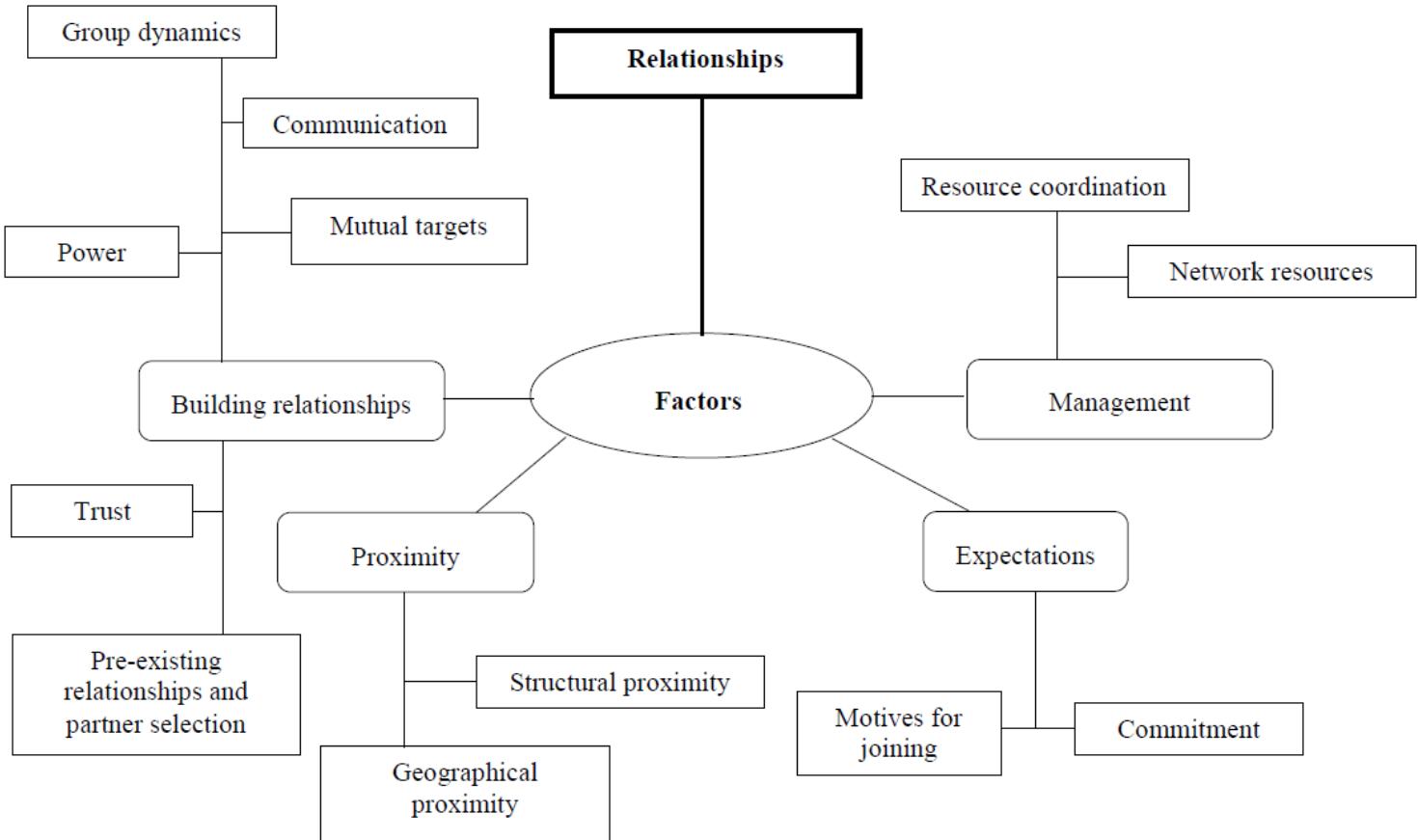
“I felt slightly overwhelmed as I had no idea what was going on. There were so many organisations going back and forwards. I was playing catch up and getting to grips with who was in there. I felt like the new one.” (ED2)

### **Section summary**

In this network, dyads were developed between organisations that focused on providing art-related services and products to the education market. These dyads were found to be a mix of competitive- and cooperative-dominated relationships, and this suggested coooperation was in existence within the network. Also suggested from the findings was the potential for a high resource compatibility made possible through coooperation. Four factors (management,

building relationships, expectations and proximity) were found to influence competitive relationships, and though they are supported by findings as being key elements in the success of the network, they have also been linked to tensions between member organisations. Figure 4n presents a thematic network diagram of all four key factors and their sub-themes under the organising theme of *factors*.

**Figure 4n: Full thematic network presenting the organising theme *factors* in NN**

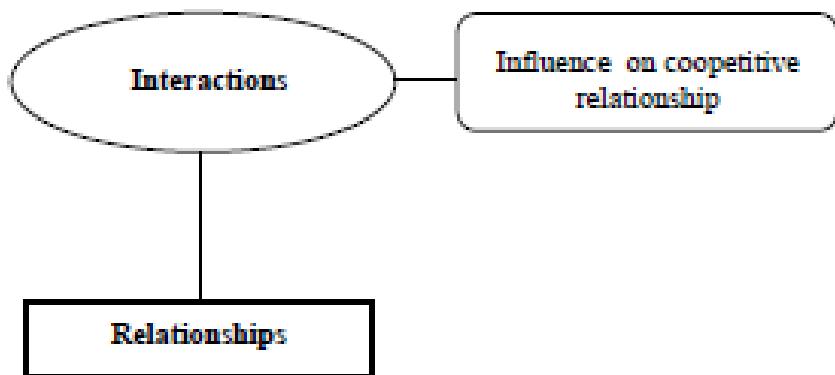


#### 4.4 How do these factors influence competitive relationships and the functioning of the network?

This section presents the results from the data collection process covering objective three from the study objectives. It deals with the last of the three organising themes, namely *interactions*. Interactions are determined by the meanings attached to relationships and, in conjunction with factors, it has been found to have an effect on the direction of relationships.

Therefore, this organising theme presents one basic theme, namely, *influence on the coopetitive relationship*. This is depicted in figure 4o.

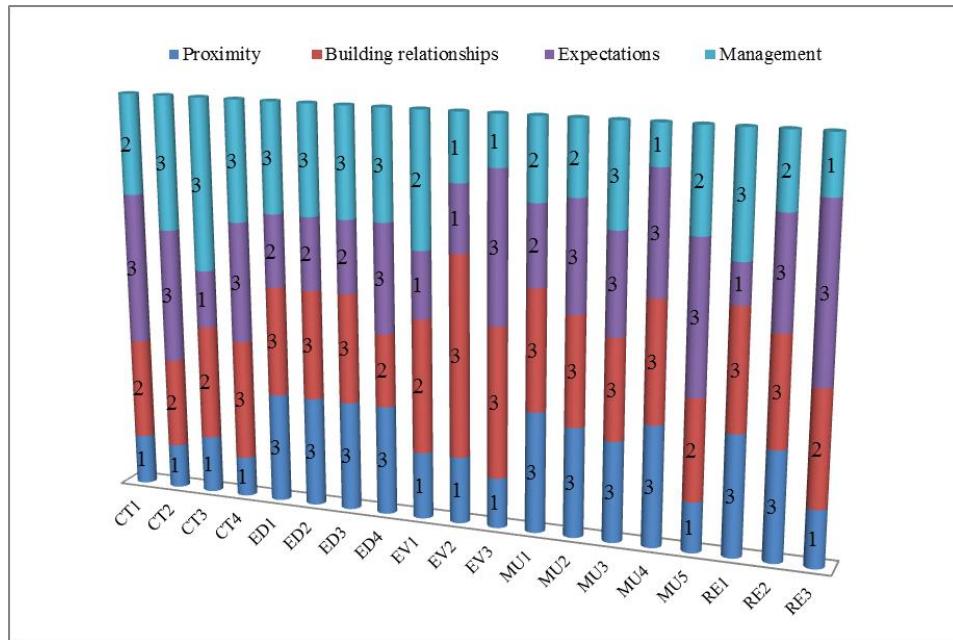
**Figure 4o: Thematic network representing the organising theme *interactions* in NN**



#### **4.4.1 Influence on coopetitive relationship**

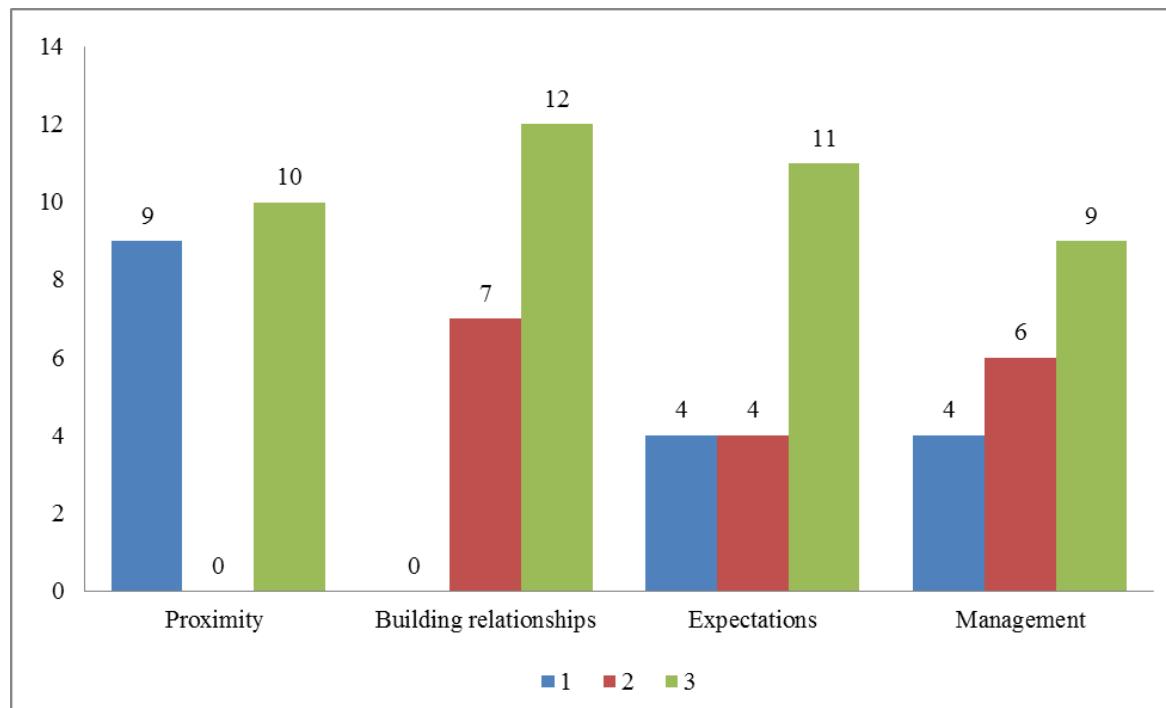
Organisations are said to engage in multi-role type relationships which involve a number of smaller, less complex relationships. As such, relationships evolve as decisions are made and behaviours are noted and responded to. It is therefore necessary to understand how the factors highlighted in previous sections play a significant role in either supporting or obstructing the relationships formed. As part of the data collection process, interviewees were asked to identify areas they felt influenced the relationships they had with other organisations. The sub-themes were used as prompts, and three grading levels were used in order to maintain a consistency between the responses. These were low (1), medium (2), or strong (3). Where a low (1) grade is shown, it is indicative of a low influence on their current relationship with another member organisation. Medium (2) grading suggests there is a fair influence on their current relationship with another member organisation, and a high (3) grading is indicative of a high influence on their current relationship in either their immediate relationship with another member organisation or on potential relationships with other organisations within the group. Diagrammatic representations are presented in figures 4p and 4q.

**Figure 4p: Ranking how factors influence coopetitive relationships in NN based on interviewee perceptions**



There were a total of 342 relationships between 19 organisations in this network. 184 of the 342 relationships were found to be competitive, 90 cooperative, and 46 are shown to be balanced coopetitive. Figure 4q shows the number of organisations in each category and how they graded the different factors.

**Figure 4q: Number of organisations that rank what factors influence their coopetitive relationships in NN**



Data analysis revealed that organisations joined the network to develop their outreach capabilities through access to a wider education database. Thus, every organisation had an equal chance to create opportunities to actively compete for funding and audience numbers under the cover of the network. However, the reality was often very different from representative views as tensions emerged as the primary outcome in the relationships between the organisations. Tensions cannot be avoided, as perceptions borne as a result of the different aims of organisations guide the manner in which relationships develop. In one example EV3 speaks of, during the planning stages of one NN project CT3 had made it clear she was not going to attend (see quote from EV3 below). However, when the decision-making process for dates came about, she was seen to be quite disruptive and had on several occasions meddled, and was perceived by other member organisations as being a negative influence within the group. Her actions contributed to creating negative perceptions of her intentions, which in turn affected her relationships with other organisations.

“{CT3} had already decided that they weren’t going to have a stand, or not a manned stand, at the teachers’ fair because it wasn’t particularly working for them. So they’d already withdrawn from that when this issue of the date came up... but {the representative} who was representing them on the meeting still kept having another point about why a certain date would work better than another date and you know sending the whole stream of emails going round again and you’re like, ‘You’re not even coming to this event, please go’. It’s all intended to be helpful, it’s just sometimes not seeing the bigger picture of, actually, we need to make a decision so that we can get on with things.” (EV3)

Within the network, tensions were evident over the introduction of new members, as all wanted to have a say on the qualifying remits the new organisation would bring to the network. For some, it was a welcome addition because it meant access to an expansive set of resources, whilst others were concerned about how much power this new organisation would wield within the group and how disruptive it might be to the group dynamics.

“{EV1} will be interesting because they’re a new member, but they are probably the biggest arts organisation in terms of the clout that they hold and the funding that they have.” (CT1)

“{EV1} are a highly profiled professional organisation. You know; they’re... I think we would only be enhanced by having them there.” (CT3)

“There does seem to be some issue with some members feeling that just anybody shouldn’t be allowed to join. I’m a real, ‘Let’s get everyone involved who’s thinking the

same way', but there was some little bit of a ruffled feathers about... last time around... because {EV1} has joined now..." (CT3)

Some organisations had specific concerns about the influence some organisations had were a direct cause of tensions to relationships within the group. A majority were of the belief that a few organisations seemed to have the power to determine how the network was run. Interviews suggest that an organisation's perception of its membership status and role change if the structures within its network-based relationships are ambiguous. By structure, it is implied that the form, process and content of the relationship are met with a level of agreement about mutual expectations. Since the network in this study is conditioned by an environment in which competitive organisations cooperate, any perceived opposition from representative organisations (particularly those organisations with the least influence) affects the nature and frequency of mutual exchange within the network, causing uncertainty. The statement from ED2, for example, is representative of those organisations that had a lesser influence in the decisions that affected the running of the network. It recognises the tensions and differences that may have emerged between member organisations during meetings, and talks about covertly avoiding it. A lot of interviews revealed a similar feeling, where they felt being silent during important decision-making periods in meetings and agreeing with the general consensus of the more influential organisations was the best way to stay involved within the group dynamics. However, general observations suggest that these underlying tensions still pose a problem:

"I find it difficult. Sometimes I am not sure why. At {other network} meetings, I find it a lot easier to speak. There seems to be such a strong voice for going for the NN fair that you feel like a rebel trying to put forward another opinion, so you stay quiet. I find it difficult sometimes to question decisions as I feel like a lost cause." (ED2)

The ability to contribute financially was found to cause tensions between organisations as there was a pressure to contribute to the development of the group. If an organisation was found to have limited funding and staffing resources, then they found themselves at a loss in terms of their ability to influence decisions and create partnerships with those organisations that had more resources and expertise.

"I think it was the lady from {CT2} who was very, very strong minded, [...] quite opinionated really. And she didn't hold back from being like that. So I think it's, like I said, I was talking about the map thing, just stupid little things like that, but she got really kind of, 'No, I really want this to happen', and other people were disagreeing. So there was, there definitely was the odd tension..." (ED3)

"...and just sort of things each organisation was asked to contribute... it wasn't very much, I think about £15 for catering costs, and that caused quite a lot of discussion as well." (ED1)

"I sometimes find like that it becomes like a school class. It's probably because I've had too much experience of working with schools, but you sit in and you'll notice that some people aren't paying attention. Some people are having a giggle in the background. You know? Some people are just not paying attention and just, you know, doodling. Other people are shouting... you know, sort of being the loudest one. And there's that sense that, you know, there's group dynamics, because you have somebody who's very strong with their opinion. And so then when you find that, when you've got someone who's very strong, other people sort of back off. I sort of think 'Oh, well, they're going to speak now so I won't bother'." (MU1)

Likewise, influence was attributed to those organisations that had strong links with funding providers and the expertise of an organisation, so it came as no surprise that when it came down to decisions that affected the group, those with limited access to both were not involved. As such, hidden tensions began to set in.

"There's [the] tensions of having a different opinion... It is hard because you're sort of, obviously, you're aware that everyone else is listening and you, you know you want to obviously, yeah, tell them that you disagree." (ED3)

"...we're not involved in these festivals... they're doing it for the second year and we've not been involved in either of those, so maybe other people are moving forward and they feel that momentum and maybe we don't, and that's not because I'm sitting here doing this but it is just the way that they've got to work with each other so maybe they really feel that benefit..." (CT4)

One example is where contributions to a joint event were requested of all organisations and the smaller ones had difficulty having their say. The quotes below demonstrate to some extent the perceptions of both sides:

"I think actually one of the other issues with it is budget, because obviously it hasn't got a budget and so when we did... I think when they did the last teacher's event they made a little bit of profit somehow. I think it was just from like a raffle or selling teas and coffees or something, but they made a tiny bit of profit, like a couple of hundred pounds I think it was, so that's kind of it. So when we've got an event like this, for example, they wanted to send out this invitation letter and someone else, I think, suggested perhaps doing it as a flyer instead and getting some proper flyers done and putting them up on school notice boards, which I thought was a really good idea. But then obviously the response was, there's no budget to do that. And so that's really difficult." (ED3)

Where tensions were disregarded and the cause not dealt with immediately, organisations were more likely to be confrontational or consider leaving the network. Some of the quotes below were a direct result of believing the network offered nothing of value back. Two organisations gave their reasons for considering leaving the network:

“...definitely I think it was {CT4} and {CT2} [who] both said that they didn’t really feel that the event last time was worth their while being there. They felt it wasn’t...” (ED4)

“We {in reference to CT3 and CT4} don’t want to be part of it next year because it didn’t really meet our remit. It didn’t really do anything for us. And I think the lady from {CT1} felt the same. She said that they certainly didn’t want to be as involved as last time. And I suppose the way that was communicated was perhaps not particularly positive. It was almost sort of a little bit of a... a bit of a strop about it. I don’t know; it is difficult...” (ED3).

“{The representative from CT3} is in the same boat as me: she wants to be part of it but doesn’t see much of the benefit...” (CT4)

“I think I would contemplate leaving because I don’t feel I get an awful lot out of it really, possibly because it is exactly the reasons that I’m saying, I don’t quite see how our organisation fits with some of those. I mean I think it is a lovely idea in principle and I’d love to see it work better.” (RE1)

#### **4.5 Chapter summary**

This chapter started with an introduction of the case study, which featured 19 organisations that all aimed to promote arts-based products and services to the education community in the east of England.

This chapter was divided into two sections in accordance with the research question and objectives. The question was: *What factors influence coopetitive relationships within an inter-organisational network?* The first section presented the types of relationships that were in existence in the network, and this served as the starting point in trying to define the relational strength and the intensity of interactions between the organisations. In total, there were 342 relationships in existence between the organisations. Approximately 184 were found to be predominantly competitive, 90 predominantly cooperative, and 46 were shown to have a balanced coopetitive relationship. 22 of the relationships were found to be either one sided (i.e., where an organisation acknowledges it has a relationship with another organisation but it is not reciprocated), or non-existent, in which both organisations acknowledged that no relationship existed at all. However, for all of the organisations that

were affected, there was a desire to engage in some type of coopetitive relationship in the future through joint projects.

In this network, dyads were developed between organisations that focused on providing art-related services and products to the education market. These dyads were found to be a mix of competitive- and cooperative-dominated relationships, and this suggested coopetition was in existence within the network. Also suggested from the findings was the potential for high resource compatibility made possible through coopetition. Four factors (i.e., management, building relationships, expectations and proximity) have been found to influence coopetitive relationships, and though they are supported by findings as being key elements in the success of the network, they have also been linked to tensions between member organisations.

The next chapter (chapter five) discusses the results and draws conclusions where appropriate from the empirical findings within the context of the literature. Consequently, the ION (i.e., NN) in this case represents a typical environment for the empirical application of theory on coopetitive relationships.

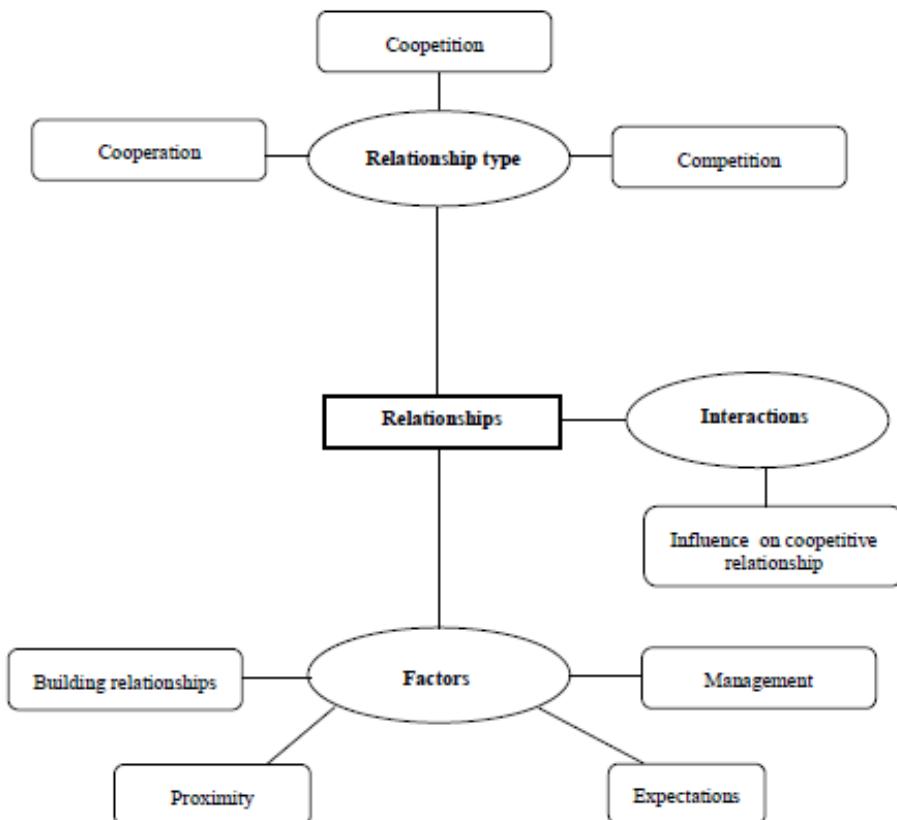
## Chapter Five

# DISCUSSION

This chapter discusses the results of the empirical study and how they answer the research questions, and relates the key findings back to the literature reviewed and discussed in chapter two of this thesis. Findings are discussed in the context of the concepts reviewed in chapter two.

Consistent with Easton and Araujo (1992) and subsequent additions to the topic by Bengtsson and Kock (1999) on types of horizontal relationships, this study adds to coopetition literature by empirically identifying the existence of the three relationship types (cooperation, competition and coopetition) within a predominantly competitive inter-organisational network in the arts industry. The main themes from the data analysis process are centred around a thematic network framework as advocated by Attride-Stirling (2001). Thus, discussion is based around one global theme (i.e., relationships), with three organising themes: relationship type, factors and interactions. Within each of these, there are basic themes that will be set out as necessary. The thematic network diagram is provided below as a reference (see figure 5a).

**Figure 5a: Thematic network for global theme *relationships***



## **5.1 Relationships between competing organisations in the network**

Objective one of this research is to examine the relationships that exist between competing organisations in the network (NN).

Dyadic relationships in this study are based on the typology of cooperative-competitive relationships, which according to Bengtsson and Kock (2000) can be cooperation dominated, competition dominated or a balanced cooperative-competitive relationship. They suggest through their findings that organisations have different stances on the relationships they choose to engage in and this is reflected by the degree to which they choose to cooperate or compete. Bengtsson and Kock (2000) define a cooperation-dominated relationship by the degree to which cooperation is perceived to be higher in the dyadic relationship than competition. A competition-dominated relationship is when competition is perceived to be higher than cooperation in the relationship, and a balanced relationship is where both cooperation and competition are perceived to be of equal standing in the relationship. For this study, all three types of relationships were found between the organisations in this network. Of the 342 total relationships between the 19 organisations in NN, 184 relationships were found to be competitively dominated (CM), 90 were found to be cooperatively dominated (CO), and 46 were found to be balanced (CP).

Within this network, organisations were engaged in a range of the three types of relationships with other organisations simultaneously. Unsurprisingly, because they are all in a similar arts-based sector, there were more competitively dominated relationships in NN than any other type. However, competition was often viewed in a narrow sense and competition was not always perceived in cases where it did perhaps exist given that all of these organisations were competing at some level for audience numbers and limited funding. Some empirical studies (e.g., Zakrzewska-Bielawska, 2015; Blind, Ebersberger and Lorenz, 2013) suggest size is a determinant to assess how organisations establish competitive relationships. Larger organisations, especially with organisations that operate in networks within the high-tech industry, were found to be less likely to want to be part of a dyadic union with smaller organisations that were technologically weaker. This literature suggests that many organisations in the high-tech field prefer to have relationships with organisations of a similar size or with a comparable market and technological positioning to reduce the risk of asymmetry in the relationship. Within NN, although the size of the organisation could be important in terms of the amount of resources brought into the network, the organisations did

form relationships with organisations of different sizes. In the arts sector, it therefore seems that size is less of a consideration for entering into a dyadic union.

These NN organisations were more likely to enter into coopetitive network relationships because they shared similarities in wanting to provide services and programmes that allowed for greater access to the education market. Hence, cooperative relationships between these competing arts organisations were varied, and this variation was quite often dependent on the area of cooperation, their proximity to each other, and their interaction type, based on their ability to build relationships and their expectations prior to entry into the network. Pesämaa and Hair (2007) suggest cooperation is a skill that organisations develop at different speeds. Some of the organisations in NN tried to commit to a solely cooperative relationship. Even though these organisations disclosed that they only cooperated, the reality was that a different pattern of interactions emerged from the data to suggest the majority of organisations pursued a more competitive stance. Some organisations were able to cooperate more easily and hence were able to sustain a more cooperatively-based relationship, whilst others had difficulty in understanding the benefits of working together and chose to be more competitively dominated.

In many instances, organisations made reference to several frustrations caused by a lack of order in organising events, which eventually meant that no real partnerships were created and access to resources was limited. Chen (1996) suggests that market commonality and the need to attain certain resources are crucial to competition. There is some agreement with his conclusion that certain similarities (e.g., organisation type, similar target market or wanting access to specific resources) may prompt competitive behaviour, but in NN these same similarities caused interactions to have an overall positive influence on the coopetitive relationship. This finding concurs with other research (i.e., Lado *et al.*, 1997; Chen, 1996). Garcia and Valasco (2002) propose that organisations which directly cooperate with competitors experience a significantly positive effect on their business activities, product lines and technological diversity. This study on NN's relationships shows that competition can affect organisations differently and this adds to countervailing arguments and empirical research on the effects of competition between partners in the literature. As long as an organisation has a requirement for certain resources, it needs to cooperate with its competitors to gain a stronger market position overall.

Inter-relational intensity is also significant within the context of interactions between relationships, as Luo *et al.* (2006) found when they studied coopetitive intensity from an intra-organisational perspective. Although it is within a different context, the findings from

NN show how intense the relationships between organisations are within dyadic relationships formed within the network. Where interactions are stronger, this indicates a longer-term perspective in the relationship and joint activities between organisations and, for those organisations that engage in more balanced-coopetitive and cooperative relationships, this was felt to be a positive influence. Where interactions are weaker, a more short-term and tactical approach is observed, particularly as organisations strive for more strategic positioning in the education market through the network. These findings support research from Bengtsson and Kock (1999; 2000), Bengtsson *et al.*, (2010) and Padula and Dagnino(2007), who all found that when there is a higher level of interaction between organisations, there is the likelihood of a greater level of intensity that would influence inter-organisational relationships differently during different periods. The arts organisations in this study are in multiple dyadic relationships (i.e., where an organisation has a one-to-one relationship with multiple organisations). Thus, the ability to effectively form and manage multiple IORs can be considered a unique organisational capability for networked coopetitive organisations.

What emerges from this study is that coopetition as a concept is a complex phenomenon that evolves over time.

Overall, the arts organisations in this network demonstrate their need to be proactive, which means there is a strong need to be cooperatively embedded within the network in order to achieve specific competitive goals. The key suggestion here is that interactions attest to the strength of the links, and despite a majority of competitive relationships found, organisations were still able to maintain a high level of cooperative activity.

## 5.2 Factors that affect coopetitive relationships

The second objective of this research is to identify the potential factors that directly affect coopetitive relationships and how these factors influence the different types of coopetitive relationships and the functioning of the network.

The key factors arising from the in-depth analysis of the interviews, the analysis of the documents and observations at network meetings and events are: management, expectations, building relationships and proximity.

### 5.2.1 Management

A key factor arising from this research is around the *management* of the coopetitive network. In particular, this theme raised issues around access to resources, funding and resource coordination.

## **Access to resources**

Within the literature on inter-organisational networks and coopetition, access to resources is often cited as an important factor as no organisation can provide or have all resources readily available or at their disposal. Information, either through communication and expertise, is often cited as the most important form of resource crucial to the development of relationships (Abdallah and Wadha, 2009). According to Bengtsson and Kock (2000: 421), "...resources can foster coopetitive relationships, as unique resources can be advantageous both for cooperation and competition", but this viewpoint brings with it a key issue to consider. When applied to the network in this study, there is the suggestion that relationships within NN are somehow dependent on the offerings of the organisations within it to exhibit their worth externally. In other words, the network is only of value when its users benefit from the products/resources on offer or access to organisational links using those resources. The NtN members felt that they would be able to achieve more by pooling their resources and collectively raising their profile within the education sector. For example, they could share contacts with schools and access advice from more experienced colleagues regarding funding. Membership in the network also helped members to overcome feelings of isolation in some cases. In NN, the resources on offer were mainly found to differ between information and assets, and were often according to the needs of the organisations. So by networking together, member organisations were able to support more schools by providing a wider range of educational resources and activities.

In agreement with Das and Teng (1998), organisations bring at least four types of resources (financial, technological, physical and managerial) upon entering into cooperative relationships. Further, an examination of literature on alliances (e.g., Tong and Rueur, 2010; Das and Teng, 2000) and coopetition (Luo, 2007) both acknowledge that one predominant reason for organisations entering into inter-organisational relationships is to reduce the uncertainty associated with increasing resources to efficiently exploit opportunities. Their core argument centres on an organisation's desire to gain access to heterogeneous resources, which increases the likelihood of a cooperative engagement although both organisations are still considered competitors when their activities are closer to their customers. As long as an organisation has a requirement for certain resources, its need to gain a stronger market position by cooperating with other organisations will be strong (Lado *et al.*, 1997). Thus, the findings in this study are aligned to research findings from the IOR literature where a key motivation to form alliances or join networks is to gain access to resources. In this case, the

profile and identity of the network is also important to the individual organisations and in reaching a wider audience for their services.

## **Funding**

The findings in this study indicate that the weaker organisations have limited funding capabilities and so there is a need for their representatives to build business relationships rather quickly. The more established or stronger members generally had better access to funding and tighter personal links that extended beyond the network structure. When examined from the perspective of individual member organisations, it seems funding issues affected the level of participation and the amount of influence organisations were able to exercise in group decisions. Many organisations in this study found that their access to funding on a regular basis was very restricted, and therefore they had to rely on external funding bodies or find innovative means to supplement their incomes. Jones' (2000) research on UK opera companies shows some similarities with the findings in this study as both studies find that organisations can be bound by their total revenues, even though they have incomes independent of each other. Funding is not necessarily a dominant theme in most of the general inter-organisational relationships or coopetition literature. However, in the public sector or for certain industry types, funding is an important form of network resource. With NN specifically, funding was a significant issue and thus access to funding expertise and knowledge seems particularly pertinent to arts-based organisations, whose existence often depends on their ability to secure external funding.

## **Resource coordination**

Another point highlighted is the ability of the lead organisation to manage joint resources. Findings appear to agree somewhat with research carried out by Chin, Chan and Lam (2008) who argue that management support can negatively affect the effectiveness of coopetitive relationships. Findings show CT1 was given the responsibility of management, and this role included providing a supportive function to all organisations and to manage the central resources within NN. However, the general consensus from the interviewees is that CT1 was not able to adequately fulfil its duty in providing management support to help align the pressures of resource allocation and individual organisational strategies to those with the overall vision and strategy of the network. The implications of this finding are managing the effects from an inadequate management system on developing relationships. These organisations have different mandates, structures, resource strengths, values and motivations

for cooperating. Thus, if organisations perceive the management of the network to be ineffective, organisations may subsequently opt out of key relationships and take their valuable resources along with them – which may lead to less resources being channelled to NN. Yan and Yan's (2013) study also provides a basis for comparison to this study. They study management from a relations-oriented perspective, where the focus primarily is on developing relationships through effective leadership. In addition, they argue that relations-oriented leadership constitutes certain positive behaviours including providing support, recognising individual strengths/weaknesses, and developing teamwork. Given this point, it is clear that this is an area that may merit further research within coopetitive networks.

### **5.2.2 Expectations**

For the *expectations* factor, the key findings were around expectations towards a commitment to the network and the time that members could give to network meetings and activities. Research shows that different expectations can lead to either major changes or a relationship ending that is unintended by one or more of the partnering organisations (Das and Teng, 2000; Inkpen and Beamish, 1997). Commitment is referred to as the willingness to invest in a relationship mentally and financially for long-term mutual benefits, and as such commitment is mostly cited within the context of trust and reciprocity (Holm-Blankenburg *et al.*, 1999; Morgan and Hunt, 1994; Zineldin and Jonsson, 2000). Although literature indicates a strong link between commitment and trust, findings suggest that commitment to a relationship can equally be linked to an organisation's motives prior to entering the relationship or, in the case of NN, prior to joining the network. Findings for NN indicated that on the whole, where the level of commitment was considered to be greater, the interactions between organisations also seemed to indicate that those organisations were more willing to adapt their expectations by adjusting their operations to have a better relationship. Hence, there was more of a willingness to share information and experiences. What was also broadly demonstrated were the intentions by organisations to invest resources, expertise, and time to build cooperative relationships over the longer term. In this research, commitment is demonstrated as being dependent on the level of support given through resources or personally (through expertise or knowledge) by either party in the relationship. Of key interest here was how there seemed to be a lower level of commitment where existing resources (such as knowledge) were present, although organisations were quite willing to commit to larger projects to access the marketplace. Hence, it is proposed that the higher the level of involvement, dependence and satisfaction on both sides, the more likely commitment

would feature highly in creating an overall positive effect on the relationships. Where emphasis is placed more on the cooperative element of the coopetitive relationship, this study concurs with Zineldin (2004) that the depth of trust between organisations creates the need for a commitment in their actions towards each other for a mutually accepted goal.

### **5.2.3 Building relationships**

This research on relationships within NN suggests that organisations have many reasons for entering into inter-organisational relationships. As a result, certain factors, such as partner selection, group dynamics, trust, power, communication and mutual targets tend to play a significant role in the success of the relationship or present the organisations with challenges that need to be managed. Arts-focused organisations often find the incentive to cooperate with their competitors stems from the similarities they face. Consequently, community and customer needs tend to provide the justification for these organisations to work together, particularly as funding and other external factors are central to their operational survival.

#### **Partner selection and group dynamics**

Choosing the right partners upon entry into NN was found to determine the manner and frequency in which organisations were willing to cooperate. Where information was limited or non-existent, organisations were forced to rely on trust as a matter of recourse. Bierly and Gallagher (2007) highlight partner selection as a complex process influenced by fit, trust and strategic suitability. They suggest that as long as an organisation has sufficient time and information, suitability is the first step in choosing a partner. Ingram and Roberts (2000) found that the friendships between organisations helped to develop trust over the long term, although some interactions also seemed to create opportunistic behaviour, particularly where information was not shared. This was even though tighter organisational friendships afforded free access to partner resources. This study of NN acknowledges trust to be a fundamental factor within coopetitive relationships, although findings do not explicitly indicate a relationship between friendship and trust in the same way as between friendship and commitment. However, trust did influence commitment, and this was more evident socially and professionally.

The findings for NN showed that where emotional support was found to be present, group dynamics were more positively influenced. Groups in general are defined by greater reciprocal expectations for solidarity and trust, suggesting a mutual need to diminish self-serving behaviours for the greater good (Granovetter, 1985; Hongseok, Myung-Ho and

Labianca, 2004). For NN, project work that required mutual effort led to increased benefits. Generally, these benefits included reducing costs and risks that would have ordinarily been associated with expanding or maintaining a competitive advantage. It was found that within NN, the key benefits included gaining access to organisations with an essential know-how and expertise in specific fields or to those with an ability to obtain funding. In the short term, the results from entering into a cooperative arrangement to develop and deliver projects led to an improvement in the relationships between those organisations and also increased the credibility of the network externally. However, benefits are often followed with negative aspects. For instance, certain organisations may not meet the criteria that others perhaps expect within the agreed norms, and they then become isolated from benefits. This was evident within NN. In particular, where emotional support was lacking or ignored (as was discovered within some parts of NN), the group lost some of its focus, which resulted in a negative impact on the relationships between organisations and, ultimately, the network.

Within the organisational behaviour literature, emotional support is cited as a resource within the context of intra-organisational relationships without considering different relationship types. Hongseok, Myung-Ho and Labianca (2004), for instance, highlight the importance of social ties that lead to effective group dynamics. Broadly speaking, these include the quality and quantity of work, ability to complete work on time, the response time to problems, resource access, initiative and the willingness to cooperate with others. However, despite these types of studies, there is the suggestion that good group dynamics mean all members have greater relational satisfaction, better performance/effectiveness, stronger relationships, and better end products. Within this study of NN, both positive and negative influences were highlighted due to the presence or absence of emotional support, which is probably a function of the coopetitive nature of the network. In the more competitive relationships, emotional support was harder to achieve than in the more cooperative relationships.

### **Trust and power**

In literature, trust is linked extensively to organisational interactions (Jassawalla and Sashittal, 1998), and has often been discussed in terms of its value to cooperative relationships (Abdallah and Wadha, 2009; Tsai, 2000; Martin and Eisenhardt, 2010). Kale, Singh and Perlmutter (2000) address trust in coopetitive relationships by first acknowledging mutual respect and friendship between the organisations at an individual level, thereby limiting opportunistic behaviour that may threaten the relationships from being developed

further. In assessing coopetitive relationships in NN, the findings are consistent with these existing studies on trust. This study indicates that the degree of trust perceived usually determines how an organisation will want to interact with another and the degree to which organisations will want to cooperate. In other words, the more trust is perceived between the competitors, the more likely a close social bond will develop. Other similarities in the consistency of participant perceptions from the findings tally with Ritala *et al.* (2009), who indicate that trust is crucial in being able to build relationships in coopetition. However, this study found that lower levels of trust between organisations led to involuntary exclusion of some member organisations (e.g., EV1, CT4) from NN. What this suggests is that despite trust being a fundamental factor within coopetitive relationships (because it is often perceived in a positive light), a low perception of trust between organisations can create a weaker cohesive force that leads to lesser involvement in the network.

The balance of power between organisations is another area covered in previous research (Ross, Anderson and Weitz, 1997). Organisations enter into relationships based on the value each will provide to the relationship, and as such each presumes to have an equal standing in the relationship. However, what happens is that one organisation tends to have its own perception of the other, and in doing so uses that to define its stand in the relationship. As with NN, this was often the case with the organisations that had fewer resources to contribute, which meant that they were considered weaker and thus less influential than those that brought in more resources. Perceptions regarding power therefore differ for a majority of the organisations, and often it is perceived as a negative attribute of relationships as weaker organisations gain less from the relationships despite needing those relationships more. Therefore in managing relationships, particularly in the context of multiple dyads, organisations have to consider the balance of power as the appropriation of weaker organisations by the more influential ones, which may not always be good for either organisation.

### **Communication and mutual targets**

Communication is argued to positively influence the willingness to cooperate. Barner-Rasmussen and Bjorkman (2007:215) study the inter-unit relationships in multi-national corporations (MNC), in which they empirically demonstrate how crucial the fluency in a common language is for the development of close inter-unit relationships. In other words, communication can help to develop longer term relationships. Copley and Robson (1997) also argue that communication is a vital element in resource allocation. In this research,

communication between the NN organisations was found to be an important attribute for inter-relational success and towards the network overall. The quality of information transmitted within the network and the sharing of information helped to create more productive links between organisations. The quality of information conveyed within the network and the degree of information shared between the organisations facilitated a better understanding between them. This helped them to achieve mutually beneficial aims, such as developing a larger education audience and creating joint events for local schools and their students. Clearly, as players in a compact network such as NN are exposed to more resource access and better partnership links, there is a likelihood of building mutual trust and stronger two-way communication, as Granovetter (1985) suggests. However, elements from the findings also propose that although communication is considered an important part of their inter-relational development, it is not always positively linked to the development of coopetitive relationships. This study argues that increased competitive behaviour between organisations impacts on communication and fosters a negative influence on the existing relationship, increasing the likelihood of asymmetric interactions between members. A more independent organisation would have no need to gain its partners' trust. Rather, it would be more inclined to use power or control to regulate methods of communication and information distribution, thus eventually creating a situation of low trust.

The presence of an incentive for an organisation to succeed in the long term is often considered “likely to increase the attractiveness of relationships” between competing organisations, “particularly in the case of the [smaller organisations] with limited financial resources” (Thomason *et al.*, 2013:22). Such shared values (e.g., the need to be belong) within the arts match those found within this network. Moreover, these values are often translated, as Ropo and Sauer (2003) confirm in their study, through a need to achieve mutual targets that are perceived to influence not only relationships between organisations but also, from an independent perspective, to build positively upon both organisational profiles. From the perspective of the network, project work that required mutual effort shows the benefits derived from being coopetitive. Generally, benefits included reducing costs and risks that would have ordinarily been associated with expanding or maintaining a competitive advantage. It was found that within this network, however, benefits specifically included gaining access to organisations with an essential know-how and expertise in specific fields or to those with an ability to obtain funding. In the short term, the results from entering into a cooperative arrangement to develop projects emphasized a visible improvement in relationships and also increased the credibility of the network externally. The compatibility

of resources were matched according to the needs and requirements of organisations ensuring responsibilities were acknowledged, discussed and shared.

#### **5.2.4 Proximity**

Many interviewees in this study agreed that the geographical area in which they were all located was a relatively small one, which meant access to funders and consumers alike was limited and often of an intensely competitive nature. The network therefore helps the members become more visible, develops opportunities and works to extend a diversity of perspectives to aid organisations that may often struggle to survive on their own with an overall aim to educate society through schools on the importance of the arts.

A significant finding from this study is the link between distance and the degree to which organisations were either willing to cooperate or compete. For those organisations that were closer together (approximately a mile or less apart), there was a greater focus on cooperating because organisations could pass visitors easily from one venue to another. A majority shared the same experiences when it came to heightened competition, and for many this drove them to cooperate more to try to increase their audience numbers for both organisations in the dyad or as a network. NN presents a setting for contact to take place as opportunities are created based around organisations' common interests and their organisational similarities, which arise from the coopetitive nature of the network. Geographic proximity is considered a major influencing factor where coopetitive relationships are concerned because it allows for a shift from a perfect coopetitive situation to a higher or lower cooperative-competitive state depending on the circumstances surrounding the organisations.

Peng and Bourne (2009) cite geographical proximity as a basis for competitive behaviour between organisations. In essence, they advocate that sharing a regional focus intensifies the need for an organisation to be competitive. Proximity encourages contact (i.e., planned and unexpected interactions) in order to closely monitor the actions of competing organisations and potentially to imitate them (Madhavan, Gnyawali and He, 2004). Peng and Bourne's (2009) study indicates that geographical proximity facilitates some level of social ties (amongst other factors), but there is no suggestion regarding the effects of distance on the proximity of organisations actively involved in a coopetitive relationship. Rather, the distance between organisations only reinforces how proximity is an insufficient basis for the development of relationships. This is echoed by Torre and Lourimi (2013), who insists that the formation of relationships between organisations in the same area is not exclusively related to their geographical proximity. Rather, other factors such as social ties, inter-

organisational relationships and trust (amongst others) pay a vital role in developing a network of links that all play a role.

Perceptions are subject to implicit or explicit assumptions and are therefore individual to the participant. So, the interpretations of one individual's actions can be presumed to be different to the next. The findings agree with the opinions from Johansson and Mattsson (1992), who argue the structure of a network can be influenced when one's interpretation of their role within the network changes. In the same vein, an organisation's role is determined by their perception of their position within the group, which in turn will affect the position of other organisations within the network as organisations will have differing perceptions of their position and role in any horizontal relationships formed and, ultimately, within network relationships. Consequently, relationships formed will ultimately affect the structure of a network, as a network is built on tight relational links. Applying literature from psychology, Becvar and Becvar (2003) advocate three categories of boundaries – clear, rigid and diffused boundaries – which can be applied in this instance to describe how perceptions can influence a change in the structure of relationships and, consequently, the network. Clear boundaries indicate a certain level of flexibility although there is some element of rigidity to give it a structure. Although members may feel nurtured by being in the network, it is only to an extent, as they are also encouraged to work independently of the network or its members in order to develop.

A rigid boundary refers more to a formalised network, where inter-relational contact with other member organisations is restricted to specific norms. Where this was the case with NN, the more influential organisations became more independent, which meant that those organisations that did not have the same level of influence struggled due to a lack of support. Finally, diffused boundaries suggest a mixture of both rigid and clear boundaries, indicating that boundary lines may become blurred over time and impeding relational links in the process. Network theory proposes that an organisation's position within the network determines the level of impact on its competitiveness (Gnyawali, *et al.*, 2006) and so the influence of an organisation within the wider context of the network determines how successful it is by how well it can manage the relationships it forms with others. The implication of this is that for many in the network, there was very little or no acknowledgement that boundary lines between organisations existed, implying that the majority of relationships were diffused in nature. For those member organisations that tried to apply a clearer or more rigid boundary, relationships appeared to become somewhat strained, which in itself is indicative of the different expectations and experiences that organisations

have and what they are willing to contribute in order to remain in a beneficial standing within their relationship and the network. Proximity was therefore identified as an important factor within this research. What is perhaps surprising is that even though the organisations were all within a few miles of each other, there were still differences in levels of contact. Those members located more centrally had more connections and contacts with each other than those located a bit further out from the centre.

### **5.3 Interactions**

#### **5.3.1 How do these factors influence coopetitive relationships and the functioning of the network?**

For the vast majority of organisations, all four factors are considered to either have a high or fair amount of influence on their relationships. The findings therefore indicate that cooperation and competition occur simultaneously. Also, coopetition in dyads can vary depending on the extent of competitive and cooperative interactions between organisations. Interactions attest to the strength of the links, and how embedded organisations are within the network – so, despite the majority of competitive relationships found, organisations in this network are still able to maintain a high level of cooperative activity. The arts organisations in this network demonstrate their ability to be proactive, which suggests there is a strong need to be cooperatively embedded within the network, despite being competitors, in order to achieve specific goals. In many of the cases, organisations understand that establishing a number of formal and informal links with other organisations that face similar issues in the same industry may help to create a closeness that increases the likelihood of access to resources and their target market. Such a result highlights that coopetition is not only a catalyst in acquiring access to resources, but there is also the suggestion that where competitors come together to cooperate in a highly dense environment, there are governance mechanisms (e.g., the norms of mutual gain and reciprocity) that control and safeguard the relationships. Such safeguards usually force organisations into cooperating with competitors in order to achieve mutual benefits.

Literature on coopetition considers how inter-organisational relationships operate and whether the relationships are successful. Ensuring cooperation prevails and limiting or avoiding competitive behaviour between organisations is a challenge described in much of the coopetition literature. Cooperation is suggested to have a positive effect on the relationship because it involves the pursuit of mutual benefits, whilst competitive behaviour is argued to do the reverse as it caters to the interests of the organisation at the expense of

others (Das and Teng, 2000; Smith, Carroll and Ashford, 1995). As a relationship that incorporates both elements, coopetition is considered complex because of the multiplicity of activities and the number of organisations involved in developing the relationships (Dagnino and Padula, 2002; Gnyawali *et al.*, 2008; Mariani, 2007).

Golden and Dollinger (1993) investigated the effect of interactions on small firm performance. They found that with organisations that interacted in a more cooperative manner, there was a definite beneficial effect on the relationships, which then placed the organisations in a position to compete effectively. Their findings can be comparable with the findings in this study. Both findings highlight the significance of interactions by the degree to which relationships internal to the network are influenced and the influence on the network structure itself. Luo *et al.* (2006) studied coopetitive intensity from an intra-organisational perspective and their findings can also be applied to this network. Bengtsson and Kock (1999) argue that distance is created based on psychological factors, and as organisations tend to interact based on distance, issues such as trust as a consequence of competitive behaviour are not often marked as a major influencing factor in the relationship. Trust remained high for the majority of organisations within NN, although other factors, such as dependence, were affected because of the risk of creating asymmetrical relationships between organisations, which can have detrimental effects on the network. Surprisingly, findings indicate where satisfaction in the relationship is high as perceived by one or both the parties involved in the dyad; the level of satisfaction does not impact upon the relationship strength.

There is an inherent tension that results from a difference in organisational expectations and the likely opportunism from partner organisations that influences the process of coopetitive relationships when viewed from either or both a competitive or cooperative perspective (Baretta, 2008; Kale *et al.*, 2000). Pondy's (1967) extensive research on the conflict process indicates that tensions between organisations form a functional part of the conflict process. This study accepts the notion that tensions are denoted within a prescribed sequence of events associated with the escalation or resolution of conflict situations (Molnar and Rogers, 1979; Litterer, 1966). Literature mostly attributes the presence of tensions to the individual incompatibilities of the organisations or bad management within intra-organisational relationships (Kumar, Scheer and Steenkamp, 1995).

Literature on coopetitive tensions is still in its infancy, so there is a tendency for academics to stipulate the notion of conflict as a dynamic process in which tension is often misrepresented as conflict where there are the issues with resource scarcity, power and trust in asymmetric relationships. An asymmetric interdependence takes place when there is an

unbalanced relationship between organisations in a group setting, particularly where different levels of dependence are evident. For example, an asymmetric relationship becomes possible where one organisation is totally dependent on another whilst the other is totally independent (Kumar, Schleer and Steenkamp, 1995). This study highlights asymmetry in a number of the relationships, and for a few organisations within NN it meant the proclivity to leave was greater. Opportunist behaviour was the underlying reason why asymmetry was found to occur, and this often undermined relationships in a number of the dyads. However, this seemed more likely to happen where one organisation felt it had achieved its own objectives and so no longer had anything to gain from being in the relationship, and would subsequently underinvest in the relationship. It would seem that the least influential organisations seemed generally content to conform to decisions made by the more powerful organisations due to greater dependence on the network.

In this instance, the more influential organisations would be less likely to harbour tensions because they would have a choice of whom to have relations with in the group, whereas those less influential organisations would have a higher probability of perceived tensions because they would have no choice but to accept the situation. However, this does not in itself suggest that within a competitive environment there is a guarantee that tensions or indeed conflict will take place. In fact, tensions have not been shown to directly influence asymmetric dependent relationships as suggested in research, and selecting a partner with intentions that differ from its own only compounds the issue of a failure in the relationship and may eventually lead to major changes or a termination that is unexpected by one or both partners (Das and Teng, 2000; Kempl and Ghauri, 2001). What it does suggest is that with asymmetric or un-balanced relationships, trust issues are more likely to develop than those that operate within a more symmetric or balanced relationship. Instead, the findings suggest that in trying to manage certain expectations, there is often a conflict of interest that is indirectly linked to asymmetric inter-dependence based around trust issues.

What is suggested from the discussion above is the instability that risk can cause in a relationship. Teng and Das (2001) propose two types of risk in alliance literature: relational and performance risks. From a relational viewpoint, risk is internally oriented and is influenced in part by how each partnering organisation allocates and manages the resources it pledges to the relationship. The implication to the findings from this study is that where an organisation fails to meet its obligations to the relationship, the relationship is automatically put at risk through opportunistic behaviour. Hence, this contributes to why many

organisations from NN had concerns regarding the commitment and level of cooperation between organisations.

From a network perspective, Uzzi (1997) cites differences in how one's counterpart may perceive the relationships often influencing the social relationship in either a negative or positive manner – in the process, producing structural complexities (within the network) -. Findings from this research on NN confirm that perceptions can help shape relationships. It was apparent that organisational perspectives on inclusion for many in the group was linked more to the apprehension of being side-lined in important group decisions and it seemed from findings that such apprehensions affected the general perception of being able to satisfy any initial expectation upon entry into the network. The significance of this is that fewer apprehensions equates to greater interaction in their relationships, which in turn highlights trust as a fundamental element in creating and maintaining successful competitive relationships. Alternatively, organisations may not wish to associate with those that are considered to be *out*. In an intra-organisational setting, Mehra, Kilduff and Brass (2001) and Ibarra and Andrews (1993) found a correlation between positive performance ratings within groups that had stronger social ties outside of the group to those who had fewer or none. When applied within the context of inter-organisational relationships, my findings showed some similarities. In the case of RE1, the interviewee mentions how she felt isolated from other members, often describing them as *boring* because she felt no real links had been created. Having few or no links outside the network to any other member organisation may have intensified this feeling.

Thus, analysis of the data shows that social ties are strongly linked to resource access and thereby influence the manner in which relationships are developed in NN. However, just because social links are created outside the group and carried through into the network does not necessarily lead to better productivity. In the case of this network, some isolated parties considered leaving the network, or had minimal input, or dissuaded new members from joining the group. Consequently, this study argues that an organisation's perception of its membership status and role change if the structures within its network-based relationships are ambiguous. By structure, it is implied that the form, process and content of the relationship are met with a level of agreement of mutual expectations. Since the network in this study is conditioned by an environment in which competitive organisations cooperate, any perceived opposition from representative organisations (particularly those organisations with the least influence) affects the nature and frequency of mutual exchange within the network, causing

uncertainty. Thus, a lack of a unified structure would add to the possibility of tensions and, eventually, conflict (Kumar and van Dissel, 1996).

Competition and cooperation as separate constructs have been researched in-depth at both an inter- and intra-organisational level (Peng *et al.*, 2012; Bengtsson and Kock, 2000; Gnyawali and Park, 2011; Johansson, 2012). Likewise, cooperative and competitive relationships between organisations are argued to depend on certain factors to succeed. In particular, research by Hakansson and Snehota (1995) claim that inter-organisational relationships, when examined in the context of *organisational activities*, *key actors* and *resources*, can provide a deeper insight into inter-organisational interactions within a network. These three factors were found to be important for NN because of the measure of interplay between them, suggesting that all three elements might not necessarily be present in dyadic relations but that they are nonetheless dependent on each other.

The research findings demonstrate that the factors identified within this research can pose both challenges and successes to the coopetitive relationships found within the network. Four factors in particular (proximity, building relationships, expectations, and management) have been found to influence the coopetitive relationships. Although these factors are found to be key for the success of the coopetitive network, these factors also create tensions between member organisations.

#### **5.4 Chapter summary**

In summary, this study has shown that within the field of IORs and networks, there has been a change in academic and practical perspectives over the last decade that has resulted in a growth in new theories on coopetition that depict the discipline as a dynamic, socially orientated and multifaceted process. New methods are therefore required both to help organisations develop, communicate and apply methods that focus on harnessing organisational potential in terms of their commitment and capabilities within dyadic relationships and networks, and also to build an understanding of the potential pitfalls. As such, the areas researched in this study attempt to examine coopetitive relationships in order to explore whether the factors found to exist in single dyads also apply on a larger scale within a network, and to what extent organisations can benefit from, or face challenges within, their coopetitive relationships. Findings indicate that the four key factors found can contribute to both challenges to coopetition as well as to successful coopetition. Although these factors enable the success of coopetition within the network, the factors also create tensions between member organisations. There were clear differences in relationship type. Relationships were either considered to be competitively dominated, cooperatively dominated or balanced cooperative-competitive. The key suggestion here is that interactions attest to the strength of the links, and despite a majority of competitive relationships found, organisations were still able to maintain a high level of cooperative activity. However, despite the

differences in relational type, interactional intensity and influencing factors, the outcome (i.e., tensions) remains a constant area of contention in inter-organisational relations. Table 5.1 presents a summary of the key findings and the contribution of this research to the literature.

**Table 5.1: Key findings from discussion chapter and their contribution to literature**

Key findings	Contribution to literature
<p><b>Relationships between organisations:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Organisations in NN are competitors that operate in the same industry and in one network.</li> <li>342 dyadic relationships were found to exist in NN: 184 competitively dominated relationships, 90 cooperatively dominated, 46 balanced cooperative-competitive (coopetitive).</li> <li>Generally, membership of the network is perceived as positive.</li> <li>Certain similarities (e.g., organisation type, similar target market or wanting access to specific resources) prompted competitive behaviour, but in NN these same similarities caused interactions to have an overall positive influence on the coopetitive relationship.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contributes to the knowledge of IORs by applying different theoretical concepts (i.e., cooperation, competition and network theory) to our understanding of relationships between and among organisations at network level</li> <li>This study extends the earlier results from academics such as Oliver (1990) by demonstrating that the interactions between organisations are dependent on the perspectives of both sides of the dyad. In doing this, this study contributes detailed empirical evidence that shows the type of interactions and exchange processes that cannot be gained from studying just one side of the dyad.</li> <li>This study also extends our understanding of coopetitive relationships through a conceptualisation of coopetition using empirical data. It builds on previous work by Bengtsson and Kock (2000), who conceptualise coopetition as being one of three parts: cooperation between partners; competition between partners; and the interaction between cooperation and competition. What emerges from this study is that coopetition is a complex phenomenon that evolves over time.</li> <li>Within the arts industry, IORs are considered complex and so can be difficult to examine adequately, especially where multiple dyads (such as the ones in this network) are concerned. This study creates a focus on network links by examining the interactions between connected organisations. Whereas Peng and Bourne (2009) examine coopetition from the perspective of two networks, this study examines coopetition from the perspective of one coopetitive network. Thus, it provides a clear picture of the connections, relations and influences, as well as the effects from the influences of organisations engaging in a multiple dyads coopetitive network.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Factors that influence coopetitive relationships:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Funding, access to expertise and resources are a key issue for arts-based organisations.</li> <li>There is a significant link between distance/proximity and the degree to which organisations are willing to cooperate or compete.</li> <li>Previous research produces contradictory findings. In some studies (e.g., Torre, 2013), distance is considered a positive influence on the relationship because organisations rely on communication to</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Overall, this study offers a unique opportunity to examine how and why certain factors affect coopetitive relationships</li> <li>Within the arts, funding is a pertinent source of resource, and access to it means an organisation becomes more independent in its choice of partner. This means a lack of funding creates opportunities for organisations to build relationships. However, this factor is not as emphasised in coopetitive literature. This study on an arts-based coopetitive network therefore provides insights into how access to funding influences the cooperative-competitive relationship dynamics.</li> </ul>

<p>develop the relationship. In coopetitive studies (Peng and Bourne, 2009), it is argued that proximity encourages competitive behaviour between organisations so as to prevent problems with information leaks.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For those organisations that had longer relationships, findings highlighted that there was a higher chance of cooperative activity and this affected their choice of partners. Hence, partner selection was found to be an essential part of building relationships.</li> <li>Prior relationships were found to lead to differences in the perception of competition at organisational level.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Concerning resource coordination, this study argues that the effect of an inadequate management system is mostly on developing relationships. In essence, this study extends our understanding of why resource access and coordination have been found to be key motivations for joining a coopetitive network, particularly for arts organisations.</li> <li>Proximity is mostly covered in research on clusters, innovation and communication. Within the context of coopetition, research is limited and findings in this study appear to contradict some of the empirical research carried out. Peng and Bourne (2009), for instance, base their argument on the results from empirically examining two networks in health care. However, this study finds that proximity is beneficial for cooperative relationships within a single network. The suggestion is that organisations in the arts seem more likely to work together in order to achieve mutual gains. This study therefore adopts the stance that distance between organisations is not necessarily a determinant of how coopetitive relationships develop.</li> <li>Commitment is mostly cited within the context of trust and reciprocity in the management literature (Zineldin and Jonsson, 2000). In an extension to their research, this study proposes that, like trust, the motives of an organisation prior to becoming part of a dyad are important, as is a willingness to adapt their expectations to attain mutual goals.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Role of tensions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Literature suggests that relationships tend towards stability but, as Das and Teng (2000) argue, stability and change are underlined by the balance of power in cooperative-competitive relationships. Dominant cooperative or competitive relationships are reflective of the instability that may be caused where there is more cooperation and less competition (or vice versa) perceived from one party in the relationship. They present a dialectical framework approach to the development process of relationships. As is indicated by the number of dominant competitive and cooperative relationships in NN, dialectical forces are present.</li> <li>The findings show that tensions are synonymous with coopetitive behaviour.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>DeRond and Bouchikhi (2004) studied the dialectics of strategic alliances in the pharmaceutical industry. Empirical research on dialectics in coopetitive relationships is limited, so this study adds to dialectic research by demonstrating that the development of relationships is a factor in an organisation's ability to manage its coopetitive ties with other organisations.</li> </ul>

This chapter has discussed the findings from the empirical study in the context of the concepts reviewed in chapter two. The next chapter will conclude the thesis by showing the contribution of this research to current coopetition, IOR and network theory and outlining further research that can be undertaken in light of the research done here.

## Chapter Six

# CONCLUSION

This chapter presents a concluding summary to reinforce all of the main arguments that have been considered and presented throughout this study. As part of this final chapter, the author also presents the limitations of the study and findings; the theoretical and practical contributions and implications of the research; and concludes with directions for further research.

### **6.1 Summary of the thesis**

Empirically, the main aim of this thesis was to identify and assess the influence of coopetitive factors in an inter-organisational network. The next two sub-sections present a summary of the findings based on this aim.

#### **6.1.1 Examine the relationships that exist between competing organisations in the network (NN)**

The thesis opened with an introduction to the network. This gave the reader some insight into the type of network NN was, as it gave an account of the type of organisations that were members of the network, their product types and offerings, their geographical proximity to each other and why they felt an incentive to join and contribute to the network. At the time of data collection, 19 organisations served as members of the network. For analytical ease, organisations were grouped into five categories, with each category representative of the nature of their business. The five groups were religion (three organisations), cinema/theatres (four organisations), events (three organisations), arts education establishments (four organisations) and museums (five organisations).

The thesis centred on the perceptions that organisations have of their associations with other member organisations and of the network as a whole. The three types of relationships, as originally proposed by Bengtsson and Kock (2000), were found to exist within NN: competition, cooperation and coopetition. Having examined the opinions of the interviewees in chapter four, it is found that a mix of different relationships within inter-organisational networks may have a strong positive influence on the development of coopetition.

#### **Summary of key findings:**

- Coopetitive relationships, according to Bengtsson and Kock (2000), can be conceptualised as being: cooperation between partners; competition between partners; and the interaction between cooperation and competition. Thus, what emerges from this study is that coopetition is a complex phenomenon that evolves over time.

### **The extent of cooperative-competitive relations within the network**

Findings established that organisations in NN are key competitors that operate in the same sector. In recent years, there has been an increased focus on the education market, and the business operations of the network organisations have overlapped in areas such as strengthening their strategic position with respect to competitors, resource acquisition and management.

One reason for entering into NN was the potential for a high resource compatibility made possible through coopetition. A majority of the organisations expressed their concern with the changing demands of their business environment, leading to a multitude of dyads being developed between organisations that focused on providing art-related services and products to the education market. These dyads were found to be a mix of competitive- and cooperative-dominated relationships, indicating that coopetition was a feature of this network. Single dyads were also present in cases where short-term projects were undertaken. There were a total of 342 relationships. Of these, 184 were found to be predominantly competitive, 90 predominantly cooperative, and 46 had a balanced cooperative relationship. Collaboration has become one of the conditions for receiving funding, and is important in order to retain access to key resources (e.g., audience databases, expertise). This has meant that arts organisations are increasingly establishing cooperative relationships with their competitors. Of the relationships, 22 were found to be either one-sided (i.e., where an organisation acknowledges it has a relationship with another organisation but it is not reciprocated) or non-existent, where both organisations acknowledged that no relationship existed at all. However, for all of the organisations that were affected, there was a desire to engage in some type of coopetitive relationship in the future through joint projects.

Overall, the arts organisations in this network have demonstrated their need to be proactive, and this means that there is a strong drive for organisations to be cooperatively embedded within the network in order to achieve specific competitive goals. The interactions attest to the strength of the links, and although a majority of the relationships were defined as predominantly competitive, organisations were still able to maintain a high level of cooperative activity.

#### **Summary of key findings:**

- Organisations in NN are competitors that operate in the same industry and in one network.
- 342 dyadic relationships were found to exist in NN: 184 competitively- dominated relationships, 90 cooperatively- dominated, 46 balanced cooperative-competitive (coopetitive).
- Generally membership of the network is perceived as positive.
- Certain similarities (e.g., organisation type, similar target market or wanting access to specific resources) prompted competitive behaviour, but in NN these same similarities caused interactions to have an overall positive influence on the coopetitive relationship.

### **6.1.2 Identify potential factors that directly affect coopetitive relationships and how these factors influence such relationships and the functioning of the network**

This objective explored those factors that were considered pertinent to a coopetitive relationship and these were presented in the thesis using thematic networks.

#### **Factors that influence coopetitive relationships in NN**

Four factors were found to influence coopetitive relationships, and though they are key elements in the success of the network, they have also been linked to tensions between member organisations. These factors are management, building relationships, expectations and proximity. The research findings demonstrate that these factors can provide both challenges and support to the coopetitive relationships found within the network.

#### **Summary of key findings:**

- Funding and, access to expertise and resources are a key issues for arts- based organisations.
- There is a significant link between distance/proximity and the degree to which organisations are willing to cooperate or compete.
- For those organisations that had longer relationships, findings highlighted that there was a higher chance of cooperative activity and this affected their choice of partners. Hence, partner selection was found to be an essential part of building relationships.
- Prior relationships were found to lead to differences in the perception of competition at organisational level.

Overall, this study offers a unique opportunity to examine how and why certain factors affect coopetitive relationships.

#### **Influence on coopetitive relationships**

In addressing this objective, I examine the ways in which the factors defined within this study influence coopetitive relationships. Tension emerged as the primary outcome of factors on coopetitive relationships in this study, and can be regarded as both positive and negative depending on the nature and intensity of the factors involved.

When viewed positively, tensions can act as a driver to create the opportunities necessary for the development of network members and their perceived standing within the network. The network itself may directly benefit from a boost in its reputation from an outsider's perspective of what the network may potentially offer. Alternatively, the rise of tensions can elevate dormant power and control issues, which may eventually have a detrimental effect on the relationships within the network.

Despite the positive or negative role of tensions or their management within relationships, tensions remained a constant outcome and could not be avoided due to individual perceptions and the aims and temperaments of the key players within those competitive relationships.

**Summary of key findings:**

- Literature suggests that relationships tend towards stability, but as Das and Teng (2000) argue, stability and change are underlined by the balance of power in cooperative-competitive relationships. Dominant cooperative or competitive relationships are reflective of the instability that may be caused where there is more cooperation and less competition (or vice versa) perceived by one party in the relationship. They present a dialectical framework approach to the development process of relationships. As is indicated by the number of dominant competitive and cooperative relationships in NN, dialectical forces are present.

Overall, the findings show that tensions are synonymous with competitive behaviour.

## 6.2 Limitations of the study

Traditionally, competition and cooperation have been approached separately by academics from two different epistemological and theoretical positions. Bengtsson *et al.* (2010) illustrate how competition is often studied from an objectivist and positivist standpoint, whilst interpretivist approaches are used to examine collaboration and cooperation. The study of both concepts therefore presented a challenge, as I had to find an epistemological standpoint that would be appropriately suited to the objectives of this study. I chose to use an interpretivist stance because this school of thought is rooted in developing a social reality that aims to give a full account of or deeper insight into the research area and its context. Specifically, it is an ideal approach to explore the different interpretations of co-operation and how certain factors affect the social entity of a group of organisations in a network.

This research examined relationships at an organisational level, and a qualitative approach was chosen. Most empirical studies examine co-operation using quantitative measures that are unable to capture the complexities of co-operation (Yami *et al.*, 2010). A qualitative approach becomes relevant when there is insufficient existent knowledge on the topic to develop and preserve a holistic description of a phenomenon (Bonomo, 1985; Attride-Stirling, 2001). In this thesis, there are complexities attached to the emergent themes underpinning inter-organisational relationships, and also to understanding those factors that may influence competitive inter-relationships, where the flexibility of a qualitative approach is therefore particularly appropriate (Miles and Huberman, 1994). It is generally agreed that there are no set procedures or theoretical frameworks used to carry out qualitative analysis as

the majority of routes are based on the researcher's experience and, ultimately, on an acknowledged decision-making process informed by knowledge of what they want to get out of the research (Braun and Clarke, 2006). In this instance, a thematic analysis was deemed the best route for the researcher. Although widely used, thematic analysis is not as widely acknowledged as other more popular forms of data analysis procedures in both quantitative and qualitative research (Boyatzis, 1998; Braun and Clarke, 2006; Silverman, 1993). Thematic analysis provides a platform upon which a thorough yet complex description of data is made accessible through the reoccurring themes highlighted within the data set (Attride-Stirling, 2001). The thematic networks are illustrated in a diagrammatic format divided under the sub-headings of themes. According to Boyatzis (1998: vi), thematic analysis is "a process for encoding qualitative information, which may be a list of themes; a complex model, indicators and qualifications that are causally related".

Such a procedure makes a valid contribution to qualitative research for the following reasons: First, the flexibility of thematic analysis as a method allows one to recognise and describe in rich detail the key themes that emerge from simultaneously searching multiple data sets to find repetitive patterns (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Second, the importance of themes is dependent on the overall research question, particularly where representations can be systematically summarised under the headings of *basic, organising* and *global themes* (Attride-Stirling, 2001). Finally, applying a thematic analysis creates a simple yet workable framework that helps the researcher to easily cope with coding large volumes of data that are often inevitable with qualitative research. According to Coffey and Atkinson (1996: 27), coding is "a way of relating our data to our ideas about the data." Therefore, it forms an expressive tool in these interpretations, particularly as codes should be clearly defined to reduce mistakes and concentrate on the purpose of the enquiry. Overall, the methodological stance chosen creates a bridge between providing a rich empirical database of the different interpretations of relationships at horizontal level and analysing how those relationships may be affected by certain factors at that level.

This study has provided some interesting insights to competitive research, but it is equally important to recognise that limitations are inherent in every empirical study.

One area of contention is in generalising the findings of qualitative research (Creswell, 2003). A single case study offers the possibility of gaining an insight into general behaviour, but more research needs to be conducted before a generalisation can be made. Additionally, data collection is generally conducted differently depending on the researcher, the question set, participants being questioned, and the research setting.

Bias is inevitable despite a systematic, rigorous review and methodological process. For example, untruths, review selections or the wrong sample size can lead to different analyses or exaggerated conclusions. In gathering data, it is inevitable that findings can be limited by taking information from interviewees at face value, as untrue statements can threaten trustworthiness. Participants may be selective in disclosing certain events that occurred in the past because they cannot remember, they choose not to disclose it, or they think it is something that the researcher might not want to hear. Some deliberately attribute positive actions or events to themselves and attribute more negative actions to other member organisations, or they may even exaggerate certain actions or events for personal gain. I found this to be the case in a few of the representatives I interviewed. Some participants tried to provide consistent answers to questions regarding which organisations they felt were their competitors, but their previous statements often contradicted or influenced later statements. My response was to immediately ask more questions in the areas I felt unsure of. As I had recorded the interviews, transcripts provided me with a later opportunity to pick up on a majority of the inconsistencies, which I then concentrated on in subsequent interviews.

Historically, extant research examines the development, growth and maturation of coopetition inside and between organisations. Due to the limited time, the scope of this study is focused on a small group of arts sector organisations. Specifically, the number of organisations used in this study was dictated by the type of research problem being investigated. Findings are based on specific coopetitive relations in a single inter-organisational network in the arts industry, so it has been relatively easy to find significant relationships from the data. However, the sample size may also limit the generalisability of the findings to other coopetitive contexts; particularly where more than one network is being investigated or where different sectors are being studied. From a longitudinal perspective, this research is affected by a time constraint. This study is set at a specific point in time, and as such certain patterns that may be obvious over a longer period of time are not readily available now.

### **6.3 Key theoretical contributions and implications for practice**

#### **6.3.1 Theoretical contributions**

The key contributions of this research are to extend the conceptualisation of coopetition into a network context and to test the idea of coopetition through an empirical study in which dyadic relationships occur in an identifiable inter-organisational network.

As was discussed in Section 2.4, this research integrates literature on inter-organisational networks and coopetition. Whenever coopetition is mentioned in research, it is automatically associated with the paradoxical balance between cooperation and competition, highlighting the significance of the intensity of organisational interactions, roles in the relationship and the perceived expectations (Chen, 2008; Clarke-Hill, Huaning and Davies, 2003; Padula and Dagnino, 2007). Consequently, if either dynamic (i.e., competition or cooperation) takes more precedence, Bengtsson *et al.* (2010) suggest that the coopetitive relationship is put at risk. The tensions that arise as a result of the dynamics of the network may therefore serve to simultaneously facilitate and restrain the formation of inter-organisational relationships (Babiak, 2007). Thus, this research has explored the role of tension in coopetitive relationships.

Traditionally in the literature, tensions in inter-organisational relations have been linked to paradoxical influences such as value creation versus value appropriation. The role that tension plays in coopetitive relationships is critical for understanding the relationship between cooperation and competition. To date, this tension remains relatively under-researched in coopetition literature (Chen, 2008; Das and Teng, 2000; Luo, 2007).

Organisational responses are dependent on the characteristics of their relationships (Hibbard *et al.*, 2001). Padula and Dagnino (2007) acknowledge that organisations simultaneously pursue cooperative and competitive strategies in relationships. The competition paradigm is crucial to the resource-based view of the organisation, whilst the cooperation paradigm dominates the strategic alliance literature and network theory. Coopetition literature highlights the importance of both competition and cooperation paradigms and is more closely linked to the literature on horizontal strategic alliances. Coopetition research offers a narrower, but more focused, analysis of the organisation's quest for simultaneous cooperation and competition in its relationships and of its interdependences on multiple levels (Lou, 2005; Dagnino and Rocco, 2009).

Findings discussed in this study describe the dyadic formation of coopetitive relationships as strategically motivated activities that can be influenced by organisational interactions (often as a result of resource inequalities). In other words, the degree to which an organisation is willing to interact is determined by what resources it is willing to contribute to the network and as such, there is an effect on the network such that the dynamics of the network may be altered. Therefore, I argue that coopetitive relationships are formed on an agreement between two or more independent organisations with the aim of mutually sharing tangible and intangible inputs, outputs and the resulting end-benefits. Historically, research

acknowledges that organisations create and encourage the mentality of added value in economic terms by adapting certain organisational functions whilst remaining responsive to their environment (Kirchner, 2007). When the benefits of coopetition are discussed in terms of inter-organisational relationships, the appeal of increased performance, profitability, new market creation, and innovative efficiency gained from the cooperative relationships in which organisations engage are usually some of the key points highlighted (Luo *et al.*, 2007; Ritala, 2012; Gnyawali and Park, 2009). For horizontal relationships, trust is considered to be less important to information and knowledge sharing at the initial stages, as frequent cooperation between organisations is suggested to increase the possibility of a rise in mutual understanding, thereby reducing any potential confusion (Luo *et al.*, 2006).

However, competition has certain drawbacks within coopetitive situations. There is the potential to create informal social or informational exchanges that have been described as harder to grasp, mainly due to weaker links between organisations (Laine, 2002; Easton and Araujo, 1992; Bengtsson and Kock, 1999). Also highlighted in the literature is the risk of competitive behaviour to partner selection, which is crucial in coopetitive dyads. Inconsistencies in expectations, for instance, can make cooperation in the dyad difficult – potentially leading to uncertainties in the relationship or towards the eventual failure of the relationship (Das and Teng, 2000). Thus, the success rate of a coopetitive relationship will most likely be influenced by the level of competition and cooperation. To date, however, there is limited empirical research on the factors that affect horizontal coopetitive relationships (Bengtsson and Kock, 2000; Thomason *et al.*, 2013; Bengtsson and Johansson, 2012).

By conducting an empirical examination of both extremes in inter-organisational relationships, this study is relevant to both coopetition theory and to managerial practice. By addressing inter-organisational dynamics, this thesis argues that there are underlying factors that need to be empirically investigated in order to both enumerate them and to understand how they influence the mix of competition and cooperation within dyadic relationships. In particular, horizontal coopetitive relationships should be empirically observed, as they are not only influenced by the cooperative interaction between the organisations or individuals in question, but also by the competitive context in which they are embedded. In other words, an organisation understands that in committing to a cooperative relationship with its competitor, the agreement does not weaken its capability to also compete. The large number of dyadic relationships formed in NN is a reflection of the shifting attitudes of the organisations towards coopetition as opposed to operating independently. However, the tensions that

become inherent in these relationships may simultaneously facilitate or limit the formation of the dyads.

Three theoretical streams – the resource-based view, the relational-based view and network theory – provide the conceptual basis for the understanding of how organisations identify the most relevant factors that affect inter-organisational relationships at a horizontal level and for outlining their potential implications. Thus, the research presented in this thesis goes beyond simply offering multiple explanations of IOR formations by extending the analysis to explore the factors that define horizontal coopetitive relationships between organisations within a network, as well as how these factors influence the dynamics of the coopetitive relationships formed based on the intensity of the competitive and cooperative interactions between organisations. As with Oliver's (1990) conceptual framework that considers the motives of partnerships, the previous point is an important one. The insights gleaned from this study's analysis suggest that my findings may extend beyond dyadic relations between two organisations towards broader network interactions. As such, it is just as important to acknowledge the role of individual-level factors in the context of the dyadic formation as it is to explore organisational interactions from multiple dyadic perspectives.

However, there has been difficulty in fusing the different literatures and theories in this study. This is primarily due to the fact that they consider different levels (i.e., the network, organisations and the individual actor). They have different foci on competition, cooperation or coopetition, and they tend to focus on single dyads rather than multiple dyads in a network context. This has required careful consideration in the design of this study and the development of the conceptual framework.

This study extends work by Bengtsson and Kock (2000) who conceptualise coopetition as being one of three parts: cooperation between partners, competition between partners, and the interaction between cooperation and competition. Within the arts industry, IORs are considered complex and so can be difficult to examine adequately, especially where multiple dyads (such as the one in this network) are concerned. This study creates a focus on network links by examining the interactions between connected organisations as well as offering a unique opportunity to examine how and why certain factors affect coopetitive relationships. Whereas Peng and Bourne (2009) examine coopetition from the perspective of two networks, this study examines coopetition from the perspective of one coopetitive network. Thus, it provides a clear picture of the connections, relations and influences, as well as the effects from the influences of organisations engaging in multiple dyads within a coopetitive network.

What emerges from this study is that coopetition is a complex phenomenon that evolves over time. Literature suggests that relationships tend towards stability but, as Das and Teng (2000) argue, stability and change are underlined by the balance of power in cooperative-competitive relationships. Dominant cooperative or competitive relationships are reflective of the instability that may be caused where there is more cooperation and less competition (or vice versa) perceived by one party in the relationship. They present a dialectical framework approach to the development process of relationships. As is indicated by the number of dominant competitive and cooperative relationships in NN, dialectical forces are present. Likewise, DeRond and Bouchikhi (2004) studied the dialectics of strategic alliances in the pharmaceutical industry. Empirical research on dialectics in coopetitive relationships is limited, so this study adds to dialectic research by demonstrating that the development of relationships is a factor in an organisation's ability to manage its coopetitive ties with other organisations. Thus, both studies demonstrate that the interactions between organisations are dependent on the perspectives of both sides of the dyad. Consequently, this study contributes detailed empirical evidence that shows the type of interactions and exchange processes that cannot be gained from studying just one side of the dyad. Furthermore, this study also extends our understanding of coopetitive relationships through a conceptualisation of coopetition using empirical data.

### **6.3.2 Implications for practice**

A question that springs to mind when asked about practical implications is how to frame the ambiguous notion of coopetition in a more practical format in order to recognise those factors that may affect the existing inter-relations between cooperating competitors.

The nature of relationships NN members engage in are such that choosing not to be involved means a detachment from valuable resources that contribute to the overall operational competence, influence and reputation of the organisation. Hence, it is in the interests of the members of NN to remain in the network in order to exploit the opportunities that may present themselves as well as develop the relationships and benefits already available. Most of the participants who offered feedback were the main point of contact for the organisation they represented in NN. On the whole, they could benefit from a workshop geared towards simplifying the potential benefits of coopetition and what that would mean to their industry specifically. Of significant value here is highlighting the pitfalls associated with coopetition in the form of competitive myopia, which surprisingly was a very common

theme across all of the different organisational types. Competitive myopia is a term used to describe those organisations that consider competition to be from those that are only in direct competition to them, which in itself is suggested to pose a potential risk to their business (Bennett, 2005).

Within the context of this study, all the relationships that were found to exist within the network were in one way or another embedded in the coopetitive context, where the interactions between member organisations were one of three types: coopetitive, cooperative or competitive. Consequently, if the leading organisation of this network were aware of how easily a shift in perceptions of relationships could create beneficial outcomes, they would be in a better position to manage these different forms of coopetition. Management of the network should be the responsibility of all organisations, and they should aim to create better access to resources and support mechanisms to enable effective communication exchanges and provide greater self-sufficiency so that a culture is built within the network that encourages cooperation (Gynawali *et al.*, 2009). Equally, communication is a vital element to consider. Network members should be aware of the importance of communication to the success of coopetitive relationships, as too much or too little communication will inevitably impact upon the level of commitment to the relationship. Thus, in understanding the effects of myopia, it is suggested that the risks associated with competition will be minimised as organisations (using the rationale that either collectively or individually, cooperation and competition can be used to an organisations' advantage) will begin to redefine their competitive arena and broaden their collaborative and cooperative spectrum to embrace opportunities.

Leaders and members of networks should also be more aware of the potential power imbalances and also how to better integrate newer and smaller members into the network's meetings and activities. Specifically, it is proposed that the objectives and purpose of the network be regularly discussed and negotiated with members to provide a focus for the activities and the member organisations. Equally, the roles and responsibilities assigned to the leading organisation should be clarified and agreed unanimously by all member organisations. Other key responsibilities should more formally be assigned across the members to avoid confusion and involve other members more in the growth of the network.

The findings from this study are limited in their generalisation to other contexts because this is a case study of a single group of arts organisations. Nonetheless, it serves as a valuable insight into how managers can strategically shape the structure, governance and resource allocation of their coopetitive relationships within networks. Specifically, managers are better

informed on how to respond to the expectations of partnering organisations, which is critical, especially as traditional forms of management may not be sufficient in dealing with the shifting boundaries often subject to the change in dynamics inherent in IORs (Babiak, 2007).

#### **6.4 Directions for further research**

This study contributes to the better understanding of the dynamics of coopetitive relationships within inter-organisational networks. This thesis provides evidence of the importance of factors to inter-organisational relationships. It also adds to the slowly emerging body of research on the influence of factors to coopetitive relationships between organisations in the non-profit and arts industry (Roussin-Isett and Provan, 2005). From a geographical perspective, a broader qualitative study using the same format and interview questions as prescribed in this study may be one suggestion. For instance, would there be different results if the same questions were applied to arts organisations in other parts of the UK or internationally? Would certain factors be characteristic of and influence the relationships beneficially or detrimentally?

Another suggestion at which this study hints is that individuals within an organisation make up a critical part of the formation of relationships. The role a representative plays can be as simultaneously coopetitive as the relationships between organisations because of the constant balance between being independent and embedded in the relationship. Therefore, future research should aim to examine the extent to which network relationships can further influence partner formation, management and evaluation. In particular, a more psychological focus on the dyadic relationships formed by using the interpersonal networks of individuals would be valuable. This work would support a deeper understanding of different responses to tension by individuals and the support needed from their organisations and the network to cope with the tensions.

Finally, it should be noted that a vast amount of research has explored network relationships in the private sector (Babiak, 2007; Inkpen and Curral, 2004), but despite this very little exists on coopetitive dyads in the non-profit sector. This research has developed a richer language and understanding of relationships between organisations, but a deeper acknowledgement of the coopetitive aspect of these relationships is needed. For instance, to what degree do the factors uncovered in this study influence organisational decisions to enter into partnerships, and to what extent is one factor considered more or less influential in this assessment? These aspects need to be explored in order to ascertain what tools and

mechanisms will be needed to overcome the tensions and paradoxes that emerge and gain a much more comprehensive insight into coopetitive interactions within networks.

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## Appendix 1: Empirical and non-empirical research on coopetition

Author(s)	Context/Main concept	Focus	Research approach	Unit of analysis	Findings
<b>Empirical research on coopetition</b>					
Kim, Kim, Pae and Yip (2013)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Paper examines the strategic implications and managerial outcomes of the concurrent use of cooperation and competition in vertical channel relationships. Specifically, the focus is on coopetition strategy in retailer-supplier relationships.</li> </ul> <p>Research setting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Questionnaire to gather data regarding vertical channel relationships in China.</li> </ul>	Coopetition Vertical channel relationships Ambidextrous strategy	Quantitative (Structured questionnaire)	Industry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The value of the current study centres on the application of a conceptual framework regarding ambidextrous strategy to vertical retailer – supplier channel relationships in a developing economy</li> <li>Academic literature emphasizes cooperation between channel members because of the interdependence between them, but in reality, retailers may accept competition as just another part of doing business with suppliers.</li> <li>Using an ambidextrous strategy does not damage relationship quality, although this study also finds that it does not enhance it. This view is based on the notion that an ambidextrous strategy at least does not harm either common or private benefits. Therefore, exchange parties using the ambidextrous strategy should not experience a relationship that is worse than that which results when they use cooperation or competition alone. Results indicate that this view reflects reality more accurately.</li> </ul>
Billitteri, Lo Nigro and Perrone (2013)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Paper empirically examines the drivers that influence the choice of governance form used in organisational inter-firm relationships within the Italian biopharmaceutical industry.</li> </ul> <p>Research setting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Data obtained from Italian companies associated to Farmindustria.</li> </ul>	Coopetition Transaction cost economics Resource based view Governance literature	Survey	Industry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>By reviewing the relevant literature on transaction cost economics, property right theory, real option and resources-based view, drivers might influence such relationships and set of hypotheses were formulated and linked to governance forms.</li> <li>It was found that the developmental stage of the product/technology object of the agreement, the existence of previous collaborations between firms and the number of products marketed by</li> </ul>

					the biotech company were able to influence the selection of a specific governance form.
Akdogan and Cingoz (2012)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Paper empirically examines coopetition from the perspective of small to medium sized enterprises (SMEs); determining how they deal with coopetitive challenges.</li> </ul> <p>Research setting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Data obtained from managers covering 52 SMEs from different sectors operating in Turkey.</li> </ul>	Coopetition SMEs	Quantitative	SMEs/ Industry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Findings suggest a positive attitude correlates with the coopetition strategy. That is, they assess the collaboration with competitors, positively. Trust is seen as the most important factor in relationship with competitors. Secondly, commitment dimension is considered important. Mutual benefits had the least mean score when compared with other dimensions of coopetition.</li> </ul>
Bigliardi, Dormio and Galati (2011)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Paper empirically examines coopetition in the context of Italian space and defence industries. The aim was to highlight and apply the benefits of the coopetition model into a different context.</li> </ul> <p>Research setting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Data obtained from managers within the context of a consortium and engineering company</li> </ul>	Coopetition	Mixed methods (Case study based approach using both interviews and questionnaire surveys)	Industry/ network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The case study is introduced from a network level perspective, and demonstrates that in understanding the nature and consequences of the competitive dynamics among companies is vital to the strategic management field. Specifically, it highlights differences in interactions between organisations from vertical and horizontal perspectives.</li> <li>For example, cooperative relationships between vertical actors (i.e. buyers and sellers), identified relationships were built on a distribution of activities and resources among actors in the network. Horizontally; relationships appeared to be more informal and invisible.</li> <li>These relationships, both horizontal and vertical, resulted to be important at the same extent for the focal firm when carrying out activities in a network context. This view may help organizations understanding new profiles, behaviours, and structures of companies that are searching new strategies for developing their business in the next years.</li> </ul>
Peng, Pike, Yang, Roos (2011)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Paper examines coopetition from the viewpoint scrutinising literature in coopetition (since 1996). This is in order to clarify this phenomenon, highlight</li> </ul>	Coopetition	Quantitative study Case study	Industry/ network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The findings imply that competition (<i>Yang</i>) and cooperation (<i>Yin</i>) are reciprocally rooted in and mutually promoted by each other. The findings also confirm that cooperation with competitors</li> </ul>

	<p>possible implications and develop an analytical framework.</p> <p>Research setting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Study conducted to cover a 15 year period in Taiwanese supermarket network to study impact of coopetition on performance before and after launching coopetitive strategy.</li> </ul>				<p>leads to better performance, at least over a period, in two ways.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The first is that the adoption of coopetition permits the attainment of performance levels beyond what would otherwise have been possible;</li> <li>• The second is that the adoption of coopetition changes the timeframe, permitting earlier achievement of higher performance levels.</li> <li>• This study contributes to and extends knowledge of the dynamics and consequences of cooperation with competitors and demonstrates that coopetition has a significant temporary advantage.</li> </ul>
Osarenkhoe (2010)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Study examines impact of coopetition on collective strategies in context of value generation in food information industry</li> </ul>	Coopetition		Industry/ Network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coopetition relationships promote collective intelligence through information and sharing knowledge.</li> </ul>
Peng and Bourne (2009)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research examined coopetition between networks. In other words, the purpose of study was to address the coexistence of competition and cooperation between networks, and to depict how networks with different structures interacted with each other.</li> </ul> <p>Research setting: 10 informants over 2 healthcare networks in Taiwan</p>	Coopetition Structure of network	Qualitative study/ Case study semi-structured questionnaires during interviews (primary data)	Network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Previous research focused on coopetition from an intra-organizational level, inter-organizational level and triad level; but less attention has been paid to coopetition at the network level.</li> <li>• It was found that two organizations will compete and cooperate simultaneously when each organization has complementary but distinctly different sets of resources and when the field of competition is distinctly separate from the field of cooperation. In other words, the simultaneous existence of cooperation and competition is not dependent on closeness to the customer, as previously suggested in the literature, but on the balance between the forces for cooperation and for competition.</li> <li>• Also, two networks will find it easier to balance competition and cooperation when each network has compatible but distinctly different structures.</li> </ul>

Baretta (2008)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Research examines the interaction between competitive and cooperative stimuli between cooperative and competitive relationships. In other words, it investigated the determinants of coopetition in a network of healthcare trusts.</li> </ul> <p>Research setting: General managers interviewed from 4 Tuscan healthcare trusts</p>	Coopetition	Qualitative study/ Case study interviews (primary data)	Network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Found that main cause of conflict amongst trusts was their financial mechanism, and inter-trust cooperation was a necessary course of action in order to guarantee a more efficient service</li> </ul>
Geraudel and Salvetat (2008)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Coopetition is presented from the perspective of the individual using personality traits of the <i>actors</i> involved in the relationship to introduce five dimensions of coopetitive relations. Relationships are presented in different scenarios and most relationships are represented either as being competitive (i.e., competitors), cooperative (i.e., co-operators) and/or coopetitive (i.e., coopetitors). Furthermore, this study demonstrated that the personality traits of the actors explain the five dimensions of coopetition. The dimensions (i.e., agreeable, conscientious, extroverted, unstable and open to new experiences) suggest coopetitive behaviour is influenced to a more or lesser degree depending on the personality traits of managers.</li> </ul> <p>Research setting: 165 managers/students at a French business school</p>	Coopetition Personality traits	Quantitative study (statistical procedure)	Firm/ individual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Coopetition is understood to be the joint-meeting of competitive and cooperative behaviours. So, competitors are believed to compete substantially, but cooperate on a far smaller scale. They are found to be average negotiators, who have little influence and are, of course, not very powerful actors.</li> <li>Co-operators cooperate substantially, but compete on a smaller scale. As they perceived to be very influential, they negotiate little and remain powerful. Coopetitors are those individuals who were found to simultaneously undertake both competitive and cooperative actions with other rivals (Gulati, et al., 2000). These actors are considered influential, and tend to negotiate but are not very powerful.</li> <li>Theoretical contributions lie in the construction of a typology of actors according to their propensity to cooperate, compete, and yet strive for performance which is related to managerial capacities to negotiate and to influence.</li> <li>In addition, results indicate that, according to the managerial profiles, there are different personality traits which impact the dimensions of coopetition</li> </ul>

Chin, Chan and Lam (2008)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Research examines success factors critical to coopetitive strategy management</li> <li>Consequently, seven key critical success factors (CSFs) are identified. These are; management leadership, long-term commitment, organisational learning; development of trust, knowledge and risk sharing; information systems support, and conflict management system. The seven CSFs are broken down further into 17 sub-factors and both factors and sub-factors have been prioritised under three key categories namely; management commitment, relationships development and communication management</li> </ul> <p>Research setting: 149 firms in manufacturing industry based in Hong Kong</p>	Coopetition Critical success factors Competitive strategy	Survey/interviews (primary data)	Firm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Results indicate management leadership and development of trust are the most important success factors.</li> <li>From the factors identified, the authors propose the prioritization of critical success factors and sub-factors that are believed can help practitioners understand their relative importance and develop improvement plans in cases where they lack sufficient resources to deal with all factors simultaneously.</li> </ul>
Luo, Slotegraaf and Pan (2006)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Study examined the association between cross-functional coopetition and performance, and whether this association is mediated by market learning</li> </ul> <p>Research setting: 326 informants across 163 technology firms based in China</p>	Social embeddedness theory Knowledge based view	Quantitative study/ Survey (primary data)	Intra- organisational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Coopetition from an inter-unit perspective is found to improve a firm's customer performance, and financial performance – suggesting that coopetition should be actively encouraged from a strategic angle.</li> <li>The ability and intensity to interact are found to be important factors; particularly where cooperative interaction was found to foster effective strategic decision making.</li> </ul>
Gnyawali, He and Madhavan (2006)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How coopetition, centrality and structural autonomy affect an organisations' competitive behaviour</li> </ul> <p>Research setting: 445 global steel producers</p>	Network structure Competitive dynamics	Quantitative study (archival data)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Organisations with a higher market diversity benefit more from structural positions in the coopetitive network</li> <li>Organisations that are highly central and structurally autonomous tend to be more competitively active and versatile</li> </ul>
Bengtsson and Kock (2000)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Paper examined coopetition in business networks and how coopetition and cooperation can be divided and managed (inter-firm coopetition)</li> </ul>	Resource based view Strategic alliances Managing conflict	Qualitative study/ exploratory case study (primary data)	Firm/ industry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Coopetition defined as a complex dyadic relationship that simultaneously includes both the common and conflicting interests of competing organisations</li> </ul>

	<p>Research setting: 21 interviewees from the lining, brewery &amp; dairy industries</p>				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The coopetitive context is divided into 3 types on a continuum: competitively dominated; cooperatively dominated and equally dominated relationships.</li> <li>Coopetition as a relationship depends on type of strength of links between organisations: competitors cooperate with activities far from the customer and compete in activities close to the customer. There is a certain level of heterogeneity in resources, closeness of an activity to the customer, competitors' position and the connectedness between them, conflict and consensus about organizational goals influence cooperation between competitors</li> <li>Organisations cooperate in order to maintain direct interaction</li> </ul>
Bengtsson and Kock (1999)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Paper proposes four types of horizontal relationships between competing organisations in networks</li> </ul> <p>Research setting: 16 interviewees from the lining, rack &amp; pinion industries</p>	Social embeddedness	Qualitative study/ case study (primary data)	Firm/ industry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Research suggests an organisation can be involved in four different types of horizontal relationships at the same time. These include; co-existence, cooperation, competition, coopetition</li> <li>A relationship between competitors can change over time</li> </ul>

### Non-empirical research on coopetition

Author(s)	Context/Main concept	Focus	Findings
Thomason, Simendinger and Kiernan (2013)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The study draws upon several perspectives within the literature in strategy and organizational behaviour to inform the predictive model of successful coopetition presented at individual, firm, dyadic and triadic relationship levels in small businesses.</li> </ul>	SMEs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Suggestions propose several socially complex, relational, and resource-based determinants predict successful coopetition (trust, commitment, mutual benefit).</li> <li>Policies, procedures and feed-forward control systems are presented and developed by a consultant who facilitated a successful coopetitive relationship among several competitors in the fragmented casual furniture industry.</li> <li>Understanding determinants of successful coopetition is useful to those seeking a sustainable competitive advantage and the enhancement of firm performance.</li> </ul>
Lado, Boyd and Hanlon (1997)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Study developed a syncretic model of competition and cooperation to assess how firms</li> </ul>	Resource based view Game theory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Managerial cognitive systems that emphasize variety (or heterogeneity), embrace conflict, and promote organizational renewal will more likely engender syncretic rent-seeking behaviour compared to those that emphasize homogeneity, eschew tensions,</li> </ul>

	generate economic rents through a four-cell typology or rent-seeking behaviours		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• and promote stability</li> <li>• Firms that maintain balanced investments in stocks of internalized, relational, and market resources will be more likely to engage in syncretic rent-seeking behaviours compared to those that invest disproportionately in one of those resource sets. In turn, investments in these resource stocks will engender syncretic rent-seeking behaviour</li> <li>• Findings suggested firms that exhibit syncretic rent-seeking behaviour will achieve sustained superior performance relative to those that predominantly emphasize competitive rivalry (competitive rent-seeking), cooperative strategies (collaborative rent-seeking), or monopolistic rent-seeking</li> </ul>
Gnyawali and Madhavan (2001)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Study developed a multi-level model of how structurally, network properties influence the competitive dynamics of firms</li> </ul>	Competitive dynamics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• With a resource-based view, Gnyawali and Madhavan (2001) suggested that coopetitive relationships consist of three flows: asset, information, and status. They used these to develop a framework to be tested on how different structural factors affect action and response in a coopetitive business relationship.</li> <li>• Findings suggested that the centrality, structural autonomy, and structural equivalence of a focal firm increases the probability of a firm's action and response likelihood</li> <li>• The network density increases any firm's action probability and response likelihood The network density will weaken where there is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the positive relationship between centrality and action likelihood and</li> <li>• the negative relationship between centrality and response likelihood</li> </ul> </li> <li>• The network density will strengthen where there is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the positive relationship between structural autonomy and action likelihood and</li> <li>• the negative relationship between structural autonomy and response likelihood</li> </ul> </li> <li>• The network density will weaken where there is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the negative relationship between structural equivalence and action likelihood and</li> <li>• (b) the positive relationship between structural equivalence and response likelihood</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Source: author (adapted and *cf.* from Peng *et al.*, 2011; Kim *et al.*, 2013; Thomason *et al.*, 2013; Bigliardi *et al.*, 2011; Billitteri *et al.*, 2013; and Hannele, 2008)

## **Appendix 2: Preparatory notes (pre-interviews) and interview checklist**

### **1. Equipment**

- Audio digital recorder
- Snacks/water for in-between interviews.

### **2. Preparatory process**

- Contact participant to arrange interview – usually based on their availability
- Discuss and book time/date at meeting place – either on campus, at their offices or a neutral location
- Get confirmation of time/place and location/ request for quiet room (if necessary)
- Printing copies of all necessary paperwork
- Check package/equipment for interview
  - Copy of interview guide - Appendix 2
  - 2 copies of consent form and business cards (a copy each for interviewer and participant) – Appendix 2
  - A copy of interview questions (interviewer copy) - Appendix 2
  - A copy of the informant sheet - Appendix 2
  - Additional questions for prompting participants into discussion (very useful for the author as an inexperienced researcher)
  - Testing equipment/ taking spare batteries
- Packing student card to produce upon request
- Field notebook to make notes prior to interview on personal feelings, observations and also during interview
- Arriving early at interview location in order to set up equipment - estimate times for interviewing/breaks/transport etc.
- Get forms signed off by interviewee

### **3. Conducting the interviews**

In their work, Gorman and Clayton (2005:130) suggest that an interview creates an opportunity for the researcher “to listen and not to preach, praise or condemn.” As such, I use the format below to remain consistent in my approach to all of the interviews I conducted.

- An initial greeting and thanks for granting the interview is important to show appreciation. Always smile!
- Briefly describe the purpose of the study, the format the interview will take and how long they are likely to be interviewed. Ask for forms to be signed off immediately by interviewee – give them a copy and keep a copy
- Ask again for permission for recorder to be used during interview – check during interview that it is still working. Ask all necessary questions, and ensure adequate understanding of each question
- Ask one question at a time, and repeat if necessary to ensure both parties understand question. Avoid giving directional information about a question, or a point raised
- Be sensitive to participants especially to their rights and needs, in accordance to your ethical and moral obligations and practise. For example,– all records (ie names,

responsibilities, organisations etc.) are kept confidential unless prior permission is granted)

- Make brief notes during interviews on question sheet to highlight specific points that may need clarification or further discussion.
- At end of interview, give participant opportunity to add any points you felt had not been covered adequately during the interview. Thank the participants for their involvement, and remind them of how they can contact you if they want to.

#### **4. Sequencing the interviews**

**After the interviews, the author should carry out the following tasks:**

- Review the digital audio recorder to make sure interview was recorded. Expand on your notes if the information is not adequate as soon as possible after interviews.
- Label digital files on your computer, external hard drive and a dedicated USP drive using a password – to maintain confidentiality. Keep digital content and recorder in safe conditions.
- Check any statements that needed to be highlighted that were not covered. If not, schedule additional interviews.
- Double check all forms, label and archive them.
- Transcribe interviews within 24 hours if possible.
- Send copy of interview transcripts to participants for their thoughts and additional contributions on the interview conducted.

### **Appendix 3: Consent form and interview guide**



#### **CONSENT FORM**

##### **Examining cooperation in inter-organisational relationships between competing organisations**

Your input is very valuable, so I want to thank you for agreeing to participate in this conversation (interview) as part of my research study. The title above reflects the research topic, and as such; this study aims to assess the complexities of inter-organisational relationships between organisations that operate in a network.

Current theoretical studies of organisations in networks suggest that they often collaborate and compete simultaneously. However, there is a lack of understanding of how these relationships work in practise and more importantly; how it affects individuals, organisations and their relationships with other network members. This is what I would like to explore in more depth.

Please take a moment to read the information and sign below to acknowledge that you have done so.

- You voluntarily agree to be interviewed for approximately an hour.
- You understand that this conversation (interview) will reflect upon your experiences and your total honesty on certain sensitive subjects will be appreciated for the purpose of furthering research through this study.
- You agree that your name and that of your organisation you represent will remain completely confidential and anonymous in all areas in this study unless under your explicit instructions to do otherwise.
- You agree that only on your approval will some of the information discussed here today be brought up with only my supervisory team (see below), and that the information will solely be used for the purpose of furthering my research.
- You agree that the in-depth conversation (interview) we will have today will be recorded and archived with a strict restricted access upon completion of the doctorate programme.
- You may review written transcriptions, and have the right to request at any time that any portion you disagree with; be reviewed, altered or destroyed.

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Interviewee/ Representative

---

Date

**Kemi Faloye**

**Cc: Dr Fiona Lettice and James Cornford (PGR supervisory team)**

## INTERVIEW PLAN

<b>Name of interviewee:</b>	
<b>Organisation:</b>	
<b>Title/ position held:</b>	
<b>Time at organisation:</b>	
<b>Joined NEN (when):</b>	
<b>Main representative?</b>	
<b>Time of interview:</b>	
<b>Date of interview:</b>	

## QUESTIONS

### PART A

**General information about the network to establish perception of this network of organisations and existing relationships with other organisations**

**1. Tell me more about your position in your organisation, and how you came to join the network**

Probing questions

- a. How long have you been part of the network?
- b. In your opinion – what is the purpose of the network?
- c. Why did you join?
- d. Why and how has it met with your expectations?
- e. What expectations has it met or not?

**2. What activities/events do you get involved in/have responsibility for?**

Probing questions

- a. Do you have any responsibilities or specific tasks you have been assigned during your time in the network? If not, why not?
- b. What would need to change for you to participate more or less?

**3. What is your opinion on the current member organisations?**

Probing questions

- a. Should there be more or fewer members in this network? If yes, explain briefly.
- b. Who else do you think should join or leave?

**4. What are the strengths/weaknesses of being part of this network? Why?**

**5. What other networks are you part of, and how do they compare to this one?**

Probing questions

- a. How does this network of organisations compare in terms of the types of activities offered, feeling of network, purpose and mutual achievements?

## PART B

**Establishes those factors can affect cooperative relationships and how they can influence the relationships and this network of organisations – (Also use the grid matrices provided)**

### **6. To what extent do you relate with other organisations?**

Probing questions

- a. In your time at this network, and from previous experience, what organisations do you feel cooperate with the most and in what areas?
- b. What is the benefit of having such a range of organisations cooperating with your organisation?
- c. What do you gain from cooperating with those particular organisations and not others, and how often do you meet?
- d. Do you meet outside of the network or just within this network for meetings and joint events?
- e. How are your cooperative relationships managed? Who has more say – yourself or the other organisation in how you proceed?
- f. Which organisations do you feel the most competition from and towards in the network?
  - a. What areas do you feel you compete in? How are your competitive relationships managed?
  - b. If you don't feel you compete, why would you say this?
- g. What would make you cooperate with another organisation in this network? Why?
- h. What would make you compete with another organisation in this network? Why?
- i. Which organisations and their representatives do you feel more indifferent towards? Why?

### **7. What tensions are perceived or visible between organisations in this network?**

Probing questions

- a. What do the members seem to disagree on most/least?
- b. Is it easy or difficult to challenge the views of key members? Why? Why not?
- c. Who do you think has the most and least influence in this network? On what and why?
- d. What do you see as being a tension and why?
- e. Is there any tension that you might have perceived during your time at this network? If yes, what do you think caused it and how? Give an example or two of where and in what instance this took place.
- f. Which organisation do you feel has been most affected and how? Did it affect how you related to the organisation(s) involved?

#### Appendix 4: Stage one of thematic analysis – reduction of text (example of application)

Text from interview	Key issues	Basic codes (light grey)	Themes identified
<p>I Since you joined has it met your expectations?</p> <p>R Yes I think it has actually. <u>I was not surprised at all, but it did really make me roll my eyes at how typically ‘{regional}’ the meetings were.</u> There would be people, who had known each other for such a long time, or you will turn up and there would be someone there you know but you did not know they were part of this. {The region} is so small. I do not know if you have been in {the region} for ages but it is like you will just go randomly to someone’s house and there will be someone you knew at school sitting there. It was very much like that so quite closed in a way. <u>It was not enormously friendly the first time I went, but people were quite forthright which I quite like.</u> I think it is not as ‘arty’ and ‘airy fairy’ as I thought. I had concerns it would be a bit too nice, I guess, for anyone to make a decision. <u>Democracy is great but when everyone is being so nice no one can make a decision.</u> It is not really like that but equally there are frustrations that I anticipated in terms of trying to get twelve or fifteen organisations together. <u>Unless everyone is sitting around a table and the decision is made there it is a nightmare,</u> so we have been trying to work out a date for this teachers’ event with all our stalls at (RE3) and it was planned but then someone discovered it was on a World Cup semi-final day so we had to change it <u>but there had been twenty, thirty emails going round about it</u> and eventually someone set up a questionnaire, a little survey online so everyone could pick what day and we go with the majority. <u>This is actually a bit silly isn’t it, when you have thirty emails? You are out the office for half a day and there are thirty emails about the learning for teachers’ event.</u> I think it is probably what I expected. It has been really interesting. <u>I have loved going and seeing the facilities that other places have.</u> I found that things like {another location} has this amazing ancient court room and law is one of my schools in (ED4) and I run mock trials for school groups and going there and saying ‘this place is amazing. Does it ever get used?’ They are like ‘no not really, the city council meets here sometimes. Would you like to come and use it?’ ‘Yes, that is brilliant.’ <u>There have been really nice surprises</u> and getting to know a few people has been good. <u>Finding out how the organisations work a tiny bit - I have scratched the surface - has been really interesting and I am really enjoying getting more involved</u> in {an event} <u>but all of the niggly annoyances about trying to get everyone to work together are there</u> but that should not really be a massive shock. It is just what happens I guess.</p>	<p>Interactions</p> <p>Identity</p> <p>Willingness to contribute</p> <p>Desire to join group</p> <p>Aim of network in question</p> <p>Commitment does not necessarily mean participation</p> <p>Frustration</p> <p>Proximity/cooperation</p> <p>Lack of direction</p> <p>Competencies in similar field</p>	<p>Mutual relations</p> <p>Personal relationships</p> <p>Organisational relationships</p> <p>Social identity</p> <p>Tensions apparent</p> <p>Communication</p> <p>Management</p> <p>Resource coordination</p> <p>Commitment</p> <p>Competition</p> <p>Goals</p> <p>Benefits</p> <p>Interaction</p> <p>Cooperation</p> <p>Trust</p>	<p>Interpretations of organisations based on perceptions of nature of interactions</p> <p>Long term associations apparent between organisations</p> <p>Diversity of organisations</p> <p>Identification with wider group</p> <p>Possible underlying tensions particularly to access to group</p> <p>Aim is different for every organisation.</p> <p>Group as a whole have no clear focus</p> <p>There is some commitment to making decisions</p> <p>Identification of inadequate or lack of management in specific areas</p> <p>Geographical proximity seen as a benefit to aid cooperative relationship</p> <p>Trust is present</p> <p>Weighing up competition</p>

## **Appendix 5: History of member organisations**

### **Arts education (ED)**

**ED1** – ED1 is an outreach facility that promotes the benefits of higher education to students of all ages and different backgrounds who would not necessarily think about furthering their education. A lot of the work ED1 does centres around communicating with schools on the benefits of higher education, and they use seminars and workshops around specific subjects to help break down barriers normally presented to young people from low-income and disadvantaged backgrounds. Referred on this group of organisations on the back of previous working relationships; ED1 joined network N in 2010. ED1 have a dedicated outreach and education team, so any member of staff within their small team can attend meetings and project functions on its behalf.

**ED2** – ED2 is housed in a medieval church, but is described as an educational facility with a difference. It provides an environment where science and technology is explored through specific activities inevitably helping children and adults alike stimulate curiosity, develop an interest in experimentation and explore areas on the science curriculum – effectively developing skills in literacy, numeracy, creative writing and social skills. There is no clear indication as to when ED2 joined but transcripts reveal it may have been in the later stages of the network's formation. One dedicated member of staff attends meetings and project functions on its behalf.

**ED3** – ED3 is an outreach facility that promotes the benefits of higher education to international students of all ages and different backgrounds who would not necessarily think about furthering their education. A lot of the work ED3 does centres around communicating with schools on the benefits of higher education, and they use seminars and workshops around specific subjects to help break down barriers. There is no clear indication as to when ED3 joined but transcripts reveal it may have been in the later stages of the network's formation. ED3 have a dedicated outreach and education team, so between one to two members of staff within their small team attends meetings and project functions on its behalf.

**ED4** – As an educational outreach facility, ED4 also promotes the benefits of higher education to potential students both in the UK and abroad. Targeted students are of all ages and different backgrounds who would not necessarily think about furthering their education. At present, the focus of outreach programmes centre on schools in the region and seminars, workshops and presentations around specific subject groups enable the team break down barriers. ED4 joined the network around 2010. There is a dedicated outreach and education team in ED4 and it is believed that up to seven members of staff are employed within it, and have been known to attend meetings. However, approximately half of that number regularly attend meetings and participate in project functions on its behalf.

### **Museum (MU)**

**MU1** – MU1 was opened in 1978 and is home to over three hundred artwork collections spanning 5000 years. Although predominantly European art is featured, it also houses artworks and objects from all over the world including, Africa, Asia, North and South America, the Pacific region and the Mediterranean. As well as being a museum, it is also used for teaching by a wide number of educational establishments in the region. It currently has a small team specifically dedicated to education outreach and as such one representative attends network meetings regularly.

**MU2** – Housed in a Grade 1 listed medieval merchant's trading hall, which now operates as a heritage museum and as well as a venue for community, cultural and private events. MU2 is unique because it the only known surviving structure of its type built for personal use rather than by a union of merchants. 2006 saw a major refurbishment project take place with nearly £1.8million being invested into restoring the building; with another £50,000 grant over a two year period from the Heritage Lottery Fund to research and record the working lives of some of its inhabitants over recent times. MU2 joined the network in 2009. MU2 is mostly run by volunteers with two permanent full-time staff responsible for day-to-day operations, and so can be classified as a small team. So, one key representative is solely responsible for developing its education outreach portfolio, which she does through the network.

**MU3** – MU3 is an archive service that preserves unique written and sound archives of historical interest to the region. It operates as an exhibition gallery offering a research service, education and outreach, as well as an exhibition gallery. From an educational standpoint, MU3 provides a medium by which students and educational establishments are given the opportunity to gain access to a wide range of historical data. It joined the network in 2008 although transcripts reveal MU3 had knowledge of the network's existence prior to being asked to join. Only two members of staff make up the education and outreach service, but owing to work commitments both do not attend regularly and are not as heavily involved with joint projects.

**MU4** – Operating from a 15<sup>th</sup> century redundant medieval church, MU4 currently operates as a museum showcasing 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> medieval stained glass windows from over 150 churches (including the one in which it is housed) within the region. There is no clear indication as to when MU4 joined the network but transcripts reveal it may have been in the later stages of the network's formation. Representatives are infrequent in their attendance and their involvement is linked more with the sub-groups formed within the network rather than toward the networks' own development.

**MU5** – MU5 was built during the Norman period of William the Conqueror between 1066 and 1075, where its initial use was as a royal palace. Architecturally, it was built in the form of a motte and bailey, which was mostly a defensive strategy. Aside from being a royal palace, MU4 was used as a prison during 1220-1887. Eight years later, it was officially opened as a museum. Now, it houses a museum and gallery where fine art, significant archaeological finds, military regalia and natural history collections are kept. MU5 joined the network in 2003, and has one representative who is actively involved in network projects.

### Cinema/Theatre (CT)

**CT1** - CT1 is an independent art-house cinema which has been officially in existence since April 1978. However, the building that houses the cinema since its inception has a historical significance, as it was once the residence of many affluent families to include sheriffs, bailiffs, and medieval wine merchants dating back to the fourteenth century. Other additions to the building were added in the eighteenth century, and in

1915, it ceased to be a residence. It was sold in 1916 and after restorations spanning nine years; the building was presented as a public hall in 1925 to be used for the “advancement of education in its widest and most comprehensive sense.” To date, it remains the oldest independent art-house cinema of its kind in the country. 2004 saw CT1 close for a multi-million pound restoration project. Three years later, it reopened with three cinema screens that caters to just over 360 people, housing also a bar and restaurant. Learning development projects are aimed at formal and informal learners regardless of age, ability and access. Workshops are by no means limited to the cinema but are also carried out on a nationwide basis as a development fund is in place from the Heritage Lottery Fund.

**CT2** – Opened in 1980, CT2 is the only organisation in the region that specifically provides all year round family centred entertainment dedicated to puppetry works. From an educational standpoint, it provides regular educational workshops for families, schools, children and adults as well as training sessions for theatre practitioners. It was an original founding member of this network of organisations, and has one dedicated member of staff who regularly attends meetings and project functions on its behalf.

**CT3** – CT3 is described as a small riverside theatre that opened in 1995 and seats approximately 300. Although it is one of the more modern developments amongst Network N members, CT3 remains a key contributor to the initial formation and current growth of the network. As well as offering a diverse range of products to suit a host of different tastes, CT3’s education portfolio is fast developing. It offers subsidised projects using nationally recognised grade descriptors through local colleges to create its niche in the highly competitive education market. It has one dedicated member of staff who regularly attends meetings and project functions on its behalf.

**CT4** – This 1300-seat theatre has been in existence and on the same site for over 250 years. It is one of the larger members in Network N and is a founding organisation of the network. Today, CT4 is regarded as a highly successful performing arts theatre in the region, commanding a box office income of nearly two million pounds with just over 390,000 visitors to 112 productions in 2011 alone. Education, community work

and managing corporate memberships are vital to the operations of CT4. As well as working closely with teachers and schools through the provision of production activities/projects, work experience, and training courses, CT4 hosts charitable collections for local charities and acts in a supportive role to a number of other arts providers including CT3, which it manages. It is one of the few member organisations within network N that have a dedicated education department. Between one to two representatives from its education department attend meetings and project functions on its behalf.

## **Religion (RE)**

**RE1** – RE1 dates back to 1953. The preceding church where the current RE1 building stands is believed to be 14<sup>th</sup> century Saxon architecture, but it was rebuilt after the original building was destroyed by a bomb blast during the war in 1942. Located in the centre of town, its closest business links are with RE3 and MU2 based on the distance (proximity) between the attractions, and the ease by which visitors can frequent all three attractions in the same visit. Proximity has also helped the representatives develop a personal friendship. RE1 joined the network in 2009, and had one key member of staff attend meetings.

**RE2** - As the second largest Catholic cathedral in England, RE2 has a thirteenth century architectural style and is described as being Victorian Gothic. RE2 was built on the site of an old city gaol in 1884 and despite problems with planning permission and building materials; it was officially completed and opened in 1910. Recent additions in 2012 include a library open only to the congregation of the cathedral; a visitor centre which comprises an education and interpretation gallery, a shop, a refectory, outdoor patio, licensed bar and a community garden. It joined the network in 2003 and has one dedicated member of staff who regularly attends meetings on its behalf.

**RE3** – RE3 is an English cathedral and is the bigger of the cathedrals within the network. Its structure is primarily Norman architecture. Work started on RE3 in 1096 on the site of two churches and an entire Saxon settlement which had to be demolished to make room for its completion in 1145. Despite being having the second

largest cloisters and the second tallest spire in England, RE3 has had its fair share of drama spanning centuries. In 1272, it was damaged by riots when Henry III levied heavy fines on the city. In 1463, the spire was struck by lightning, causing a fire to destroy the nave of the building. In 1644, it was attacked and destroyed by an angry puritan mob during the reign of King Charles I, where it was reportedly used as an ale-house for musketeers. More recently, changes have been suited to the education market, where a new education and visitor centre is open to the general public. It joined the network in 2009 and has one full time member of staff that represents RE3 at network meetings.

## Events (EV)

**EV1** – With its origins dating as far back as 1772, EV1 is one of the oldest art-festival providers in England, which it organises and manages every year. The festivals last over 16 days and hosts more than 100 performances on an annual basis both outdoors and across a number of venues including CT4, CT3 and EV2. Its original role was as a fundraiser using performances through classical musical festivals as its forte. On developing creative education schemes with 49 schools across the region, EV1 has had to move to a more diversified portfolio, where other art forms (e.g., circus, dance, visual arts, children's events etc.) have been introduced. Despite a cut in funding for developing creative learning school schemes, Art Council Reports (2011) suggest EV1 will start to receive funding of nearly £1.5million over a three year period to bridge the gap between the arts and education by developing an understanding of the significance of arts and create opportunities for children and young people. It recently joined the network despite opposition from a number of existing members. Despite being recognised as been a member on the website of CT1 as a member of NN, its membership status still questionable. One representative from its education department attends meetings but attendance is rare.

**EV2** – EV2 was opened to the public in 2002 after a fire devastated the building that originally stood in its place eight years prior. It is generally considered to be a public building and as such houses a library, an open air amphitheatre, and exhibition space amongst other attractions that either are encompassed within it or are part of its immediate vicinity. The perception of the local community on how it priorities

education and community work are fundamental to how EV2 meets its remit. Although considered to be a member of the network, representation by EV2 is infrequent.

**EV3** – Considered by many within the network to be the more influential organisation, EV3 is a private charitable heritage organisation that acts as an umbrella organisation for all types of heritage in the region. Subsequently, EV3 co-ordinate and promote heritage-based open days in the region, in a bid to encourage awareness of both national and European heritage. Their definition of heritage includes old buildings, social history collections such as costume, furniture and industrial history collections such as, vehicles, machines/machinery and decorative art. One to two representatives from its management team attend meetings and are mostly present for every meeting and joint events. EV3 are responsible for developing a sub-group that operates outside of this network with the help of four other members from the network.

## Appendix 6: Relationship intensity grade charts (RIG)

																KEY																																				
0	CT1																	CO - Predominantly cooperative; low competition																																		
1	CT2	CO																	CM - Predominantly competitive; low cooperation																																	
2	CT3	CP	CO																	CP - balanced relationship with high levels of both cooperation and competition																																
3	CT4	CM	CO	CP																	NR - No relationship between organisations																															
4	ED1	CP	CM	CM	CM																																															
5	ED2	CM	CO	CO	CM	CO																																														
6	ED3	CO	CM	CM	CM	CP	CO																																													
7	ED4	CO	CM	CO	CM	CP	CO	CP																																												
8	EV1	CM	CO	CO	CO	CM	CM	CM	CM																																											
9	EV2	NR	CM	CM	CO	CM	CP	CO	CM	CM																																										
10	EV3	CM	CO	CM	CM	CO	CM	CO	CO	CM	CO																																									
11	MU1	CP	CO	CM	CM	CP	CM	CP	CP	CP	CM	CP																																								
12	MU2	CO	CM	CM	CM	CM	CP	CM	CM	CM	CM	CM	CP	CM																																						
13	MU3	CM	CM	NR	CM	CP	CO	CO	CM																																											
14	MU4	CM	NR	CM	CM	CM	CO	NR	NR	CM	NR	CP	NR	CO	CO	CO	CP	CP	CP	CP	NR	CM																														
15	MU5	CM	CM	CM	CM	CO	CO	CO	CO	CM	CO	CP	CP	CO	CO	CO	CP	CP	CP	CP	NR	CM																														
16	RE1	CM	NR	NR	CM	NR	CM	CM	CM	CP	CP	CP	CP	NR	CM																																					
17	RE2	CM	CO	CP	CM	CO	CO	CO	CO	CO	CM																																									
18	RE3	CM	CO	CM	CO	CO	CM	CO	CO	CM	CO	CM	CM	CO	CO	CM	CM	CM	CM	CO	CM	CM	CM	CM	CM	CM	CM	CM	CM	CM	CM	CM	CM	CM	CM	CM	CM	CM	CM	CM												
R'ship No.	ORG	CT1	CT2	CT3	CT4	ED1	ED2	ED3	ED4	EV1	EV2	EV3	MU1	MU2	MU3	MU4	MU5	RE1	RE2	RE3	RELATIONSHIP INTENSITY GRADES (RIG)																															
R'ship No.		18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0																																

Org	Relationship Type				R'ships btw orgs
	CO	CP	CM	NR	
<b>CT1</b>	4	3	10	1	18
<b>CT2</b>	9	0	7	2	18
<b>CT3</b>	4	3	9	2	18
<b>CT4</b>	4	1	13	0	18
<b>ED1</b>	4	4	10	0	18
<b>ED2</b>	7	2	9	0	18
<b>ED3</b>	6	3	8	1	18
<b>ED4</b>	6	3	8	1	18
<b>EV1</b>	3	1	14	0	18
<b>EV2</b>	4	2	9	3	18
<b>EV3</b>	7	5	6	0	18
<b>MU1</b>	2	7	8	1	18
<b>MU2</b>	3	3	12	0	18
<b>MU3</b>	3	2	12	1	18
<b>MU4</b>	3	1	8	6	18
<b>MU5</b>	7	3	7	1	18
<b>RE1</b>	2	1	12	3	18
<b>RE2</b>	3	2	13	0	18
<b>RE3</b>	9	0	9	0	18
<b>Total R'ships</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>184</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>342</b>